

Shingon's Kakukai on the  
Immanence of the Pure Land

Robert E. MORRELL

From ancient times, demons had often harrassed the devotees on Mount Kōya to obstruct their religious practice. Vowing to pacify these evil influences and so protect the Buddha's teaching, Bridge-of-the-Law Kakukai, on the 17th day of the eighth month in Jōō 2 (1223), suddenly sprouted wings, kicked down the door in the gate of the temple where he resided, and flew off into the sky. Shiban (1625-1710), who records this incident in his *Honchō kōsōden* (Biographies of Eminent Japanese Priests, 1702), goes on to say that in his own day Kakukai was still to be seen making his way among the mountains of Kōya (Iwano 1961, p. 228).

Kakukai (Nanshōbō, 1142-1223), after serving as thirty-seventh Superintendent of Shingon's Kongōbuji headquarters from 1217 to 1220, retired to Kōya's Keōin. Historical records less imaginative than Shiban's have a somewhat different account of Kakukai's life and death, however. Three years later, in his eighty-second year, he auspiciously expired while performing the hand gesture of Māhāvairocana, the *mudrā* of the Knowledge Fist (*chiken'in*) expressed by the central Buddha in the Diamond maṇḍala (Saunders 1960, p. 103). He left behind a brief statement of his religious views, the *Kakutai hōkyō hōgo* (Bridge-of-the-Law Kakukai's Discourse on the Dharma), whose precise dating and authorship are uncertain. Apparently a transcription of Kakukai's remarks by a disciple, the work's originality consists largely in its being an early vernacular tract (*kana hōgo*), an attempt to explain theoretical obscurities to a popular audience in the beginning phase of the

Kamakura religious reformation. Doctrinally it is little more than a restatement of the traditional Shingon position on the uses of myth, but its timing enhances its significance. The **Discourse** is clearly a response to the new Amidist Pure Land movements which enjoyed great popularity after Hōnen's advocacy of the Sole Practice Calling Upon the Name of Amida Buddha (*senju nembutsu*) in 1175. Kakukai argued that the Pure Land—Amida's, Mahāvairocana's Maitreya's, or any other—was to be realized immediately in this defiled world, just as Kūkai (774-835) had taught that we are to attain Buddhahood in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*). The Pure Land was to be found in our everyday thought and action rather than some geographically remote realm as usually conceived by the popular Pure Land movements of his day, if not by Hōnen (1133-1212) himself. In this brief **Discourse** Kakukai is content to describe his own viewpoint and not to explicitly call Hōnen's into question. In this he differs from the Kōfukuji sōjō (Kōfukuji Petition, 1205) of Hossō's Jōkei (Morrell 1983) and the Saijarin (Attack on the Bad Vehicle, 1212) of Kegon's Kyōe (Bandō 1974; Morrell 1982a, pp. 181-82).

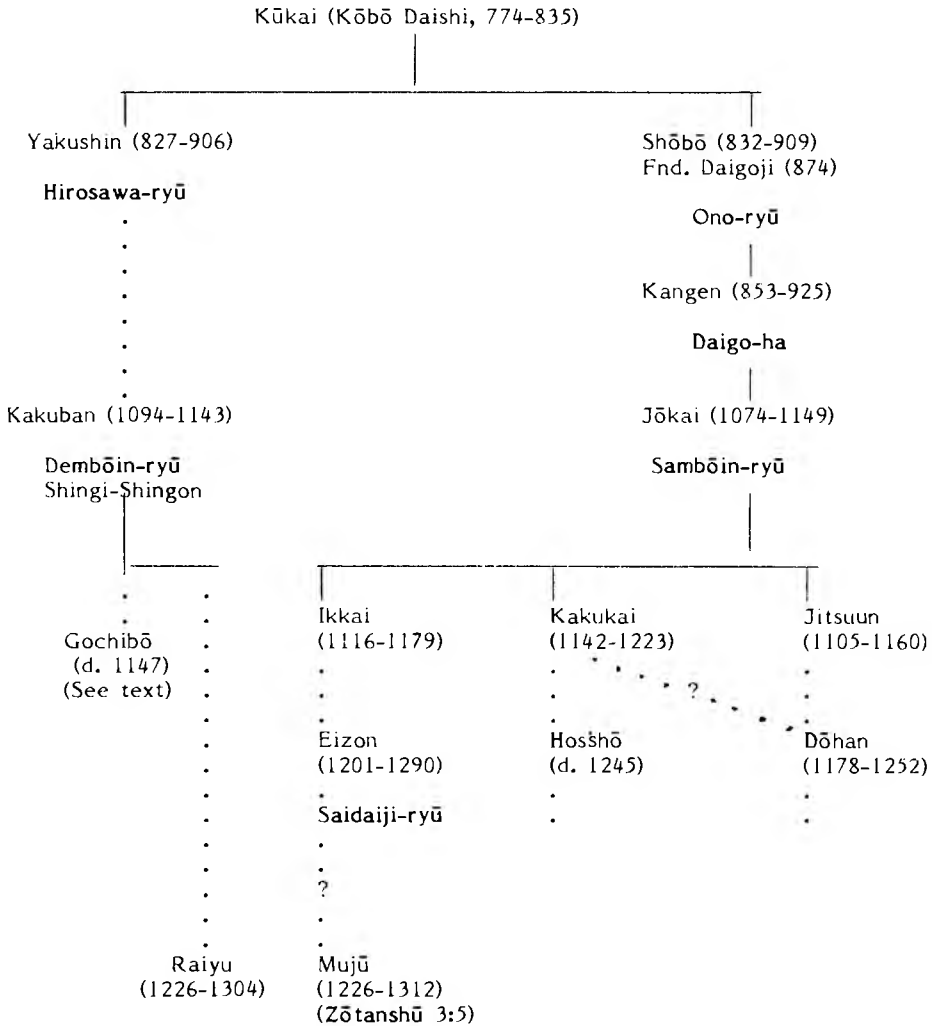
This paper will examine Kakukai's **Discourse**, introducing a complete translation with a discussion of several central notions in which it is grounded. But first we must see Kakukai in the context of his age.

#### KAKUKAI'S SPIRITUAL LINEAGE

The details of Kakukai's life are sketchy and our sources do not always agree. He was born in Tajima province, the present-day Hyōgo Prefecture which borders the Sea of Japan northwest of Kyoto. Most authorities tell us that he studied with Jōkai (1074-1149), founder of Daigoji's Sambōin school of Tōji esotericism. And since Kakukai was only seven in the year that Jōkai died, he was evidently a precocious child. Whatever doubts we may have about the details, a tentative diagram of the relationship between Kakukai and others of the Sambōin school may at least help to define his circle of acquaintances and influences (cf.

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charts in *Bukkyō daijiten* 1954, supplementary pp.40-42, and *Mikkyō daijiten* 1970, vol. 1, p.189; also Miyasaka 1964, pp.14-15).



Note that Kakukai's colleague, Ikkai, is in the line of transmission to Eizon (Shiembō, 1201-90), founder of the Esoteric Disciplinary (*Shingon Ritsu*) sect centered at Nara's Saidaiji. A trip east which Eizon made in 1252, with a five-day stop along the way at the Chōboji Temple in what is now Nagoya, is recorded in *Kantō ōgenki* (Back and Forth to the Kantō Region; Kokusho Kankōkai 194, pp.1-2). Later that same year Mujū Ichien took over the administration of this temple, where he was to remain for the next half century. Circumstantial evidence suggests that throughout his life Mujū had a continuing relationship with Eizon and may well have been initiated by him into the mysteries of the Tōji Sambōin school. In his *Zōtanshū* (Casual Digressions 3:5) of 1305 Mujū mentions that he had gone to [the Shōrakuji on Nara's] Mount Bodai in 1261 to have the practices of that school transmitted to him (Yamada and Miki 1973, p.110). If his mentor on this occasion was Eizon, this would provide the link between Mujū and Kakukai. A short anecdote recorded in *Shasekishū* (Sand and Pebbles, 1279-83) is a major item of the Kakukai legend repeated in subsequent accounts. Chapter 2:10 is entitled "Karmic Affinities with the Buddha's Law not without Effect."

Kakukai, Superintendent of Nanshōbō on Mount Kōya, had a reputation as a prominent contemporary scholar of the Esoteric Sect. Wishing to know about his earlier existence, he prayed to the Great Teacher [Kūkai] and was shown the circumstances of seven of his former lives.

"First of all you were a small clam in the sea west of Tennōji Temple tossed in by the waves. While you were lying on the beach, a small child picked you up and brought you to the front of the Golden Hall where you heard the chanting of the Hymn in Praise of Relics (*Sharisanden*). By virtue of this you were reborn as a dog living in Tennōji who constantly heard the sūtras and mystic formulas being chanted. Then you were

reborn as an ox; and because of having carried paper used for the copying of the Great Wisdom sūtra, you were reborn as a horse. The horse carried pilgrims to Kumano and was reborn as a votive-fire attendant who lit the way for people by always keeping the fires bright. Having gradually become suffused by the karmic activity of wisdom, you were reborn as caretaker of the Inner Chapel (*Oku no In*), where constantly your ears were moved and your eyes exposed to the practice of the Three Mysteries. And now you are living as Superintendent Kakukai."

Having heard of this incident, we can clearly see the value of establishing affinities with the Buddha's Law.

As we view early Kamakura Buddhism from a distance of seven and a half centuries, Kakukai appears as a minor player in the events which would radically alter its institutional structure. But as abbot of the Kongōbuji from 1217 to 1220, he was one of the leading prelates of Shingon, the sect second in influence at the time only to Tendai. Hōnen's Amidist Pure Land movement had grown rapidly since its inception in 1175, but it was still far from being the main stream of Japanese Buddhism which it was to become in later centuries after Shinran (1173-1262), Ippen (1239-1289) and Rennyo (1415-99). Japanese Zen was only a few decades old, the *Kōzen gokokuron* (Promulgation of Zen as a Defense of the Nation) having been written by Eisai (1141-1215) in 1198, seven years after his return from China with the Rinzai transmission. Dōgen (1200-1253) would return from study on the mainland in 1227; Enni (Ben'en, 1202-80), in 1241. And Nichiren (1222-82) would not found his Lotus Sect (*Hokkeshū*) until 1253.

In short, early Kamakura Buddhism was still dominated by Tendai and Shingon, with Hossō and Kegon among the old Nara sects that continued to occupy a broad range of the ideological spectrum. In 1205 the *Kōfukuji sōjō* called for the suppression of what were perceived as excesses in

the Amidist Pure Land movement. Hōnen's *Senjaku* [*hongan nembutus*] (Collection of Passages [bearing on the Original Vow of Amida]) was compiled in 1198 but not made public until after his death in 1212, when it was immediately challenged by Myōe's *Saijarin*. Moreover, in tallying the events which define these transitional decades between the old and the new order of things in every area of Japanese life and thought, we might note that the *Gukanshō* ("The Future and the Past," 1219), the monumental history of Japan by the Tendai prelate Jien (1155-1225), was produced while Kakukai was superintendent of the Kongōbuji.

Kakukai is said to have had a substantial following in his time, but nothing that could be compared with those of the new Amidism or Zen. Shiban and others tell us that Dōhan (Hongakubō, 1178-1252) on occasion came to Kakukai for instruction, if he was not actually a direct disciple. Dōhan had a distinguished career promoting the cause of Shingon. His numerous works include the vernacular tract known as *Dōhan shōsoku* (Dōhan's Letter, ca. 1187-1252; Miyasaka 1964, pp.76-83). Whatever the personal relationships between Kakukai and his Shingon contemporaries may have been, these monks shared a common tradition of religious thought and practice which continued to influence Japanese Buddhism even after being deprived of its earlier prominence by the new popular movements.

#### KAKUKAI'S WORLD OF IDEAS

Like every Mahāyānist system of thought and practice, Shingon recognizes the necessary variability of theological explanations. The goal of religious experience ultimately transcends every human formulation, and no one explanation is true to the exclusion of all others, although some may be viewed as more or less adequate than their competitors. Variations arise because of differences in the abilities of sentient being to comprehend the Truth that surpasses understanding. The underlying metaphor for this view is not the one-to-one correspondence, the mirror image, between a physical object and its verbal

counterpart, but rather the shifting perspectives and their varying descriptions as we view an object from several directions. While no description is definitive, the provisional usefulness of varying explanations is not in question. In the words of Kūkai (Kōbō Daishi, 774-835), founder of Japanese Shingon:

The Dharma is beyond speech, but without speech it cannot be revealed. Suchness transcends forms, but without depending on forms it cannot be realized. Though one may at times err by taking the finger pointing at the moon to be the moon itself, the Buddha's teachings which guide people are limitless. (Hakeda 1972, p.145).

Fully recognizing the viability of other perspectives, Shingon chooses to explain the mechanism of the religious life in terms of the ultimate identity, but phenomenal non-identity, of all sentient beings with the Buddha Mahāvairocana, the Great Sun Buddha. The difference is not real but only apparent and arises because thinking makes it so. So Kakukai, in the opening statement of his *Discourse*, says that his tradition "affirms the two principles of the identity and difference of ordinary human nature [with Mahāvairocana]." And he goes on to affirm the goal of supreme enlightenment, rather than the lesser ideal of birth in some Pure Land which others—notably Hōnen and the Amidist movement—had argued was all that humans could hope to attain during the Latter Days of the Law (*mappō*). The theory of the Latter Days so prominent in early Kamakura was not supported by Kūkai and his school. The goal of Shingon practice was the attainment of Buddhahood here and now in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*; Kiyota 1978, pp.123-27).

Just as early Mahāyāna could admit that its Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were "obviously productions of the mind, and without historical or factual basis" (Conze 1959, p.150), the esoteric movements went a step further by

asserting that

...things and Gods alike are equally unreal compared with the one vast emptiness, but on the whole the data of mythology represent a kind of fiction far more worthwhile than the data of our everyday practical experience, and when properly handled, can greatly assist us in winning emancipation from the fetters of existence (Conze 1959, p. 185).

These mythical Buddhas and Bodhisattvas were dramatically represented as residing in their own Pure Lands, where a person might be born to escape transmigration through the Six Paths of existence even though he had not yet attained supreme enlightenment. For the man in the street these "productions of the creative mythological imagination" were understood quite literally, of course; and while Buddhism flourished, the easy movement between literal and figurative meaning posed few problems for those who organized their experience around its symbols.

The lot of unenlightened sentient beings is transmigration within the Six Destinies (*rokudō*): the realms of gods, men, fighting-beings (*asuras*), animals, hungry ghosts (*pretas*), and those in the hells—the last three comprising the Three Evil Destinies (*san'akudō*). The Ten Worlds (*jikkai*) include these six together with the enlightened realms of *śrāvaka* (*shōmon*) and *pratyekabuddha* (*engaku*) [i.e., the Hīnayāna adepts], *bodhisattva* (*bosatsu*) and Buddha [i.e., the Mahāyāna adepts]. Buddhist cosmology is not so much geography as the dramatic representation of psychological states. The Three Worlds (*sangaï*) of Desire (which includes the Six Destinies and the Six Desire Heavens; see note 2b), of Form and of No-form describe in objective terminology the progressive states leading to enlightenment. Within this three-part world of unenlightened beings are to be found several Pure Lands presided over by a Buddha, as Kakukai notes in support of his thesis that there is no essential difference between the various



Pure Lands and our defiled world.<sup>1</sup>

The Hossō monk Jōkei sought rebirth in the Heaven of the Satisfied Gods (*tosotsuten*) where the Buddha of the future, Maitreya (*Miroku*) is waiting until the current cycle of Gautama's teaching is complete (see Morrell 1983, p. 10); this Pure Land is one of the Six Desire Heavens. Late in life Jōkei also prayed for rebirth on Kannon's Mt. Potalaka (*Fudarakusen*), popularly understood to be situated in the sea south of India, on a mountain in China, or, in Japan, at sites near the Nachi Falls and at Nara's Kasuga Shrine. Holy Eagle Mount (*Ryōjusen*), the mythical site where Śakyamuni is said to have taught the Lotus and Larger Pure Land sūtras, is located near Rājagṛha in India.

The most famous of these regions is Amida's Pure Land of Supreme Bliss (*gokuraku jōdo*) as described in the Larger Pure Land Sūtra and in the Amida Sūtra. This is said to be in the "western direction" (*saihō*), evidently beyond our Three Worlds (Beal 1871, pp. 1161-18). Of lesser importance is the Lapis Lazuli Pure Land (*jōruri jōdo*) of the Medicine Buddha, Yakushi Nyorai, which is "in the east" (T. 450, 451; Birnbaum 1979 pp. 1521, 191-2). And there are others.

Kakukai chose to symbolize the goal of religious practice as Mahāvairocana's Terrace of Esoteric Grandeur (*mitsugon dōjō*). In contrast to the Amidist pure land movements of his day, which increasingly viewed Amida's Pure Land of Supreme Bliss as geographically apart from the sullied world of human affairs, Kakukai understood Mahāvairocana's Terrace (and Amida's Pure Land, for that matter) to be identical with the immediate world in which we live. The Terrace, described in the [Daijō] mitsugogyō ([The

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1. Different sūtras and commentaries provide partial descriptions of the Buddhist cosmos which we can organize into a single coherent system only with patience and ingenuity. The major scriptural source is the encyclopedic *Abhidharmakośa* (T. 1558-59) of Vasubandhu. See Rosenfield et al. 1973, pp. 104-09, for early Buddhist maps with commentary; Coates and Ishizuka 1925, pp. 89-98, for additional explanations. Beal's pioneer *A catena of Buddhist scriptures* (1871), pp. 10-125, has a substantial discussion of Buddhist cosmology which is worth consulting.

Mahāyāna Sūtra of] Mystic Grandeur; T. 681-682) is the abode of the Great Sun Buddha (*Dainichi Nyorai*), a Buddhaland (*bukkoku*) of esoteric grandeur because it is the site of the integration (*kaṣṭi*) of the Three Mysteries (body, voice and mind) of Mahāvairocana with the three parallel karmic actions (*sangō*) of sentient beings by virtue of which they attain Buddhahood in this very body (*sokushin jōbutsu*).<sup>2</sup>

According to Shingon teaching, both the Lotus Womb World of Grandeur (*rengedō shōgon sekaï*) of Vairocana as described in the *Kegonkyō* (Garland sūtra, T. 278-79, 293) and Amida's Supreme Bliss World (*gokuraku sekaï*) of the Pure Land tradition are simply other names for the Pure Land of Esoteric Grandeur (*mitsugon jōdo*). In Japan the concept of the Pure Land of Esoteric Grandeur was emphasized by the founder of Neo-Shingon, Kakuban (1095-1143), whose writings include a 10-fascicle *Mitsugon shohishaku* (The Mysteries of Esoteric Grandeur Variousy Explained). Kakuban's view evidently influenced Kakukai, who was not, however, in the Neo-Shingon line of transmission (see earlier chart). Kakukai also uses the term, Esoteric Grandeur of the Lotus Womb (*mitsugon kezō* = *rengedōshōgon sekaï*, above), whose second phrase indicates the Lotus Womb world (*kezōsekaï*) which is the Garland World (*kegon sekaï*) of the *Kegonkyō*. Although the Vairocana (*Birushana*) of the exoteric *Kegonkyō* and Mahāvairocana of the Two-part Maṇḍala are distinguishable in some traditions, Shingon's Tōmitsu identifies them and thus views the Garland World as another name for Mahāvairocana's Pure Land (Miyasaka 1964, p.432). The some-

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2. See Kiyota 1978, pp.69-70, 125-27. I am indebted to Professor Kiyota's lucid account of the system in which Kakukai lived and wrote, and I heartily recommend it to the reader for complementary details. In spite of his own demanding schedule, Professor Kiyota generously agreed to read this manuscript and made many valuable suggestions. I cannot, of course, hold him responsible for any errors which appear because of my own lack of understanding.

what tedious exercise of tracing these distinctions to their scriptural sources helps us to appreciate the spirit of accomodation with which Kakukai and his school attempted to reconcile differences in scripture and tradition. It was taken for granted that there should be various rationalizations of religious experience, and no single formulation was uniquely true, although it might be seen as better, more adequate, than others.

Early in the *Discourse* Kakukai speaks of the Five Elements (Earth, Water, Fire, Wind, Space) which constitute form/matter (*shiki, rūpa*). These and Mind (*shin, citta*) together comprise the Six Elements (*rokudaī*), which are "the inseparable entities of suchness (*tathatā; shinnyo*), the Shingon concept of ultimate reality" (Kiyota 1978, p.67; see also p.81). The integration of knower (mind) and known (form) is Mahāvairocana. Meditation on the Six Elements comprising Suchness is facilitated by the two basic Shingon maṇḍalas: the Womb (*taizōkai, garbhadhātu*) and the Diamond (*kongōkai, vajradhātu*), respectively signifying the known and the knower. For Kakukai the Holy Throng is nothing other than a dramatic representation of immediate experience as the known, rather than of a world of transcendent beings. The entire *Discourse* appears to be basically a reassertion of Shingon's allegorical understanding of religious imagery in the face of widespread literal-mindedness.

#### THE DISCOURSE

The disciple who transcribed Kakukai's remarks does not tell us why he wrote in Japanese rather than in the prestigious Chinese commonly used in most Buddhist writings of the time. The *Discourse*, among the earliest of vernacular tracts (*kana hōgo*), apparently antedates Kōshin's collection of Myōe's aphorisms from 1235-1238 (Morrell 1982b, pp.173; 181-95). It is reasonable to assume that the author responded to the wave of popular religious movements which were then flooding the country. But whatever his motivation, the author really made only one concession to

easy comprehension: the technical terms are connected to each other through the medium of Japanese grammar. But he does not explain them and appears to be uneasy even with this minor accommodation, occasionally slipping back into the traditional *kambun* style. The result can only have been intended for those already familiar with Kakukai's thought.

My text is the modern printed edition of the Kempō 2 (1742) manuscript of the Kōya monk Myōzui (1696-1764) which is included in Miyasaka Yūshō, ed. *Kana hōgo shū* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1964), volume 83 in the *Nihon Koten Bungaku Taikei* series. Miyasaka's text was compared against several other editions, notably the version in Washio 1925, pp. 37-42. (NKBT uses characters for Myōtan, but this may be an oversight since Washio and other standard references mention only Myōzui; and the dating is compatible. See Miyasaka 1964 p.121, line 3.)

A word about the translation. Every terminology eventually turns to jargon, but those who first use its metaphors have in mind a very clear set of images, images which are inevitably lost in a translation paraphrase designed to read smoothly. and so I have chosen to be as literal as possible, even if the result is stylistically awkward.

**Bridge-of-the-Law Kakukai's Discourse on the Dharma**  
(Kakukai hōkyō hōgo)

This is what was said by Bridge-of-the-Law Kaku[kai]:

The tradition of the mantrā (i.e., Shingon) teaching affirms the two principles of the identity and difference of ordinary human nature [with Mahāvairocana]. If we genuinely seek Unexcelled Enlightenment,<sup>3</sup> we will be completely unconcerned about where we may have our being or in what form. By constantly purifying our Mind<sup>4</sup>

we will come to the understanding of the identity of phenomena with absolute reality,<sup>5</sup> in which the apparent world is thought-construction.<sup>6</sup>

The Pure Land I look forward to as [Mahāvairocana's] Terrace of Esoteric Grandeur (*mitsugon dōjō*) is [this present world of] Nine Mountains and Eight Seas surrounding Mount Sumeru. Through the externally manifest bodies

3. Mujō bodai; anuttarā-samyak-sambodhi. The unexcelled wisdom of the Buddhas. A transliteration of this term from Sanskrit into Sino-Japanese is incorporated in the curious poem composed by the Tendai patriarch, Saichō (Dengyō Daishi, 767-822) when he established the Enryakuji on Mt. Hiei in 788 (*Shinkokinshū* XX: 1921):

Anokutara	O Buddhas
Sammyaku sambodai no	Of unexcelled enlightenment,
Hotoke tachi	Bestow your grace
Waga tatsu soma ni	Upon this hall of timbers
Myōga arase tamae	Hewn from the mountain.

4. Kakukai paraphrases the third line of the Shichibutsu tsūkai ge (Verse of admonition handed down by the seven Buddhas), which is thought to epitomize the Buddha's teaching. It appears in several forms in early sources, but the most popular version is found in two translations of the Dharmapada, the Hokkukyō (T. 210) and the Shutsuyōkyō (T. 212), as well as much later in Shasekishū 4:1 (Watanabe 1966, p.179):

Shoaku makusa	Avoid all evil,
Shuzen bugyō	Cultivate every good,
Jijō koi	And purify your thoughts—
Ze shobutsu kyō	This all Buddhas teach.

5. Sokuji nishin. At the common level of understanding, the phenomenal world of things (*ji*) is distinguished from the undifferentiated "truth" (*shin*, as it appears in this compound), i.e., the absolute (*ri*). But since ultimately there is no distinction between the absolute and phenomena, there is also equality among things. This is the world of the interpenetration of all things (*jiji muge hokkai*)—a concept shared by Shingon and Kegon, among others (see Cook 1977, pp.35-36). But whereas the exoteric schools explain this identity as a temporal return of phenomena to the absolute which underlies their multiplicity, Shingon speaks of things just as they are being identical with the absolute.

6. Zuishin tenjiki; literally, "change of form in accordance with mind." Shingon shares the Yogācāra (Hossō) doctrine of consciousness-only (*yuishiki*, *citta-mātra*), by which all phenomena are functions of mind.

of the Buddhas<sup>7</sup> the Ten Worlds [from the Buddhas to the denizens of hell (see p.9)] are all represented as the Holy Throng (*shōju*) in the maṇḍalas. Kaku[kai] may have a bodily form, but it cannot be other than the body of Buddha [since the Six Elements comprising all things are nothing other than the true reality (*shinnyo*, *tathatā*, "suchness") personified as Dharmakāya Mahāvairocana]. Since one whose mind [the sixth element, the knower] is transformed is called a Buddha, then if we carefully investigate his external forms consisting of the Five Elements, [the known], we find that they are truly the Holy Throng [of beings represented in the Womb] maṇḍala. Distinctions between the Nine Worlds [from the hells through the bodhisattva realms] and the world of the Buddha with respect to the formal continuities of phenomena (*sōzoku no eshin*) are [only made within the realm of *samsāra*, within] the interval of transmigration through birth-and-death. But to think that such distinctions between the worlds of sentient beings and that of the Buddha [are real] is due to attachment to fixed views.

When we are enlightened to the "original no-production" (*honsho fushō*)<sup>8</sup> of all things, then the ridge-

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Shikisō no busshin, "the Buddha body with form (*rūpa*) and characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*)." Tradition assigns 32 major characteristics (*sanjūnisō*) and 80 minor attributes (*hachijū shukō*) to the Enjoyment Body (*Sambhogakāya*, *jyūjūjin*) of the Buddha. For the listing in the Great Wisdom Sūtra (*Daihannya haramittakyō*, T. 220) see Bukkyō daijiten 1954, pp.1554-60, 4212-13; cf., Conze 1975, pp. 583-87.

Also *hampushō*, *anupāda*. Shingon's "Meditation on the Letter A" (*A-ji kan*) leads to the understanding that while all phenomenal things co-arise according to conditions and have conventional names, they are essentially empty. Essentially, "originally, nothing arises" or is produced because all things essentially lack a self-nature (*jishō*, *svabhāva*); at the same time, conventional truth (*zokukai*) recognizes the provisional existence of things. On *A-ji* and *anupāda* see Kiyota 1978, pp.71-74.

poles and pillars of grass hut [or palace]<sup>9</sup> are all as timbers of [Mahāvairocana's] Palace of the World of Dharmas.<sup>10</sup> To see [Vairocana's] Lotus Womb World of Grandeur<sup>11</sup> [in this present world of] Nine Mountains and Eight Seas surrounding Mount Sumeru is to construct in this very world [Mahāvairocana's] Terrace of [the Palace of] the World of Dharmas in which phenomena are identical with absolute reality (*sokuji nishin*; see note 5). [Thus symbolizing my everyday life in terms of the two maṇḍalas], I see the monastic quarters where I live in terms of the absolute as the Pure Land of Esoteric Grandeur (*mitsugon jōdo*; see p.11). I prepare myself with the Four Wisdoms<sup>12</sup> and the

9. The Ryōjin hishō (Secret selection of songs) compiled by Emperor Goshirakawa (1127-1192) in 1179 includes this imayō uta (II: 45; Kawaguchi and Shida 1965, pp.350-51):

Shingonkyō no medetasa wa	The glory of Shingon teaching is to declare
Hōsōkuden hedatenashi	No distinction between mugwort hut and palace,
Kimi wo mo tami wo mo oshinabete	Equality between the lord and his subjects
Dainichi Nyorai to toitamō	Through identity with the Great Sun Buddha.

10. Hokkai gūden. Dharmadhātu, the world of all elements, is symbolized as a palace (*gūden*) wherein resides Mahāvairocana, the personification of true reality (*tathatā*, "suchness"), which is nothing other than the phenomenal world comprised of the Six elements.
11. An abbreviation of Vairocana's Rengezōsōgon sekai (*padma-garbhā-lokadhātu*) described in the Garland Sūtra and in the Bommōkyō (Net of Brahma Sūtra, T. 1484). Both the Tōdaiji and the Tōshō-daiji in Nara represent Vairocana as being in this paradise (Fontein 1967, p.167; Cook 1977, pp.90-93).
12. Shichi. The four consciousnesses untainted by illusion (or *chihon*, types of wisdom) are important Yogācāra concepts adopted by Shingon: (1) the wisdom of perfect reflection (*daienkyōchū*), (2) the wisdom of equality (*byōdōshōchū*), (3) the wisdom of unerring cognition (*myōkanzatchū*), and (4) the wisdom for accomplishing all things through skill-in-means (*jōshosachū*). They are represented in the Diamond Maṇḍala by the four Buddhas surrounding Mahāvairocana in the four directions, ESWN respectively. The Fivefold Wisdom (*gochū*) adds to these four the "wisdom that perceives the essential nature of the world of dharmas (*hokkai tsuhōchū*)," represented by Mahāvairocana in the center. Cf. Hakeda 1972, pp.83-84; Weinstein 1965, pp.253-54.

[paralle] Four Disciplinary Processes<sup>13</sup> to my left and right in front and in back. [To identify with] the Nine Assemblies [of the Diamond World],<sup>14</sup> the Thirteen Great Assemblies [of the Womb World],<sup>15</sup> and the Maṇḍala of the Womb World [as representing the phenomenal] World of Dharmas (*hokkai*, *dharmadhātu*),<sup>16</sup> I contemplate the perfect enlightenment [symbolized as "the moon-disc of self-realization" (*jishō no gachirin*)] of each of the Thirty-seven deities in all the worlds of the Diamond Maṇḍala<sup>17</sup> [representing the known].

While at the causal stage (*innī*) of enlightenment [i.e., during the period of practice before its attainment] it is during the practice of meditation (*kanbō zazen*) on the mind (*shin*, *citta*) and its functions (*shinjo*, *caitta*, "mentals," objects) that as we enter into the Diamond World, the various wisdom signs (*chi-in*) of Mahāvairocana, Lord of Mind, will be revealed. I should truly rid myself of deep attachments and be aware that reality arises through

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13. Shigyō: (1) enlightened mind (*bodai*), (2) compassion (*fukuchi*), (3) wisdom (*chie*) and (4) action, function, skill-in-means (*katsuma*). These actions parallel the four wisdoms of note 12.
  14. Kue. The 1,461 deities represented in the Diamond Maṇḍala are grouped into Nine Assemblies. See Kiyota 1978, pp.93-104.
  15. More commonly, *jūsandai-in*, "Thirteen Halls." The standard (*genzu*, "iconographic" (Womb Maṇḍala transmitted by Kūkai comprised only twelve halls (Kiyota 1978, pp.83-93). A rare older form, the so-called "Womb Representation" (*taizō zuzō*) brought back from China by Tendai's Chishō (Enchin, 814-91), has an additional thirteenth outer enclosure of Thunderbolt Deities (*kongōjin*) in the Hall of the Four Great Protectors (*shidaigo-in*). But it seems curious that Kakukai would refer to this form. On the other hand, the problem may simply depend on how one counts the halls (see Kiyota 1978, p.143, notes 8 and 10).
  16. The "known" represented by the Womb Maṇḍala is the *dharmadhātu* (*hokkai*), "the world of the infinite co-arising (continuity) of dharmas based on the doctrine of the emptiness of a dharmā-essence" (Kiyota 1978, p.110).
  17. *Kongōkai sanjūshichison*. The Five Buddhas and thirty-two Bodhisattvas of the central Karma Assembly of the Diamond Maṇḍala.



causes and conditions.

My! How many people there are who delight in the prospect of the afterlife! It is because none of them is yet liberated from attachments to this world that they discuss the difference between the "easy" and "difficult" paths to realize birth in [Maitreya's] Heaven of the Satisfied Gods Tosotsu, Tuṣita) or [Amida's Pure Land of] Supreme Bliss (Gokuraku). And not a single one of them opts for [Mahāvairocana's] World of Esoteric Grandeur of the Lotus Womb (*mitsugon kezō*) by putting a stop to their delusive ruminations. The followers of the Shingon sect who emphasize the practice [without understanding the theory] of the mantras fall into the error of Eternalism (*jōken*),<sup>18</sup> while those who stress the theory fall into the error of Annihilationism (*kūken*).<sup>19</sup> Lately there seems to be no one who is convinced that practice and theory are one and inseparable.

In response to private questioning [Kakukai] said:

You ask me, good people, what Buddha I hope to see and in what Pure Land I expect to be born. And you tell me to state unequivocally if I have realized my religious objective and abide in the Truth. Indeed, it is difficult for me to extricate myself from the miserable attachment to this world of transmigration through birth-and-death. I regret not having clarified my mind through the levels of practice to enlightenment, and I think of this matter constantly. My reason for thus seeking to realize the profound purpose for entering the Dharma-gate [to the

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18. *Jōken*. The notion that there is a permanent substratum, a self, to individuals and dharmas. This violates the basic Buddhist principle of *anātman* (*muga*), "no-self." See following note.

19. *Kūken*. The Mahāyāna has always been careful to distinguish its central notion of Emptiness (*kū*) from the extreme view of Annihilationism which would deny all continuity and thus render impossible the workings of karma. Buddhism proposes to teach the Middle Way, maintaining a kind of continuity without postulating a permanent self for persons or things.

Truth], and for inquiring into your own state of realization is not for the sake of making a livelihood. It is solely to attain supreme enlightenment [i.e., enlightenment both for myself and for others]. Were this insignificant monk to deceive you, then surely he would receive retribution from our Great Teacher [Kōbō] and [Kōya's Guardian] Deities.<sup>20</sup> It is because from the beginningless past and into the future we are obsessed by the distinction between self [power] and other [power]<sup>21</sup> that the world of sentient beings and the world of the Buddha are forever separate. Even if we live through countless kalpas, it will be difficult to dispel this view.

Nan[shōbō] said:

Truly one should always be concerned with liberation (*shutsuri tokudatsu*), and it saddens me to have to be reminded of this time and time again. Even if he does not purify his mind [of ratiocination], a person who thinks in this manner will certainly have a wholesome mind; and with such an attitude he will escape the Three Evil Destinies. He will then be blessed with the essence of the teaching. Because we are all common people who have not yet realized enlightenment, we need to depend on the development of such an attitude.

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20. Among four deities (*shisho myōjin*) associated with Kōya, Nibu (tshime) Myōjin and Kōya Myōjin are the most prominent. According to legend, Nibu Myōjin provided Kūkai with the site for the Kongōbuji (of which Kakukai was 37th Superintendent) in 816. See Ponsonby-Fane 1953, pp.272-73; Kiyota 1982, p.33.

21. The *Bosatsujiikyō* (Sūtra on the Stages of Bodhisattva Practice, T. 1581), a major exposition of the Mahāyāna disciplinary code, describes four powers (*shiriki*) through which one may attain Enlightenment: (1) self power (*jiiriki*), (2) other power (*tariki*), (3) the power of past good karma (*iniriki*), and (4) the power of skillful means (*hōbeniriki*), i.e., the good offices of friends in the faith (*zenchishiki*). In Kakukai's day the Amidist Pure Land sects emphasized their reliance on the efficacy of the Other Power of Amida's Vows, in opposition to the traditional sects of the Holy Path (*shōsōmon*) which promoted the teaching and practice of Self Power.

When we quietly contemplate the origin and extinction of phenomena, we cannot be attached either to [Maitreya's] Heaven of the Satisfied Gods, to [Amida's Pure Land of] Supreme Bliss, or to [Mahāvairocana's] World of Esoteric Grandeur, giving no thought to where we shall be born or what we shall become as we purify our mind. If we simply purify the mind, we shall not feel pain even if we were to assume the forms of such creatures as dragons and yakṣas [among the lowest of heavenly beings]. The realms occupied by clever beings<sup>22</sup> [within the Nine Worlds] are not always like the places in which we live; they are all in Pure Lands. Our partiality for the human form and our bias against the strange forms of other creatures is due to our lack of understanding. Regardless of transmigration we shall suffer no discomfort.

Nor do I consider what kind of *mudrā* to make at the moment of death.<sup>23</sup> Depending on my state of mind I can constantly abide in the Four Dignified Postures [*shūgi*: walking, standing, sitting, lying]. What kind of deportment is not *samādhi* (*zammai*)? Every thought and every word are meditations (*kannen*) and mantras (*shingon*) leading to Enlightenment (*shitsuji*, *siddhi*). Indeed, should delusive thoughts arise in my heart, I take no notice of them even though [conventional wisdom says that] I should lament this state of affairs and put a stop to those thoughts. And what about the [other] two karmic actions of body and voice? The same also applies to them. The devotee should simply take care always to intone (*tonae*) the letter "A" (*A-ji*; see

22. Those with *naishō*, the inner realization of *satori* which is outwardly manifest (*geyū*) in enlightened action. Within the scheme of Ten Worlds (*jikkai*), they operate in the nine beneath the formless world of the Buddha.

23. One's posture and state of mind at the moment of death were often considered to have a critical bearing on prospect for rebirth. ("And the time of death is every moment"? Kakukai, Genshin and Hōnen would probably agree with Eliot, but not Shinran and the subsequent Pure Land Movement.) A traditional posture was that assumed by Śākyamuni when he entered Nirvāṇa, head to the north while lying on the right side facing west. See Coates and Ishizuka 1925, pp. 637-38.

note 8) and in his heart to meditate (*kannen*) on the Reality of everything as co-arising (*enshōjissō*). The circumstances of our final moments are by no means known to others, and even our Good Friends<sup>24</sup> in the faith will then be no help to us. Since each maintains his own distinctions of self [power] and other [power], even though we meditate (*kannen*) on the same [object of worship] it is only to be expected that another's thinking is not identical with my own. And as for those who do not share a common ideal with me, it would be better to have no one at all [around at the moment of death]. If we just tranquilize our thoughts, the mind itself will be our Good Friend. I think it quite splendid to die as did the likes of Gochibō,<sup>25</sup> abiding in a correct state of mind with his final moments unknown to any others. These were people who calmly sought [birth in] the Pure Land of Esoteric Grandeur (*mitsugon jōdo*). But, in response to people's questioning, of none of these people can it be stated with certainty with which Buddha they were born.

Privately [Kakukai] remarked:

All beings within the Ten Worlds are essentially without attachments. But transmigration is endless; and we should understand how it is that some receive the karmic retribution of birth in the human world or as devas, while others are born into [Maitreya's Heaven of] the Satisfied Gods, the [Pure Land of] supreme Bliss, or into the realms of demons, hungry ghosts and asuras.

Nan[shōbō] said:

Because we are essentially without attachments to the Ten Worlds, we roam through the Nine Worlds [beneath that

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24. Zenchishiki. See note 21. Kakukai here uses the term in the simple sense of religious colleague or spiritual mentor, although it frequently refers to the fifty-three "Good Friends" (*kalyāṇamitra*) in the Garland (Kegon) Sūtra's account of Sudhana's pilgrimage. Cf. Morell 1982a, pp. 184-85.

25. Yūgen (d. 1147), disciple of Kakuban.

of the Buddha] with our states of being determined by changes in our mental state. Therefore we say that we abide in the Ten Worlds without abiding in any of them (*jikkai jūbuji jizai*). It is entirely as a consequence of our attitude of attachment to things (*shūjakushin*) that our feelings conjure up the variety of forms in the Nine Worlds. And since it is through the power of karma that our feelings effect this our lives in this world are determined according to whether or not our karma is exhausted. For man, with his sustained recollection (*okuji fumō*) of the sites of rebirth, the human and heavenly worlds are all Pure Lands. If we understand the nature of the Shingon mantrā and the meaning of what the name [Amida] stands for, then even the realms of demons, animals and asuras [beneath the human and heavenly worlds] are all Pure Lands of Esoteric Grandeur.

Just as when two people sleep with pillows side by side and one may have a bad dream while the other has a good one, so also we may learn the same scripture with a single teacher in the same discipline and same tradition (*dōgyō dōhō*) but the benefit will very depending on differing states of mind. Although within the Six Desire Heavens beings are attached to pleasure and for some [e.g., Māra] the Buddha's Law does not exist,<sup>26</sup> there also within the Heaven of the Satisfied Gods is the Pure Land of the Bodhisattva He-Who-Will-Be Buddha-in-his-Next-Life (*isshō fusho*; i.e., the future Buddha, Maitreya). Although this World-to-be-Endured (*shaba sekai, saha-loka-dhātu*) is the

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26. Beneath the heavens of Form (*shikikaiten*) and of No-form (*mushikikaiten*) are the Six Desire Heavens (*rokuyakuten*) which include, in ascending order, the heavens of (1) the Four Heavenly Kings (*shitennō*), (2) the Thirty-three (*tōsan*), (3) Yama, (4) the Satisfied Gods (*tosotsu*), (5) Self-providing Pleasures (*keraku*) and (6) Other-providing Pleasures (*takejizai*). Within this last heaven is the abode of Māra (Maō) who obstructs the practice of Buddhism (Cf. *Shasekishū* 1:1; Morell 1973, p. 457.

Region of the five Defilements,<sup>27</sup> it is also [Amida's] Pure Land of the West (*saihō jōdo*). It is said that when we purify the mind it is the land of the Buddha's Dharma.<sup>28</sup> Turn around the thinking of the ordinary person and the physical form bound by karma (*gobaku no eshīn*) is the Pure Land of True Reward (*shōbō*) for how we have lived. Our present abode in this life is just like this. During the Three Long Kalpas (*sansōgi*) [which we must spend until we attain Enlightenment] we pass the time in spiritual practices just in order to understand this principle.

Thus did Kakukai reaffirm the basic Mahāyāna principle of the identity of our phenomenal world of transmigration (*rinne, saṃsāra*) through the Six Destinies with the absolute (*nehan, nirvāṇa*). The Pure Lands of Mahāvairocana, Maitreya, or Amida were thought-constructs "fingers pointing at the moon," expedient means to help us realize the Dharma beyond speech, the Suchness transcending forms. And this traditional interpretation of the limits and uses of reason challenged the dogmatic literalism of the extreme faction of the new Amidist Pure Land movement.

Kakukai's views no longer appealed to the people of his time and they were largely replaced by simpler, but often narrower, explanations of the religious life. Nevertheless, popularity is no sure guarantee of value. We who live in other times and circumstances may judge Kakukai differently than did most of his contemporaries. His language may be unfamiliar, but his message is clear enough. Many

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27. Gōjoku. The five sources of defilement in our present world. Our evils arise because of (1) the times in which we live, (2) deteriorating views, (3) the passions, (4) declining capacities, and (5) decreasing life span. Among a variety of scriptural sources to express this notion are the Lotus Sūtra (T. 262; Hurvitz 1976, p. 31) and the Amida Sūtra (T. 366; Muller 1965, p. 102).

28. A reference to the Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa Sūtra (*Yūmakitsu shosetsukyō*, T. 475), Chapter 1: ". . . if a Bodhisattva wants to win the pure land he should purify his mind, and because of his pure mind the Buddha land is pure." Luk 1972, p. 13.

## Kakukai on the Immanence of the Pure Land

of us today are unable to accept a single formulation of religious experience with dogmatic certainty but quite prepared to admit a variety of mythical explanations. Moreover, for us to accept the necessity as well as the possibility of conceptual variety is to provide a firm basis for the accommodation of Eastern and Western modes of religious expression.

### Glossary

a-ji kan 阿字觀	kaji 加持
chiin zammai 智印三昧	Kakukai hōkyō hōgo 覺海法橋法語
dōgyō dōhō 同行同法	Kakuban 覺鑊
Dōhan 道範	kana hōgo 仮名法語
Eizon 叡尊	kanbō zazen 觀法坐禪
enshō jissō 緣生實相	kannen 觀念
eta enshō no hō 依他緣生の法	Kantō ōgenki 關東往還記
genzu 現因	Keōin 華王院
geyū 外用	kongōjin 金剛神
gōbaku no eshin 業縛の依身	kongōkai 金剛界
Gochibō 五智房	kue 九會
gojoku 五濁	Kūkai 空海
gokuraku jōdo 極樂淨土	kūken 空見
hokkai dōjō 法界道場	mappō 末法
hokkai gūden 法界宮殿	mitsugō myōji 密號名字
Honchō kōsōden 本朝高僧伝	mitsugon dōjō 密嚴道場
honsho fushō 本初不生	mitsugon kezō 密嚴華藏
inni 因位	mitsugonkoku 密嚴國
issō fushō 一生補處	Mitsugon shohishaku 密嚴諸秘釈
jikkai jūbujū jizai 十界住不住自在	muga 無我
jissō jōjū 實相常住	mujō bodai 無上菩提
Jōkai 空海	Mujū Ichien 無住一円
Jōkei 貞慶	Myōe 明恵
jōken 常見	Myōtan 妙端

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Myōzui 妙瑞	shiigi 四威儀
naishō 內證	shiki 色
Nanshōbō 南勝房	shikisō no busshin 色相佛身
okuji fumō 憶持不忘	shin 心
rengeszō sekai 蓮華藏世界	shinjo 心所
rokudai 六天	shinnyo 真知
rokudō 六道	shitsuji 悉地
Ryōjin hishō 梁塵秘抄	shūjakushin 執著心
sambōin 三寶院	shutsuri tokudatsu 出離得脫
san'akudō 三惡道	shōju 聖衆
sangai 三界	sokuji nishin 即事而真
sangō 三業	sokushin jōbutsu 即身成佛
sansōgi 三僧祇	sōzoku no eshin 相續の依身
shaba sekai 娑婆世界	taizōkai 胎藏界
Shasekishū 沙石集	taizōzuzō 胎藏圖像
Shiban 師蠻	tosotsuten 都率天
shichi 四智	zenchishiki 善知識
Shichibutsu tsukai ge 七佛通誠偈	zokutai 俗諦
shidaigoin 四大護院	Zōtanshū 雜談集
shigyō 四行	

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