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The Identity between the Purport of the Perfect and Esoteric Teachings

The agreement of Tendai Perfect teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* and Esoteric Buddhism is one of the hallmarks of Japanese Tendai. I trace this idea from Indian sources such as the *Dazhidulun* to China in works by Zhiyi, Zhanran, and Yixing, finally ending in Japan with a number of figures such as Saichō and Annen. In doing so, I explore how the terms and their nuances gradually changed.

KEYWORDS: Taimitsu, Tendai—*enmitsu itchi*—agreement of *Lotus Sutra* and Esoteric Buddhism—Saichō—Annen

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THE IDENTITY of the purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings (*enmitsu itchi* 円密一致) is a major focal point of Tendai doctrine. This term clearly refers to the harmony and agreement between the Perfect teachings of the *Lotus Sutra* and Esoteric Buddhism. The phrase “the Exoteric and Esoteric teachings have the same purport” (*kenmitsu itchi* 顕密一致) was used in a similar way, but in this case the definition of the word “exoteric” presented a major problem. In this article, both of these technical terms for the agreement of teachings are examined.

The Tendai scholar Ninkū 仁空 (1309–1388) stressed the importance of the transmission of the teaching *enmitsu itchi* in his *Shanagō anryūsō* 遮那業案立草 (Thoughts on the esoteric course, fascicle 7, T 77.227c). In his sub-commentary on Śubhakarasiṃha (637–735) and Yixing’s 一行 (683–727) commentary on the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, the *Gishaku sōketsushō* 義積搜決抄 (Investigations and determinations about the commentary on the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, fascicle 1.3, TZ 10: 149c), he discussed this topic while examining the identity of the Buddha as preacher. For Ninkū, because the identity of the purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings was one of the cardinal teachings of Tendai, he did not have to be obsessive in his use of the exact term. For example, he used such headings as “the identity of the two schools” (*ryōshū ittetsu no hōmon* 兩宗一徹の法門; TZ 10: 206c) or “the agreement of Perfect and Esoteric teachings” (*enmitsu ittetsu no shūshi* 円密一徹の宗旨; TZ 10: 327a). These had the same meaning as *enmitsu itchi*.

Even when he did not use the actual phrase *enmitsu itchi*, the doctrine was understood as a hallmark of Tendai. Where did the concept come from? In terms of doctrine, the commentary on the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* by Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing, the *Darijing yishi* 大日經義釈, played a major role. In terms of Japanese Tendai Esoteric Buddhist (Taimitsu) history, Saichō 最澄 (766/767–822) was the source of the teaching. Ennin 円仁 (794–864) and Enchin 円珍 (814–891) took *enmitsu itchi* as the premise for many of their remarks. However, Annen 安然 (841–?) is particularly noteworthy as the thinker who completed the full exposition of the teaching. In the process of introducing Tendai doctrines into Esoteric teachings, he systematized the whole of Tendai thought. The result was

* Translator’s note: the meaning of the key terms in this article change over time and include such nuances as Esoteric, secret, hidden, and profound. Following Ōkubo’s lead, I have endeavored to consider the context in which a text was written in translating terms.

that the harmony and identity of the purport of the Perfect and Esoteric teachings became a fundamental tenet of the classification of teachings.

Annen did not actually use the term *enmitsu itchi*. However, in the *Bodaishin gishō* 菩提心義抄 (Compilation on the doctrine of the mind of enlightenment), he established a fivefold classification of doctrines: Hīnayāna, Pervasive, Distinct, Perfect, and Esoteric. He frequently discussed Perfect and Esoteric teachings together. Among the terms that appear in his writings are the two teachings of Perfect and Esoteric (*enmitsu nikyō* 円密二教 or *enmitsu ryōkyō* 円密兩教), the meanings of Perfect and Esoteric (*enmitsu gi* 円密義), and Perfect and Esoteric Buddha(s) (*enmitsu butsu* 円密仏). In addition, the expression “the First Abode of the Perfect and Esoteric (teaching)” (*enmitsu shōjū* 円密初住) reflects his emphasis on the First Abode in his descriptions of the Perfect and Esoteric paths.

Although Ennin, Enchin, and Annen—the three scholars who established Taimitsu teachings—considered Esoteric Buddhism to be superior, they were also committed to blending Esoteric Buddhism with the Tendai or Perfect teaching. To rephrase the issue, these scholars strove to clarify the identity of the purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings even as they established Esoteric Buddhism as superior. In fact, as Tendai scholars they had to argue for the identity of the purport of Perfect and Esoteric Buddhism. This is particularly clear in Annen’s writings. For example, in the *Kyōji mondō* 教時間答 (Questions and answers about teachings and time periods), fascicle 1, Annen wrote:

Question: The Tendai School considers the *Lotus [Sutra]* to be the ultimate teaching... However, if the *Lotus Sutra* is considered to be ultimate, then Esoteric teachings should be provisional. If Esoteric teachings are ultimate, then the *Lotus Sutra* should be provisional. How can you say that they are identical?
 Answer: The *Lotus Sutra* was preached through the acquired wisdom that everything that arises and ceases is the one-mind (*issai ishinshiki* 一切一心識)... Esoteric teachings were preached in terms of the innate wisdom that everything is equal and is thus the one-mind (*isshin isshinshiki* 一心一心識)... Thus according to Zhiyi, the mind, Buddha, and sentient beings are not distinct. The mind is all phenomena; all phenomena are the mind. They have neither a horizontal nor a vertical relationship. They are neither the same nor different. Even an instant of consciousness (*keni isshin* 芥爾一心) is replete with the three thousand realms. This is the Shingon School’s innate wisdom that everything is equal because all is the one-mind. (T 75.389c)

In this passage, Annen used doctrines from the *Shi moheyan lun* 釋摩訶衍論 (Commentary on the *Awakening of Faith* attributed to Nāgārjuna) to argue that the *Lotus Sutra* was equated with the ultimate teaching of Tendai as the ninth consciousness, the acquired wisdom that everything that arises and ceases is the one-mind; it was classified below Esoteric Buddhism, the tenth consciousness or the innate wisdom that everything is equal because it is the one-mind. At

the same time, the popular phrase from the *Huayan jing* (*Avatamsaka-sūtra*), “The mind, Buddha, and sentient beings are not distinct,” was used to prove that Tendai doctrine was the same as Esoteric innate wisdom, that everything is equal because it is the one-mind. As Annen introduced Tendai teachings into his explanations of Esoteric Buddhism, he frequently accepted and rejected teachings on the basis of his own value judgments. Particularly important are some passages where Annen simultaneously argued that the Perfect and Esoteric teachings were both congruent and incongruent.

In his discussion of the bodies of the Buddha, Annen considered Tendai teachings of the identification (*soku* 即) of the three bodies. Even as he argued that Tendai’s teaching of the mutual identification of the three bodies of the Buddha did not equal Esoteric teachings, he also maintained that the Tendai teaching of the inherent essence and function of the Buddha’s bodies was the same as Esoteric doctrine. When he discussed the preaching of the Dharmakāya, when the mutual identification of the three bodies was considered from an inclusive perspective, the Tendai and Esoteric positions were the same. From an exclusive perspective, Tendai did not measure up to Esoteric Buddhism, but then Annen went on to cite quotations that demonstrated that from the perspective of Tendai doctrine, Esoteric Buddhism had the same purport. Because misunderstandings are present in the research of earlier scholars, I would like to examine these issues further (ŌKUBO 2004, 15–61).

I begin by citing the following noteworthy passage from the third fascicle of the *Bodaishin gishō*:

As for the tenets used in Shingon [here referring to Taimitsu], if we argue inclusively, the Perfect-Sudden teachings of Tendai and Kegon are embraced. If we argue exclusively, then [Tendai’s] four teachings and [Kegon’s] five teachings are not embraced. This refers to the Diamond-vehicle that includes both the phenomenal and principle aspects of Esoteric Buddhism. Thus, Esoteric Buddhism differs from Tendai and Kegon. Consequently, there are eight petals surrounding the central platform; further out from these eight petals are the inconceivable leaves. Although the Dharmakāya and the self-oriented *sambhogakāya* both preach, they are not the same as the words of the other-oriented *sambhogakāya* or the transformational bodies of the Buddha. Zhiyi also stated, “The Dharmakāya does not preach, but mysteriously helps all.” According to the *Lankāvatāra-sūtra*, “The Dharmakāya emits light that eternally illuminates all.” Our school’s Dharmakāya and Self-oriented *sambhogakāya* ultimately take all sentient beings, lands, and the myriad phenomena as their essence. All the myriad phenomena are their preaching. The various Buddhas take all the sentient beings and lands as the Three Mysteries of the Dharmakāya and as the pleasures and instruments of the Self-oriented *sambhogakāya*. However, sentient beings do not know this because they are in

the midst of delusion. Thus the *Yuanjuejing* (Sutra of perfect enlightenment) states, “O Samantabhadra, you should know that from the beginning, all sentient beings are filled with illusions and ignorance, yet all are established from the Perfect enlightenment of the minds of the Tathāgatas.” (T 75.508c)

The problem with this passage arises with the explanation of the statement, “Zhiyi also stated, ‘The Dharmakāya does not preach, but mysteriously helps all.’” In discussing this passage, scholars such as Shimizutani Kyōjun have mentioned the lack of any clear assertion in Tiantai writings that the Dharmakāya preaches.¹ But is this actually the case? From the context of the passage, the emphasis on the phrase “mysteriously helps all” could be understood as a reference to the nature of the Dharmakāya’s activities. Even so, the statement attributed to Zhiyi that the Dharmakāya does not preach is somewhat difficult to understand. In this regard, the following passage from fascicle 2 of the *Kyōji mondō* explains the activities of the Dharmakāya in a way that is noteworthy.

For example, all of the six elements, the ten realms, the myriad phenomena accordingly realize sagehood and are embraced in Vairocana’s preaching at all times. Why? Because all phenomena are the essence of Mahāvairocana. Whenever activities of the Buddha occur, they are encompassed within the actions of Mahāvairocana. According to Tiantai tenets, the Dharmakāya does not preach, does not manifest, but mysteriously helps all. This is the meaning of this statement. (T 75.409a)

In other words, just as in the above-mentioned *Bodaishin gishō*, Annen argues that the various phenomena are nothing other than the activities of Dainichi Nyorai (Mahāvairocana Tathāgata).

Here he clearly relied on the sentence, “Zhiyi stated, ‘The Dharmakāya does not preach, does not manifest itself, but mysteriously helps all,’” to prove his point. But what was Annen’s statement based on? He does not cite a source, but he probably relied on the following two passages in Zhiyi’s *Weimo jing wenshu* (Commentary on text of the *Vimalakīrti*, fascicle 1) and *Weimo jing lueshu* (Brief commentary on the *Vimalakīrti*, fascicle 1):

As for explaining that the preaching and teaching of the land of eternal quiescent light is not the same [as in other lands], if we consider the ultimate land of eternal quiescent light, then there is no preaching and no manifestation. It sur-

1. According to SHIMIZUTANI 1972, 302: “Statements such as the following demonstrate that the Dharmakāya is active but do not assert that the Dharmakāya preaches: ‘According to Zhiyi, the Dharmakāya does not preach, but mysteriously helps all’ and ‘According to the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, the Dharmakāya emits light that eternally illuminates all.’” However, for Annen, not only Zhiyi, but also the *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra*, serve as sources supporting his assertion that the Dharmakāya preaches.

passes *dha* 荼 [the final syllable in the forty-two character Sanskrit syllabary referred to in Tiantai texts] so that there is no letter that can be preached. And yet we speak of preaching the Dharma. The Dharmakāya is the Dharmadhātu [Dharma-realm] and constantly, universally, and mysteriously helps all sentient beings. This is the preaching of the Dharmakāya. (z 1.27.435.left a–b)

As for the statement that preaching and teaching in the land of eternal quiescent light is not the same [as in other lands], when we consider the ultimate land of eternal quiescent light, there is no preaching and no manifestation and yet there are words and preaching. The Dharmakāya is without conditions and yet mysteriously helps all. It does not preach and yet preaches. In other words, this is the preaching of the Dharmakāya. (T 38.566c)

The phrase “mysteriously helps all sentient beings” refers to the nature of the Dharmakāya’s activity and can thus be understood as the preaching of the Dharmakāya. In other words, Annen stresses that it should be understood as the preaching of no–preaching, and thus insists that it is a declaration of the preaching of the Dharmakāya. How should this doctrine be understood? It is crucial to note that there can be multiple interpretations.² Nonetheless, for Annen, the phenomena in front of his eyes, just as they were, constituted the preaching of the Dharmakāya; this served as a major basis for his assertion that Perfect and Esoteric teachings had the same purport. This was a major hallmark of Annen’s teachings.

Esoteric Buddhism and Tendai Doctrine

As I have pointed out, Annen’s efforts to discover elements of Tendai doctrine that were in accord with Shingon or Esoteric Buddhism are crucial in Tendai doctrinal history. As Annen argued for the identity of the essential purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings, all the while placing Esoteric Buddhism at the center of his teachings, what place did he find for the Esoteric doctrines and practices that had never appeared in Tiantai?

The practice of the unique disciplines that constituted the Three Mysteries (*sanmitsu*) and the realization of superior attainments through them are hallmarks of Esoteric Buddhism. The realization of Buddhahood by the Nāga girl related in the “Devadatta” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* was interpreted in Esoteric Buddhist terms by equating it with the First Abode. According to the first fascicle of the *Bodaishin gishō*, “When the Nāga girl described in the *Lotus Sutra* is in the ocean and hears this sutra from Mañjuśrī, she is then able to obtain a prediction of Buddhahood, enter the First Abode, go southward to the world-sphere Spotless, pass through the eight events of a buddha’s life, and realize Buddhahood;

2. For a discussion of how the term “preaching of the Dharmakāya” is understood in Zhiyi’s *Weimo jing wenshu* and *lueshu*, see ŌKUBO 1998, 183–89.

this must be through the practice of this meditation” (T 75.471a). The realization of Buddhahood by the Nāga girl could be placed in either the ocean or in the southern world-sphere Spotless. On the basis of the ninth fascicle of the *Shouhu guojiezhutuoluoni jing* (Sutra on the dhāraṇī that protects the ruler of the nation, T 19.570c), Annen argued that when the Nāga girl went to the untainted southern regions and passed through the eight events of the Buddha’s life, she had practiced the meditation on the syllable “om” (discerning the syllable *om* in a moon-disk). In Japanese Tendai doctrine, the issue of whether she realized Buddhahood in the ocean or after going to the southern regions was a major point of discussion. The usual approach to this issue was to identify one alternative as the actual attainment and the other as provisional. Annen discussed this approach in his *Sokushin jōbutsugi shiki* (Private record on the doctrine of the realization of Buddhahood with this very body), but did not touch on it in the passage in the *Bodaishin gishō* under discussion here. Usually the Nāga girl’s travel to the southern world-sphere Spotless and subsequent realization of Buddhahood were considered to be provisional, but Annen thought they were really attained through the practice of the meditation on the syllable *om*; this is evident in the following passage:

Question: According to the *Lotus Sutra*, the Nāga girl heard the sutra in the ocean and realized Buddhahood with the body she had at that time; she did not use this discernment. Why then do you say it is necessary?

Answer: Two proof-texts exist. First, according to the *Xindiguan jing* 心地觀經 (Sutra on the discernment of the mind-ground), “All those who have a relation [to Buddhism] and receive a prediction [of their Buddhahood] practice and attain realization by using this method.” Second, according to the *Pudixin lun* 菩提心論 (Treatise on the mind of enlightenment), “Because realization of Buddhahood with this very body is only attained through the method of mantra, this method of samādhi is preached here; but it is missing in other teachings and not recorded in them.” Thus you should know that the Nāga girl is a person who already has a relation [to Buddhism], has received a prediction [of her Buddhahood], and realized it with her body. Therefore, she must use this discernment if she is to go south, go through the eight events of a Buddha’s life, [and realize Buddhahood]. (T 75.471a)

Annen argued that the Nāga girl had gone to the southern regions, practiced the meditation on the syllable “om,” and realized Buddhahood. However, he did not explain why she had to go to the southern world-sphere Spotless to do this instead of practicing the meditation in the sea. Whatever the explanation to this problem may be, the key point for Annen in the path is that when a Tendai practitioner realized the First Abode, he entered the realm of Esoteric Buddhism. Annen’s position was based on a passage in Ennin’s *Soshitsujikyō sho* 蘇悉地經疏, in which Ennin claimed that a practitioner of the Perfect teaching was engaged in Esoteric Buddhism in principle only; after the First Abode, he entered the

realm of Esoteric Buddhism in both principle and practice—in other words, the world of Shingon or Esoteric Buddhism (*Bodaishin gishō*, T 75.534a).

As these issues are examined, the term *himitsu* also must be considered. I focus first on its use in expressions such as *himitsu zō* 秘密藏 or *himitsu no zō* 秘密之藏, in which *zō* can be translated as “treasury.” The meaning of *himitsu* varies according to the context in which it is used. It is often used to refer to the profundity of teachings. Thus it naturally came to play an important role in Tendai doctrine, particularly when it was used with the sense of Profound (*oku fukasa* 奥深さ) Treasury.

The term “Profound Treasury” (*himitsu no zō*, also translated as “Secret Treasury”) appears in the “Comfortable Conduct” chapter (Anlexing pin 安樂行品) of the *Lotus Sutra*: “O Mañjuśrī, this *Lotus Sutra* is the Secret Treasury of the Buddhas and Tathāgatas and is superior to all the sundry sutras. I have kept it through the ‘long night’ without proclaiming it; I proclaim it for the first time today to you” (T 9.39a). The term is also used in the “Four Supports” chapter (Siyi pin 四依品) of the Mahāyāna *Nirvāṇa Sutra*; particularly important is the following sentence paraphrasing the sutra, “With the nature that includes the defilements, one is able to know the Profound Treasury of the Tathāgata.” Of particular note here is the use of the phrase “know the Profound Treasury” rather than enter it. In other words, entering and knowing the Profound Treasury were seen as different, a distinction that is clearly articulated in discussions of the path. According to Tendai doctrine, entering the Profound Treasury is equated with the beginning stage of Partial Enlightenment (*bunshōi* 分証位), which is the same as the beginning of the First Abode. In contrast, knowing the Profound Treasury, as the above-mentioned passage specifies, indicates the worldling who is replete with defilements. Although no argument arose with identifying entry into the Profound Treasury with the First Abode, a debate did arise concerning which stage of the worldling was to be identified with knowledge of the Profound Treasury. According to Zhiyi, such knowledge was equivalent to the degree of identity in practice (*kangyō sokui* 觀行即位) or the five preliminary levels of disciples of the Buddha (*gohon deshi* 五品弟子). However some later exegetes argued that it should be equated with verbal identity (*myōji soku* 名字即) or seeming identity (*sōji soku* 相似即) (ŌKUBO 2004, 191–214).

How were these views used by Annen? As was indicated above, the First Abode of the Buddhist path was considered to be the transition between Exoteric and Esoteric teachings. This was considered to be the entry into the secret treasury that was composed of Esoteric Buddhism in both principle and practice (*jiri gu mitsu* 事理俱密). Because Esoteric Buddhism was defined as encompassing both principle and practice, it was clearly placed in a position superior to the Perfect teaching. In the *Bodaishin gishō* (fascicle 2), inclusive and exclusive arguments are established (T 75.491a–b). When an inclusive approach is employed,

then both the Perfect and Esoteric teachings would be included in the secret realm of the Tathāgata known by those in the stages of the worldling. They would all go through the same fifty-two stages on the path and realize Buddhahood with this very body. According to the exclusive approach, the Perfect teaching occupies the stages of the worldling before the First Abode, and these stages would not be included in the category of Esoteric Buddhism in both principle and practice. Moreover, even after one has entered the Secret Treasury, namely, the stages above the First Abode, the differences with the Perfect teaching would still be evident.

When these positions are considered, some might argue that they do not constitute the identity of the Perfect and Esoteric purport in a literal sense. However, Taimitsu scholars such as Ennin, Enchin, and Annen were always concerned with integrating their positions with Tendai doctrine, so much so that this became one of the hallmarks of Taimitsu doctrine. Most of the Esoteric sutras and treatises identify the first ground (*shoji* 初地), not the First Abode, as the entry into the level of sages (the stage when the practitioner begins to apprehend suchness). Even so, Annen's emphasis on the role of the First Abode was based on his study of Chinese Tiantai doctrine. His teachings focusing on the First Abode became one of the defining features of Taimitsu.

Problems with the Profound (or Secret) Teachings (himitsukyō 秘密教)

At the time of Zhiyi, Esoteric Buddhism did not exist, but his teachings were utilized in Taimitsu doctrine. Moreover, the elements in common between Zhiyi's teachings and Esoteric Buddhism should not be overlooked. For example, even though *dhāraṇī* are not unique to Esoteric Buddhism, they were often discussed in conjunction with it. The *Dainichikyō shiki* 大日經指歸 (Indications of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*), generally attributed to Enchin, states:

According to Zhiyi's [*Mohe zhiguan*], when Zhiyi practiced the *Lotus Sutra*, he obtained *dhāraṇī*. The four teachings propounded by Zhiyi are all based on *dhāraṇī*. Fluent and eloquent preaching arises through the power of *dhāraṇī*. If someone denies this, then he profoundly differs with the tenets of our teachers. Within, one realizes the Secret teachings; without, one preaches Exoteric teachings. Therefore, all the results [of practice] depend on this realization.

(BZ 26: 674a)

Thus, the claim that all of the Buddha's teachings were encompassed within *dhāraṇī* was said to be based on Zhiyi's obtaining *dhāraṇī*. The exegetical problem with this statement lies in the claim that while within Zhiyi realized the Secret teachings, he preached "Exoteric teachings" to others. The statement that Zhiyi obtained *dhāraṇī* comes from the statement in the first fascicle of the *Mohe zhiguan*, "[When he] practiced the Lotus repentance, he obtained *dhāraṇī*" (T 46.1b).

When Zhanran's writings are considered, fascicle 10b of his *Fahua wenju ji* (Commentary on Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju*) is typical:

Other teachings follow the events of the world, expelling bad fortune and increasing benefits. [The effects] brought forth are not the same. Those passages each had distinct discernments. This is because in the new translations these are called mantras and spells; people in the past perceived them as secret and did not translate them. These are like the procedures of the spells of this land. Thus in older translations, these were called spells. Now we say that these are all the seeds of inconceivable and secret mantras of the Tathāgatas.

(T 34.358a–b)

Passages like this reveal that while mentions of Esoteric Buddhism were not entirely absent, its influence was slight.

In Japanese Tendai, Ennin insisted that Mahāyāna teachings were Esoteric in principle and did not limit this designation to only the *Lotus Sutra*. A later Tendai scholar, Ninkū, while examining agreement of the basic purport of the Perfect and Esoteric teachings, wrote in the *Gishaku sōketsushō* (fascicle 2a):

Although the *Avatamsaka*, *Vimalakīrti*, *Greater Perfection of Wisdom*, and other Mahāyāna sutras [are partly] Esoteric in principle, [the aspects of these teachings] that are provisional are not Esoteric in principle. Because this teaching [of the identity of purport of Perfect and Esoteric] should be considered in regard to the Perfect, ultimate and unchanging [teaching], the *Lotus Sutra* should be designated as being identical with Esoteric teachings in principle.

(TZ 13: 8a)

The agreement between the *Lotus Sutra* and Esoteric Buddhism was Ninkū's primary interest, and so the significance of secrecy within the *Lotus Sutra* must be examined. According to Zhiyi's *Fahua wenju* (Words of the *Lotus Sutra*, fascicle 8a),

[As for the phrase in the *Lotus Sutra*] “the treasury of the hidden essentials [*hiyō no kura* 秘要之藏],” because it is concealed and not preached we consider it hidden. Because it encompasses all, it is essential. That which encompasses the true aspect of Suchness is the treasury. [According to the *Lotus Sutra*,] “This teaching is difficult to understand and propagate,” [so only] those with profound wisdom can confer it. For those without wisdom, it only increases their wrongdoing. Thus, it should not be indiscriminately preached. [As for the passage from the *Lotus Sutra*,] “From long, long ago, it has not yet been revealed,” this explains why the teaching that [persons of the] the two vehicles can become Buddhas is not in Hinayāna [teachings]. Nor do those teachings clarify the relation between teacher and disciples, or the origin and traces. Although the treasury of the true aspect is found in the *vaipulya* and Perfection of Wisdom teachings, they do not yet speak of the five vehicles becoming Buddhas. Nor have they cast off the traces to reveal the origin [*hosshaku kenpon* 発迹顕本].

The various gradual and sudden teachings have not yet been comprehensively explained and integrated [with this treasury] [*yūe* 融会]. Thus it is called hidden. This sutra fully explains the teachings that were hidden in the past. Thus it opens the secret treasury and must certainly be that hidden treasury. In this way, it is the hidden treasury that had not yet been revealed.³

This passage contains a noteworthy approach to the interpretation of the *Lotus Sutra*. Such teachings as the realization of Buddhahood by the two vehicles or the five vehicles had been kept secret in the past; thus the preaching of the *Lotus Sutra* was considered the opening of the hidden treasury. The relation between the *Lotus Sutra* and secrecy varied depending on the exegete's perspective. The view that the *Lotus Sutra* was secret because the realization of Buddhahood by the two vehicles had not yet been revealed was based on fascicle 100 of the *Dazhidulun* (Treatise on the perfection of wisdom): "The *Perfection of Wisdom* is not a secret teaching. And yet the *Lotus* and other sutras teach that arhats receive a prediction of future Buddhahood and attain Buddhahood" (T 25.754b). A passage in Zhiyi's *Fahua xuanyi* (Profound meaning of the *Lotus Sutra*, fascicle 10a) refers to this passage: "According to the *Dazhidulun*, 'The *Perfection of Wisdom* is not a secret teaching.' It is entrusted to Ānanda. The *Lotus Sutra* is a secret teaching; it is entrusted to the various bodhisattvas" (T 33.804b). A similar passage is found in fascicle 10b of the same text: "According to fascicle 100 [of the *Dazhidulun*], 'The *Lotus Sutra* is secret; the *Perfection of Wisdom* is not secret because it does not elucidate the realization of Buddhahood by the two vehicles' (T 33.811c). Ji 基 (Cien Dashi 慈恩大師, 632–682) echoes this view in fascicle 10a of his *Fahua xuanzan* 法華玄贊: "Nāgārjuna explains this, saying, 'The other sutras are not secret; only the *Lotus Sutra* is secret because it explains that the two vehicles realize Buddhahood'" (T 34.842c). According to fascicle 10b of the *Fahua xuanyi*,

You should know that Exoteric [teachings] are shallow, but that Secret [teachings] are profound. Now the *Perfection of Wisdom* and *Lotus Sutras* both elucidate how bodhisattvas realize acquiescence to the unproduced nature of phenomena and acquire the six superhuman powers. These [texts] are secret [*mimi* 秘密], profound, and great. Now in regard to Secret [teachings], we can further discuss how they can be classified into hidden [*hi* 秘] and not hidden. The *Perfection of Wisdom* does not elucidate the realization of Buddhahood of the two vehicles; because it lacks this provision, it is not classified as hidden.

(T 33.811c)

3. See T 34.110b. This is an explanation of the following passage from the "Dharma-teacher" chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* (T 9.31b): "This sutra is the treasury of the hidden essentials of the Buddhas; it must not be distributed or recklessly transmitted to others. It has been guarded by the Buddhas, the World-Honored Ones, and from times past until now has never been openly expounded." The passage from the *Fahua wenzhu* focuses on the phrase "treasury of hidden essentials."

This section was followed by the notation that Zhiyi's student Guanding had personally recorded the differences and similarities between the teachings.

When Chinese Tiantai views are examined, the following discussion of the term *mimi* 秘密—translated in the following passage as “hidden” and “secret” from fascicle 9b of the *Fahua wenju*—is vital to an understanding of Tiantai views on secret teachings:

As for the term *mimi* [秘密] [that appears in the *Lotus Sutra*], the identity of the one body [of the Buddha] with the three bodies is called hidden [*mi* 秘]; the identity of the three bodies with the one body is called secret [or profound] [*mi* 密]. Moreover, that which was not preached in the past is called hidden; that which only a Buddha can know is called profound. The term “the power of superhuman activities” [*shentong zhi li* 神通之力] [in the *Lotus Sutra*] refers to the functioning of the three bodies. Superhuman [*shen* 神] refers to the natural unmoving principle; this is the body of Dharma-nature. Penetrations [*tong* 通] refer to unhindered inconceivable wisdom; this is the reward body. Power refers to usefulness and freedom; this is the response body. The Buddha has three bodies throughout the three time periods [of past, present, and future]. Within the various teachings, this is hidden and not transmitted.⁴

Zhiyi argued by separately analyzing the characters *mi* 秘 and *mi* 密, discussing the mutual identification of the one body and three bodies of the Buddha, and by distinguishing between teachings that were not preached in the past and those that only the Buddha could know. In this passage he did not directly link the teachings not preached in the past with the realization of Buddhahood by the two vehicles. Putting these considerations aside, Zhiyi's key point in this passage was that the term *mimi* clearly had the sense of the profound.

The realization of Buddhahood by the two (Hinayāna) vehicles is not mentioned in other scriptures and must be considered to be secret, but this teaching is revealed in the *Lotus Sutra*. Thus in the *Lotus Sutra* it is no longer a secret teaching.⁵

How was the term *mimi* (Jp. *himitsu*) treated in Japanese Esoteric traditions? Annen's explanations are especially striking. He takes up this issue in the *Kyōji*

4. See T 34.129c. This is an explanation of the phrase “the power of the secret superhuman penetrations of the Tathāgata” from the “Life Span of the Tathāgata” chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* (T 9.42b).

5. The passage from fascicle 10b of the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.811c) quoted earlier in this article continues, “Question: Because the Perfection of Wisdom has not yet opened up and explained the provisional teachings, it must be secret. The *Lotus Sutra* has opened up and explained the provisional. Shouldn't it be called Exoteric? Answer: If one were to cling to opening the provisional, then it would be as your question suggests. However, now we only take the simple and shallow as provisional.” From the perspective of explaining the provisional, the *Lotus Sutra* could be said to not be secret.

mondō (fascicle 4) and the *Bodaishin gishō* (fascicle 2). The explanation in the *Bodaishin gishō* is detailed and includes a number of different expositions of the term. Thorough research on this topic exists,⁶ but I would like to add observations from the perspective of the identity of purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings. First, I consider the following passage from fascicle 4 of Annen's *Kyōji mondō*:

Question: Why are Shingon teachings called secret teachings?

Answer: Four explanations are included in the [*Darijing*] *yishi*. The first is that which is hidden by Buddhas. If a person does not have the faculties for sudden enlightenment, then he will not be able to obtain these. The second is that which is hidden in sentient beings [through ignorance and other defilements]. The words and sounds of beings in the various rebirths are all mantras [*shingon* 真言]. These are naturally hidden by sentient beings, but are not hidden by Buddhas. Third, verbal explanations are hidden. The secret utterances [*mitsugō*] by the various Buddhas all have separate profound meanings. If one takes the literal meaning from the words, then one loses the Buddha's meaning. The fourth is the secret of the essence of the Dharma. The supreme enlightenment that Buddhas themselves realize is not in the mind and its objects. Without empowerment [*kaji* 加持], then even a tenth-ground bodhisattva cannot discern it. How much less so a human being in the midst of the rounds of birth and death? Thus we call it Secret [*himitsu*]. (T 75.449b)

A similar passage is found in fascicle 2 of the *Bodaishin gishō*, where the following six categories of secrecy are listed: 1. the subtlety of the essence of Dharma; 2. the realization of the Buddhas; 3. non-conferral on those without proper faculties; 4. that which sentient beings do not understand; 5. that which those who have not entered the *samaya* are not permitted to perform, preach, hear, or hold; and 6. the practices that practitioners must hide and not publicly perform (T 75.492b). However, these do not match up directly with the four categories from the *Kyōji mondō*. In particular, the third category in the *Kyōji mondō*—that verbal explanations are hidden—is not found in the *Bodaishin gishō*. The fourth category in the *Kyōji mondō*, the secret of the essence of the Dharma, is not explained in the same way as the first category of the *Bodaishin gishō*, the subtlety of the essence of Dharma. Even so, Annen clearly intended to develop his argument from the perspective of the identity of purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings in both texts. In fascicle 4 of the *Kyōji mondō*, Annen wrote:

In addition, Zhiyi states, “When people hear the same sermon but perceive it differently and are unaware of each other, it is called the hidden undetermined

6. See MISAKI (1988), “Godaiin Annen ni okeru *himitsu gi*” (The meaning of “secret” in Annen's [thought]), in *Taimitsu no kenkyū* (Studies of Taimitsu), chapter 1, part 3.

teaching.” Now in the teaching of mantras, people hear and perceive the same [sounds]; they have the same wisdom and the same bodies. Although they perceive the concentrations of the five [provisional] vehicles, they thoroughly know the single ultimate path. These are not the same as Hossō and Tendai implicit or incomplete [*furyō* 不了] and provisional secret teachings. In addition, Zhiyi stated, “When the teaching is not conferred on those with inappropriate faculties, it is called hidden. The subtlety of the essence of the Dharma is called profound [*mi* 密].” When we compare this with our categories, the first and fourth are the same, but the second and third are not found [in Zhiyi’s scheme]. (T 75.449c)

In this passage the secret undetermined teaching in which people hear the same sermon but perceive it differently and are unaware of each other is clearly distinguished from the Shingon Esoteric teachings. The former is called implicit (*furyō*) or provisional secret teachings. In addition, “When the teaching is not conferred on those with inappropriate faculties, it is called secret. The subtlety of the essence of the Dharma called profound (*mi* 密)” is identified as a Tendai teaching; these two sentences are respectively identified in the *Kyōji mondō* as the first meaning (that hidden by the Buddhas) and fourth meaning (the subtlety of the essence of the Dharma) of secret. Thus the second (that hidden by sentient beings) and third meanings (that hidden in verbal expressions) are not derived from Tendai. The following passage from the *Bodaishin gishō* (fascicle 2) is an important explanation of this.

According to the commentary on the *Tiantai Fahua wenju*, “When the teaching is not conferred on those with inappropriate faculties, it is called hidden. The subtlety of the essence of the Dharma is called profound [*mi* 密].” Thus in the *Lotus* we find six meanings. First, in the *Fahualun*’s (Commentary on the *Lotus Sutra*) enumeration of seventeen names, the term “secret treasury of all the Buddhas” appears. According to “The Mystic Powers of the Tathāgata” chapter, the treasury of hidden essentials of all the Buddhas is the subtlety of the essence of the Dharma. Second, at the beginning of “The Life Span of the Tathāgata” chapter, the secret superhuman powers of the Tathāgatas are the secret treasury of the three virtues of *nirvāṇa*; this is the meaning of the secret of realization. Third, near the end of “The Comfortable Conduct” chapter is a passage that states, “I will now preach the secret treasury of all the Buddhas.” This has the meaning that it should not be conferred on those with inappropriate faculties. Fourth, at the beginning of the “Parable” chapter, Śāriputra states that it is his fault and that of the other śrāvakas, not that of the World Honored One, [that the Buddha preached the Hīnayāna]. This has the meaning of being naturally hidden by sentient beings. Fifth, the “Parable” chapter includes [instructions] not to preach this sutra to those without wisdom. This has the meaning that it is not permitted for those who do not yet aspire to

[supreme] enlightenment. Sixth, [the chapter] also mentions a person seeking the Buddha's relics. In the same way, a person might seek the sutra; when he has received it, he should preach it. This has the meaning of secretly holding the *Lotus*.
(T 75.493a)

The *Tiantai Fahua wenju shi* (translated above as “Commentary on the *Tiantai Fahua wenju*”) cited here in *Bodaishin gishō* is given simply as “Tiantai” in the *Kyōji mondō*. The first half of the passage is from the *Fahua xuanyi* (fascicle 1a; T 33.684b). The second half is probably based on the following passage from Zhanran's *Fahua wenju ji* (fascicle 7b; T 34.285c): “If we take *mi* as meaning ‘subtle,’ then the *Lotus Sutra* is *mi*. If we consider *mi* in terms of revealed and hidden, then śrāvakas, from the time of the Deer Park onwards, all received revealed teachings. How could they be called *mi*?” Moreover, in the *Bodaishin gishō*, Annen insisted that the six meanings of secrecy were found in the *Lotus Sutra*. In fact, Annen seems to be emphasizing the identity of purport of the Perfect and Esoteric teachings more in the *Bodaishin gishō* than in the *Kyōji mondō*.

The six definitions of secrecy were based on passages from the *Lotus Sutra*. The first, which was based on the seventeen names in the *Fahualun*, probably relied on the seventh element in the following passage: “Sixth, it is called the secret Dharma of all the Buddhas because this sutra is profound and only Buddhas can know it. Seventh, it is called the treasury of all the Buddhas because the treasury of the meritorious concentrations of the Tathāgata is in this sutra. Eighth, it is called the secret place of all the Buddhas because it is not conferred on those who are not suitable for the Dharma because their faculties are not yet mature” (T 26.2c). The first category, the subtlety of the essence of Dharma, is based on a passage from the “The Mystic Powers of the Tathāgata” chapter (T 9.52a); the second category, the realization of the Buddhas, is based on passages from the “Life Span of the Tathāgata” chapter (T 9.42b) and a passage in the *Nirvāṇa Sutra* on the secret treasury of the three virtues (of *nirvāṇa*). The third category, not conferring the teachings on those with inappropriate faculties, is based on a passage from the “Comfortable Conduct” chapter (T 9.39a). The last three categories—that sentient beings did not understand it; that those who had not entered the *samaya* should not be permitted to perform, preach, hear, or hold it; and the practices that practitioners must hide and not publicly perform—were all from passages from the “Parable” chapter (T 9.10c, 16a, 16b). Thus this passage reveals Annen's efforts to develop the doctrine of the identity of purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings.

The exegetical problem is found when the continuation of the above-mentioned passage from the *Bodaishin gishō* is considered:

According to Zhiyi's *Bajiao* (Eight teachings), “Those who listen [to the Buddha] but perceive [his sermons] differently (and practice) knowing about each

other [follow] the revealed undetermined [teaching]. Those who listen [to the Buddha], but perceive [his sermons] differently without knowing about each other [follow] the hidden undetermined teaching.” According to the *Dazhidulun*, there are two types of teachings. The first is the revealed teaching; during the first turning of the wheel of Dharma, Ajñāta-Kauṇḍinya realized the fruit of enlightenment, and eighty-thousand deities attained the insight that phenomena do not arise substantially. The second is the hidden teaching; from among the innumerable deities, some realized the four fruits [from that of the stream-winner to the arhat], some pratyekabuddhahood, some the ten grounds [of a bodhisattva], and some the last existence before Buddhahood. This was all at the same time the Buddha preached the *āgamas*. This is also explained in the *Miji lishi jing* [密迹力士經]. The Three Mysteries of the Tathāgatas are various and not the same. Through them, the three-vehicles realize enlightenment.

The commentary on the *Vajraśekhara-sūtra* [*Kongōchō kyō sho*] cites the *Dazhidulun* and interprets it as referring to Shingon Esoteric teachings and realizations. Zhiyi took the idea that members of the assembly sat together but were concealed and did not know each other's presence as secret. As for mantras, the Three Mysteries of the Tathāgatas in that sutra are considered doctrines of the Shingon secret teachings. The tenets of the two traditions are thus not different from each other.

This is a discussion of the relation between the Secret Undetermined Teaching in Tiantai classifications of doctrine and the Secret Teaching in the *Dazhidulun*. Although some aspects of the argument are difficult to understand, basically the Secret Undetermined Teaching and Shingon Esoteric teachings are different. Although at the end of the above passage, the Secret Undetermined Teaching and Shingon Esoteric Buddhism are said not to be different, the passage does not actually contain a good argument identifying the Secret Undetermined Teaching with Shingon Esoteric Buddhism. The Tendai and Shingon views of secrecy are explained from their respective positions and both are established as valid.

An important issue in Taimitsu arose in the interpretation of the above-mentioned passage from the *Dazhidulun* (fascicle 4):

There are two types of Buddha Dharma: hidden and revealed. Within the revealed doctrine, the Buddhas, pratyekabuddhas, and arhats are all fields of merit because they have exhausted their defilements without remainder. Within the hidden doctrine, the various bodhisattvas are said to have realized acquiescence to the unproduced nature of phenomena, to have exhausted their defilements, and to have acquired the six types of superhuman powers in order to benefit sentient beings. (T 25.84c-85a)

In addition, according to fascicle 65 of the *Dazhidulun*, “There are two types of activities of the Buddhas: 1. hidden [*mi* 密] and 2. revealed [*xian* 現]”

(T 25.517a).⁷ These passages originally had nothing to do with Shingon Esoteric Buddhism. When Zhiyi discussed undetermined teachings in the *Fahua xuanyi* (fascicle 10a), he mentioned the *Dazhidulun*'s classification of revealed and hidden teachings in his account of how poison within cream killed people.⁸

7. The passage from the *Dazhidulun* relevant to the secret undetermined teaching follows (T 25.517a):

Question: The first sermon caused people to realize enlightenment; it was called the first turning of the wheel of Dharma. Why do you now speak of the second turning of the wheel of Dharma? If we call the Buddha's sermons turnings of the wheel of Dharma, then all would be the wheel of Dharma. Why do you limit it to two?

Answer: The first sermon is called the wheel of the determined ultimate, unitary Dharma. Through the first turning and so forth, all the Dharmas are exhausted; thus we comprehensively call them all "turnings." The gods saw that many in the assemblies realized the highest path and acquiescence to the unproduced [nature of] phenomena. Because they saw these benefits, they praised it by calling it the second turning of the wheel of Dharma. In the first turning of the wheel, 80,000 deities realized acquiescence to the unproduced nature of phenomena. Only Ajñāta-kaundinya became a stream-entrant. Now innumerable deities realize acquiescence into the unproduced [nature of] phenomena; thus we call it the second turning of the wheel of Dharma. The present turning of the wheel of Dharma resembles the first turning.

Question: In the current turning of the wheel of Dharma, many realize enlightenment, but in the first turning of the wheel of Dharma, few realized enlightenment. How can you take the larger and compare it with the smaller?

Answer: The activities of the Buddha can be classified into two types: secret and revealed. In the first turning of the wheel of Dharma, among the śrāvakas, 80,001 became stream-entrants. The bodhisattvas saw innumerable myriads of people realize the śrāvaka path; countless numbers plant the causes and conditions of the pratyekabuddha path; myriads develop the aspiration to the supreme path; and myriads practice the six perfections and gain deep concentrations and *dhāraṇī*. At the same time, innumerable sentient beings of the ten directions realized acquiescence to the unproduced nature of phenomena. Innumerable myriads of sentient beings dwelled in the first through the tenth grounds. Innumerable myriads of sentient beings realized the stage where only a single birth remains before Buddhahood. Innumerable myriads sat in the seat where Buddhahood is attained, heard this Dharma, and quickly realized Buddhahood. These inconceivable characteristics are named the secret turning of the wheel of the Dharma. It is like a great rain; large trees receive much [water], small trees a little. Thus, you should know that the first turning of the wheel of Dharma is also great and that to take the later [turning] and liken it to the prior is not a problem.

8. The passage in the *Fahua xuanyi* (T 33.806b) follows:

Third, as for the undetermined teaching, it is not a Distinct teaching [in terms of content]; when it is explained in terms of the gradual and sudden [approaches to teaching], its meaning becomes clear. According to fascicle 27 of the *[Nirvāṇa]-sūtra*, "When poison is placed in milk, it will kill people; cream, butter, and ghee also can kill people. This refers to [people hearing] the Mahāyāna teachings of the true aspect of phenomena from past Buddhas. This was compared with poison. Now when people encounter Śākyamuni's teachings for śrāvakas, the poison comes forth and people with

In addition, in the first fascicle of the *Kongōchōkyō sho*, Ennin stated, “According to the *Dazhidulun*, “There are two types of teachings of the Buddha: 1. secret [*himitsu* 秘密], and 2. revealed [*kenji* 顯示]” (T 61.9b). However, Ennin cited the passage with the presupposition that the hidden teaching referred to Shingon Esoteric teachings (Supreme vajra secret vehicle [*Saishō kongō himitsu jō* 最勝金剛秘密乘 or *Saijō kongō himitsu jō* 最上金剛秘密乘]). Although Ennin’s interpretation may not seem reasonable, it was followed by Annen, who particularly relied on the passage in fascicle 65 of the *Dazhidulun*, cited above. By combining this with a passage concerning the Three Mysteries from the *Miji lishi jing* 密迹力士經, he was able to read Shingon Esoteric Buddhist teachings into the *Dazhidulun* passage on secret teachings.⁹ In addition, fascicle 65 of the *Dazhidulun* also contains the phrase, “the profound concentrations and the approach through *dhāraṇī*.”

Annen compiled Tendai doctrine up to his time, but occasionally his position is not easily understood. As an exegete of Taimitsu doctrine, Annen played a crucial role in establishing a form of Esoteric Buddhism based on the identity of purport of the Perfect and Esoteric teachings.

defilements and delusions die. If they were like Trapuṣa and Bhallika, then by merely hearing the five precepts, they would realize the acquiescence to the unproduced nature of phenomena. Three hundred people realized acquiescence [to emptiness] that arises with faith; the four celestial kings realized acquiescence [to emptiness] that arises through compliance with the path. All drank the medicine of everlasting bliss, wore the amulet of longevity, and abided in morality, and saw the mother of Buddhas. This is how [poison] within milk kills people.

[Next, we consider how poison] within butter kills people. According to the *Dazhidulun*, there are two types of teaching: revealed and secret. The revealed teaching refers to the first turning of the wheel of Dharma, when the five monks and eighty-thousand deities obtained the purity of the Dharma-eye [that enabled them to clearly perceive the truth]. If we consider the secret teaching, innumerable bodhisattvas were able to realize acquiescence to the unproduced nature of phenomena. This [demonstrates] that the poison reaches butter and still is able to kill people. As for the [poison] within curds that kills people, this refers to the various bodhisattvas that are able to discern their Buddha-nature through the *vaipulya* teachings and dwell in great *nirvāṇa*. Butter killing people refers to those bodhisattvas who are able to discern their Buddha-nature through the great Perfection of Wisdom teachings. Ghee killing people refers to teachings within the *Nirvāṇa-sūtra* through which śrāvakas with dull faculties develop their ability to perceive wisdom and are able to discern their Buddha-nature. It extends to pratyekabuddhas with dull faculties, bodhisattvas, and those in the seven provisional [vehicles prior to the Perfect teaching], who will all enter final *nirvāṇa*. This is called the indeterminate teaching; it does not refer to a specific [teaching, but rather to a teaching technique].”

9. *Dabao jijing*, fascicle 10, T 11.53b. Also note the following passage in the *Dazhidulun* (fascicle 10), “As is stated in the *Adamantine sūtra on the Esoteric traces*, the Buddha has Three Mysteries” (T 25.127c).

Conclusion

Exoteric and Esoteric teachings were mentioned together and called *kenmitsu*. However, the usage of this term has hardly been investigated by modern scholars. In fact, terms such as this have frequently been misused.

Kūkai 空海 (774–835) contrasted Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism in his text, the *Ben kenmitsu nikyō ron* 弁顯密二教論 (Distinguishing the two teachings of the Exoteric and Esoteric), in which Esoteric Buddhism was clearly considered the superior teaching and Exoteric Buddhism inferior. Thus when Kūkai used the term *kenmitsu*, he clearly assigned values to the two terms. Kūkai’s doctrinal position is seen in the following passage from the *Go himitsu giki* 五秘密儀軌 (Ritual manual of the five secrets): “The practitioner of Exoteric Buddhism must pass through three incalculable eons before realizing supreme enlightenment” (T 20.535b).

Before Esoteric Buddhism was propagated, terms such as “secret” (*himitsu*) and “secret teaching” (*himitsukyō*) simply referred to profound doctrines. When such terms were contrasted with revealed or Exoteric (*ken*), the contents of the constituent parts were not necessarily clear. As I have tried to make clear from the beginning, problems arose in the use of terms such as the “identity of purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings” and “identity of purport of Exoteric and Esoteric teachings.” In addition, the term “Exoteric” involved exegetical issues concerning whether it included all teachings outside of Esoteric teachings. Thus research into the scope of this term is also necessary.

Japanese Tendai has traditionally used the term “the identity of the purport of the Exoteric and Esoteric teachings.” For example, it is found in both the *Keiran shūyōshū* 溪嵐拾葉集 (A collection of leaves gathered in stormy streams) and in Echin’s 惠鎮 (1281–1356) *Enmitsushū nikyō myōmoku* 円密宗二教名目 (Terms concerning the two teachings of the Perfect and Esoteric tenets). According to Echin’s *Enmitsushū nikyō myōmoku*,

In conclusion, the term “identical purport of Exoteric and Esoteric teachings” in the Tendai lineage was originally intended as a reference to the Perfect-Sudden teachings of the *Lotus Sutra*. Śubhakarasiṃha and Yixing realized the identity of the essence of the *Lotus Sutra* and the *Darījīng* (*Mahāvairocana-sūtra*). When they specifically spoke of Esoteric Buddhism in principle, they only referred to the ultimate teaching of the *Lotus Sutra*. (T 74.424a)

Even as Ennin’s concept of Esoteric Buddhism in principle (*ri himikkyō*) was being discussed, the term “identical purport of Exoteric and Esoteric teachings” was used. Moreover, the *Lotus Sutra* was identified as Esoteric Buddhism in principle. This is because the term “Exoteric” used in the phrase “identical purport of Exoteric and Esoteric teachings” referred to the *Lotus Sutra*; thus the term “identical purport of Exoteric and Esoteric teachings” was identical to “identical purport of Perfect and Esoteric teachings.”

In this way, terms such as “Exoteric and Esoteric” (*kenmitsu*) were interpreted from a variety of standpoints. No single standard was applied to understanding the categories of Exoteric and Esoteric. If scholars use terms such as Exoteric teachings, Esoteric teachings, Exoteric-Esoteric, and “secret” in a facile manner, their arguments soon become vague and ambiguous. Care must be taken in such discussions.

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