

## Replanting the Bodhi Tree: Buddhist Sectarianism and Zhenyan Revivalism<sup>1</sup>

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### INTRODUCTION

The Mantra School Bright Lineage (MSBL, 真言宗光明流) is a fledgling esoteric Buddhist sect with over six thousand refuged members.<sup>2</sup> It was founded in Taiwan during the 1970s as a resurrection of Tang Dynasty Zhenyan (真言, Jpn. Shingon), an “extinct school” of Chinese esoteric Buddhism.<sup>3</sup> Since then, the MSBL’s influence has spread throughout the Chinese-speaking world in the form of overseas branches, offshoots, and rivals.<sup>4</sup> Its founder, Guru Wuguang (悟

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1. This paper draws from my PhD dissertation, “Reenchanting Buddhism via Modernizing Magic: Guru Wuguang of Taiwan’s Philosophy and Science of ‘Superstition’” (Leiden University, 2017). Some sections of this paper were presented at More Bonds Than Boundaries: The Diverse Roles of East Asian Temples and Shrines Conference, Shanghai, China, Aug. 2015.

2. On a refuge certificate from Apr. 27, 2014, it states that the current head of the MSBL has officiated over 835 MSBL refuge ceremonies, a number that does not include refuge ceremonies conducted by other MSBL members in Hong Kong and Malaysia. Wuguang, the MSBL’s founder, personally performed over five thousand.

3. Chinese characters have been romanized in Pinyin, except for place and individual names who have standardized transliterations that do not conform to Pinyin.

4. The MSBL has branches throughout Taiwan as well as one in Hong Kong. There is a splinter group in Malaysia that sees itself as an extension of the MSBL, the Malaysian Mahā Prāṇidhāna Parvata Mantrayāna (马来西亚佛教真言宗大願山). There is also a breakaway group with branches throughout Taiwan and Hong Kong and has a loose following on the Chinese mainland and New Zealand, the Zhenyan Samantabhadra Lineage (真言宗普賢流), detailed below. Another breakaway group, the Xiu Ming Society (修明堂, a.k.a. Hong

光上師, dharma-name Quanmiao 全妙, secular name Zheng Jinbao 鄭進寶, 1918–2000), was a dizzyingly eclectic Taiwanese figure. He was a construction worker, merchant sailor, Chan 禪 monk, faith healer, exorcist, alchemist, holder of an honorary doctorate in philosophy, lesser archbishop (少僧正) in the Japanese Buddhist ecclesiastical hierarchy (僧階), and Shingon priest (阿闍梨, Skt. *ācārya*).<sup>5</sup> He was also a mentor to Shinzen Young (真善, a.k.a. Steve Young), the American-born, ethnically Jewish, Japanese-ordained Shingon *ācārya* and *vipassanā* teacher who collaborated with UCLA and Harvard Medical School to research the neurological effects of meditation.<sup>6</sup> Despite their importance, the scholarly community has all but ignored Wuguang and the MSBL

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Kong Esoteric Group 港密) is very popular in Hong Kong. It was founded by another one of Wuguang's disciples, Guru Ming (明上師, secular Cantonese name Li Kuiming 李居明, English name Edward Li, dharma-name Chehao 徹豪). The MSBL was also the inspiration for the Modern Pure Land Society (現代淨土, formerly Modern Chan Society 現代禪), detailed below. A known rival group is based in the Acala Monastery (不動寺) at Mt. Qinglong (青龍山), in Taiwan's rural Pingtung County (屏東縣). It was founded by the Taiwanese Chan monk and Shingon priest Weili (惟勵, 1931–2016). Unlike the other sects mentioned, Weili's group is still officially under Japanese oversight.

5. Wuguang's experience as a merchant sailor and alchemist are retold in his autohagiography, *Cangsang huiyilu* 滄桑回憶錄 (A Memoir of Trials and Tribulations) (handwritten manuscript, 1999), <http://www.mantrabright.org/index.php?option=com/lyftenbloggie&view=entry&id=5&Itemid=29>, accessed Jan. 19, 2016. His time as a merchant sailor is corroborated in Shinzen Young, *Break Through Pain: A Step-by-Step Mindfulness Meditation Program for Transforming Chronic and Acute Pain* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True Inc., 2004), 75. Photographs of Wuguang's Shingon ordination certificates, honorary doctorate, and ecclesiastical rank can all be seen in Wuguang, *Fojiao zhenyanzong jishenchengfo guan* 佛教真言宗即身成佛觀 (Contemplation on Becoming a Buddha in This Body) (Kaohsiung: Paise wenhua, 1991), front endpapers. His experience as a construction worker, alchemist, and exorcist are detailed below.

6. See Shinzen Young, "Buddhist Brain: 'The Science of Enlightenment, the Enlightenment of Science,'" public talk, Tuscon, AZ, Oct. 19, 2006, <http://www.shinzen.org/The%20Buddhist%20Brain.pdf>, accessed Jan. 18, 2016. Also see Ann Gleig, "#Hashtag Meditation, Cyborg Buddhas, and Enlightenment as an Epic Win: Buddhism, Technology and the New Social Media," in *Asian Religions, Technology, and Science*, ed. István Keul (London and New York: Routledge, 2015), 191.

as—outside of my work<sup>7</sup>—they have only been discussed in a single paragraph<sup>8</sup> in one English academic work and two Chinese MA theses.<sup>9</sup>

The members of the MSBL and its scions are, to the best of my knowledge, unique in the fact that they do not identify as Japanese Shingon despite basing their sectarian affiliation and claim to orthodoxy on the Japanese provenance and Shingon origins of their dharma-transmission. Similarly, while they are aware that the MSBL is new, they perceive it as a resurrection of an ancient school of Buddhism. These complexities are born out of the fact that Wuguang's resurrection of Zhenyan was enabled by the religious authority that he had gained while in Japan, and that this resurrection resulted in garnering the disapproval of those who had bestowed that authority. In this paper I explore the ways in which Wuguang and his disciples have navigated these seemingly contradictory positions, and argue that they make use of traditional Buddhist legitimization strategies in an innovative fashion to root the MSBL within the confines of preexisting Shingon orthodoxy while simultaneously uprooting Shingon's claim to esoteric orthodoxy from Japan, and replanting it in the Sinosphere, in order to resurrect Tang-era Zhenyan.

Appreciating what reviving Zhenyan by establishing the MSBL entailed requires an understanding of contemporary Taiwanese Buddhist sectarianism, esoteric Buddhist orthodoxy, the relationship between Zhenyan and Shingon, and the revival of tantrism in the Chinese-speaking world. Therefore, this paper begins by detailing the sectarian issues and historical factors central to the birth of the MSBL. Then, I

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7. Cody R. Bahir, "Buddhist Master Wuguang's (1918–2000) Taiwanese Web of the Colonial, Exilic and Han," *E-Journal of East and Central Asian Religions* 1 (2013): 81–93, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2218/ejecar.2013.1.737>; Bahir, "Reformulating the Appropriated and Relinking the Chain: Challenges of Lineage and Legitimacy in Contemporary Chinese Zhenyan," title TBD, ed. Fabienne Jagou (forthcoming); and Bahir, "Reenchanted Buddhism."

8. Chen Bing, "The Tantric Revival and Its Reception in Modern China," in *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Monica Esposito, 2 vols. (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2008), 1:394.

9. Gu Zhengli 顧正立, "Study on Shingon Buddhism of Guangmingwang Temple at Wuzhishan, Kaohsiung 高雄市五智山光明王寺之真言宗信仰研究" (MA thesis, Huafan University, 2012); Li Yongbin 李永斌, "Master Wu Light Esoteric Ideological Research 悟光法師密教思想研究" (MA thesis, Northwest University, 2011).

detail the ways the MSBL, its founder, and offshoots have met these challenges. Data has predominantly been collected through onsite fieldwork conducted throughout Taiwan from 2011 to 2016.<sup>10</sup>

#### THEMATIC AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Taiwanese Buddhist sectarian consciousness has been greatly influenced by relatively rigid Japanese Buddhist denominational boundaries that solidified during the Tokugawa Period.<sup>11</sup> Although the neatly organized boundaries that this framework offers have never reflected common perception and are in fact a product of East Asian appropriations of Western religious boundaries, they have shaped both religionist and scholarly understandings of Buddhist sectarianism.<sup>12</sup> These boundaries are articulated via the terms “school” (宗) and “lineage” (流).<sup>13</sup> Often “school” represents an overarching denominational identity that consists of multiple “lineages.”<sup>14</sup> Within this framework, schools and lineages are clearly defined as independent religious sects whose sectarian identities are defined by the provenance and contents of their dharma-“transmissions” (傳). These transmissions are school/lineage-specific and differentiated by the particular soteriological

10. Due to ethical issues surrounding research that involves living human subjects, I have concealed the identity of a number of my informants and certain individuals involved in the history of the MSBL. The only times I have named my informants is when they have given me explicit permission to reference them as the source of that particular piece of information.

11. For the development of these Japanese Buddhist boundaries see Michel Mohr, “Zen Buddhism during the Tokugawa Period: The Challenge to Go beyond Sectarian Consciousness,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 21, no. 4 (1994): 341–372.

12. Jimmy Yu, “Revisiting the Notion of Zong: Contextualizing the Dharma Drum Lineage of Modern Chan Buddhism,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 26 (2013): 116–120, <http://enlight.lib.ntu.edu.tw/FULLTEXT/JR-BJ001/bj001390683.pdf>, accessed Jan. 11, 2016.

13. Both the characters for “school” and “lineage” are frequently paired with a character that is often translated as “branch” (派), whose usage is most frequently interchangeable with “lineage.”

14. It must be noted that in Japan, certain sectarian lineages are subdivided into yet another level. However, there is no single standardized term for this. Sometimes the character for “temple” (寺) or “hall” (院) is used. The only times I have encountered these terms used this way in Taiwan are in reference to Japanese Buddhist communities.

technology they contain as well as the specific individuals who are believed to have propagated them. Thus, sectarian boundaries are justified by differences in orthopraxis—the contents of a sect’s transmission—and the provenance of the transmission. Living devotees’ religious authority and sectarian identity rest upon the belief that they are links within an unbroken chain of a particular transmission. Within esoteric Buddhism, transmission-continuity is especially significant due to the perceived potency of the rituals contained within the transmission—so much so that esoteric Buddhism can be distinguished from other forms of Buddhism based upon its emphasis on transmission-continuity.<sup>15</sup>

Transmission procedures often entail reenacting the origination myth of the school in which the transmission is taking place,<sup>16</sup> and therefore differ between schools.<sup>17</sup> The archetypal format central to this study is the Shingon method for performing *abhiṣeka* (灌頂). There are different levels and forms of *abhiṣeka*. In Shingon, the most basic is karmic-binding *abhiṣeka* (結緣灌頂) that establishes a link between the master and disciple. Above this there is dharma-study *abhiṣeka* (學法灌頂) that enables a devotee to study rudimentary esoteric rituals. After this comes dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* (傳法灌頂) that renders one an ordained Shingon *ācārya* and forges a link within the

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15. Richard K. Payne, introduction to *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, ed. Richard K. Payne (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 8. Despite the seemingly definitive nature of my assertion here, there is currently no scholarly consensus on exactly how to define esoteric Buddhism. For more information, see Charles D. Orzech, “Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras of East Asia: Some Methodological Considerations,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras of East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech et al., *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 24 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 9–22.

16. In addition to the ways in which Zhenyan/Shingon transmission reenacts the school’s origination myth (see below), the same framework is found in Chan/Zen where “mind-to-mind transmission” (以心傳心) is seen as a reenactment of the “Flower Sermon” (拈花微笑). See Albert Welter, “Mahākāśyapa’s Smile: Silent Transmission and the Kung-an (Koan) Tradition,” in *The Kōan: Texts and Contexts in Zen Buddhism*, ed. Steven Heine and Dale S. Wright (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71–109.

17. Despite the fact that there are discernible similarities between the ways in which transmission is justified in different schools, there is not a single, universal understanding or process of transmission. See Wendi L. Adamek, *The Mystique of Transmission: On an Early Chan History and Its Contexts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 14.

transmission-chain.<sup>18</sup> This is the level of *abhiṣeka* that Wuguang received in Japan.

Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* as practiced in Shingon represents a reenactment of the school's origination myth referred to as the legend of the "Iron *Stūpa* of South India" (南天竺鐵塔).<sup>19</sup> The legend of the iron *stūpa* of South India states that the cosmic Buddha Mahāvairocana transmitted the esoteric dharma to Vajrasattva Bodhisattva. Vajrasattva then transcribed the contents of this transmission and sealed them in an iron *stūpa* in southern India. These writings remain locked away and untouched within this *stūpa* for hundreds of years until the Buddhist philosopher Nāgārjuna (ca. 150-ca. 250) was given the whereabouts of the *stūpa* and knowledge of how to open it in a vision. Whilst inside the *stūpa*, he received transmission from Vajrasattva, which marks the moment when the first human became a link within the Shingon transmission chain.<sup>20</sup> Dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* reenacts the exchanges that took place between Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva as well as Vajrasattva and Nāgārjuna, as it takes place over a *maṇḍala* that is meant to simultaneously symbolize Mahāvairocana's palace and the iron *stūpa*. During the ritual, the initiator and initiated respectively visualize themselves as Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva.<sup>21</sup>

This origination myth references not only the provenance of Shingon's dharma-transmission but also the contents of the transmission itself as well as their soteriological aims. Shingon's soteriological aim is to realize the unity that exists between the practitioner and Mahāvairocana and is encapsulated in the phrase "becoming a buddha in this body" (即身成佛). The realization of this unity, referred to as "ritual identification" (入我我入), is achieved through mimicking Mahāvairocana's activities. These activities—referred to as the "three mysteries" (三密, Skt. *tri-guhyā*)—are identified as his body (身), speech (口), and mind (意), which are respectively copied by performing

18. Abé Ryūichi, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 124.

19. For this tale see, Charles D. Orzech, "The Legend of the Iron Stupa," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 314–317.

20. Adrian Snodgrass, *The Symbolism of the Stupa* (1st Indian ed.; Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1992), 376.

21. Cynthia J. Bogel, *With a Single Glance: Buddhist Icon and Early Mikkyō Vision* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2009), 208.

*mudrās*, reciting mantras, and visualizing *maṇḍalas*. The transmission that Mahāvairocana gave to Vajrasattva not only serves as the model for Shingon dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka*, but also the contents of its orthopraxis due to the fact that this transmission was communicated via the three mysteries.<sup>22</sup>

Given the importance of dharma-transmission continuity, it is clear why Wuguang's resurrection of Zhenyan by appropriating Shingon was considered such a remarkable accomplishment and posed a number of challenges. According to popular East Asian religious historiography, Zhenyan was a form of esoteric Buddhism that flourished in China during the Tang dynasty (618–907) in the empire's capital of Chang'an (長安, modern day Xi'an 西安). However, sometime in the early Song dynasty (960–1269) its chain of initiation was interrupted and its spiritual technologies became subsumed under other Buddhist movements, folk religion,<sup>23</sup> and Daoism.<sup>24</sup> Prior to this fissure, Zhenyan's initiation chain was transported to Japan by the Japanese figure Kūkai (空海, a.k.a. Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師, 774–835), who had studied the esoteric dharma under the Chinese Master Huiguo (惠果, 746–805) while on a trip to China. After this, the teachings that Kūkai received from Huiguo became the basis for Shingon. Since Zhenyan's orthodox initiation chain disappeared from China after it had been transmitted to

22. Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 130.

23. "Folk religion" (民俗宗教), also referred to as "popular religion," is an umbrella term for local cults that do not neatly fit within the confines of established religious categories such as Buddhism, Daoism, and modern Shintō. While multiple folk religious groups in close geographical proximity oftentimes share numerous similarities, they are not considered a singular unified tradition due to their non-centralized and heterogeneous nature. See Philip Clart, "The Concept of 'Popular Religion' in the Study of Chinese Religions: Retrospect and Prospects," in *The Fourth Fu Jen University Sinological Symposium: Research on Religions in China: Status Quo and Perspectives*, ed. Zbigniew Wesolowski (Xinzhuang: Furen Daxue chubanshe, 2007), 166–203.

24. See Charles Orzech, "Seeing Chen-yen Buddhism: Traditional Scholarship and the Vajrayāna in China," *History of Religions* 29, no. 2 (1989): 87–144. Although this is the traditional account, Robert Sharf has called the existence of Tang-dynasty Zhenyan into question in Robert H. Sharf, *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism: A Reading of the Treasure Store Treatise*, Kuroda Institute Studies in East Asian Buddhism, 14 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2002), 263–278. However, the existence or non-existence of this school during the Tang dynasty is irrelevant to this study as it concerns a modern movement.

Japan by Kūkai, Chinese devotees had to venture outside the confines of Chinese Buddhism if they wanted to study orthodox forms of esoteric Buddhism. As no esoteric Buddhist school or lineage can “spring into being *ex nihilo* but must be able to trace its origin back through several generations of master-to-student transmission,”<sup>25</sup> Wuguang had to travel to Japan in order to join himself with the initiation chain as propagated by Japanese Shingon.

Although Wuguang’s attempt to resurrect Zhenyan by receiving dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* in Japan is currently the most successful that I am aware of, it was not the first. In fact, the Chinese Buddhist reformer Taixu (太虛, 1890–1947) also attempted to revive this extinct form of esoteric Buddhism. To do so, he urged his students to receive initiation, first in Japan and later in Tibet, where esoteric chains of initiation remained intact. Taixu’s efforts initiated the “Tantric Revival” (密教復興運動), which collectively refers to esoteric Buddhism’s rises in popularity on the Chinese mainland during the late Qing dynasty (1644–1912) and early Republican period (1912–1949). The first rise in popularity was centered in Eastern China and was focused on Japanese esoteric Buddhism (Shingon and Tendai 天台), while the second was centered near Beijing and concentrated on Tibetan Vajrayāna. The first, Japanese-oriented of these developments—although still alive in present day Hong Kong<sup>26</sup> despite being called “short-lived”<sup>27</sup>—was

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25. Erik J. Hammerstrom, “The Heart-of-Mind Method: Legitimizing a New Buddhist Movement in 1930s China,” *Nova Religion: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions* 17, no. 2 (2013): 13.

26. Although usually not mentioned, there was an interest in Japanese esoteric Buddhism happening in Hong Kong that coincided with developments taking place on the Chinese mainland. The Hong Kong Mantra School for Lay Buddhists (香港佛教眞言宗居士林), which is still in operation, was founded during this time. See, “Hong Kong Mantra School for Lay Buddhists Website,” <http://www.buddhistmantra.hk>, accessed Feb. 4, 2015. Also see Bill M. Mak, “The Career of Utsuki Nishū 宇津木二秀 in Hong Kong during the Japanese Occupation Period (1941–1945),” *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society Hong Kong Branch* 55 (2015): 57–82, <http://www.billmak.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Mak-2015-4.pdf>, accessed Jan. 13, 2014.

27. Chen Bing, “The Tantric Revival and Its Reception in Modern China,” in *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, ed. Monica Esposito (Paris: École française d’Extrême-Orient, 2008), 394.



not as widespread as the Tibetan-oriented popularity.<sup>28</sup> Additionally, unlike Wuguang, the figures of this movement are not known to have founded their own, independently self-perpetuating Zhenyan lineages.

Wuguang was a direct heir of Taixu's Tantric Revival. However, he was not directly influenced by the Japanese-oriented revivalists but, rather, the Tibetan ones. This occurred in 1960, when Wuguang was serving as a secretary at Zhuxi Temple,<sup>29</sup> a Chan monastery in Taiwan's southern city, Tainan (台南). Wuguang used his position to organize a public ten-day *phowa*<sup>30</sup> retreat headed by Elder Gongga (貢噶老人, 1903–1997). Elder Gongga was a female disciple of the Karma Kagyu master Gangkar Rinpoche (貢噶呼圖克圖, 1893–1957).<sup>31</sup> Gangkar Rinpoche was one of many Tibetan teachers who helped spread Tibetan Buddhism in China during the Tantric Revival by giving initiation

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28. For the Tantric Revival see the previous note and Ester Bianchi, "The Tantric Rebirth Movement in Modern China: Esoteric Buddhism Re-vivified by the Japanese and Tibetan Traditions," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungarica* 57, no. 1 (2004): 31–54; Martino Dibeltulo, "The Revival of Tantrism: Tibetan Buddhism and Modern China" (PhD diss., University of Michigan, 2015); Erik Schicketanz, "Wang Hongyuan and the Import of Japanese Esoteric Buddhism to China during the Republican Period," in *Buddhism across Asia: Networks of Material, Intellectual, and Cultural Exchange*, vol. 1, ed. Tansen Sen (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2014), 323–347.

29. For the history of Zhuxi Temple see Lu Jiaying 盧嘉興, "Taiwande diyizuo siyuan-zhuxisi 臺灣的第一座寺院—竹溪寺" (Taiwan's First Monastery—Zhuxi Temple), *Taiwan fojiao shilunji (8)-taiwan fojiao pian* (1979): 233–254.

30. *Phowa* practices are aimed at transferring one's consciousness, enabling ethereal travel, spiritual possession, or choosing where one will be reborn. See Anna Balikci, *Lamas, Shamans, and Ancestors: Village Religion in Sikkim* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2008), 273; Margaret Gouin, *Tibetan Rituals of Death: Buddhist Funerary Practices* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010), 16–17; Tanya Zivkovic, *Death and Reincarnation in Tibetan Buddhism: In-Between Bodies*, Routledge Critical Studies in Buddhism (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 74.

31. See Monica Esposito, "rDzogs chen in China: From Chan to 'Tibetan Tantrism' in Fahai Lama's (1920–1991) Footsteps," in *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. 2, ed. Monica Esposito (Paris: École française d'Extrême-Orient, 2008), 476. About Gangkar Rinpoche, see Carmen Meinert, "Gangkar Rinpoché between Tibet and China: A Tibetan Lama among Ethnic Chinese in the 1930s to 1950s," in *Buddhism between China and Tibet*, ed. Matthew T. Kapstein (New York: Wisdom Publications, 2009), 215–240.

to “famous officers, warlords, wealthy traders, and intellectuals.”<sup>32</sup> Gongga—who is most famous for her posthumous mummification into a golden Flesh Body Bodhisattva Relic (肉身菩薩)<sup>33</sup>—left China in 1958 and made her way to Taiwan, where she was instrumental in spreading Tibetan Buddhism.<sup>34</sup> During the retreat, Wuguang became one of Gongga’s disciples,<sup>35</sup> but shortly thereafter severed his ties to Gongga and her followers due to a disagreement.<sup>36</sup>

32. Bing, “The Tantric Revival and Its Reception in Modern China,” 409.

33. See Douglas Gildow and Marcus Bingenheimer, “Buddhist Mummification in Taiwan: Two Case Studies,” *Asia Major*, 3rd ser., 15, no. 2 (2002): 95; Fabienne Jagou, “Tibetan Mummies and Relics in Taiwan: Tibetan Heritage or Hybrid Innovation?” paper presented at Today’s Interactions between Tibetan, Taiwanese, and Chinese Buddhism Conference, Taipei, Apr. 2, 2014.

34. About Elder Gongga, see Fabienne Jagou, “Today’s Taiwanese Hagiographies of Sino-Tibetan Buddhist Masters: A Search for Legitimacy,” in *Chinese and Tibetan Esoteric Buddhism*, ed. Yaël Bentor et al. (Israel Institute for Advanced Studies, forthcoming); and Jagou, *Gongga laoren (1903–1997): Une nonne laïque à l’origine du développement du bouddhisme tibétain à Taiwan* (forthcoming).

35. For the events surrounding this retreat, as well as Wuguang’s involvement, see Huang Hui Li 黃慧琍, “The First Research of Tibetan Traditional Buddhism Development—Based on the Tibetan Tradition Buddhism Group in Tainan Area 藏傳佛教在台發展初探——以台南地區的藏傳佛教團體為研究對象” (MA thesis, National University of Tainan, 2000), 54; Lo Wei-shu 羅妮淑, “A Study of the Development of Chongqing Temple in Tainan and Its Relationship to the Development of Tibetan Buddhism in Southern Taiwan 台南重慶寺的發展歷程與南台灣藏傳佛教發展關係研究,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 20 (2007): 316–317. These events, as well as the contents of the following paragraph, are also recorded in Wuguang, *Cangsang huiyilu*.

36. There are conflicting accounts regarding the nature of this disagreement. In his autohagiography, Wuguang states that he became disillusioned with Elder Gongga after she appointed a new disciple to lead the community. He reports that this was done behind his back and that a number of Elder Gongga’s followers in Tainan perceived it as a slight to Wuguang, as he had contributed so much to the community and had been Elder Gongga’s assistant during lectures. Another version of the reason for Wuguang’s estrangement from Elder Gongga is told by her followers. They state that it was rooted in differences in Buddhist practice. As some Tibetan Buddhist rituals involve the ingestion of meat—which is forbidden in orthodox Chan Buddhism—Wuguang eventually banned the practice of Tibetan Buddhism at Zhuxi Temple. See Fabienne Jagou, “Tibetan Buddhism in the Tainan Area: A Case Study of Two Karma bKa’rgyud School Monasteries,” paper presented at the Third

Wuguang's short time with Gongga was brought about by a spiritual crisis. Before becoming a Buddhist monk, Wuguang had been a long-term practitioner of Daoist alchemy<sup>37</sup> and a well known exorcist.<sup>38</sup> He only became a Buddhist monk after being convinced to do so by Zhuxi Temple's abbot, Yanjing (眼淨, 1898–1971),<sup>39</sup> who had hired Wuguang for his expertise in construction to oversee the restoration of Zhuxi Temple.<sup>40</sup> Wuguang's lifelong fascination with the preternatural and practice of highly experiential forms of religiosity made him find Chan orthopraxis—consisting of silent meditation and sutra recitation—unfulfilling. This is why he sought out Elder Gongga, for he thought that Karma Kagyu might appeal to his religious proclivities. After breaking away from Gongga, Wuguang entered into a personal retreat near a mountaintop waterfall in Kaohsiung's Liugui District (高雄六龜區). There, he is said to have discovered Shingon's Tang Dynasty forerunner, Zhenyan, while studying the Chinese *Tripitaka*. In search of a way to bridge his personal, highly experiential religiosity and Buddhism, he decided to travel to Kōyasan (高野山), Japan.

In 1971, Wuguang traveled to Kōyasan, where was ordained as a Shingon *ācārya*. After returning to Taiwan the following year, Taiwanese Buddhists saw him endowed with the religious authority to revive Tang Zhenyan and give dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* as he was now a

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International Conference on Tainan Studies, Religion in Transformation in the Tainan Area, National Museum of Taiwan Literature, Oct. 21, 2012. I find Wuguang's account more reliable, as he was not known to stringently enforce monastic regulations. Additionally, the version given by Elder Gongga's disciples conflicts with accounts that Wuguang continued practicing with Elder Gongga's disciples after they had already vacated Zhuxi Temple, as documented in his autohagiography and corroborated in Lo Wei-shu, "A Study of the Development of Chongqing Temple in Tainan," 316–317.

37. Wuguang's practices of Daoist alchemy are recorded in Wuguang, *Cangsang huiyilu*, and were corroborated by (1) an individual who knew Wuguang and was not one of his followers during my fieldwork at Dehua Hall 德化堂, Tainan, Mar. 2015 and (2) a personal communication with Shinzen Young, Oct. 24, 2014.

38. Semi-structured interview with longtime disciple of Wuguang, Aug. 2014; Shinzen Young, personal correspondence, Oct. 24, 2014.

39. As recorded in Wuguang, *Cangsang huiyilu*.

40. This period of reconstruction is detailed in Wuguang, *Cangsang huiyilu*, and memorialized in a stele that currently stands at Zhuxi Temple that I saw on Aug. 2, 2013.

recognized link within the chain of esoteric dharma-transmission. In 1974, Wuguang allocated space within a small folk religion shrine in Tainan as the base of his new Buddhist lineage, the MSBL. From this modest space Wuguang's flock steadily grew. In 1980 another, equally humble branch was established in Kaohsiung's Zuoying District (高雄市左營區). In 1983, a large plot of land in Wuguang's rural hometown in Kaohsiung's Neimen District (高雄市内門區) was purchased with the intention to construct a large central monastery. It took sixteen years for the temple to finally be completed in 1999, during which time the MSBL Hong Kong branch was opened in 1990. After completion, the new monastery was named the Temple of Universal Brightness (TOUB, 光明王寺). Wuguang passed away the following year, since which time Wuguang's disciple, Huiding (徽定; b. 1956), has served as the MSBL's spiritual leader.

#### APPROPRIATING AUTHORITY AND ESTABLISHING ROOTS

What truly made Wuguang's new MSBL an independent Buddhist lineage from its inception is the fact that it has always been self-perpetuating. In lieu of sending students to Japan to receive dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* as is done at Shingon centers in Taiwan<sup>41</sup> and Hong Kong<sup>42</sup>—even those that are run by local devotees—Wuguang ordained his own *ācāryas* on Taiwanese soil. In Japan, to become a Shingon priest one must go into retreat that lasts roughly one hundred days and perform multiple rituals around the clock.<sup>43</sup> Since the MSBL's humble beginnings made hosting such a retreat impossible, Wuguang allowed his students to perform the rituals at home after he had instructed them in the ritual procedures and meanings thereof. The MSBL's informal

41. Two examples of Taiwanese-run Shingon centers who send their disciples to Japan to receive dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* are Kōyasan Jūkon-in 高野山住嚴院 in Taichung and Kōyasan Juntei-in 高野山準提院 in Kaohsiung. During my fieldwork, I discovered that devotees at these locations are trained in Japanese language and etiquette as well as Shingon rituals by the Taiwanese abbots of these centers as well as Japanese Shingon emissaries. This is done to prepare them for their studies in Japan.

42. Personal communication with a representative of the Hong Kong Mantra School for Lay Buddhists, Apr. 20, 2015.

43. See Philip L. Nicoloff, *Sacred Kōyasan: A Pilgrimage to the Mountain Temple of Saint Kōbō Daishi and the Great Sun Buddha* (New York: SUNY, 2007), 193–196.

*abhiṣeka* process changed after the land for the TOUB was purchased, where the one hundred-day retreat experience has been replicated.

Had Wuguang returned to Taiwan and acted as an agent of Japanese Shingon, under Japanese oversight, and trained his disciples to receive ordination in Japan, he would simply have been an emissary, and the MSBL would merely be a Taiwanese branch of Japanese Shingon. However, this was not the case, as Wuguang defied his Japanese dharma-brethren by ordaining his own disciples, which resulted in his ties to Japan being severed.<sup>44</sup> Because of this, Japanese Shingon authorities generally do not recognize MSBL priests as their dharma-kin<sup>45</sup> since Wuguang rerouted his disciples' transmission by establishing himself as the sole fount thereof.<sup>46</sup> It is from here that the contradictory nature of the MSBL's sectarian affiliation and challenges to its orthodoxy arise. As Wuguang's religious authority and the MSBL's sectarian identity as well as its claim to orthodoxy are all based on Wuguang's status as a link within the Shingon transmission-chain, the fractured nature of that chain calls them all into question.

Wuguang and his disciples have always been acutely aware of these contradictions and challenges and have adopted multiple strategies in order to meet them. The first entailed establishing that MSBL members are in fact links within the esoteric transmission-chain that originated with Mahāvairocana. This can be seen in the following passages, taken from two MSBL websites that function as self-proclamations of sectarian identification:

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44. When Wuguang's Japanese dharma-brethren were made aware of Wuguang's actions, they sent a letter demanding that he desist. This episode was told to me by high-ranking members of the MSBL who wish to remain anonymous and have requested that I conceal the identity of the individual who reported Wuguang's activities.

45. Informant, personal correspondence, Dec. 24, 2015.

46. This is not to say that Japanese Shingon priests generally express disrespect to or refuse to interact with the devotees of the MSBL and its offshoots. In fact, there have been multiple Japanese delegations to Taiwan that have visited the TOUB and centers used by its offshoots. MSBL members and those of its offshoots have also visited Kōyasan, which I have detailed in Cody R. Bahir, "Buddhist Master Wuguang's (1918–2000) Taiwanese Web" and "Reformulating the Appropriated and Relinking the Chain." However, MSBL *ācāryas* are not recognized as "Shingon" priests, but as priests of a derivative movement.

Esoteric Buddhism originated in India. It was transmitted by Mahāvairocana to Vajrasattva, the latter who passed it on to its systematizer, Nāgārjuna. It was later introduced to China during the reign of the Tang-dynasty emperor Xuanzong by Śubhākarasiṃha and Vajrabodhi, who respectively traveled by land and sea. After that, the Japanese monk Kūkai studied it with Huiguo of Qinglong Temple before bringing it to Japan, reorganizing it, and passing it down to his disciples. This transmission has continued for over a thousand years.

In 1971, our temple's founder, Guru Wuguang, traveled to Kōyasan, Japan where he studied esoteric Buddhism and received dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka*, thus becoming a fifty-fourth generation *ācārya* of the Chūin-ryu sect under the monk Kamei Senyū. Thus, the bloodline of Zhenyan returned to China. After returning to Taiwan the following year, our Guru planned to build a great monastery so that the flag of esoteric Buddhism that had disappeared from China for over a thousand years would fly again.<sup>47</sup>

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47. Mantra School Bright Lineage Website, "Introduction of Our Sect History," <http://www.tofub.org/history.html>, accessed Oct. 23, 2012. On Nov. 30, 2015 I attempted to access the website only to discover it had been taken down. However, I was still able to access a saved copy from Dec. 7, 2013 by utilizing the Wayback Machine, Internet Archive: [https://web.archive.org/web/\\*/http://www.tofub.org/history.html](https://web.archive.org/web/*/http://www.tofub.org/history.html). I have heavily edited the grammar, syntax, and spelling of the text due to the fact that English was not the author's first language. Original text:

Esoteric Buddhism orientated from India, cultivated by Nagahvaya (龍猛) which was passed on by Universal Buddha Variocana (大日如來) and he derived it into pure Esoteric Buddhism (密教) doctrines. That was introduced it to China from India during the time of Tang Xuan Emperor (唐玄宗) by Subhakara Simba (善無畏三藏) and Vajra Bodhi (金剛智菩薩) via the land and sea routes. After that, Japanese student Monk Kukai (空海) learnt it from Wei Guo Acarya (慧果阿闍黎) of Qing Long Temple (青龍寺). He brought it back to Japan, re-organized it and passed it on from generation to generation for more than a thousand years. Our temple founder, Superior Master Wu Guang went to Kongobu-ji (金剛峰寺) Head Temple of Shingon (True Words) Buddhism at Mount Koya, Japan in 1971 and learnt this Esoteric Buddhism from Monk Xuan Xiong. He finally received from the Main Court Stream (中院流) the title of 54th Bhisoka [sic] Acarya (傳法阿闍黎) and the bloodline thus returned to China. Next year after his return to Taiwan, the Superior Master energetically planned and built the Temple of Universal Brightness (五智山光明王寺) so that the flags of Esoteric Buddhism which had disappeared from China for more than a thousand years now flies again.

“Bright” (光明) is a “lineage” (流) of the “Mantra school” (真言宗) of Buddhism. It evolved from Japanese Shingon. In 1972, the founder of our lineage, Guru Wuguang, brought the [esoteric] linkage back to Taiwan that Kūkai inherited from Huiguo of Qinglong Temple during the Tang dynasty.<sup>48</sup>

Here, we see that the members of the Mantra School Bright Lineage (MSBL) self-identify as devotees of a specific Buddhist group that is distinguishable from others and that they see their “Bright Lineage” (光明流) as a particular lineage within the larger “Mantra (Zhenyan/Shingon) School” (真言宗). We are told that this self-differentiation is based upon the contents and provenance of the dharma-transmission that they received from Wuguang. The former is conveyed through the emphasis on mantra recitation, while the latter is expressed in the authors’ retracing the provenance of the MSBL’s chain of dharma-transmission. These passages also express an awareness of the peculiarity of their transmission’s provenance, articulated by stating that the MSBL “evolved from Japanese Shingon,” that Wuguang “brought the [esoteric] linkage back to Taiwan that Kūkai inherited from Huiguo,” and that this was done so that “the flag of esoteric Buddhism that had disappeared from China for over a thousand years would fly again.”

The emphases on the provenance and soteriological contents of dharma-transmission, as well as the terminology of “school” and “lineage,” are consistent with contemporary East Asian Buddhist sectarianism. This consistency demonstrates that the MSBL has attempted to establish itself as an orthodox form of Buddhism via “playing by the rules.” This consistency is also embodied in the MSBL’s lineage chart (血脈, see fig. 1),<sup>49</sup> which implies that the MSBL stems from Shingon’s

48. Mantra School Bright Lineage, <http://www.mantrabright.org/>, accessed Nov. 29, 2015. I have heavily edited the grammar and spelling of the text due to the fact that English was not the author’s first language. Original text:

“Bright 光明流” is a lineage of “Mantra 真言宗” school Buddhism. It evolves from Japan’s “Shingon Buddhism,” The Founder “Master Wu Guang 悟光上師” brought the linkage back to Taiwan in 1972, after inheritance from Xian’s “Wei Guo Acharya 惠果阿闍黎” of Qing Long Temple 青龍寺 by “Master Kobo Diachi 弘法大師” during the Tang Dynasty 唐朝.

49. Unless otherwise noted, all images were created by the author.

佛教真言宗五智山光明王寺傳承血脈圖



FIGURE 1. MSBL lineage chart. Image supplied by MSBL devotee and reproduced with full permission.



Ono Lineage (小野流).<sup>50</sup> Lineage charts have been used by Buddhists since at least the Tang dynasty. They were retroactively constructed by appropriating important historical and ahistorical figures from the past and placing them at the beginning of the chart. Buddhists did this in order to link their contemporary leadership to these figures through transmission.<sup>51</sup> As the MSBL stems from Japanese Shingon, the first two patriarchs listed are Mahāvairocana and Vajrasattva.

The MSBL's lineage chart, as well as the references to transmission provenance, contents, and the terms "school" and "lineage," all demonstrate that the MSBL's sectarian consciousness is consistent with orthodox Buddhist sectarian parameters. As the MSBL is a new lineage, created and designed by Wuguang, this consistency is undoubtedly intentional. This intentionality demonstrates that Wuguang was aware of the dilemma posed by burning his bridge to Japan in order to construct another—one linked to Tang dynasty China—upon its ashes.

Having established the MSBL's sectarian boundaries in a traditional fashion, Wuguang assumed three distinct titles that I have never seen proof of him ever being awarded. Two are Japanese and one, although rooted in Tang dynasty esoteric Buddhism, is primarily used by Tibetan Buddhists. The two Japanese ranks that he took on are greater

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50. As seen when comparing the MSBL's lineage chart with those found in Zuishin'in Religious Research Institute 随心院聖教調査研究会, *Zuishin'in shōgyō tojiin nettowāku* 随心院聖教と寺院ネットワーク (Network of Zuishin'in Religious Temples) (Tokyo: Zuishin'in Shōgyō Chōsa Kenkyūkai, 2004), section 1, 30–31. Within Shingon, there are multiple levels to school and lineage subdivisions that oftentimes overlap. Perhaps the most well-known division is that between the Old Shingon School (古義真言宗) and the New Shingon School (新義真言宗), each of which boasts its own, further subdivided lineages. Of these two, the Old Shingon encompasses two of the oldest and iconic sub-lineages, Hirosawa 廣澤 and Ono 小野, which are respectively believed to have been founded by Yakushin (益信, 827–906) and Shōbō (聖寶, 822–909). Existing alongside the Hirosawa/Ono divide are later lineages such as Chūin 中院 and Tōji 東寺, the former of which overlaps the Hirosawa/Ono distinction. See Donald Drummond, "Looking Back and Leaping Forward: Constructing Lineage in the Shingi-Shingon Tradition of Japan," in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras of East Asia*, ed. Charles D. Orzech et al., *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 24 (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2011), 815–826.

51. See John R. McRae, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Chan Buddhism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 2003), 3–4.

arch bishop (大僧正),<sup>52</sup> which is the highest rank within the Japanese ecclesiastical hierarchy, and high priest (大阿闍梨, Skt. *mahā-ācārya*).<sup>53</sup> Of these, the second is the most important and is fully written as “Grand Master of Lamp Transmission” (傳燈大阿闍梨), which requires the priest to receive a level of *abhiṣeka* higher than Wuguang is known to have received, “study-cultivation *abhiṣeka*” (學修灌頂).<sup>54</sup> Wuguang either gave himself the shortened version of this title, or was portrayed by his students as having it, in order to show that he was the patriarch of a new Buddhist lineage. The greater archbishop title is less important and is largely symbolic. Although his disciples often refer to Wuguang by these titles in writing, the more preferred term is *guru* (上師). This was used in Tang China, but since then has primarily been used by Tibetan Buddhist masters as a Chinese translation of the term *lama* (which itself is a Tibetan rendering of “guru”). This is a shortened version of the term “Lofty Esoteric Guru” (金剛上師), which denotes an influential teacher of esoteric Buddhism. However, during the Tantric Revival it was used by Chinese devotees who had received Japanese Shingon ordination. Wuguang undoubtedly first encountered this term during his studies with Elder Gongga as it was the title she used. Since Wuguang’s personal adoption of this term, it has become a general title for esoteric Buddhist teachers—regardless of denomination—in the Chinese-speaking world.<sup>55</sup>

The appeals to widespread sectarian markers, the use of lineage charts, and appropriating authoritative titles discussed in this section root the MSBL within the Shingon orthodoxy from which it evolved. The tactics that Wuguang utilized, discussed in the following section,

52. As signed in *Mijiao sixiang yu shenghuo* 密教思想與生活 (Esoteric Buddhism and Life) (Kaohsiung: Guangmingwangsi, 1981), 3.

53. See Wuguang, *Xinbian zhengfa yanzang* 新編正法眼藏 (New Perspective on the Treasury of the True Dharma Eye) (Hong Kong: Forms Publications (JK), 2014), 7. In the foreword written by Wuguang’s students it says that he received *mahā-ācārya abhiṣeka* (大阿闍梨灌頂). This could be a misunderstanding of the Shingon *ācārya* hierarchy, an intentional deception, or simply an appropriation.

54. See Mikkyō Jiten Hensankai 編纂者密教辭典編纂會, *Mikkyō daijiten* 密教大辭典 (Great Dictionary of Esoteric Buddhism), 6 vols. (Taipei: Xin wen feng chuban gongsi, 1979), 1:218.

55. See Cody Bahir, “Buddhist Master Wuguang’s Taiwanese Web,” 89–90.

were employed in order to uproot Shingon's claim to esoteric orthodoxy from Japan and replant it in Taiwan.

#### REPLANTING THE BODHI TREE

While the MSBL's lineage chart is based on documentation that Wuguang received in Japan, this is not the case for the other legitimizing agents that he utilized. Similarly, unlike the lineage chart, these agents were meant to present the MSBL's as an independent Buddhist lineage distinct from Japanese Shingon, rather than related to it. Nevertheless, they are in fact traditional sectarian motifs common to Japanese Buddhism. These motifs are "crests," (紋), "lineage poems" (派詩), and "head temples" (本山). The statements Wuguang articulated through these motifs were also praxiologically translated by Sinicizing aspects of the MSBL's orthopraxis.

#### *Religious Crest*

Wuguang differentiated the MSBL from other Buddhist sects by creating a unique "school emblem" (宗徽). This image permeates the MSBL's material culture, including T-shirts, bumper stickers, window stickers, mailings, websites, keychains, and publications (see fig. 2). This emblem is a combination of disparate elements drawn from South and East Asian as well as Western traditions. It incorporates the Japanese *mitsudomoe* 三つ巴, the Indian *vajra*, and the caduceus—a symbol commonplace in Western occultism and used by the medical profession.<sup>56</sup> Underlying these three prominent elements are subtle references to specific Shingon concepts that furnish this symbol with a multilayered signification. Wuguang claimed that this symbol encapsulates the Twin *Maṇḍalas* central to Shingon, the *Vajradhātu-maṇḍala* and *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*.<sup>57</sup>

56. For more information on the caduceus, see Walter J. Friedlander, *The Golden Wand of Medicine: A History of the Caduceus Symbol in Medicine* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1992).

57. See Wuguang, "Zonghui de xianghui yiyi 宗徽的像徽意義 [Meaning of the School's Emblem]," in *Fojiao zhenyanzong wuzhishan guangmingwangsi 佛教真言宗五智山光明王寺* (Buddhist Zhenyan Temple of Universal Brightness at Mt. Five Wisdoms), NA (Kaohsiung: Yimin chubanshe, 2002), 5.



FIGURE 2. The MSBL's emblem.

As I have argued elsewhere, Wuguang's creating this emblem was inspired by the Japanese use of crests to signify different Buddhist lineages.<sup>58</sup> The fact that the *mitsudomoe* is used as such a crest by schools of Shingon strengthens this argument. That Wuguang chose to create an emblem, rather than using preexisting Japanese ones, demonstrates the multi-purposed nature of his utilization of traditional sectarian motifs. This crest presents the MSBL as a traditional Buddhist lineage—due to its muse being Japanese crests—while simultaneously declaring the MSBL's independence, since the crest is new and unique.

#### *Lineage Poems*

Lineage poems, like lineage charts, are used to corroborate the provenance of Buddhist dharma-transmissions. Buddhist and Daoist sects in East Asia employ lineage poems as a way to designate members' sectarian affiliation and generation within their sect. Each Chinese character within these poems corresponds to a generation within a particular lineage. New lineage members are given a dharma-name (法號) composed of two characters: one chosen by the officiating master or convert, and one drawn from the lineage poem corresponding to the

58. Bahir, "Buddhist Master Wuguang's Taiwanese Web," 88.

individual's generation within that lineage referred to as a generation-character (輩字). The generation-character within the dharma-name of the lineage's founder will be the poem's first character, while those of his students will be the poem's second character, and so on. If the devotee eventually becomes a monk, he is awarded yet another two-character dharma-name referred to as a monk's style (字), which also has a poetically generated generation-character, but one drawn from a different poem than the one used to create the dharma-name. When the dharma-name and style are put side by side, they form the monk's full, four-character Buddhist name.<sup>59</sup> Wuguang wrote a new lineage poem for the MSBL's members' dharma-names to be chosen from (see fig. 3).

English	Pinyin	Chinese
Thoroughly awakened and perceiving the mysterious, the mind's powers are true and constant.	Wu che xuan jue, Xin di zhenchang.	悟徹玄覺, 心諦真常.
Luminosity shines universally, the transcendent attestation of Mahāvairocana's Pure Land (Skt. <i>Ghana-vyūha</i> ).	Guangming puzhao, Chao zheng miyan.	光明普照, 超證密嚴.
Completely revealing the nature and characteristics of things, [like] Huiguo and Kūkai.	Quan xian xingxiang, Huiguo Hongfa.	全顯性相, 惠果弘法.
Wondrous virtue expansively transforms, forever bringing esteem to the original school.	Miaode guanghua, Yongxiang benzong.	妙德廣化, 永尚本宗.

FIGURE 3. MSBL Lineage Poem.

As is the case with the MSBL's emblem, Wuguang's lineage poem was composed in order to root the MSBL within Buddhist orthodoxy while simultaneously presenting it as a new and independent form of

59. For more information on lineage poems in general see Stephen Jones, *In Search of the Folk Daoists of North China* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2010), 11 and 69.

Buddhism. If the poem's sole utility was to root the MSBL in the past, Wuguang would have simply used one of the preexisting lineage poems that his Buddhist names had been taken from. In order to highlight the fact that this poem is indeed new and was composed by Wuguang, I have highlighted the initial character of each stanza to reveal a code embedded therein. When these characters are put together they form Wuguang's full monastic name that includes both his dharma-name and monk's style—both of which are drawn from earlier lineage poems—Wuguang Quanmiao 悟光全妙.<sup>60</sup>

There is another message embedded in this poem, particularly in its third stanza, where Wuguang references the Shingon patriarchs Huiguo and Kūkai—the latter by his posthumous title Kōbō Daishi 弘法大師. This reference and the encoded message demonstrate that Wuguang was trying to root his new lineage in the past and present it as an orthodox lineage of esoteric Buddhism. However, the past evoked here does not reference Japan, but China, particularly Kūkai's studies with Huiguo in Chang'an. Thus, rather than recalling the Japanese provenance of the MSBL's dharma-transmission, Wuguang bypassed it and emphasized the Chinese provenance of Japanese Shingon. This is an obvious demonstration of Wuguang's desire to uproot Shingon's claim to orthodoxy from Japan and replant it in the Sinosphere. The message is clear: it is not the MSBL who is reliant upon Japan for its dharma-transmission, it is Japanese Shingon that is reliant upon China, due to Kūkai's relationship with Huiguo. The message quietly whispered in this poem is vociferated in the architecture and topography of the MSBL's main monastery.

#### *Head Temple*

Head Temples (本山) are temples that function as seats of Buddhist sectarian affiliation. The MSBL's head temple, the Temple of Universal Brightness (TOUB), houses around fifteen resident monastics and is visited by thousands of lay members annually during major events

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60. The entire lineage poem from which the generational character of Wuguang's style—*wu* 悟—was taken from is recorded in CBETA X86 1603. The poem that was the source for the generational character in Wuguang's dharma-name—*miao* 妙—can be found in Shi Hui-yen 釋慧嚴, "The Interaction of Fukien's and Taiwanese Buddhism in Late Ming and Early Ch'ing Dynasty 明末清初閩台佛教的互動," *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 9 (1996): 230.

and religious festivals. It is nestled inside a small mountain cove. This cove is surrounded by four mountains at whose center is a humanly enhanced hill upon which the TOUB sits. This topography gives this place its name, Mt. Five Wisdoms (五智山).



FIGURE 4. Images of the Shingon patriarchs adorning a corridor on the TOUB's first floor.

Wuguang, who was a construction worker before becoming a monk, designed the TOUB himself.<sup>61</sup> Within its walls there are references to the MSBL's transmission chain, visually depicted by images of the Shingon patriarchs (see fig. 4). The most prominent feature of the TOUB is the adamantine throne (Skt. *vajra-sana*) *stūpa* (金剛座塔) by which it is crowned (see fig. 5). Adamantine throne *stūpas*—also referred to as five buddha *stūpas* (五佛塔)—are distinguished by constituting a central *stūpa* that is surrounded by four smaller ones.<sup>62</sup> The most well known quincunx adamantine throne *stūpa* is the Mahābodhi Temple in Bodhgayā, India located next to the Bodhi Tree. Adamantine

61. Chezhen 徹貞, “Miren xianyu—Taiwan wuzhishan guangmingwang si dadian kaiguang dadian 密人顯語—台灣五智山光明王寺大殿開光大典 [Exoteric Words of an Esoteric Buddhist—Dedication Ceremony of the Great Hall at Taiwan's Temple of Universal Brightness at Mt. Five Wisdoms],” ed. Chewei 徹威, *Fengshui Magazine* 30 (1999), <http://www.fengshui-magazine.com.hk/No.30-Dec/A6.htm>, accessed Feb. 1, 2016.

62. See Clarence Eng, *Colours and Contrast: Ceramic Traditions in Chinese Architecture* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2015), 93–94.

throne *stūpas* are architectural representations of the *bodhimaṇḍa*, the ground from which the Bodhi Tree grew and upon which Śākyamuni sat when he attained enlightenment—an inference reflected in the fact that the term “adamantine throne” (金剛座) is another word for *bodhimaṇḍa*.<sup>63</sup>



FIGURE 5. The Temple of Universal Brightness.

The name of the adamant throne *stūpa* atop the TOUB—as well as its function—represent the key to unlocking the symbolism that Wuguang embedded therein. Wuguang named this five-towered *stūpa* the Iron *Stūpa* of South India,<sup>64</sup> which is an overt reference to Shingon’s origin myth that functions as a template for dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka*. It is therefore no coincidence that the central tower of this Taiwanese iron *stūpa*—which the MSBL calls the *Stūpa* of Ten Thousand Buddhas (萬佛寶塔)—is where MSBL performs dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka*. Thus, the original iron *stūpa* in South India is where the esoteric chain of transmission began, and the Taiwanese iron *stūpa* is where new links are added to this chain. This reveals that when Wuguang designed the TOUB he desired to replicate—in form,

63. The significance of the adamant throne/*bodhimaṇḍa* is not limited to the spatiotemporal location upon which Śākyamuni sat. It also functions as an omnidirectional soteriological *axis mundi*. See Snodgrass, *Symbolism of the Stupa*, 157–160.

64. *Fojiao zhenyanzong wuzhishan guangmingwangsi* 佛教真言宗五智山光明王寺 [Buddhist Zhenyan Temple of Universal Brightness at Mt. Five Wisdoms] (Kaohsiung: Yimin chubanshe, 2002), 17.



function, and name—the original *stūpa* within whose walls the esoteric dharma was brought into the human realm.

The TOUB's iron *stūpa* is not just a simple reference to Shingon mythology as it is also a polemically motivated sectarian proclamation. I base this argument on a number of the *stūpa*'s architectural peculiarities and specific topographic features in the surrounding area. First, the fact that this iron *stūpa* is not only a reference to the Shingon origin myth but also to the birth of Buddhism—as depicted in Śākyamuni's enlightenment upon the *bodhimaṇḍa* and referenced in the adamantine form of the TOUB—shows that Wuguang wished to present the MSBL as an all-inclusive Buddhist movement whose doctrines and practices are firmly rooted in the past. Moreover, these roots penetrate—directly, without a Japanese intermediary—the very soil from which Buddhism sprang and the stone walls within which the esoteric dharma came into this realm. A single reference to one of these origin myths could be interpreted as a simple reference devoid of polemical connotations. Two references to two entirely independent origination myths indicate that this was a calculated move. The multilayered quality of this calculation implies that Wuguang felt that he had something to prove that may otherwise be called into question. The exact assertion that Wuguang was making is that the MSBL's claim to esoteric orthodoxy is not only as strong, but in fact stronger, than Japanese forms of esoteric Buddhism.

My interpretation of the TOUB's symbolism as a polemic proclamation is further attested to by the iron *stūpa*'s architecture. The central tower—where dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* takes place—is a many-jeweled *stūpa* (多寶塔, Skt. *prabhūtaratna-stūpa*) as it has a square base and circular second floor (see figs. 6–7). This design differs from the more common East Asian design whose different levels are all square. This sort of structure began appearing in Japan during the Heian period (平安時代, 794–1185), has always been associated with esoteric Buddhism,<sup>65</sup> and represents Mahāvairocana's body.<sup>66</sup> As the

65. Hugo Munsterberg, *The Arts of Japan: An Illustrated History* (Rutland, VT and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1988; orig. pub. 1957), 144.

66. See Patricia J. Graham, *Faith and Power in Japanese Buddhist Art, 1600–2005* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 29; Hillary E. Pedersen, “The Five Great Space Repository Bodhisattvas: Lineage, Protection and Celestial Authority in Ninth-Century Japan” (PhD diss., University of Kansas, 2010), 148.

many-jeweled *stūpa* design is a Japanese phenomenon,<sup>67</sup> the presence of one in Taiwan is truly remarkable.<sup>68</sup> This would seem to indicate that the many-jeweled design of the central *stūpa* atop the TOUB is intended to evoke the Japanese provenance of the MSBL's dharma-transmission. This is true; however, it is only evoked in order to be immediately banished thereafter.



**FIGURE 6.** Aerial view of the TOUB. Image from video taken by Chun Hrong Lin 林俊宏 and reproduced with full permission.



**FIGURE 7.** Aerial view of the Iron *Stūpa* atop the TOUB. Image from video taken by Chun Hrong Lin and reproduced with full permission.

Notwithstanding that many-jeweled *stūpas* were confined to Japan for over a thousand years, this Taiwanese *stūpa* was designed to replicate the Tang dynasty models that Wuguang believed the Japanese Buddhists of the Heian period had mimicked.<sup>69</sup> Wuguang was not referencing the Japanese provenance of his esoteric dharma-transmission by constructing a Japanese-styled *stūpa* on Taiwanese soil. Instead, he

67. Although there are textual references to many-jeweled *stūpas* that predate this design's Japanese debut, there are no existent examples. See Paul Groner, "Kōen and the 'Consecrated Ordination' within Japanese Tendai," in *Buddhist Monasticism in East Asia: Places of Practice*, ed. James A. Benn et al. (London and New York: Routledge, 2014), 197.

68. The only other one I am aware of in Taiwan was constructed by Weili as stated in note 4.

69. Huiding, personal conversation with author, Aug. 2013.

was declaring that—despite popular opinion—many-jeweled *stūpas* are not Japanese at all, as their Chinese existence predated their Japanese construction. Hence, rather than evoking the MSBL’s Japanese ancestry, Wuguang’s many-jeweled *stūpa* is meant to recall the Chinese origins of Japanese Shingon.

This innuendo has ramifications that reverberate throughout Wuguang’s resurrecting Tang-dynasty Zhenyan by giving birth to the MSBL. The history evoked by the many-jeweled *stūpa* functions as an architectural metaphor for Shingon. Despite the fact that Wuguang studied in Japan, he is declaring that he was not the original appropriator thereof—Kūkai was. Consequently, the MSBL is not a derivative of Japanese Shingon, but a revival of Tang Zhenyan of which Japanese Shingon is itself a derivative.

The TOUB is not Mt. Five Wisdom’s only integrant to make this statement. To the west of the monastery are two lakes, one much larger than the other. The larger lake, Qinglong Pond (青龍池), is overlooked by a house built as a memorial to Wuguang, from which extends a traditional Chinese dragon head fount that feeds into and is fed by the pond (see figs. 8–9). The smaller pond is known as Yongquan Pond (湧泉池). Qinglong Pond and Yongquan Pond are named for two Buddhist temples related to Shingon’s Chinese past. The first one, Qinglong Temple (青龍寺) in the old Tang capital of Chang’an, is where the Shingon patriarch Amoghavajra (705–774) is said to have taught the esoteric dharma to Huiguo, and where he in turn transmitted it to Kūkai. Yongquan Pond bears the name of Yongquan Temple (湧泉寺) in Gushan 鼓山, on the outskirts of Fuzhou 福州, the capital of China’s Fujian Province. When Kūkai set out for Chang’an in 804, his ship was blown off course and landed near Fuzhou where the local authorities initially halted the delegation’s expedition for one month.<sup>70</sup> As inscribed upon a stele at Yongquan Temple,<sup>71</sup> there is a tradition—retold

70. Abé, *Weaving of Mantra*, 114–115.

71. Hayashi Hiroshige 林廣茂, “Kūkai to Nagayasu: Kūkai no ashiato o junkō suru 空海と長安: 空海の足跡を巡行する [Kūkai and Chang’an: In the Footsteps of Kūkai’s Voyage]” (unpublished paper, 2008), 2, <http://www.hayashihiroshige.jp/travel.html>, accessed Feb. 3, 2015.

by Wuguang's followers<sup>72</sup>—that Kūkai studied at Yongquan Temple during this time.<sup>73</sup> As Qinglong Pond is obviously a reference to Kūkai's time in China, in light of this tradition it is logical to conclude that Yongquan Pond is as well. Thus, although these lakes are references to Kūkai, they evoke his reliance upon China for transmission of the esoteric dharma.



FIGURE 8. Commemorative house overlooking Qinglong Pond.

Further evidence for my sectarian interpretation can be found in the surrounding topography of the entire religious complex. In addition to being a multi-layered *stūpa*, the TOUB is the central point within a massive topographic *maṇḍala*. As noted, the TOUB rests upon the top of a hill that is surrounded by four others, which altogether give this complex its name, Mt. Five Wisdoms. The Five Wisdoms (五智, Skt.

72. Edward Li 李居明, *Mizongde miyi yu xingfa* 密宗的秘儀與行法 (The Secret Meaning of Esoteric Buddhism and Cultivation), <http://lifedevotee.likuiming.com/PrearticleDetail.aspx?id=41>, accessed Jun. 16, 2015. Mr. Li was a disciple of Wuguang as stated in note 4.

73. See Wu Qingyuan 吳清源, *Zhongde jingshen: weiqi zhi shen wuqingyuan zizhuan* 中的精神: 圍棋之神吳清源自傳 (Moral Spirit: Wu Qingyuan, the God of Go's Autobiography) (Beijing: Zhongxin chubanshe, 2010), 44.



FIGURE 9. Dragon head fount feeding Qinglong Pond.

*pañca-jñāna*) represent an esoteric Buddhist doctrine built upon earlier Yogācāra ideas regarding cognitive modalities.<sup>74</sup> The Five Wisdoms are iconographically enshrined within both the *Vajradhātu-maṇḍala* and *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala* in the form of the Five Wisdom Buddhas (五智如來, Skt. *pañca-buddha*),<sup>75</sup> which is one of the reasons why the number five is a salient theme in Shingon sacred space.<sup>76</sup> Thus, the entire mountain cove is a physical representation of the Twin *Maṇḍalas* central to Shingon. However, this massive *maṇḍala* is a further articulation of Wuguang's sectarian polemic. Kongōbu-ji 金剛峰寺, the core temple at Kōyasan, was designed by Kūkai to be a physical *maṇḍala* that encompasses the Twin *Maṇḍalas*.<sup>77</sup> As this was also the guiding tem-

74. Robert E. Buswell Jr. and Donald S. Lopez Jr., *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 245.

75. In Shingon iconography, there are two different sets of Five Wisdom Buddhas, one found in the *Vajradhātu-maṇḍala* and the other in the *Garbhadhātu-maṇḍala*. See Louis Frédéric, *Japan Encyclopedia*, trans. Käthe Roth (Cambridge, MA and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), 251.

76. See Nicoloff, *Sacred Kōyasan*, 21 and 124–167.

77. See David. L. Gardiner, “Maṇḍala, Maṇḍala on the Wall: Variations of Usage in the Shingon School,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 19, no. 2 (1996): 245–279.

plate for the design of Mt. Five Wisdoms—in light of all of the above—it is clear that Wuguang intended for Mt. Five Wisdoms to serve as a Chinese equivalent of Kongōbu-ji.

#### *Sinicization*

The sectarian statements Wuguang articulated were praxiologically translated by Sinicizing aspects of the MSBL's Japanese-derived orthopraxis. This was accomplished by substituting Chinese equivalents for Japanese liturgical particularities and ritual paraphernalia (法器). During the ordination retreat in Japan, the Buddhist liturgical formulae are mixed with various petitions to Shintō *kami*. General Shingon rituals are performed while wearing Japanese styled black robes over white kimonos, and Chinese sutras are recited in Japanese pronunciation. At the TOUB, the petitions to *kami* have been replaced by supplications to localized Daoist deities,<sup>78</sup> and lay devotees wear a robe referred to as a *haiqing* (海青), which is commonly worn by lay Buddhists—and even Daoists—throughout Taiwan. Underneath the black ocean robe devotees simply wear their regular clothes. Scriptures, such as the *Adhyarthaśatikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtra* central to Shingon, are recited in Minnan 閩南 pronunciation commonly referred to as “Taiwanese” (台語).<sup>79</sup> Thus, although members of the MSBL are performing rituals that Wuguang learned in Japan, they direct their supplications to Chinese gods and do so in Chinese Buddhist clothing using their own local pronunciation.

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78. Semi-structured interview with one of Wuguang's early disciples, Dec. 2014.

79. Although there has been a small Chinese presence in Taiwan for over half a millennium, substantial settlement did not begin until the period of Dutch colonization around 1624. From then until the twentieth century, Han Chinese immigration to Taiwan primarily consisted of two different Han identities from China's southern provinces. The larger of the two groups consisted of the Southern Minnan speaking peoples from the prefectures of Zhangzhou 漳州 and Quanzhou 泉州 in Fujian Province, with a smaller presence of Hakka 客家語 speakers who mostly came from Guangdong Province. See Ann Heylan, “The Legacy of Literacy Practices in Colonial Taiwan. Japanese–Taiwanese–Chinese: Language Interaction and Identity Formation,” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* 26, no. 6 (2005): 498; Ronald G. Knapp, “The Shaping of Taiwan's Landscapes” in *Taiwan: A New History*, ed. Murray A. Rubinstein (New York: ME Sharpe, 1999), 9.

Another small difference is the hand-held incense censers (手爐) used by the MSBL. In Japan, the censer used during Shingon rituals holds powdered incense.<sup>80</sup> At the TOUB, the incense censer holds stick incense (see fig. 10). This detail may seem miniscule, but it is yet another example of the ways in which the MSBL has Sinicized their dharma-transmission. Stick-holding censers are commonplace in Taiwan, particularly in Daoist temples. They range in size, shape and color. Some are very simple and unadorned and thus outwardly resemble those used in Japan. Others are more elaborate and are fashioned in the image of a dragon. Those used by the MSBL are the less conspicuous kind. This is thus another demonstration of how the MSBL has Sinicized their Japanese-derived orthopraxis.

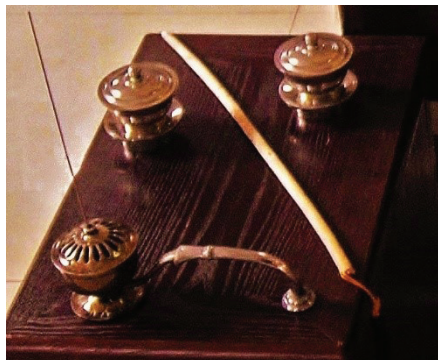


FIGURE 10. Taiwanese Zhenyan hand-held censer.

#### SPROUTING BRANCHES

As noted, the MSBL is not the only Buddhist lineage that owes its existence to Wuguang. Thus, it should not be surprising that the tactics that Wuguang employed to establish the MSBL as a new, independent and yet orthodox form of Buddhism were mimicked by those that he influenced. One of these movements, the Modern Chan Society (MCS), was a lay Taiwanese Buddhist order created in the 1980s that has been described by Ji Zhe as “one of the most remarkable phenomena in the modern history of Chinese Buddhism.”<sup>81</sup> The most radical aspect of the MCS was its rejection of the traditional Chinese Buddhist communal model that separated adherents into lay and monastic followers. Thus,

80. Miyata Taisen, *Handbook on the Four Stages of Prayoga Chūin Branch of Shingon Tradition*, 4 vols. (Kōyasan: Department of Koyasan Shingon Foreign Mission, 1988), 1:18.

81. Ji Zhe, “The Establishment of a Lay Clergy by the Modern Chan Society: The Practice of Modern Chinese Buddhism,” *China Perspectives* 59 (2005): 56.

the MCS was a fully Buddhist, yet simultaneously wholly anticlerical, movement.<sup>82</sup>

The founder of MCS, Li Yuansong 李元松 (1957–2003), was a devotee of a new Chinese religious movement popular in Taiwan, Yiguandao 一貫道, when he converted to Buddhism.<sup>83</sup> The monk who oversaw his conversion was none other than Wuguang. In addition to multiple esoteric aspects outside the scope of this work, there is one facet of Wuguang’s influence readily apparent in the MCS. Just like Wuguang, Li legitimized his new lineage by writing his own lineage poem (see fig. 11). The generational-character chosen from this poem forms the first character in the dharma-names of Li’s followers. As the first member of this lineage, the generational-character in Li’s name is the first character of this poem zu 祖, meaning “patriarch.” The second, personal character that he chose for his new, self-given dharma-name was *guang* 光. According to Li’s dharma-heirs, this was to commemorate Wuguang,<sup>84</sup> who Li reports posthumously visited him in a vision.<sup>85</sup>

Another former disciple of Wuguang, Guru Chesheng (徹聖上師, secular name Chen Shenghua 陳聖華, b. 1938), went on to establish his own Buddhist lineage, the Zhenyan Samantabhadra Lineage (真言宗普賢流). Chesheng’s Samantabhadra Lineage is an independent esoteric

82. Although there is no mention of the MCS, an overview of the ever-increasing growth of lay Buddhist leadership is discussed in Eyal Aviv, “Ambitions and Negotiations: The Growing Role of Laity in 20th Century Chinese Buddhism,” *Journal of the Oxford Centre of Buddhist Studies* 1 (2011): 31–54.

83. For a full length work on Yiguandao, a new religious movement popular in Taiwan that was imported from China, see Lu Yunfeng, *The Transformation of Yiguan Dao in Taiwan: Adapting to a Changing Religious Economy* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Book, 2008).

84. Jin Ke’an 金柯按, “Xinforen liyuansong laoshi nianpu chuguo 信佛人李元松老師年譜初稿 [Early Chronicle of the Buddhist Teacher, Li Yuansong],” <http://www.modernpureland.org/webc/html/buddhist/show.php?num=27&page=1&kind=4>, accessed Dec. 25, 2015.

85. Hua Minhui 華敏慧, “Wei chang duojie yuan, haodang fu qiancheng 為償多劫願·浩蕩赴前程 [To Fulfill the Wishes through Countless Eons, Irresolutely Proceeding into the Future],” in Jingtuzong xiangshan mituo gongxiu huibian 淨土宗象山彌陀共修會編, *Li yuansong laoshi jinian wenji* 李元松老師紀念文集 (Collected Memorials for the Teacher Li Yuansong) (Taipei: Jingtuzong wenjiaoji jinhui chuban; Jingtuzong xiangshan mituo gongxiu hui faxing, 2004), 201, <http://www.modernpureland.org/webc/html/buddhist/show.php?num=101&page=2&kind=33>, accessed Mar. 24, 2016.

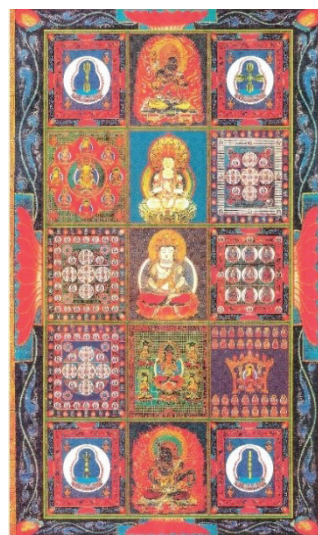


English	Pinyin	Chinese
The Patriarchs of Chan enlighten the mind,	Zuchan ming xin	祖禪明心
To see thoroughly into dharma-nature.	Chejian faxing	徹見法性
The Great Compassionate vow is like an ocean,	Beiyuan ruhai	悲願如海
Whose range encompasses all sentient beings.	Guangdu youqing	廣度有情

FIGURE 11. MCS lineage poem.

Buddhist lineage whose headquarters is located in Taichung 台中, in central Taiwan. Chesheng was ordained by Wuguang as an MSBL *ācārya* in 1983.<sup>86</sup> He began to attract disciples in the 1990s and officially founded the Samantabhadra Lineage after Wuguang's death. Like the MSBL, Samantabhadra Lineage devotees are given dharma-transmission *abhiṣeka* in Taiwan at the end of a lengthy retreat and therefore never need to travel to Japan to become priests. Similarly, Samantabhadra Lineage devotees recite scripture central to Shingon in Chinese pronunciations (Mandarin, Minnan, and, in Hong Kong, Cantonese) while wearing Chinese Buddhist garb and holding Chinese-style incense censers.

While these similarities between the MSBL and the Samantabhadra Lineage can be attributed to Chesheng simply instructing his students as Wuguang had instructed him, the way that he asserted his lineage's independence from the MSBL eerily mirrors the way

FIGURE 12. The Great King of Tantra *Maṇḍala*. Image considered by Chesheng to be a “received work” and therefore not subject to copyright.

86. As documented on the ordination certificates on display at the Samantabhadra Lineage's headquarters in Taichung 台中.

that Wuguang proclaimed the MSBL's independence. Like Wuguang, Chesheng created a new emblem to designate his lineage and claimed that this emblem encapsulates the contents of the Twin *Maṇḍalas*<sup>87</sup> (see fig. 12), which he styled the Great King of Tantra *Maṇḍala* (大教王曼荼羅). He also composed his own lineage poem after breaking away from the MSBL. This poem's first character, *che* 徹, is the generational-character of its author's dharma-name, Chesheng 徹聖 (see fig. 13). It is also the second character in Wuguang's lineage poem that we saw above. This attests to the fact that the Samantabhadra Lineage is an offshoot of the MSBL and that Chesheng is one of Wuguang's dharma-heirs.

English	Pinyin	Chinese
Deeply [penetrate] the mysteries of the mind school, Mahāvairocana enlightens the spirit.	Che mi xin zong, dari ling guang.	徹密心宗, 大日靈光.
The essential truth turns the world, wisdom and joy fulfill [our] aspirations.	Zhendi lunyuan, hui xi manyuan.	真諦輪圓, 慧喜滿願.
<i>Bodhi</i> purifies nature, dharma constantly illuminates you.	Puti jingxing, fa'er changing.	菩提淨性, 法爾常明.
The wonderful virtue omnidirectionally shines, together with the attestation of Samantabhadra.	Miaode bianzhao, tongzheng puxian.	妙德遍照, 同證普賢.

FIGURE 13. The Samantabhadra Lineage's lineage poem.

#### CONCLUSION

I have sought to illuminate how, in a very practical and technical fashion, Wuguang and his followers have breathed new life into a dead Buddhist lineage by giving birth to another. Based upon terminological, symbolical, architectural, and praxiological minutiae, I argued that this was executed by employing pre-existing techniques that are widely used to legitimate Buddhist sectarian identity and authority. Moreover, I attempted to demonstrate that this was motivated by the

87. Chesheng, *Dajiaowang mantuluo* 大教王曼荼羅 (Great King of Tantra *Maṇḍala*) (Taichung: Zhenyan Samantabhadra Buddhist Learning Center, 2001), 34-35.

aspiration to root the MSBL within East Asian esoteric Buddhist orthodoxy while simultaneously commandeering Shingon claims thereto.

Living Zhenyan revivalism remains an overlooked phenomenon despite its sustained and widespread growth. As this paper focuses on but one aspect of a single Zhenyan revival lineage, there remains much room for further investigation. Although I have identified a number of the MSBL's offshoots,<sup>88</sup> there very well may be others, as well as additional Zhenyan sects that are not related to the MSBL. Unlike the Tantric Revival's Japanese-ordained *ācāryas* whose "organizations remained attached to their parent institutions in Japan and dependent upon them for authority,"<sup>89</sup> and figures who could not trace the provenance of their dharma by way of Japan, Zhenyan revivalists walk the fine line between tradition and innovation by remaining within the confines of Buddhist orthodoxy whilst resurrecting old lineages and founding new ones. I propose that this particular tension is the defining characteristic of Zhenyan revivalism and suggest that it be used to guide future inquiry into this area.

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88. Refer to note 4.

89. Hammerstrom, "The Heart-of-Mind Method," 12.

