

THE EASTERN BUDDHIST

THE SHINGON SCHOOL OF
MAHAYANA BUDDHISM*

PART ONE

INTRODUCTORY

1

Shingon (眞言) is the name of a Buddhist sect in Japan which was founded by Kōbō Daishi (弘法大師) in 807, A.D. It was known at that time in China as Chen-yen, and it was there that Kōbō Daishi, who was then called Kūkai (空海), studied it and brought it to Japan.

Shingon means "True Word," and its teaching is esoteric. The element of secrecy has always played a prominent part in the doctrine and in its entirety is taught only to initiates. It is considered to be a teaching that was first imparted by Buddha Mahāvairocana in his spiritual body, and its full and perfect instruction is given only by oral transmission to qualified disciples. In the *Kongōchō-fumbetsushoikyō* (金剛頂分別聖位經), Shingon is spoken of as the sect of the Dhāraṇīs and the Secret Teaching of all the Tathagatas. Although some of the secret teaching has been divulged to the world in these modern days, much is still withheld; for, according to Shingon, certain religious truths and practices can only be taught orally and are known by a secret communication between teacher and pupil, and are never to be given out through the printed page or in a crowded assembly. In other words, they are esoteric in the fullest sense of the term. To study Shingon on its esoteric side, it is necessary to have a personal teacher who initiates

* This study of Shingon will be completed probably in five parts as follows: I. Introductory, II. The Mandalas, III. and IV. Doctrinal Shingon, V. Practical Shingon.

his pupil into the secret practices and the deeper significance of the doctrine. Nevertheless, there is in Shingon much of great interest which is communicable and many books on Shingon doctrine have been written.

One teacher has given as a brief definition of Shingon: "To say the words of the Buddha is the way to walk with the Buddha." Another has said: "To realise Buddhahood in this life, in this body, that is Shingon." My own definition of the true meaning is: "All is One. Realise that. That is the True Word." *Shin* means, "true and genuine," *gon* signifies "word" or "teaching," so Shingon means "the teaching of true words." Shingon is a translation of the Sanskrit *mantra* and the sect is often called the Mantra Sect.

According to Shingon, the teachings of the Buddha given out in his life-time are divided into two classes: Kengyo (顯教) or revealed teachings, and Mikkyo (密教) or mysterious or unrevealed teachings. The former include all the doctrines except the Shingon, such as the Hinayana schools, and of the Mahayana, the Tendai, Kegon, and other doctrines which were preached by the Buddha to people in general, but did not include his own pure teachings understood only by him and enjoyed in his own heart. The reason why the doctrines of the first class are called exoteric, is because they are the teachings proclaimed by Śākyamuni in his manifestation body, the absolute truth being hidden. But Shingon is believed to be the direct speech of the Dharmakāya Vairochana. The exoteric is temporal, and it expounds how to become a Buddha by practising for long ages, while the esoteric is the absolute teaching of *Sokushinjobutsu* (即身成佛) which instructs beings as to how to become Buddha at once in this very body.

In the exoteric (Kengyo) the process is from the lower to the higher, but in the esoteric (Mikkyo) from the beginning one abides in the ultimate stage far above the process. Mikkyo explains the true nature of Dainichi (大日 Vairochana), that is, the true body of Śākyamuni. Kengyo is removing

the cloud by staying on the earth and looking at the moon, but Mikkyo rides in a divine chariot directly to the moon palace of Dainichi Nyorai (Mahāvairochana), the divine chariot being the practice of the Three Secrets. Mikkyo does not proceed from limitation to infinity, nor from transiency to reality, but directly abides in infinity. Those who practise Shingon abide in the Samādhi of Buddha. With this very body, we are to realise the Dharmakāya and the Great Self. Such a doctrine had never been preached before and it was truly a revolution in Buddhist doctrine.

According to Kōbō Daishi, Kengyo or the exoteric teaching simply strives to remove the ignorance of beings, but Mikkyo (esoteric) abides in enlightenment. The former maintains the doctrines of emptiness and non-self, but Mikkyo directly shows the divine substance and activity of the Tathagata. Kōbō Daishi felt that the Kegon in its doctrine of “Ji ji muge” (事事無礙) came the nearest to enlightenment, and, therefore, that it was only a last step to Shingon. In Kengyo, said Kōbō Daishi, there are Buddhas and beings, but in Shingon there is only Reality, the One, in which, however, all have an individual and conscious part. We can attain to this divine unification by the practice of the Three Secrets. The emphasis in Shingon is positive. The exoteric schools strive to draw men from evil and ignorance, but Shingon lays stress upon the attainment of the state of Buddhahood. Which of the two doctrines will best lead men to Nirvana? In the *Kongocho-gohimitsu-kyo* (金剛頂五秘密經) translated by Fukū Sanzo (不空三藏) we read, “If you practise Kengyo you must spend hundreds of thousands of years of discipline to attain Nirvana, but if you practise Mikkyo you must attain it in your physical body without spending endless time upon it.”

In Mahayana Buddhism, the Trikāya, or Three Bodies in One Buddha, is taught, and we shall see later how Shingon adds a fourth and teaches the Buddha of Four Kāya or Bodies. The usual teaching is of Three Bodies, and accord-

ingly Buddha manifests himself, 1. as Hosshin (法身), or Dharmakāya, 2. as Hōshin (報身), or Sambhogakāya, and 3. as Ōjin (應身), or Nirmānakāya. To state the ideas briefly: Dharmakāya is the reality of Shinnyo (眞如 *tathatā*), the absolute substance pervading all objects in the universe. The Sambhogakāya is the body of bliss and blessing obtained in consequence of the meritorious deeds performed in numberless existences. The Nirmānakāya is the one in which the Buddha appears as teacher in some place, in some time, in the world, as, for example, the Buddha Śākyamuni who appeared in human form in a human world.

Shingon says that the Kengyo or revealed doctrines were taught by Śākyamuni in his transformed body, but that the Mikkyo (Secret Teaching) was imparted by Mahāvairochana (the Buddha in his Dharmakāya form) himself, but that Śākyamuni while in Samādhi (deep meditation) understood, taught, and practised the Mikkyo. So the Secret Doctrine is traced to a secret transmission from the Buddha Mahāvairochana himself and he makes known his true words to those hearers who are prepared for them. In the *Dainichikyo* (大日經) we read: "The person alone may clearly understand it, but no other is able to see it." This is the Secret Teaching of Shingon which cannot be imparted to others with words but is to be understood only through personal experience. In this respect we find an affinity with Zen Buddhism which asserts the same thing. Moreover, in regard to the matter of secrecy, Shingon thinks that it is unwise to "cast pearls before swine," and just as powerful medicines cannot be sold to persons who do not know how to use them properly, so it is best to withhold the instruction until the hearer is fitted to receive it.

According to Kōbō Daishi, the doctrines taught by Śākyamuni in his human body are the exoteric doctrines which are intelligible to all beings, but the teachings given by the Buddha in his spiritual body are signifying the highest truths and are understood only by those prepared to

receive them in their spiritual bodies, that is, by their spiritual conception of consciousness. Shingon asserts that all the Buddhist sects of Hosso (法相), Sanron (三論), Tendai (天台), Kegon (華嚴), Jōdo (淨土), Shin (眞), Nichiren (日蓮), Zen (禪) belong to the exoteric doctrines, but as the Mikkyō was enjoyed by the Buddha through his spiritual discernment it is only as we unite ourselves with him and his consciousness that we are enabled to enjoy it also.

In the *Dainichi-kyō* (大日經) the Ten Minds, or Ten Stages of Thought, are mentioned. These illustrate the different thoughts of different living beings, but Kōbō Daishi used them to explain the difference between the sects. There are various ways of explaining these Ten Minds, but this so-called "lengthwise" way is according to Kōbō Daishi's *Hizōhoyaku* (秘藏寶鑰) and *Jūjūshinron* (十住心論) where he uses them to explain the gradual improvement of the religious aspirant from the beginning to enlightenment. According to Kōbō Daishi, the first nine Minds may be taken to belong to the Kengyō and the tenth alone to the Mikkyō; and yet from another point of view all ten belong to the Mikkyō, the first nine being considered lower stages of the one Mind. So the exoteric sects are really a part of Shingon, for they are the various stages through which the Shingon believers must pass. All these teachings, then, are really nothing but the states or stages in the development of the mind of Shingon believers; the first nine being taken as the exoteric or lower stages of the esoteric doctrine. The *Jūjūshin* teaches us that we must not be content with relative perfection, but to proceed to deep faith and full enlightenment with realisation of our oneness with the Buddha.

The first stage is called *Ishō-teiyō-shin* (異生羝羊心). In this stage beings are unenlightened, opposed to any teaching, are set upon temporary pleasures, and commit the ten sins without restraint. Yet even for these beings, because they possess latent Buddhahood, there is hope for them to enter the stages if they receive good instruction from a

superior person. This is the stage of the ordinary man of the world.

The second stage is called Gudō-jisai-shin (愚童持齋心). Here the being is like a foolish boy but he has begun to practise morality and has an ideal of virtue before him. The followers of Confucius and of ordinary Christianity fall into this group, but of course, Kōbō Daishi himself only referred to Confucianism.

The third stage is that of Yōdō-mui-shin (嬰童無畏心). The being in this mind is not satisfied with temporal fame and wealth but aspires to an ideal state, i. e. heaven. According to Kōbō Daishi, the practiser in this stage has progressed into the Three Secrets and follows the precepts. We may say, according to Shingon scholars, that the more modern Jōdo sects and the higher Christianity would be included here.

Yuiun-muga-shin (唯蘊無我心) is the fourth stage of mind, which is that of the Śrāvakas (or hearers). Here the man realises the theory of non-ego and strives to enter Nirvana by meditating upon the Four Noble Truths. This stage corresponds to Hinayana Buddhism which is taught in the Kusha (俱舍) sect of Japan.

Now we come to the fifth stage, Batsugo-inshu-shin (拔業因種心), which corresponds to the Pratyekabuddha who devotes himself to his enlightenment without having deep compassion for others. The Śrāvaka gains enlightenment through meditation on the Four Noble Truths, while the Pratyekabuddha meditates upon the Twelve Nidānas, through which he realises the real nature of transmigration (*samsāra*). The idea is to get rid of re-birth, and to do this an end must be put to life in human or celestial worlds. The cause of re-birth is Karma, which is caused by delusion, which in turn is caused by ignorance (*avidyā*). To extinguish Avidyā is to root out the cause of Karma and the way to do this is through the method of the Twelve Nidānas.

In the Taen-daijo-shin (他緣大乘心) of the sixth stage.

the mind of beings is compared to the Hosso point of view. Here compassion for others is stressed and desire is aroused to attain enlightenment for self and others through the practice of the Six Perfections (*pāramitās*). In this stage it is realised that the three worlds and all the Dharmas are produced by one Mind and we can thereby get rid of attachment and a wrong view of life.

The seventh stage, Kakushin-fusho-shin (覺心不生心), corresponds to the mind of a believer of the Sanron sect. In the sixth stage it was realised that delusion can be overcome by the belief that all the dharmas are produced by the one Mind, but in this seventh stage we find that all objects are empty. The believer in Sanron tries to realise his true nature by the practice of the Middle Way. He dispels his relative delusions through the realisation of the Eight Not's: not-birth, not-death, not-temporal, not-eternal, not-one, not-many, not-coming, not-going. One in this stage thinks that the Absolute, the Bhūtatahatā, alone is real. His ideal is to realise the truth of the Absolute through the wisdom of the Middle Way, which does not go to extremes.

The eighth stage is that of Nyojitsu-ichido-shin (如實一道心), the state of mind of Tendai believers. Ichido means the "one way," which is the path of the *Hokke Sūtra* (*Saddharma-puṇḍarīka*). In the seventh stage the noumenon was emphasised, but in this stage the endeavour is to make clear the interrelation of the phenomenal world and the noumenon. Tendai tries to realise the real nature of the mind which is pure, through a knowledge of the three truths of non-being (空), being (假), and the middle (中). In this stage Shinnyo (Absolute) is the same as the phenomenal world.

In the ninth stage, Gokumu-jisho-shin (極無自性心), we have the mind that corresponds to that of the Kegon sect (*Avatamsaka*), with its doctrine of the interpenetration of Shinnyo, beings, and phenomena.

The tenth and last stage, the Himitsu-shogon-shin (秘密

莊嚴心) depicts the mind of the Shingon Mikkyo, which gives a perfect and true explanation of the real nature of the universe and its becomings. The Shingon mind teaches the origin of all beings in the six great elements which are the source of all existing phenomena and are real.

Thus we can see that one great difference between the Shingon believers and all others is that the Shingon believer tries to find reality through action, where others try to find reality by putting away illusions.

The main reason why Kōbō Daishi established the new sect of Shingon came from his earnest desire to save both superior and inferior people and to show them the shortest cut to arrive at Buddhahood. In the *Hotsubodaishinron* (發菩提心論) we are taught that when any person becomes well versed in the meaning of Bodaishin (*bodhicitta*) after searching for Buddha's wisdom, he can ascend at once to the throne of greatest enlightenment with his mortal body which he has received from his parents: so Shingon teaches the way to open Buddha's wisdom in us, to enable us to acquire Buddha's power in us, and to develop the various virtues of the Buddha in us. Enlightenment is manifested through this very body and this very mind. We will return to this subject later, but here this thought is presented as the very heart of Shingon teaching.

Mikkyo (Shingon) teaches, quite contrary to Hinayana, that this world and human life have value, and that this world is the world of the Mandala and manifests the virtues of Mahāvairochana, and that the purpose of Mahayana is to make us find the eternal in definite and finite things. So, in reality, we are true sons of Buddha, for we are in nature one with him who is the spiritual Reality. This is an entirely different conception in Buddhism. The common and fundamental principle of ordinary Buddhism is *Sūnya* which means that we do not recognise the temporal existence of the phenomenal world and that all beings are produced by the combination of all relations and so have no unchangeable

and fixed essence, but Shingon has a different way of looking at this. We come to know the great emptiness of things through wisdom and then we transcend reality; as we know the real meaning of the phenomenal world, we are free from phenomenal things, and as we grasp the principle of reality great compassion comes to us and our thoughts are no longer set upon Nirvana as an ideal, but for the sake of others we wish to remain in this phenomenal world to work for them. Ordinary Buddhism was preached to enlightened beings to show the value of the individual in the universal. In Shingon, the principle of Śūnyatā (emptiness) is passed through. Affirmation and not negation is the ultimate end of enlightenment. The real nature of the Tathagata is not Śūnyatā but action in inaction, omnipresent, eternal, and absolute being.

Later we shall return to this and discuss the principle of non-ego from the Shingon point of view in connection with the problem of the Dharmakāya. But we can say now that all beings can share the light of the Tathagata and realise individually his nature. So we see that Hinayana Buddhism teaches the impermanence of all things including beings themselves, but that Shingon teaches their permanence and absoluteness which is above birth and death. We may look upon it as a difference in the point of view. Briefly, Hinayana seeks Nirvana outside the world of birth and death, but Mahayana finds Nirvana in this very life and death. As the Hinayanist seeks to get rid of this world of birth and death and enter Nirvana, Mahayanists seek for the activity of saving others and postpone their Nirvana, or rather they can find their Nirvana in the everlasting Here and Now, i. e. in this very body, in this world, in this present life.

All Mahayana sutras have only one teaching and come to the same conclusion, i. e. the one reality of all things. In the *Hokke Gengi* (法華玄義) Chisha Daishi (智者大師) states that this is the essential foundation. The *Shōmangyo* (勝鬘經) shows the purity of all things in their essential

nature the *Kegongyo* (華嚴經) portrays the Dharmakāya, the *Hannyakyo* (般若經) holds out the ideal of Buddhahood, the *Hokkekyo* (法華經) the sameness of all beings having Buddhahood in their nature. In reality these are all one to realise the eternal life of the Tathagata. In the *Kegongyo* the ultimate goal is conceived of as realising the truth of the absoluteness of all things by the highest wisdom, but in Mikkyo the mind and body of all beings are themselves those of Mahāvairochana. In Mikkyo, the absolute wisdom of acquired Bodhicitta (菩提心) becomes one with the inherent Bodhicitta. The highest wisdom and the highest compassion become one. The *Dainichikyo* (大日經) says, "When Mahāvairochana attained enlightenment, then all beings were able to enter the real world of Kongōkai (金剛界) and become individual aspects of his enlightenment."

But as beings do not understand this they seem to be immersed in ignorance and delusion. Therefore, true enlightenment in Mikkyo means to become aware of our real nature and our own true enlightenment. The main feature of Mikkyo teaching is that it claims the eternal reality of all things which means that apparently unenlightened beings and the Tathagata have the same inherent Bodhicitta. The present world is Buddha's world, the present human body is Buddha's body, all beings themselves are the concrete form of Mahāvairochana. So in Mikkyo realism means the realisation of the inherent Bodhicitta of all beings or the real form of the Tathagata where Kengyo is the doctrine of the absoluteness of all things. The process of the progress of the mind of beings is shown in the *Jūjūshinron* (十住心論) until the realisation is reached that beings and Tathagata are one and the same in nature and that beings can perform deeds of mercy as the Tathagata does. Mikkyo explains that the essence of the self-enlightenment of Mahāvairochana is the real form of the Tathagata and his merciful activities are manifested by him in all worlds and pervade the universe. Moreover the nature of the inherent Bodhicitta of all beings

is also universal and eternal as is the Tathagata and that if a being realises his real nature he becomes one with the essence of the Tathagata's enlightenment and enters the eternal spiritual life with the Tathagata. In other words, there is absolute spiritual communion, harmony, interpenetration, and unity between them, and this is made possible to beings through the Mikkyo as explained by Kōbō Daishi. Through the Mikkyo the highest spiritual life which is eternal and absolute can be attained.

Before Kōbō Daishi the difference between Kengyo and Mikkyo indeed emphasised the question of how to enter the path of Nirvana, but after Kōbō Daishi, four points are to be noted. 1. The Buddha, 2. His Doctrine, 3. The Hearers, 4. The Speed of Attaining Buddhahood. Kōbō Daishi treats of this in his *Benkenmitsunikyoron* (辨顯密二教論). 1. In the first chapter of this book, a difference is made between the Buddha of Kengyo and Mikkyo, for it is the Buddha of Hosshin, the Dharmakāya, who preaches the Mikkyo. 2. Kengyo teaches as its ideal an experience which is beyond our thought and knowledge, but Mikkyo's enlightenment can be realised here and now and expressed. 3. As to the hearers, Kōbō Daishi insisted that there are not two kinds of Buddhism, Kengyo and Mikkyo, but two kinds of hearers. If the hearers listen to the same doctrine and understand it as Kengyo, they are not wise; the truly wise understand it as Mikkyo. 4. Enlightenment is not a matter of time. The *Jūjūshin* teaches us that we must not be content with relative perfection, but proceed to deep faith and full enlightenment with realisation of our oneness with the Buddha.

There are two sides of the Shingon teaching, namely, the Kyōsō (教相), or theoretical, and the Jisō (事相), or practical. They are like the two wheels of a carriage, or the two wings of a bird, one is as necessary as the other. The Kyōsō, the theoretical, is stated in books, but the Jisō is transmitted orally from master to pupil. And here again, although the development has been different, the Shingon is

like Zen in this idea of oral transmission, the Shingon from the Absolute Buddha Mahāvairochana, and the Zen from the Buddha Śākyamuni. As Yukwai (宥快) of Koyasan once said: "The Secret Teaching I transmit has been successively given from master to pupil directly ever since Vairochana the Buddha. What are sūtras and kalpas compared to this?" So the Shingon, like the Zen, lays far more stress on great and illumined teachers who can give oral transmission than on sūtras and śāstras.

The Secret Teaching arose when Vairochana the Buddha preached it in the spiritual realm, but it was not known to men until Nāgārjuna obtained it in the Iron Tower from Vajrasattva. Whether this tower was an actual tower or whether it is a symbol of the enlightened state of Nāgārjuna's mind, is a question. The key to Shingon lies in Nāgārjuna's statement that not only the mind but the body itself becomes Buddha, that men in this very body and in this very world may become a Buddha. At the end of the *Bodaishinron* by Nāgārjuna we find this passage: "The body born of parents forthwith accomplishes the grand or final enlightenment." And, "Body (or form) and mind are not two, enlightenment can be accomplished with this very body." In fact Shingon asserts that full enlightenment can be accomplished or attained in this life, in this body, and with this mind.

The sutras which Shingon consider authoritative and on which it bases its teachings are the *Dainichikyo* (大日經, *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*) translated by Zemmui (善無畏, Subhakarasinha); and the *Kongōchōkyō* (金剛頂經) (*Vajraśekhara Sūtra*) translated by Fukū (不空, Amoghavajra); the śāstra *Bodaishiron* (菩提心論) written by Nāgārjuna and translated by Fukū. It can be seen that Nāgārjuna is the father of Shingon, the fountainhead of the Secret Word. Mahāvairochana preached the doctrine to the spiritual worlds and Vajrasattva reduced it to writing and Nāgārjuna received from Vajrasattva not only the written teaching but also the oral and in turn taught it to his pupil Ryūchi.

2

There are two lineages of Patriarchs or Fathers of this sect. The first is called the Eight Fathers of Fuhō (付法) or transmitters of the Dharma. The other is called the Eight Fathers of the Denji (傳持), the traditional preservers of the Dharma. The first, the transmitters, are as follows: Mahāvairochana (大日), Vajrasattva (金剛薩埵), Nāgārjuna (龍猛, Ryūmyō), Nāgabodhi (龍智, Ryūchi), Vajrabodhi (金剛智, Kongochi), Amoghavajra (不空金剛, Fukū Kongo), Keikwa (惠果), Kūkai (空海, Kōbō Daishi, 弘法大師), who became the founder of the Shingon sect of Japan.

The second, the preservers, are: Nāgārjuna, Nāgabodhi, Vajrabodhi, Subhakarasiṃha (善無畏), Amoghavajra, Ichigyō (一行), Keikwa, Kūkai.

According to Vajrabodhi, at the time of the Buddha's death an iron stupa containing scriptures had been set up and never opened. Nāgārjuna wished to open it in order to find the sacred writings. For a week he walked around it, repeating a sacred mantra and vowing to devote his life to the holy word. At last he was able to enter the stupa and there he found the great sutras. He learned them and wrote them down; so Nāgārjuna is called the founder of Shingon Mikkyō.

Nāgārjuna (Ryūmyō or Ryūju in Japanese) was the son of a noble Brahman in South India. He was a talented young man and very accomplished, but he gave himself up to sensual pleasures. Once, when with three companions he entered the king's palace pursuing a love affair, he made a narrow escape but his companions were killed. This incident made a great impression upon Nāgārjuna and he realised that desires are the cause of pains and the source of evil, so he became a Buddhist monk and studied the Hinayana scriptures, but when he went to the Himalayas he was given a Mahayana sutra by an old monk and thereafter he began to study, teach, and propagate the Mahayana.

According to the Denji lineage, Nāgabodhi (Ryūchi in Japanese) was the second patriarch. We know little of his life, but all the records state that he was the teacher of Vajrabodhi (Kongochi) who studied Mikkyo with him for seven years in South India. He may not have been the direct pupil of Nāgārjuna but he was certainly an indirect one and there must have been other teachers of the Mikkyo standing between him and Nāgārjuna whose names we do not know. Kōbō Daishi identified him with Dharmagupta, but whether they were the same person or not we cannot tell. According to the *Genjō-gyōjōki* (玄奘行狀記) which is a life of Hsüan-chuang written by his pupil Jion 慈恩, there was in the time of Hsüan-chuang an aged Brahman in South India who was said to have been a pupil of Nāgārjuna. From him Hsüan-chuang learned the *Madhyamaka-śāstra* and others. Kōbō Daishi believed this Brahman to be Nāgabodhi (Ryūchi). Nothing is certain about him, however, except that he was the teacher of Kongōchi and Fukū. Of his own works only one was translated into Chinese, the *Jubodaishinkaigi* (受菩提心戒儀), a kind of Vinaya. According to another tradition, Ryūchi was the same as Dharmakīrti from whom Prajñā learned Mikkyo in South India.

Nāgabodhi's pupil Vajrabodhi (Kongōchi) was the third son of Ishanamama, a king of Central India. He was born in 671 A.D. At ten years of age he became a Buddhist monk in Nālanda temple and learned the *Vaiśākaraṇa śāstra* from Munibodhi (Jakujōchi). At the age of fifteen he went to West India and there studied the *Abhidharmavibhāsa śāstra*. Then he returned to Nālanda and received Upasampadā. From the time he was twenty he studied the Vinaya of both Hinayana and Mahayana, also the works of Nāgārjuna and his followers. When he was twenty-eight he went to Kapilavastu in Central India and for three years studied the works of Asanga and Vasubandhu. When he was thirty-one he went to South India and there met Nāgabodhi from whom

he learned both the esoteric and exoteric Buddhism, and also studied philosophy, science, and art. He returned to Central India and made a pilgrimage to the eight stupas of Buddha. Later on at the time of a great drought the king invited Kongōchi to his palace and asked him to pray for rain. He did so and the rain fell to the great joy of the king and the people who were so grateful that they erected a temple for him where he stayed for three years. There was a Niguruda tree that stood by the sacred place of Avalokiteśvara on the Potalakagiri Mountain in the Himalayas, which was dying. Kongōchi prayed and fasted for a week and the tree revived and flourished again. Avalokiteśvara appeared to him and said: "You have already succeeded in your studies, now go to Ceylon to worship, and then proceed to China to make a pilgrimage to the holy place of Mañjuśrī and redeem all beings by teaching them." In accordance with these words, he went to Ceylon with eight of his pupils and worshipped Dharmadhātu which was preserved in Abhayagiri vihāra near the palace of the king of Ceylon. Then he climbed Alanka where he worshipped the Buddhapada and returned to Malaya in South India. After a month's stay he asked permission of the king to go on his pilgrimage. The king wished him to remain in his own country but when he found that he could not be deterred from his wish to go, the king ordered General Majana to accompany him, carrying the *Mahāprajñāpāramitā sūtras* and also many valuable gifts to the Chinese emperor. He reached Ceylon where he received a warm welcome from the king and then after a month's voyage he came to Java where he was well treated by the king there, and where he was detained for five months by bad weather. It was here that Fukū Sanzo (Amoghavajra) became his pupil. After a difficult voyage he reached Kuang-fu (廣府), modern Canton. This was in 719 A.D. He was welcomed by company of three thousand persons. The next spring he went to Loyang and had an audience with the Emperor Hsüan-tsong. By command of the Emperor he

first lived in Jion temple (慈恩) and then in Sempukuji (薦福寺) in Chang-an, engaged in missionary work for twenty-two years, first in Loyang and then in Chang-an. Many priests and others visited him to learn his teaching, and among them Ichigyō (一行), was one of his great pupils. He translated many books into Chinese. He also wrote a number of original works. On the 26th day of July in 741 A.D. he fell ill in Loyang and died on the fifteenth of August. Twenty-five years later he was given the posthumous name of Daikōkyō (Great Propagator) Sanzō, 大弘教三藏, by the Emperor Tai-tsung.

Kongōchi's pupil Fukū Kongo (Amoghavajra) was born in Ceylon in 705 A.D. His father is said to have been a Brahmin of North India. He lost his parents when young and went with an uncle to Java where he met Kongōchi. He became a monk and joined his teacher Kongōchi in Loyang in China. He studied deeply and mastered the Buddhist teachings in both the Sanskrit and the Chinese language. He assisted his teacher Kongōchi in translating the sutras and attended upon the master for more than twenty years. In 743 he started for Ceylon in order to acquire the larger books of both *Vajraśekhara-sūtra* and the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* which his master, owing to their loss at sea, had not been able to bring to China. He reached Ceylon safely and was welcomed by the king, and it is said that he travelled in India to complete his researches, and having secured the sutras he returned to China in 746 A.D. The Emperor Hsüan-tsung was much pleased with his return and asked him to perform the ceremony of Kwanjō (灌頂) in his palace. He went on with his great work of translation and he may well be called one of the foremost translators in the history of Chinese Buddhism. Three emperors, Hsüan, Su, and Tai, revered him and he was given the honorable title of Daikōchi Fukū Sanzō (大廣智不空三藏) by the Emperor Tai-tsung. Fukū Sanzō died on the fifteenth of June, 775 A.D. and was given the posthumous name of Daibenshokochi Fukū Sanzō.

大辨正廣智不空三藏和尚 (Fukū, the great, eloquent, right, learned, wise master of the Tripitaka).

Subhakarasiṃha (Zemmui, 善無畏) was born of a Kshatriya family in Magadha of North India in 637 A.D. His father was King of Udyāna and a descendant of King Amritodana who was a younger brother of Śākyamuni's father. After the death of his father Zemmui when only thirteen years old succeeded to the throne, but when dissensions arose he abdicated in favor of his brother and became a Buddhist monk. He travelled extensively visiting many teachers, meditating in quiet places, and mastering the doctrines and practices of the different schools. At that time there was living in the Nālanda Vihāra in Central India, a great teacher whose name was Dharmagupta, and Zemmui studied under him and then travelled over India teaching and preaching. Dharmagupta advised his pupil to go to China in order to transmit the Mikkyō. He obeyed and arrived at Chang-an in 716 A.D. at the age of 80. He proceeded to make many translations, the most notable being the *Mahāvairochana Sūtra*. He died in China in 735 A.D. at the age of ninety-nine mourned by the Emperor and the people.

Ichigyo (一行) was born in China in 683 A.D., the grand son of a prince of Yen (鄴). He became a Buddhist monk and learned Zen and the Vinaya Pitaka. He received the teaching of the *Mahāvairochana Sūtra* from Zemmui and the secrets of the *Kongōchōkyō* (*Vajrasekhara*) from Kongōchi. He wrote the only authoritative commentary on the *Dainichikyō* from lectures of Zemmui. He also wrote a number of original books. He died when he was only forty-five in 727 A.D.

Keikwa (惠果), the seventh patriarch, was born in 746 A.D. in China, the same year in which Fukū Sanzo returned to China from Ceylon. He became Fukū's pupil when he was only seven or eight years old and received Upasampadā when he was twenty. For the next twenty years he studied all the doctrines and practices of Mikkyō and mastered them.

When his study was completed he became a fully qualified teacher of Mikkyo both parts of the Mandala having been transmitted to him. Fukū's other great pupils only mastered one part of the Mikkyo (the Vajradhātsu Mandala), so we can see what great confidence Fukū placed in Keikwa. In turn Keikwa transmitted one or the other part of Mikkyo to his pupils, except to Gimyo (義明) and to Kōbō Daishi to whom he transmitted both. Three Emperors, Tai, Tê and Shun, revered him and received Kwanjo from him. He died at sixty years of age, on December 15, 805 A.D.

The founder of Mikkyo in Japan was the priest Kūkai (空海), posthumously titled Kōbō Daishi (弘法大師) by which name he is more popularly known. He was born in Byobugaura, a beautiful village in Sanuki province on the island of Shikoku. His father was Saiki Yoshimichi (or in Western writing, Yoshimichi Saiki), who was a daimyo of the province. His mother was Lady Tamayori, a descendent of the Ato family. The family was prosperous and prominent. Their son, Kūkai, was born on the fifteenth of June, in the fifth year of Hōki, 774 A.D. He was named Mao and was their third child. At the age of six he was called Totomono (precious thing), for even then he was noted for his precocity and his piety. There are many legends about wonderful things that happened at his birth and in his childhood.

As his father noticed that he liked to play with Buddhist objects, he thought of making him a priest, but his uncle who was a teacher of the Chinese classics thought it would be better for him to have a classical education, so when a youth of fifteen he was sent to Kyoto to study with his uncle, Atouo Otani. Under his uncle's care he studied hard for four years and at eighteen entered the university. He became dissatisfied, however, with worldly learning and his mind turned to Buddhism. He became a disciple of the priest Gonzo (勤操) who was the head priest of the temple Iwabuchi and at that time received the name Kūkai. It was also then that

he wrote a book called *Sangoshiki*, in which he made critical interpretation of Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Soon after this he gave himself up to spiritual training and travelled all over Japan, meditating in deep forests, climbing mountains, and practising ascetic discipline. He found a copy of the *Dainichi-kyo* (*Mahāvairochana sūtra*) in the Kume temple at Takaichi in Yamato, but as he could not understand it, he made up his mind to go to China. He received permission from the Emperor and set sail from Matsuura in Hizen in July of the twenty-third year of Enryaku, in company with Kadonomaru Fujiwara, the Japanese ambassador to China. Passing through many difficulties in connection with storms and hindrances regarding landing, Kūkai finally reached China in August 805 and studied there for two years. In Chang-an he visited every prominent priest and finally met Keikwa in Seiryuji temple. When Keikwa saw Kūkai he said: "I knew already that you would come to China to visit me. I have waited a long time for you. I offer my hearty congratulations to you. I wish to teach you. Prepare at once to receive the doctrine of Mikkyo." Keikwa taught him from the sacred sutras and revealed to him all the Shingon teachings and mysteries. From Keikwa he received not only personal instruction but also many religious books and implements for use in the rituals. Keikwa died before Kūkai left China and Kūkai erected a monument to his teacher.

Kūkai even at this time was famous for his handwriting and also for skill in drawing and painting. He worked very hard at all these arts and studied Sanskrit and other Buddhist doctrines besides the Mikkyo. Kūkai returned happily to Japan and began to preach his doctrines. In 811 he inaugurated his teaching of Ryōbu Shinto (兩部神道), the union of Buddhism and Shinto. He found favour with the Emperor and the Imperial court and the new teaching became a great success. Men of all ranks from the Emperor down to the poorest of the poor supported him.

However, the new teaching did not go unchallenged; the priests of the eight sects in Nara, especially those of Hosso (法相) stood for a time against him. But the chance came for him to uphold his doctrine before them all, for in the fourth year of Kōnin, Emperor Saga gave an order for the priests of all sects to present themselves at the palace. There the doctrine of Mikkyō was attacked to which Kūkai responded in a fluent lecture, upholding the teaching of Sokushinjobutsu (即身成佛), "becoming Buddha in this very body." Then it is said that before the eyes of the astonished Emperor, court, and clergy, Kūkai appeared for a moment before them in the form of the Buddha Mahāvairochana. As a result of this incident all were convinced of his doctrine and of himself as a holy messenger.

After his return from China, Kūkai travelled about Japan, spreading his doctrine and founding temples, and in the seventh year of Kōnin (817 A.D.) he established the great monastery at Kōya-san. The mountain was given to the Daishi by the Emperor Saga. Here many temples were erected and soon Kōya became a famous sanctuary and to this day is the holy place of Shingon. Kōbō Daishi wrote many books at Koya and died there or as Shingon believers say, entered into meditation, on March 21, in the second year of Jōwa (834). Before his departure he called his disciples together and told them: "At first I thought I should live till I was a hundred years old and convert all the people, but now that you are all grown up there is no need for my life to be prolonged, and I shall therefore enter 'Kongō-kyō' (*vajradhyāna*) the Diamond World on the twenty-first day of next March. But you need by no means grieve, for my spirit lives." In the year 931 he was given the title Kōbō Daishi (Great Teacher of Law-propagation) by Emperor Daigo. At Kōya-san he is supposed to lie uncorrupted in the tomb, awaiting the coming of Maitreya, the Buddha of the future.

Shingon followers believe that Kōbō Daishi was himself

a great Bodhisattva and the representative on earth of Maitreya. He was not only a great religious leader, but he was also active in all sorts of social work for the benefit of his country. Moreover, he was skilled as artist, sculptor, calligrapher, author, and the inventor of the Hiragana syllabary. He was one of the greatest men of Japan quite outside the sphere of religion, and in the field of religion he is unsurpassed. Shingon followers revere him as a Buddha and feel that his spiritual light is still shining upon the world. Indeed, he must have been a great personality to make people even of the present time still regard him as "great teacher" and "holy saint."

BEATRICE LANE SUZUKI