

Precepts and Performances: Overseas Monks and the Emergence of Cosmopolitan Japan

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Abstract

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In 733, Japan's ninth diplomatic mission to Tang China conveyed two Japanese Buddhist monks committed to finding a Chinese master of Buddhist precepts. The prevailing explanation for the precepts master solicitation states that Japan lacked sufficient numbers of fully ordained monks to conduct ordinations using *vinaya* codes of conduct. While this campaign successfully resulted in precept masters going to Japan in 736 and again in 754, there were no notable changes to monastic ordinations until after the final monk arrived. It is commonly presumed that only the latter precepts master possessed sufficient charisma, training, and followers necessary to establish a *vinaya* tradition. However, this explanation presumes that the later reforms matched the original expedition's intent. Moreover, this position ignores the other monks' activities in Japan's political, cultural, and religious affairs between 736-754. It is also not supported by period texts.

In this work, I utilize textual and physical evidence to demonstrate that these overseas monks' activities and significance were largely unrelated to monastic precepts and ordinations. Instead, they rose to prominence due to their knowledge of Buddhist texts and rituals, familiarity with neighboring countries' Buddhist legitimation and protection systems, fluency in overseas forms of cultural capital, and embodied otherness. Their influence can be seen in their involvement in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, promulgation of the *Avatamsaka Sutra*, and the creation and worship of the Great Buddha of Nara.

Through highlighting these understudied and highly diverse monks, I demonstrate that Japan's overseas population was intrinsically involved with the country's transformation into a

transregionally-connected, Buddhist country. Moreover, I argue that the overseas monks affiliated with Daianji Temple (大安寺) provided the Japanese court with direct ties to foreign countries that not only expanded Japanese international awareness, but also helped establish the country's understanding of its position within a broader Buddhist world.

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my husband, Jason Givens-Doyle, and also to my parents,
William and Lisa MacBain.

Introduction

Between the years of 736 and 754 CE, five Buddhist monks traveled from various parts of mainland Asia to Japan's then-capital of Heijō kyō (平城京).¹ While arriving at different times over this eighteen-year period, most relocated as a result of direct appeals from Japanese monks and resided together at Daianji Temple (大安寺) in the southern part of the capital.² Over the course of the 25 to 30 years that the Daianji overseas³ monks were active, they rose to the highest ranks of the Ministry of Monastic Affairs, or *Sōgō* (僧綱), participated in the eye-opening ceremony for the Great Buddha at Tōdaiji Temple (東大寺), revolutionized the monastic ordination processes, promoted the study of the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Sk. *Avataṃsaka sūtra*; 華嚴經 *Kegon kyō*),⁴ and contributed to state efforts to copy continental precedents in utilizing Buddhism to unite and support both court and country. At the same time, this group of monks

¹ Except where otherwise indicated, all characters are provided with Japanese pronunciations. Romanization is not included in cases where characters follow words in the main text that already contain the full pronunciation, such as in the case of temples.

² Prior to Tōdaiji Temple's (東大寺) construction, Daianji was the foremost location for Buddhist scholarship in Japan. While the temple had existed in previous incarnations in earlier capitals, it was transferred to the Heijō capital around 716, with the Japanese monk Dōji (道慈; d. 744) formally overseeing its reconstruction from 729 onwards. Having recently returned from several years in Tang China, Dōji is thought to have adjusted the layout and design to resemble Ximingsi Temple (西明寺 *Saimyōji*) in the Tang capital city of Chang'an (長安 *Chōan*). Daianji occupied a similar role to Ximingsi, in that it was the main location for overseas monks to live and study. For more on the temple's early history, see Dorothy Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645-770* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2018): 131-165 and Donald F. McCallum, *The Four Great Temples: Buddhist Archaeology, Architecture, and Icons of Seventh-Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 83-153.

³ I have elected to mainly refer to both this group of five monks as well as Japan's population with hereditary ties to other countries as being from "overseas" in order to avoid deeper connotations behind words such as "international," "foreign," "alien," or "immigrant" that impose a sense of separation, otherness, or hegemonic structure that may not be accurate for the time period. The sense of coming from overseas corresponds with how these groups were likely perceived at this time in Japan, and it is an accurate descriptor of their origins or heritage.

⁴ T 279.10.1b-444c.

expanded the Japanese court's global awareness and access to external cultures, languages, and religious practices.

The key event that instigated four of these monks' relocations was the precepts master solicitation, or *risshi shōsei* (律師招請), in which two Japanese monks accompanied the 733 diplomatic mission to Tang China in order to find and invite a precepts master (律師 *risshi*) willing to go to Japan and oversee monastic ordinations. The campaign successfully secured two precepts masters, Daoxuan (道璿 *Dōsen*; 702-760), who arrived in Japan in 736, and Jianzhen (鑑真 *Ganjin*; 688-763), who arrived in 754. The fact that Japanese ordinations changed little during the eighteen-year gap separating their arrivals has led some to assume that Daoxuan was incompetent, did not have Jianzhen's prestige, or lacked sufficient numbers of fully ordained monks to establish an orthodox ordination tradition.⁵ However, these arguments are all predicated on the presumption that the *risshi shōsei*'s purpose matched the drastic changes enacted by Jianzhen. Moreover, it ignores the totality of the four overseas monks' activities during the nearly two decades prior to Jianzhen's arrival.

In order to understand what was at stake in the precepts master solicitation, it is important to distinguish what is meant by precepts and their use in this situation. The monastic precepts at the heart of this search are the codes of conduct for monks and nuns from a category of texts known as the *vinaya* (律 *ritsu*). These monastic precepts play a central role in a novice's ceremonial advancement to the rank of full monk or nun. While *vinaya* texts had been transported from India to China between the first and fifth centuries CE, the earliest record of their transmission to Japan

⁵ Yuzhi Zhou, "Ganjin: From Vinaya Master to Ritsu School Founder," *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University* 1 (March, 2016): 49; Dorothy Wong, "Jianzhen (Ganjin)," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. II (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 572.

is in the seventh century.⁶ The prevailing theory about the impetus for the *risshi shōsei* is that Japanese monks realized that there was no way to initiate a *vinaya*-based ordination tradition without the presence of a qualified precepts master and a quorum of ten fully ordained monks or nuns who had themselves been through such a process. In this view, it was only with the arrival of Jianzhen and his followers in 754 that there was finally a sufficient number of fully ordained monks to establish what was considered to be an “orthodox” ordination system.

In contrast to the above position, a central thesis of this dissertation will be that the motivation for the precepts master solicitation has been historically misinterpreted by equating Jianzhen’s ordination reforms with the campaign’s original intention. In this dissertation, I examine the activities of these five overseas monks during their most active years of 736-760, with particular attention paid to the eighteen years separating Daoxuan and Jianzhen’s arrivals. Through an examination of eighth-century court and temple histories, biographies, and remaining artifacts, I demonstrate that up until 754, the Daianji overseas monks’ value and contributions to the Japanese court were almost entirely independent of precepts and ordinations. Instead, their authority was tied to their knowledge of Buddhist teachings, their proficiency with Buddhist rites and rituals, their insights into how Chinese and Korean rulers were using Buddhism to support their own regimes, and their own embodied otherness. I suggest that the precepts master

⁶ This date is according to the medieval historian Gyōnen, who states that the Japanese scholar monk Dōkō (道光; fl. late 7th century) brought back copies of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* (四分律 *shibun ritsu*) and the seventh-century *vinaya* master Daoxuan’s (道宣 *Dōsen*; 596–667) *Commentary on the Four Part Vinaya* (四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 *Shibunritsu sanpan hoketsu jigyō jishō*) in 678. However, this event is not reflected in court records from the period. Ronald S. Green and Change Mun, *Gyōnen Transmission of the Buddha Dharma in Three Countries*” (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018): 144-145; Leo M. Pruden, trans, *The Essentials of the Vinaya Tradition by Gyōnen*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 97-I (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995): 122.

solicitation was but one part of the 733 diplomatic mission's overall goal of appealing to overseas specialists to relocate to Japan and aid with the country's development as a Buddhist country.

In addition to producing the first scholarly work⁷ in English or Japanese treating these monks as a unit, I also use them as a lens through which we can better understand the degree to which various peoples, cultures, and goods were actively moving and interacting along Buddhist trading routes. At the same time that members of the Japanese court increasingly looked to Buddhism for personal faith and as a tool for state governance, their curiosity about other Buddhist countries and cultures also grew. The Daianji overseas monks not only provided insight and direct connections to other countries, cultures, and types of Buddhist practice, but they also offered Japan a microcosmic glimpse of the outside world.

0.1 Chapter Summaries

My goal in this dissertation is to demonstrate that the precepts master solicitation was focused less on reforming Japan's monastic ordination process than it was on recruiting overseas specialists to act as consultants and aids in Japan's transformation as a Buddhist country. I build this argument in three chapters. First, I focus on how the monks were portrayed by both contemporaries and later historians in order to demonstrate the broad array of activities, skills, and legacies that are associated with each monk. Next, I highlight a single event – the eye-opening

⁷ There are numerous scholarly works on the individual monks, including their relations with other overseas monks at the time, but there is no work considering all five as a unit. The scholar who has come closest is Kuranaka Shinobu (藏中しのぶ), as she has produced several works dedicated to individual monks as well as Daianji itself. See in particular Kuranaka Shinobu 藏中しのぶ, *Narachō kanshibun hikaku bunkateki kenkyū* 奈良朝漢詩文比較文化的研究 (Tokyo: Kanrin shobō, 2003): 428-463; The four monks who lived at Daianji are also referenced in the published papers from a symposium on Daianji's early overseas connections, titled *Shiranakatta! Motto shiritai, Daianji* 知らなかった！もっと知りたい、大安寺 (Nara: Daianji, 2014): 50-51.

ceremony of the Great Buddha in the city of Nara (奈良)⁸ – that featured all of the present overseas monks and illustrates their prominence in a manner wholly unrelated to precepts or ordinations. Finally, I examine the primary sources that depict the *risshi shōsei* and point out that there is neither any mention of needing more ordained monks nor a demand for a *vinaya*-based ordination process. Instead, I note that the consistent emphasis in these texts is on seeking out an individual capable of bestowing a variety of precepts that differed in both type and ritual function.

Chapter 1 is titled “Leveraging Legitimacy: Recruiting Religious Specialists and Promoting Buddhist State Protection.” The primary purpose of this chapter is to introduce the five overseas monks as well as provide an overview of the major sources concerning these monks. Through combining court chronologies, temple records, biographies, and later histories and narratives, I examine not only these monks’ activities and interests, but also how they were viewed in Japan during and after their lives. In so doing, four notable themes emerge: the precepts master solicitation, the eye-opening ceremony at Tōdaiji Temple in 752, the monks’ connections to the *Flower Garland Sutra*, and their hidden bodhisattva natures. For some of these monks, their activities and prominence were directly connected to their countries of origin. For two of them, their backgrounds are the subject of historical and academic debate in a manner that encourages deeper questions about continental heritage and migration at this time.

In chapter 2, “Celebration and Celebrants: The Multicultural Spectacle of Tōdaiji Temple’s Eye-Opening Ceremony,” I focus on the eye-opening ceremony for the Great Buddha at Tōdaiji in the year 752. In addition to being a cultural and religious highlight of the century, this event also demonstrates the overseas monks’ prominence within Japan’s religious and political sphere

⁸ Except in cases where referencing the modern-day city, hereafter I will refer to Nara by its name during the period of time while it served as Japan’s eighth-century capital, Heijō kyō (平城京).

in a manner wholly unrelated to precepts and ordinations. Through close readings of the two main historical sources for the ceremony and post-ceremonial entertainment, it becomes clear that the event was designed to feature Japan's diverse population of performers and monks. I argue that this was done for two reasons. The first was because the court wanted to mirror the culturally diverse performances common in Tang China, and the second was because this multicultural aspect was seen as an essential component of being a Buddhist country. By highlighting local overseas monks and kinship groups with overseas heritage, the Japanese court demonstrated their far-reaching global connections to the Great Buddha, to the local population, and to the world at large. In sum, Japan's diverse population equated to a form of cultural capital that marked its sophistication and its grand emergence as a Buddhist country.

The final chapter is titled, "Precepts and Politics: Monastic Ordination Reform and Political Control." I return to the episode that resulted in most of these monks coming to Japan: the precepts master solicitation. As stated above, the prevailing scholarly explanation for the *risshi shōsei* is that Japan was incapable of establishing *vinaya*-based ordination procedures without importing a sufficient complement of fully ordained monks and a precepts master. Even though there were at least four fully ordained overseas monks at Daianji as well as returned Japanese scholar monks, or *ryūgakusō* (留学僧), who had been ordained overseas, they were purportedly incapable of establishing this ordination tradition.

I challenge this theory by demonstrating that there is nothing in the historical records or in the Daianji overseas monks' activities prior to 754 that indicates significant concern with how ordinations were conducted or that there was an insufficient number of fully ordained monks. Moreover, I note that this approach neglects to take into consideration the full array of precepts available in Japan at the time. To that end, I provide a comprehensive overview of three categories

of precepts: *śīla* (戒 *kai*), *vinaya* (律 *ritsu*), and bodhisattva precepts (菩薩戒 *bosatsukai*). While these categories are not mutually exclusive and can overlap with one another, how and where each is referenced or implied in the historical records provides insight into how precepts were understood in eighth-century Japan.

Throughout this dissertation, I use eighth-century records and remaining artifacts related to these five monks as a means to ascertain their political, cultural, and religious contributions as well as to better understand how the Daianji overseas monks were viewed by their Japanese peers. In particular, I look at the years separating the first and last arrivals of these monks in order to point out that for most of them, their most active years were after coming to Japan in 736 and before Jianzhen's arrival in 754. I also examine works by the medieval historian monk Gyōnen (凝然; 1240-1321), who was responsible for much of the information and misinformation we have about the Daianji overseas monks.⁹ In doing so, I demonstrate that for most of these monks, their appeal came less from their fluency in monastic precepts and more from their familiarity with Buddhist texts, rituals, and cultural expressions, as well as their direct ties to mainland Buddhist strongholds.

0.2 The Daianji Overseas Monks

The five monks considered in this work are the previously mentioned Daoxuan and Jianzhen from Tang China, Bodhisena (菩提僊那, alt. 菩提仙那, 菩提遷那 *Bodaisenna*; 704-760) from India,¹⁰ Phậ̄t Triệ̄t (仏哲, alt. 仏徹 *Buttetsu*; fl. 735) from Champa,¹¹ and Simsang (審

⁹ For more on Gyōnen, see Mark L. Blum, *The Origins and Development of Pure Land Buddhism: A Study and Translation of Gyōnen's Jodo Homon Genrusho*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002): 51-132.

¹⁰ At this time referred to as Tenjiku (天竺).

¹¹ Champa is located in modern-day Vietnam. As will be discussed in chapter 1, Phậ̄t Triệ̄t is identified as hailing from Lâm Ấp, known as Linyi in Chinese and Rinyū (林邑) in Japanese. Lâm Ấp overlaps a larger area that formally became known as Champa in the tenth century, but this term had also been used for Cham territories long before then.

祥, alt. 審詳 *Shinjō*; d. ca. 751) purportedly from Silla.¹² The first three arrived in Japan in 736, the fourth in 754, and the last appears in Japanese records in 740. With the exception of Simsang, all arrived as a result of the precepts master solicitation. According to the *Essential Records of Tōdaiji Temple*, or *Tōdaiji yōroku* (東大寺要録), the monk Ryūson (隆尊; 706-760) appealed to Prince Toneri (舍人親王 *Toneri shinnō*; 676-735) about the need for someone capable of transmitting precepts. In response, the two arranged for the monks Yōei (榮叡, alt. Eiei; d.749) and Fushō (普照; fl. 733-754) to accompany the ninth Japanese diplomatic mission to China specifically to seek out a precepts master.¹³

The record goes on to state that soon after arriving in 733, the two Japanese monks met the Chinese precepts master Daoxuan and secured his agreement to return with the envoy. The 770 epitaph to Bodhisena, *Nantenjaku baramon sōjō hibun* (南天竺婆羅門僧正碑文), hereafter *Sōjō hi*, states that during this same time, the leader of the 733 embassy to Tang China Ambassador Tajihi Mabito Hironari (多治比真人広成; d. 739) met and invited the Indian Brahman monk Bodhisena and the musician monk Phât Triệt from Champa to return with them as well. All three of these monks are thought to have arrived in Japan in 736, along with four individuals from China

For more, see Vickery, Michael. “A Short History of Champa.” In *Champa and the Archaeology of Mỹ Sơn (Vietnam)*, edited by Andrew Hardy, Mauro Cucarzi, and Patrizia Zolese. Singapore: NUS Press, 2009): 45-60; Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589-1276* (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 36-40.

¹² Silla (新羅 *Shiragi*) was originally one of three kingdoms occupying the Korean Peninsula. By 668, though, Silla had successfully annexed the other two kingdoms of Paekche (百濟 *Kudara*) and Koguryō (高麗 *Kōrai*, alt. *Koma*; also known as 高句麗 *Kōkuri*) with the help of Tang China (唐 *Tō*). While some refugees from Koguryō broke away to found Parhae (渤海 *Bokkai*) in an area overlapping modern-day North Korea, Manchuria, and eastern Russia, Silla governed the rest of the Korean Peninsula until the early tenth century. For more on Japan’s relations with Silla during this time, see H. Mack Horton, *Traversing the Frontier: The Man’yōshū Account of a Japanese Mission to Silla 736-737* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2011). While this monk’s Silla origins have been traditionally passed down through Japanese works, more recent scholarship has cast doubt upon this portrayal and argues instead that he was a Japanese scholar monk who went to Silla and returned, rather than a Silla monk who went to Japan.

¹³ See Appendix B for translation of this passage. See also chapter 3.

and Persia as well as returning Japanese courtier Kibi Makibi (吉備真備; 695-775) and monk Genbō (玄昉, d. 746), both of whom had spent eighteen years living in China.

The next monk, Jianzhen, also arrived as a result of Yōei and Fushō's invitation, but nearly twenty years after the first three monks had reached Japan. As with Daoxuan, Jianzhen was a precepts master. According to the 779 narrative of his eleven year sojourn to reach Japan, the *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden* (唐大和上東征伝), hereafter *Tōseiden*, Jianzhen was charged with all matters related to monastic ordinations and precepts upon arriving at court in 754. It should be noted that, unlike the other monks, Jianzhen never lived at Daianji.¹⁴

While records of the other monks indicate that they were involved in multiple Buddhist schools and cultural activities, Jianzhen is almost entirely known for reforming Japan's monastic ordination system. As his late arrival overlapped with the final stages of the Daianji overseas monks' careers, there is little indication of direct engagement between Jianzhen and the other overseas monks. There may have also been personality clashes or power conflicts, as suggested by Daoxuan and Ryūson stepping down from the *Sōgō* shortly after Jianzhen's arrival. Nonetheless, Jianzhen is a significant part of this study as he completed the *risshi shōsei* solicitation episode, and his activities and prominence have influenced scholarly understandings of all of these monks and their purposes for being in Japan. Additionally, Jianzhen's various biographies contain details relevant for understanding the other Daianji monks.

¹⁴ By the time he arrived, Tōdaiji had already eclipsed Daianji in prestige, and so this is where Jianzhen and his followers resided. When Jianzhen retired from his activities with the Ministry for Monastic Affairs in 758, he relocated to his own temple Tōshōdaiji (唐招提寺) on the western side of the capital. Nonetheless, I include him with the "Daianji overseas monks" due to his relocating on account of the *risshi shōsei*.

The final monk, Simsang, did not arrive as a result of the precepts master solicitation. Additionally, he was likely already in Japan by the time that his name appears in historical records. As will be discussed in greater detail in chapter 1, there is controversy over Simsang's origins, in part due to his being identified as a "Silla scholar monk" (新羅学僧 *Shiragi gakusō*). While this could indicate his Silla background, scholars Fukuyama Toshio (福山敏男) and Horiike Shunpō (堀池春峰) argue that Simsang was not from Silla at all, but was rather a Japanese scholar monk who had studied in Silla, a *ryūgakusō*.¹⁵ In this case, the monk's name would be more accurately portrayed as Shinjō. As he has been historically portrayed as an overseas monk, though, I have elected to maintain the Korean name in exploring both his background and the implications behind his disputed origins.

Simsang's greatest contribution as part of this grouping of Daianji monks was in the promotion of the *Flower Garland Sutra*. The medieval historian monk Gyōnen states that Simsang was from Silla and went to China and worked with the Sogdian monk Fazang (法藏; 643–712) before relocating to Japan. Fazang's works on the *Flower Garland Sutra* lay the groundwork for the later school dedicated to this text's study, known as Huayan, Kegon, and Hwaōm (華嚴) in China, Japan, and Korea respectively. According to the *Tōdaiji yōroku*, Simsang established a three-year long lecture series on this text at the precursor to what became Tōdaiji Temple. The temple's head monk Ryōben (良弁 alt. *Rōben*; 689-773) personally sought out Simsang and is thought to have studied with the Daianji monk even as he was establishing Tōdaiji as the headquarters for what later became the Kegon School dedicated to studying the *Flower Garland*

¹⁵ Fukuyama Toshio 福山敏男, *Nihon kenchikushi kenkyū* 日本建築史研究, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Bokusui Shobō, 1971): 79; Horiike Shunpō 堀池春峰, *Nanto Bukkyō shi no kenkyū* 南東仏教史の研究, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1980): 396.

Sutra in Japan. The veracity of Simsang's activity in Silla is supported by the long list of Korean-produced texts and commentaries that he brought back with him.¹⁶

In addition to their individual pursuits, several of these monks held key roles in the government bureau concerned with monastic governance, the Ministry for Monastic Affairs. Daoxuan served in the role of preceptor (律師 *risshi*) alongside Ryūson, the monk who purportedly initiated the search for a precepts master from China. Bodhisena was appointed to the highest position of *sōjō* (僧正), or superintendent, at the same time as Daoxuan and Ryūson. Ryōben filled the position of *shōsōzu* (少僧都), or vice-superintendent. Two years after his arrival, Jianzhen was also appointed to the *Sōgō* as senior vice-superintendent (大僧都 *daisōzu*) alongside Ryōben. In chapter 3, I argue that the founding story of the *Sōgō* as described in the court record *Nihon shoki* (日本書記) provides deeper insight into the roles that precepts and overseas monks played in relation to monastic governance.

The activities of the Daianji overseas monks also demonstrated the degree to which continental arts and culture were valued during this time. This is especially evident in the eye-opening ceremony for the Great Buddha at Tōdaiji in 752. Chapter 2 provides detailed descriptions of the overseas monks' participation in this event. Bodhisena and Daoxuan were directly involved with the ceremony itself, with Bodhisena performing the crucial role of painting in the statue's eyes to functionally enliven and empower it. The ceremony featured a reading and sermon from the *Flower Garland Sutra*, and the Great Buddha himself was Vairocana (盧舍那菩薩 *Rushana bosatsu*), the major figure of veneration in this text. Not only had Simsang previously lectured on this sutra, but Bodhisena and Daoxuan also actively studied and promoted it.

¹⁶ Horiike, *Nantō bukkyō*, 423-431.

Outside of emphasizing the *Flower Garland Sutra* and the importance of the Great Buddha, the eye-opening ceremony and its subsequent cultural performances featured a vast array of entertainments that drew upon various kinship groups and performing art troupes with overseas origins. This is one of the earliest occasions where Indian liturgical chants known as *bonbai* (梵唄) or *shōmyō* (声明) were performed in Japan. The post-ceremonial festivities featured singing and dancing identified as having come from Tang China, the Korean Peninsula, and Champa. The latter were almost certainly either performed or taught by Phật Triệt, especially since Daianji became associated with music and dances associated with Champa (林邑樂 *Rinyūgaku*). Remaining masks, costumes, and instruments from that event indicate the degree to which overseas performers were incorporated into the festivities.

Another area where we see the direct involvement of the overseas monks is in monastic ordinations and promoting *vinaya* precepts, specifically from the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* (四分律 *shibun ritsu*). As previously noted, the campaign that resulted in all but Simsang's relocation had been directly tied to finding a precepts master. Technically, this requirement had been met with Daoxuan, although there was no notable change in how ordinations were carried out until Jianzhen's arrival. As will be discussed in more detail in chapter 3, Jianzhen made significant changes to the process by which monastic ordination ceremonies took place, beginning with establishing an ordination platform at Tōdaiji that restricted how, when, and where ordinations could take place. Jianzhen also mandated that ordinations had to be done in accordance with *vinaya* precepts and overseen by a committee of ten fully ordained monks. Up until that time, Japan's monastic ordinations were less formal and generally used one of two common sets of precepts that had flourished outside of India, known as the bodhisattva precepts. In addition to altering how Japan's monks were ordained, Jianzhen also founded Tōshōdaiji Temple for studying the *vinaya*.

Focusing on these monks as a group allows for a better understanding of the purpose and motivation behind this direct petitioning for overseas specialists, as well as broader consideration of how these monks collectively contributed to Japan's development as a Buddhist country. With these monks, we see the melding of religious, cultural, and political sources of authority and enrichment. Together with the local population of immigrants and kinship groups with overseas origins, these overseas monks contributed to what I refer to throughout this dissertation as Japan's "cosmopolitan" environment. We see evidence of this interest in the outside world not only through the physical "otherness" of these overseas monks, but also through the acquisition of continental goods, technologies, arts, religions, and music. When looking at the timing behind the Japanese court's copying certain mainland models for Buddhist legitimation and support, we can identify points of time when the overseas monks likely served as advisors to Japanese rulers beleaguered by challenges both natural and manmade.

0.3 Japan's Global Awareness

In addition to providing insights into continental precedents for state protection Buddhism and mainland Buddhist rituals, part of the Daianji overseas monks' appeal came from their ability to connect the Japanese court with other countries and cultures.¹⁷ As discussed in chapter 1, Ryōsenji Temple's (靈山寺) founding myth credits the Indian monk Bodhisena with naming the temple after Gr̥dhraakūṭa, or Vulture Peak, due to the area's visual similarity to the Indian holy mountain. Additionally, in multiple medieval tales known as *setsuwa* (説話), Bodhisena reveals that he recognized the popular Japanese itinerant monk Gyōki (行基; 668-749) from their past

¹⁷ For more on the early Japanese court's understanding of the country in relation to the outer world, see Torquil Duthie, *Man'yōshū and the Imperial Imagination in Early Japan* (Leiden: Brill, 2014).

encounter on Vulture Peak as the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra (普賢 *Fugen*) and Mañjuśrī (文殊 *Monju*). In both of these cases, the texts rely upon Bodhisena’s Indian origins and plausible familiarity with Vulture Peak as a source of authority and unique insight.

Phật Triệt was also seen as being within an Indian sphere of influence because of his knowledge of Sanskrit and one passage from the *Tōdaiji yōroku* that situates his home country of Champa within “Northern India” (北天竺 *Kita Tenjiku*).¹⁸ While Southeast Asia is not traditionally associated with the “Five India” (五天竺 *Go Tenjiku*) geographical regions assigned to much of Central and South Asia, this reference does nonetheless suggest an early Japanese geographical framework.¹⁹ Additionally, as discussed in chapters 1 and 2, this conflation of Champa with Northern India reflects an alternative theory summarized by Takako Inoue that Phật Triệt was himself either from a region of India known as Champa, or that he went to Northern India where he met Bodhisena and learned the forms of music that he transferred over to Japan.²⁰

The global cosmology within the *Flower Garland Sutra* and the *Brahma Net Sutra* (Sk. *Brahmajāla Sūtra*; Jp. 梵網經 *Bonmōkyō*)²¹ also provided a framework for the eighth-century

¹⁸ This is in reference to the premodern “Five India” (五天竺 *Go Tenjiku*) geographical regions assigned to much of Central and South Asia. Bodhisena is described as coming from “South India” (南天竺 *Nan Tenjiku*) due to the Indian subcontinent comprising the southernmost region of the five Indias, despite his purported hometown of Kapilavāstu’s location in modern day Nepal. While Southeast Asia was not traditionally one of the Five Indias, and certainly not the northern portion, this identification may provide insight into an early Japanese concept of where Champa was in relation to the rest of the world.

¹⁹ For more on Japan’s interactions and understandings of India, see Fabio Rambelli, “The Idea of India (*Tenjiku*) in Pre-Modern Japan: Issues of Signification and Representation in the Buddhist Translation of Cultures” in *Buddhism Across Asia: Networks of Material, Intellectual and Cultural Exchange*, ed. Tansen Sen, vol. 1 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing, 2014): 259-290.

²⁰ Takako Inoue, “Indigenisation of Traditional Performing Arts in Japan: Transformation of Indian Elements in Gagaku,” (paper presented at India and Japan: Unearthing lesser-known 16th to early 20th century linkages, New Delhi, November 15-17, 2018): 8.

²¹ T 1484.24.997a–1010a. For more on the *Brahma Net Sutra* and its connection with the Daiianji overseas monks, see chapters 1 and 3.

Japanese court to envision the world and Japan's place in it.²² The description of the whole world resting within a fragrant ocean must have resonated with the island country, and Tōdaiji's Vairocana statue essentially replicated this worldview in microcosm. The engraved lotus petals surrounding the dais provided a primitive map that reflected the multitude of worlds and heavens described in these texts, at the heart of which was the cosmic buddha.²³ Another eighth-century map is partially preserved in the fragmented mandorla at Nigetsudō Hall (二月堂) at Tōdaiji, the back of which reflects a similar understanding of Buddhist worlds and phenomenology.²⁴ These images also portray the geographic layout of known countries, including Japan, India, and China. As noted by historian Yoshikawa Shinji (吉川真司), the Buddhist worldview famously represented in the fourteenth-century *Go-Tenjiku zu* (五天竺図) map could already be seen in these two pieces six hundred years earlier.²⁵ Moreover, these engravings demonstrate an early visual concept of what would lead to the *sangoku* (三国) model, where Japan was portrayed as one of three major Buddhist countries alongside China and India.²⁶

²² The *Brahma Net Sutra*'s cosmology is informed by the *Flower Garland Sutra*'s, leading them to be highly synchronous. See Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra*. (Boston and London: Shambala Press, 1993): 33, 202-253. For a visual representation of the cosmology reflected in the *Flower Garland Sutra*, see Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*, 170.

²³ The engraving was purportedly carried out under Jianzhen's direction. Wong, 182. For images, see Maeda Yasuji 前田 泰次 et al., *Tōdaiji Daibutsu no kenkyū: rekishi to chūzō gijutsu 東大寺大仏の研究：歴史と鑄造技術*, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1997): 76-109. For a description of the worldview exhibited in the petals, see Yoshikawa Shinji 吉川 真司, "Tenpyō bunkaron" 天平文化論, in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi 岩波講座日本歴史* No. 3 Kodai 古代 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2014), 223-225.

²⁴ Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*, 189-191.

²⁵ Yoshikawa, 225. For images of both the *Go-Tenjiku zu* and a sketch outlining the major locations, see Rambelli, 266-267. See also D. Max Moerman, "Buddhist Japan and the Global Ocean," in *The Sea and the Sacred in Japan: Aspects of Maritime Religion*, edited by Fabio Rambelli (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018): 139-154.

²⁶ While the *sangoku* model did not fully develop until the medieval period, Yoshikawa points to the significance of having Japanese, Indian, and Chinese monks at the eye-opening ceremony. The fact that there are no Koreans listed as participating is particularly poignant, given that up until that time Japan had largely been reliant upon Korean monks and craftsmen to transport and localize Buddhism. Yoshikawa, 218.

This interest in looking beyond Japan's borders reflects not only Japan's overseas relations at this time,²⁷ but also what was understood in being a Buddhist country. Buddhism drove a significant amount of the trade occurring throughout East Asia, connecting distant places through the demand for semiprecious jewels, wood, and medicines. These trade routes similarly spread artistic motifs and media, leading to greater amalgamations and cultural fusions along the way. For example, Sakai Takashi (坂井隆) notes that two eighth-century ziggurat-shaped pagodas in Nara and Osaka are reminiscent of Java's Borobudur temple. While these similar layouts do not necessarily mean that there was active exchange occurring between Indonesia and Japan at this time, the shape may well have traveled to Japan via Chinese trade and diplomatic routes.²⁸

Demand for texts and translations among Buddhist countries also led to increased mobility among Buddhist monks either serving as translators and teachers or who personally sought out original texts to bring back to their home countries.²⁹ We particularly see this latter theme in relation to *vinaya* texts, especially in China. Bodhisena's disciple Xiurong (修榮 *Shūei*; fl. 770) had these models in mind while writing his master's biography. As discussed in chapter 1, Xiurong

²⁷ For an overview of research on premodern Japan's overseas relations, see Charlotte von Verschuer, "Looking From Within and Without: Ancient and Medieval External Relations," *Monumenta Nipponica* 55, no. 4 (Winter, 2000): 537-566; Charlotte von Verschuer, "Japan's Foreign Relations 600 to 1200 A.D.: A Translation from *Zenrin Kokuhōki*," *Monumenta Nipponica* 54, No.1 (Spring, 1999): 1-39; Charlotte von Verschuer, *Across the Perilous Sea: Japanese Trade With China and Korea from the Seventh to the Sixteenth Centuries*, translated by Kristen Lee Hunter. Ithaca, NY: Cornell East Asian Series, 2006.

²⁸ The Nara and Osaka pagodas are respectively known as *Zutō* (頭塔) and *Dotō* (土塔). Sakai Takashi 坂井隆. "Kodai ni okeru Buttō no denpa: Borobudouru to Nara Zutō no kankei ni tsuite. 古代における仏塔の伝播：ボロブドゥールと奈良頭塔の関係について." *Nihon kōkogaku* 日本考古学. vol. 25. (May 2008): 23-45. See also *Shiseki zutō hakkutsu chōsa hōkoku* 史跡頭塔発掘調査報告. (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Bunkazai Kenkyūjo, 2001). For English summary, see pages 199-211.

²⁹ Dorothy Wong argues that these so-called Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks were also responsible for transmitting artistic motifs throughout East Asia, a style that she refers to as the International Buddhist Art Style or the Tang International Buddhist Art Style. While Wong neglects to consider non-Chinese influences in the development of this artistic style as well as the role of artisans, craftsmen, and traders in transmitting these same motifs, this work does draw attention to the important role that peripatetic monks played in transmitting all forms of Buddhist art and culture. Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*.

compared Bodhisena with several famous Central Asian and Indian monks who were responsible for introducing or creating some of China's earliest Buddhist texts. In Xiurong's eyes, not only was Bodhisena comparable to them, but he was actually their superior, having gone even farther in his travels.³⁰

We also see religious-adjacent materials being transmitted during this time, including cloths, ritual implements, metal filigree, tools, and instruments that were essential to recreating a temple environment that would feel familiar to the buddhas and bodhisattvas enshrined there. As can be seen with the eye-opening ceremony, part of the Daianji overseas monks' appeal was their ability to duplicate and establish Buddhist ceremonies in the same way that they were being performed on the mainland. However, doing so necessitated having the right equipment and the right techniques. The fact that Daoxuan was explicitly identified as having a beautiful voice suggests that he was not only able to lead chants, but he was also able to teach them. In the same way, references to Bodhisena and Phật Triệt teaching the Sanskrit script Siddham provided a link between Japan's monks and what, to them, would likely have been viewed as the Buddha's own language.

The ruler at the time that the first group of overseas monks arrived, Emperor Shōmu (聖武天皇 *Shōmu tennō*; 701-756; r. 724-749), was keenly aware that being a Buddhist country was akin to being a cosmopolitan country. Alongside embracing the religion's culture and political advantages, Shōmu was clearly fascinated with foreign goods and technologies. During his lifetime, Shōmu collected clothing, instruments, games, furniture, artwork, and more that had

³⁰ See Kuranaka Shinobu 藏中しのぶ, "'Nantenjiku baraman sōjō hihei jo' chūshaku" 『南天竺婆羅門僧正碑并序』注釈. *Suimon* 21 (2009): 27-70; Nakamura Hajime 中村元, "Baramon sōjō hibun" 婆羅門僧正碑文, in *Nihon no meicho 2: Shōtoku taishi* 日本の名著 2 聖徳太子, 459-466. Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1970. For a partial English translation, see Hajime Nakamura, "Two Materials Referring to the Life of Bodhisena," in *Japan and Indian Asia: Their Cultural Relations in the Past and Present*. (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay 1961): 44-49.

traveled to Heijō through Silk Road trade and diplomatic exchanges. Following the emperor's death in 756, his widow Empress Kōmyō (光明皇 *Kōmyō kōgō*, alt. 光明子 *Kōmyōshi*; 701-760)³¹ donated several of these treasures to Tōdaiji's storage hall, the Shōsōin (正倉院). Tōdaiji also used the Shōsōin for storage, including items made specifically for the eye-opening ceremony in 752. As discussed in chapter 2, this archive of approximately nine thousand items includes pieces linked to the royal family, the post-ceremonial extravaganza, and the Daianji monks themselves. Moreover, it provides visual evidence of the splendor and technology that Japan was exposed to through Buddhist trading routes.

0.4 Japan's Overseas Population

In addition to having many materials from overseas, being a Buddhist country also necessitated specialists and technicians from overseas. From the earliest references of Buddhism's official introduction to Japan, it was understood that the religion was not only transported by monks bearing sutras and statues, but also by workers skilled in making Buddhist images and temples. In order for the religion to propagate, it had to be localized, which meant establishing generations of artisans, builders, scribes, and craftsmen capable of creating the items that were an essential part of Buddhism's sumptuous and sensually immersive environments.³² Particularly if

³¹ For more on Empress Kōmyō, see Takinami Sadako 瀧浪貞子, *Kōmyō kōgō: Heijōkyō ni kaketa yume to inori* 光明皇后：平城京にかけた夢と祈り (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2017). See also conference papers dedicated to Empress Kōmyō from The Great Buddha Symposium, *Kōmyō kōgō: Nara jidai no fukushi to bunka* 光明皇后：奈良時代の福祉と文化, The Great Buddha Symposium No. 9 (Nara: Tōdaiji Temple, 2011).

³² See Charles Holcombe, "Trade-Buddhism: Maritime Trade, Immigration, and the Buddhist Landfall in Early Japan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 119, no. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 1999): 280-292; Jason Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2011); Tansen Sen, ed., *Buddhism Across Asia: Networks of Material, Intellectual and Cultural Exchange*, Vol. 1 (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies Publishing, 2014); and Ann Heirman, Carmen Meinert, Christoph Anderl, eds. *Buddhist Encounters and Identities Across East Asia* (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

using the religion for protection and aid, it was crucial to have the right components to not only create the images according to scriptural directions, but also make temples that were familiar to the deities themselves.

The Daianji overseas monks counted among these populations of skilled practitioners who helped with propagating and establishing Buddhism in Japan. Moreover, they provide a window for further insights into how concepts such as heritage or country affiliation were perceived at this time in Japan, especially across generations. As was already noted, Bodhisena's Indian origins carried a significant amount of cultural and religious authority. For what little is known of Phật Triệt, his Southeast Asian origins and Indian associations were also an important part of his legacy. For Daoxuan and Jianzhen, their clout was tied to their mastery of *vinaya* precepts. Daoxuan was situated in the same lineage as the Indian Chan patriarch Bodhidharma (菩提達磨 *Bodaidaruma*, commonly abbreviated to *Daruma*; ca. 6th century CE), thereby providing Japan with another direct link back to Buddhism's homeland. While Simsang's origins are disputed, he also provides an opportunity for deeper consideration on migration and country affiliation at this time.

The multigenerational kinship groups with mainland Asian origins are especially important to consider in this study, as they complicate our understanding of what is understood as being “Japanese” during this time.³³ Moreover, children from these kinship groups often inherited

³³ Although we do not know whether there was a sense of “Japanese” identity in the eighth century, we can at least consider overlapping circles of “insider” and “outsider,” especially in relation to the capital and outlying areas. For example, Bruce Patton notes that part of the reason that Japan's “barbarian” groups were labeled as such was because they were hunter-gatherers instead of farmers. In other words, agriculture and rice cultivation in particular were signifiers of cultural sophistication. Patton, 118. There are many types of pluralism in this study, not only between Japan and the outside world, but even within Japan's own borders. For example, the Hayato (隼人) of Kyushu were certainly outsiders, in that they were external to Yamato (大和) hegemony and resisted attempts at subordination. However, very little is known about the Hayato in terms of their background or society. Moreover, following military defeats in the early eighth century, many Hayato were transported to Heijō to be palace guards, thereby incorporating

occupations related to propagating Buddhist temples, scriptures, images, and ritual implements, thereby transmitting generational knowledge that may have initially been rooted in a distant country or culture. Several of Japan's monks and nuns also came from these kinship groups with overseas origins, including the monks Ryōben, Gyōki, and Dōji (道慈; d. 744), who will be referenced throughout this dissertation in relation to the Daianji overseas monks. As these *ryūgakusō* often occupied important positions within temples or the *Sōgō* upon returning, their overseas experience and heritage played an important role in their monastic lives. In short, this continental heritage does not appear to have been a detriment, and it did not prevent them from representing the interests of the Japanese court in other countries.

When looking at the eye-opening ceremony's multicultural extravaganza in chapter 2, several kinship groups with known overseas origins are identified as performing music and dances associated with China and Korea at the eye-opening ceremony. The implication is that some semblance of that cultural heritage was preserved even after many generations. The many references to Chinese-inspired courtly music known as *gagaku* (雅楽) being performed at court and at major temple events supports that assertion. However, it is also possible that kinship groups with overseas ties could have also been pressed into service to perform those pieces based upon a presumption that their heritage made them the most qualified to do so. The primary sources do not provide that level of insight, but at the very least, we can tell that non-native cultural expressions

them into the Yamato power structure while also highlighting their "otherness." Whether they were considered to be "Japanese" or not is unclear, and yet they were certainly not immigrants. For more on the Hayato and their relations with the Yamato state, see Mark Hudson, *Ruins of Identity: An Ethnogenesis in the Japanese Islands* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999): 193-197.

were an important part of Japanese court and Buddhist life. As will be discussed in that same chapter, this interest in outside performances was inspired at least in part by the Tang empire.

0.5 Conclusion

In this dissertation, I demonstrate that the common perception that the precepts master solicitation of 733 was wholly dedicated to finding someone capable of implementing Jianzhen's style of *vinaya*-based ordinations is not supported by either the actions of the first group of overseas monks who preceded Jianzhen or the event's historical sources. In providing evidence for this position, I examine the five Daianji overseas monks from the perspectives of their literary records, a major cultural and religious ceremony that featured Japan's population with overseas origins, and the campaign that brought four of the five monks to Japan. I argue that the reason Jianzhen's style of reforms were not established earlier is unrelated to the effectiveness of these monks, but rather is because these changes were not called for. Instead, I suggest that we consider the *risshi shōsei* as being part of a broader campaign to recruit for overseas specialists.

Through this coterie of monks, we gain greater insight into the active role that the Japanese court took to transform Buddhism's role in the country. I see the Daianji overseas monks as representing a third stage in Buddhism's establishment in Japan. The first stage involved passively receiving Buddhist material goods, monks, and craftsmen from neighboring countries. The second comprised sending out *ryūgakusō* to study and bring back their knowledge and experience as well as more texts, images, and other ritual items or objects of interest. With this third stage, though, the Japanese court actively and directly sought out these monks to relocate to Japan. While the purpose is clearly achieved with Daoxuan and Jianzhen, the fact that Bodhisena and Phật Triệt also came along suggests that there was more to this mission than a diplomatic visit and an

incidental search for a precepts master. It was fundamentally a search for skilled practitioners and specialists capable of elevating the state of Japan's Buddhist community and practice.

The overseas monks also provide a lens through which to better understanding how Japan's broader community of monks, tradespeople, artisans, craftsmen, and kinship groups with overseas origins all contributed to the local culture and flavor of the period. Japan's eighth century witnessed the creation of literary, religious, political, and artistic advancements that are among the earliest forms of identifiably "Japanese" cultural elements. However, this was also a period of great mobility and cultural exchange as well as deep curiosity in what was happening outside the island country's borders. When we focus in on these "Japanese" cultural developments, we see footprints and inspirations from overseas civilizations. While this does not undermine the Japanese quality or identity of these elements, it does create a more complex and nuanced understanding of culture and identity at this time.

With the Daianji overseas monks, we also see the degree to which overseas origins and training were part of their desirability and authority. These aspects of their overseas influence were not incidental, but rather sought out by the Japanese court in its process of developing the country into a Buddhist nation. Considering the visual and cultural diversity reflected in Buddhist images and ceremonies, the court clearly understood that being a Buddhist country meant embracing these signifiers of the outside world.

In addition to Buddhism's benefits in terms of state support and stability, the texts closely associated with this coterie of monks also gave the Japanese court a global framework to perceive their place in the world. The cosmology described in the *Flower Garland Sutra* and *Brahma Net Sutra* provided a geographical blueprint that indicated where and how countries spatially related to one another. By imbuing the base of Tōdaiji's Vairocana statue with that map, Japan

functionally rooted the Great Buddha and Japan itself at the center of that cosmology. What the Daianji overseas monks offered, then, was not just ceremonial skills, a knowledge of Buddhist scriptures, and an understanding of other countries, but also a way for Japan to interact with and conceive of its own role within a Buddhist worldview.

Chapter 1: Leveraging Legitimacy: Recruiting Religious Specialists and Promoting Buddhist State Protection

According to the 797 court record *Shoku nihongi* (続日本紀), in 736 the returning vice-ambassador for the ninth mission from the Japanese court to Tang China, Nakatomi Ason Nashiro (中臣朝臣名代; d. 745), presented to court three people from China and one from Persia who had traveled with him.¹ This seemingly straightforward passage belies the fact that this was a historically momentous event. Nashiro's return and the arrival of these four overseas individuals completed a mission that began in 733, when he and Ambassador Tajihi Mabito Hironari (多治比真人広成; d. 739) transported two Japanese Buddhist monks who were intent on going to China in order to locate a master of Buddhist precepts (律師 *risshi*). This enterprise was the first time that the Japanese court actively sought out Buddhist specialists to relocate to Japan, rather than passively waiting for monks to arrive from the mainland. The precepts master solicitation, or *risshi shōsei* (律師招請),² marked a notable turning point in the eighth-century court's reliance on Buddhism and overseas specialists to transform Japan into a Buddhist country.

Despite the centrality of Buddhist precepts and the stated goal of recruiting a precepts master, the monks who arrived in response to the *risshi shōsei* were not overly engaged with transmitting or reforming precepts and ordinations until the final monk Jianzhen (鑑真 *Ganjin*; 688-763) arrived in 754. Instead, their influence can be seen in four key areas: (1) the development of Japan's Buddhist state protection system; (2) the construction and eye-opening of the Great

¹ 736.8.23. *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 2, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系 13, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1990): 302-303.

² For an overview of the *risshi shōsei* and its historical sources, see chapter 3.

Buddha (大仏 *daibutsu*) at Tōdaiji Temple (東大寺); (3) the promotion of the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Sk. *Avataṃsaka sūtra*; 華嚴經 *Kegon kyō*); and (4) their roles within the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, or *Sōgō* (僧綱). Their interest in promoting Buddhist teachings and practices extended beyond the form of precepts most commonly associated with the *risshi shōsei*, that is those precepts related to monastic behaviors as listed in a category of texts known as *vinaya* (律).

Together with the Japanese monks and courtiers who previously spent several years studying in neighboring countries' courts, this coterie of overseas monks provided the Japanese court with first-hand accounts of how Buddhism was practiced in other countries, including how their rulers were using the religion to support their own regimes.³ Foremost among these foreign rulers was Empress Wu Zetian, (武則天 *Bu Sokuten*; 624-705; r. 690-705), whose unprecedented rise from imperial concubine to founder of her own short-lived dynasty made her the only independently reigning empress in Chinese history.⁴ Wu's efforts to embrace Buddhist means of legitimation and support provided a powerful model to Japan's Emperor Shōmu (聖武天皇 *Shōmu*

³ For more on Chinese use of Buddhism for the protection of the state, see Jinhua Chen, *Monks and Monarchs, Kinship and Kingship: Tanqian in Sui Buddhism and Politics* (Kyoto: Italian School of East Asian Studies, 2002); Jinhua Chen, "A Complicated Figure with Complex Relationships: The Monk Huifan and Early Tang Saṃgha-state Interactions," in *The Middle Kingdom and the Dharma Wheel: Aspects of the Relationship between the Buddhist Saṃgha and the State in Chinese History*, edited by Thomas Jülch (Leiden: Brill, 2016): 140-221. For Korea, see Richard D. McBride II, *Domesticating the Dharma: Buddhist Cults and the Hwaōm Synthesis in Silla Korea*. (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2008); Richard D. McBride II, "Silla Buddhism and the Hwarang," *Korean Studies* 34 (2010): 54-89; Sam Vermeersch, *The Power of the Buddhas: The Politics of Buddhism During the Koryō Dynasty (918-1392)* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2008).

⁴ For more on Empress Wu and her use of Buddhism, see N. Harry Rothschild, *Emperor Wu Zhao and her Pantheon of Devis, Divinities, and Dynastic Mothers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); April D. Hughes, *Worldly Saviors and Imperial Authority in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021); Amy McNair, *Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007); T.H. Barrett *The Woman Who Discovered Printing* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008); Antonino Forte, *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock* (Rome: Istituto italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente; Paris: Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient, 1988); Antonino Forte, "Wu Chao, Cakravartin of the Golden Wheel and Bodhisattva," in *Political Propaganda and Ideology at the End of the Seventh Century* (Napoli: Istituto universitario orientale, Seminario di studi asiatici, 1976): 125-170. For more on Fazang, see Jinhua Chen, *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643-712)*. (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

tennō; 701-756 r. 724-749), as well as to his daughter, who reigned independently as Empress Kōken (孝謙天皇 *Kōken tennō*; 718-770; r. 749-758) and again as Empress Shōtoku (称徳天皇 *Shōtoku tennō*; r. 764-770).⁵

Each of the overseas monks had the potential to connect the Japanese court to the major religious and political centers and individuals around which Shōmu shaped his own Buddhist efforts that centered on securing his own regime. As will be seen in chapter 2, there are direct parallels between Wu and Shōmu's Buddhist state protection systems, especially in their shared interest in the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Moreover, as will be discussed below, one of the overseas monks was assigned a direct line of transmission from Empress Wu's spiritual advisor and key promoter of the *Flower Garland Sutra*, the Sogdian monk Fazang (法藏 *Hōzō*; 643–712).

Through their ties to mainland Asia and own embodied otherness, these overseas monks also influenced Japanese monks and writers well past the eighth century. In subsequent Buddhist narratives and transmission histories, their overseas origins were important in providing authority and lineages connecting Japanese Buddhism to the religion's homeland. As such, their legacies continued to connect Japan to the rest of the world for generations to come.

1.1 Chapter Breakdown

In this chapter, I introduce and examine the lives of the five overseas monks who went to Japan in the mid-eighth century as a result of direct solicitation. Despite the *risshi shōsei*'s stated

⁵ For more on Wu's influence on both Shōmu and Kōken/Shōtoku's reigns, see Katsuura Noriko 勝浦令子, *Kōken, Shōtoku Tennō: shukkeshite mo matsurigoto o okonau ni ani sawarazu* 孝謙・称徳天皇：出家しても政を行ふに豈障らず (Kyoto: Mineruva Shobō, 2014): 95-96, 193. See also Katsuura Noriko 勝浦令子, *Nihon kodai no sōni to shakai* 日本古代の僧尼と社会 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000).

intention to procure a precepts master, I suggest that the overseas monks' varied activities within Japan demonstrate that procuring a precepts master was but one part of a larger campaign to attract specialists capable of helping Japan develop into an advanced and culturally sophisticated Buddhist country.

To demonstrate the degree to which the overseas monks provided services outside of reforming monastic ordinations, this chapter analyzes what is preserved in written records about each of these monks. These works fall within three categories: biographies written by contemporaries, court records, and later medieval works. In the latter case, these histories, stories, and temple records may provide additional insights from no longer extant sources. However, they can also create or preserve misinformation that further distorts our understandings of these monks. Nonetheless, these non-contemporaneous sources demonstrate these overseas monks' legacies long after they had passed.

1.2 The Overseas Monks of Daianji Temple

Vice Ambassador Nakatomi Ason Nashiro's homecoming as recounted in the *Shoku nihongi* provides the clearest account of overseas individuals being transported to Japan as a result of the 733 mission to Tang China. However, the three Chinese and one Persian listed therein are not the only people who were involved with this envoy. The return of the ninth mission's ambassador, Tajihi Mabito Hironari, is notably absent, although he is mentioned as participating in government a year later.⁶ Moreover, the record following Nashiro's homecoming states that the emperor bestowed seasonally appropriate clothing (時服 *jibuku*) to the overseas monks Bodhisena

⁶ 737.8.19. *Shoku nihongi* 2, 326-327.

(菩提僊那 *Bodaisenna*; 704-760)⁷ of India and Daoxuan (道璿 *Dōsen*; 702-760)⁸ of China. This reference indicates that they had arrived in Japan by this time, despite their not being mentioned in the above passage.⁹ As such, despite the fact that the *Shoku nihongi* chronicled court events, the record is incomplete in terms of noting the overseas monks' arrivals.¹⁰ However, the *Essential Records of Tōdaiji Temple, Tōdaiji yōroku* (東大寺要錄), which was initially compiled in 1106, supplements the court history. It states that Daoxuan, Bodhisena, and the third overseas monk Phật Triệt (仏哲, alt. 仏徹 *Buttetsu*; fl. 735)¹¹ from Champa in modern day Vietnam were presented at court on the twenty-third day of the eighth month, the same date listed in the *Shoku nihongi*.¹²

In addition to Bodhisena, Daoxuan, Phật Triệt, and the later arriving Jianzhen, there is a fifth monk whose activities, temple, and purported home country also place him within the same

⁷ Also referred to as the “Brahman monk Bodai” (波羅門僧菩提 *Baramon sō Bodai*), Superintendent Bodai (菩提僧正 *Bodai sōjō*), or a similar combination of a shortened version of his name, his Brahman attribution, and his position as either a monk or superintendent in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs.

⁸ Also romanized as Tao-hsüan. Not to be confused with the renowned seventh-century *vinaya* master Daoxuan (道宣 *Dōsen*; 596–667).

⁹ 736.11.2 *Shoku nihongi* 2, 302-303.

¹⁰ While it is possible that Daoxuan could have been one of the three Chinese individuals referenced in the Nashiro passage and that Bodhisena's country of origin was mistakenly recorded as Persia (波斯 *Hashi*) instead of India (天竺 *Tenjiku*), the fact that a Persian named Ri Mitsuei (李密翳; fl. 736) was presented to the emperor a few records later suggests that the Nashiro passage probably did not involve Bodhisena. Moreover, Bodhisena's hailing from the Indian homeland was a point of great pride. Records typically referred to him as the “Brahman monk” (婆羅門僧 *Baramon sō*; later 婆羅門僧正 *Baramon sōjō* when elevated to the highest rank of the *Sōjō*), supporting the position that his country of origin was not likely to be mistaken. For more on the subject of Ri Mitsuei and other Persians referenced in early Japanese records, see James Henry Morris, “A New Analysis of Persian Visits to Japan in the 7th and 8th Centuries,” *Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies* 12 (February 2020): 105-120.

¹¹ Depending upon the source, Phật Triệt's name may be romanized as Buddhasthira, Fozhe, Foche, Fo-ché, Fattriet, or as the Japanese *Buttetsu*.

¹² “On the twenty-third day of the eighth month, Tempyō 8 (736), the Brahman monk Bodhi from South India and Phật Triệt from Rinyū in the country of Champa in Northern India came to court. On the seventh day of the tenth month, [the emperor] bestowed seasonally appropriate clothing (時服 *jibuku*) upon the Tang monk Daoxuan and the Brahman monk Bodhi.” *Tōdaiji yōroku* 東大寺要錄, ed. Tsutsui Eishun 筒井英俊 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1982): 8.

category as the overseas monks who arrived as a result of the *risshi shōsei*. The Korean-trained Simsang (審祥, alt. 審詳 *Shinjō*; d. ca. 751)¹³ entered Japanese records in response to an appeal by the Japanese monk Ryōben (良弁 alt. *Rōben*; 689-773), who asked him to lecture on the *Flower Garland Sutra*.¹⁴ With the exception of Jianzhen, this diverse array of monks were assigned to live at Daianji Temple (大安寺), at that time the foremost center for Buddhist study in Japan.¹⁵ Through assembling their biographies and references in court and temple records, I have pieced together some of their most important activities after relocating to Japan, as well as episodes that demonstrate how their backgrounds and abilities contributed to their involvement in the cultural and religious highlights of the century.

1.3 Review of Sources & Biographies

In order to better understand these monks' contributions to Japan's development as a Buddhist country, I look to a number of sources of both contemporaneous and later origin. The first category is biographies and epitaphs written by the monks' disciples or colleagues. Foremost among these are the works by Jianzhen's disciple Situo (思託 *Shitaku*; 722–809), who traveled

¹³ There is some discrepancy as to the year of Simsang's death. Gyōnen states that he "died with a gasp" (奄焉と卒し) at the end of the lecture series in 742, but Horiike Shunpō argues that the term 命終 (*myōjū*) seen in the "The Origins of the Tōdaiji Ceremony on the *Flower Garland Sutra*," (東大寺華嚴別供縁起 *Tōdaiji Kegon Bekku Engi*) rather refers to Simsang's remaining as lecturer until the end of the three-year series. Horiike points to historical sources referencing Simsang in Shōsōin documents (正倉院文書 *Shōsōin monjo*) to argue that at the very least, he would have still been alive until the first month of 751. He also notes that the death anniversaries formerly celebrated at Tōdaiji for Simsang took place on the fourteenth day of the first month, providing some possible indication to the date of his death, if not the year. Horiike Shunpō 堀池春峰, *Nanto Bukkyō shi no kenkyū* 南都仏教史の研, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1980): 396-397.

¹⁴ There is some disagreement about whether or not Simsang was Korean or Japanese, as will be discussed below. I have elected to maintain the Korean version of his name instead of the Japanese equivalent *Shinjō* due to the fact that he is more routinely known this way in scholarship, and also because his rise to prominence was directly related to his overseas studies and connections.

¹⁵ By the time Jianzhen arrived in the capital in 754, Tōdaiji had been built and already surpassed Daianji in terms of prestige and importance. Emperor Shōmu assigned Jianzhen to live there until his ultimate retirement from the *Sōgō*, at which time he relocated to Tōshōdaiji Temple (唐招提寺), the construction of which he had personally overseen.

with his master from China. Together with another disciple named Fajin (法進 *Hōshin*; 709-778), Situo wrote a three-volume biography of Jianzhen titled *Daitō denkaishi sōmeiki daiwajō ganjin den* (大唐伝戒師僧名記大和上鑑真伝), hereafter *Kōden* (広伝), the majority of which is now lost. Nonetheless, the main narrative was preserved in Ōmi Mifune's (淡海三船; 722-785) *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden* (唐大和上東征伝),¹⁶ hereafter *Tōseiden*, which relates Jianzhen's journey to Japan.¹⁷ The *Tōseiden*'s completion date of 779 helps to retroactively date the *Kōden*, as it must have been written sometime between 754 and 779.

In addition to the *Kōden*, Situo is also credited with creating Japan's first biography of monks and notable Buddhist practitioners, the *Enryaku sōroku* (延暦僧録),¹⁸ which dates to 788. While also largely lost, several biographical entries were preserved in the *Nihon kōsōden yōmonshō* (日本高僧伝要文抄),¹⁹ including the passages on Jianzhen and Daoxuan as well as the two Japanese monks sent to Japan in search of a precepts master, Yōei (榮叡, alt. Eiei; d.749) and Fushō (普照; fl. 733-754). Yōei and Fushō also feature in the *Tōseiden*, within which Daoxuan and Bodhisena are briefly referenced as well.

¹⁶ Japanese text taken from “Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden” 唐大和上東征伝, in *Gunshō Ruijū* 群書類従 5, no. 69, (Tokyo: Zokugunsho ruijū kaiseikai, 1997): 527-543. I am also using a translation in two parts, Marcus Bingenheimer, “A Translation of the *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden* 唐大和尚東征伝 [T. 2089 (7)],” part 1, *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 4 (2003): 161-189 and Marcus Bingenheimer, “A Translation of the *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden* 唐大和尚東征伝 [T. 2089 (7)],” part 2, *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 5 (2004): 143-181. There is also a well-known French version. J. Takakusu, trans. “Le Voyage de Kanshin en Orient (724-754),” *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 28, no. 1 (1928): 1-41.

¹⁷ Mifune had once been a monk named Genkai (元開) and was even ordained by Daoxuan, but Emperor Shōmu laicized him in 751. He became Jianzhen's lay follower after the *vinaya* master's arrival in 754. Bingenheimer, part 1, 163

¹⁸ For references from the *Enryaku sōroku*, I am relying upon Kuranaka Shinobu's annotated edition, *Enryaku sōroku chūshaku* 延暦僧録注釈 (Tokyo: Daitō Bunka Daigaku Tōyō Kenkyūjo, 2008).

¹⁹ Bingenheimer, part 1, 166 n13.

Outside of these works connected with Situo, there is an epitaph dated to the year of Daoxuan’s death in 760 that is attributed to courtier Kibi Makibi (吉備真備; 695-775),²⁰ a high-ranking Japanese scholar who accompanied Daoxuan, Bodhisena, and Phật Triệt to Japan from Tang China, where he had spent the past eighteen years. The *Dōsen wajō densan* (道璿和上傳纂), hereafter *Densan*, was preserved in the Tendai (天台) master Saichō’s (最澄; 757-822) lineage history, the *Naishō Buppō sōjō kechimyakufu* (内証仏法相承血脈譜), hereafter *Kechimyakufu*. As discussed in chapter 3, Daoxuan taught Saichō’s master, thereby placing Saichō within Daoxuan’s lineage. Considering that this is the only biographical work not attributed to a Buddhist monk, the *Densan*’s emphasis upon Buddhist memorial practice and Daoxuan’s transmission lineage is notable.

The final work in this category is an epitaph written for Bodhisena ten years after his death. The *Nantenjaku baramon sōjō hibun* (南天竺婆羅門僧正碑文),²¹ hereafter *Sōjō hi*, dates to 770 and was written by Bodhisena’s disciple, the Chinese monk Xiurong (修榮 *Shūei*; fl. 770). This work provides rudimentary biographical data for Bodhisena prior to his arrival in Japan and emphasizes his interest in the *Flower Garland Sutra* as well as bodhisattva worship. Surprisingly, this account neglects to include the highlight of Bodhisena’s career, namely his role in the eye-

²⁰ I am using the version in Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, ed., *Nara ibun* 寧楽遺文 3 (Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1962): 889 and the version published in Miyata Toshihiko 宮田俊彦, *Kibi no Makibi* 吉備真備 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1961): 114-115. For translation of this text, see Appendix C.

²¹ Alternatively, *Nantenjaku baramon sōjō hi narabi ni jo* (南天竺婆羅門僧正碑并序). For more on this work’s content and history, see Kojima Yasuko 小島裕子, “Daibutsu o kaigen shita Bodaisenna (Bodhisena): Nihon bunka no naka ni kōchiku sareta ‘Indo’” 大仏を開眼した菩提僂那(ボーディセーナ): 日本文化の中に構築された「印度」 *Tsurumi Daigaku Bukkyō Bunka Kenkyūsho kiyō* 24 (March 2019): 205-248. For a compilation of primary sources on Bodhisena, see Waseda University and Nara Prefecture’s collaborative report from 2013, Shinkawa Tokio 新川登亀男, ed., *Kodai ni okeru Nansai Ajia bunka to Yamato Bunka no kōryū ni kansuru chōsa kenkyū (sōshūhen): Nantenjiku baramon sōjō Bodaisenna o megutte* “古代における南西アジア文化とヤマト文化の交流に関する調査研究 (総集編): 南天竺婆羅門僧正菩提僂那をめぐって (Japan: Waseda University, 2013). Several sources are also listed in the latter section of Horiike Shunpō 堀池春峰, ed., *Ryōsenji to Bodai sōjō kinen ronshū* 靈山寺と菩提僧正記念論集 (Nara: Daihonzan Ryōsenji, 1988): 111-131.

opening ceremony described in chapter 2. However, the *Sōjō hi* was written as a preface, meaning that there is probably a great deal more about the Indian Brahman monk in the accompanying work that did not survive.²²

The second category of texts is the official court record *Shoku nihongi*, which is referenced at the beginning of the chapter. This work chronicled the years of 697 to 791, including all of the years in Shōmu and Kōken/Shōtoku's reigns. It was compiled in three pieces and was presented to the court as a finished work in the 797.²³ While I reference the *Shoku nihongi* throughout this dissertation, in this chapter it largely serves as a source for supporting dates for the monks' lives and activities. Given the work's focus on affairs of state, the overseas monks are only referenced as they interacted with the emperor or attended court.

The final category of sources comprises work written much later than the eighth century, including temple records and medieval Buddhist history texts. The first is the *Tōdaiji yōroku*. While the work as a whole in its entirety was finished in 1241, the earliest section was compiled in 1106, with one additional amendment dating to 1134.²⁴ This is a key source of information for

²² The *Sōjō hi* mentions an image of Bodhisena, which is also lost. Kojima, 206. For this section, I utilize the annotated edition by Kuranaka Shinobu 藏中しのぶ, “Nantenjiku baraman sōjō hihei jo' chūshaku” 『南天竺婆羅門僧正碑并序』注釈. *Suimon* 21 (2009): 27-70. For a partial English translation, see Hajime Nakamura, “Two Materials Referring to the Life of Bodhisena,” in *Japan and Indian Asia: Their Cultural Relations in the Past and Present*. (Calcutta: Firma K. L. Mukhopadhyay 1961): 44-49. There is also a modern Japanese version of the *Sōjō hi* in Nakamura Hajime 中村元, “Baramon sōjō hibun” 婆羅門僧正碑文, in *Nihon no meicho 2: Shōtoku taishi* 日本の名著 2 聖徳太子 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōronsha, 1970): 459-466.

²³ For more on the *Shoku nihongi* and its composition, see Sakamoto Tarō, *The Six National Histories of Japan*, translated by John S. Brownlee (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991): 90-122. See also Ross Bender's introductions to his translated volumes of the *Shoku Nihongi*. Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 749-757: A Study and Translation of Shoku Nihongi, Tenpyō shōhō 1–Tenpyō Hōji 1* (Self-published, CreateSpace, 2015); Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 758-763: A Study and Translation of Shoku Nihongi, Tenpyō Hōji 2–Tenpyō Hōji 7* (Self-published, CreateSpace, 2016); Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 764-766: A Study and Translation of Shoku Nihongi, Tenpyō Hōji 8–Tenpyō Jingo 2* (Self-published, CreateSpace, 2016); Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 767-770: A Study and Translation of Shoku Nihongi, Jingo Keiun 1–Hōji 1* (Self-published, CreateSpace, 2016). See also Ross Bender, *The Imperial Edicts in the Shoku Nihongi: A Translation with Text and Transliteration* (Self-published, CreateSpace, 2018).

²⁴ For more on the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s history and research on its formulation, see Sakaehara Towao 栄原永遠男, “‘Tōdaiji yōroku’ no gen kōzō” 『東大寺要録』の原構造 in *Kodai Tōdaiji no sekai: Tōdaiji yōroku o yominaosu*

this group of overseas monks and will be referenced throughout this dissertation. Tōdaiji is the main temple for the Kegon School (華嚴宗 *Kegon shū*) dedicated to the study of the *Flower Garland Sutra*, and this group of monks were essential figures in this text’s promulgation. Moreover, since Shōmu founded and patronized the temple, the text’s compilers incorporated a large amount of material related to him and, consequently, the Daianji overseas monks.

The *Tōdaiji yōroku* is referenced heavily in chapters 2 and 3, each of which respectively features passages related to the Great Buddha’s eye-opening ceremony in 752 and the precepts master solicitation in 733. In both of these chapters I point to evidence that these sections reflect or preserve earlier information than the *Tōdaiji yōroku*’s later composition would suggest. Due to the degree to which these passages are emphasized in other chapters, I only mention them here insofar as they contain biographical data about the overseas monks. I also refer to passages titled “Biography of Daianji’s Bodhi[sena]” (大安寺菩提傳來記伝 *Daianji Bodai denrai kiden*),²⁵ “The Origins of the Tōdaiji Ceremony on the *Flower Garland Sutra*,” (東大寺華嚴別供縁起 *Tōdaiji Kegon Bekku Engi*),²⁶ and “The Biography of the Eye-Opening Priest”(開眼師傳來事 *Kaigenshi denraiki*).²⁷

Another significant resource for information is the later historian monk Gyōnen (凝然; 1240-1321). Gyōnen was a monk at Tōdaiji with a deep interest in *vinaya* studies as well as Buddhism’s introduction and propagation throughout Japan. As such, the Daianji overseas monks

古代東大寺の世界：『東大寺要録』を読み直す. The Great Buddha Symposium 14 (Nara: Tōdaiji Temple, 2017): 7-36.

²⁵ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 54.

²⁶ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 156-157

²⁷ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 53-54. This is from a collection of materials from Gangōji Temple called the *Gangōji Shōtōin shishi shōjōki* (元興寺小塔院師資相承記).

were particularly important to him, and he mentions several of them throughout his works. The three works referenced here are *The Essentials of the Eight Traditions* (八宗綱要 *Hasshū kōyō*),²⁸ hereafter *Eight Traditions*, from 1268, *The Essentials of the Vinaya Tradition* (律宗綱要 *Risshū kōyō*)²⁹ from 1306, and *Transmission of the Buddha Dharma in Three Countries* (三国仏法伝通縁起 *Sangoku buppō denzu engi*), hereafter *Transmission of the Buddha Dharma*, from 1311.³⁰ As stated in the introduction, much of what is known about the Daianji overseas monks is due to Gyōnen, which includes information both accurate and inaccurate. This is particularly the case for Simsang, as Gyōnen’s histories are among the most prominent sources of information on this monk.

Finally, I reference a category of medieval stories known as *setsuwa* (説話), or “explanatory tales,” that often portrayed Buddhist figures, morals, or related subject matter.³¹ These tales are especially important for understanding the overseas monks’ legacies beyond the eighth century. Bodhisena particularly features in several *setsuwa*, largely in relation to his voyage to Japan or his first meeting with the Japanese monk Gyōki (行基; 668-749). As discussed below, Gyōki is mentioned in several accounts as personally greeting Daoxuan, Bodhisena, and Phật Triệt at the moment they arrived in the port city of Naniwa (難波). The *Sōjō hi* declares that Gyōki and Bodhisena treated each other as old friends and exchanged greetings, an encounter which was

²⁸ Leo M. Pruden, trans. *The Essentials of the Eight Traditions by Gyōnen*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 97-I (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1994).

²⁹ Leo M. Pruden, trans. *The Essentials of the Vinaya Tradition by Gyōnen*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 97-I (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995).

³⁰ Ronald S. Green and Change Mun, *Gyōnen Transmission of the Buddha Dharma in Three Countries* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018).

³¹ For more on the relationship between *setsuwa* and Buddhist literature, see Charlotte Eubanks, *Miracles of Book and Body: Buddhist Textual Culture and Medieval Japan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011).

transformed in later *setsuwa* as a revelation that the two monks were actually both bodhisattvas who had previously known each other at the Buddhist holy mountain Vulture Peak. As seen below, this theme of a hidden bodhisattva nature recurs in multiple accounts.

Through combining eighth-century sources with far later histories and narratives, I aim to demonstrate the varied nature of these monks' lives, activities, and legacies. Despite Yōei and Fushō's objective to find a precepts master, the fact that most of these monks were unconnected to precepts suggests that this pursuit was part of a larger agenda of the ninth diplomatic mission in 733 – namely, to find and attract an array of overseas specialists to Japan. Incorporating Simsang into this group of monks despite the fact that his presence at Daianji was unrelated to the *risshi shōsei* provides a deeper understanding of the significant role the Daianji overseas monks played in promoting the *Flower Garland Sutra* and Vairocana Buddha (盧舍那仏 *Rushana butsu*) as a subject of worship in a manner comparable to that found on the Asian mainland. Moreover, the academic controversy concerning Simsang's origin provides an avenue for deeper consideration of the importance of country affiliation both during the eighth century and in later works.

1.3.1 Daoxuan

Of the monks who arrived with the returning Japanese mission in 736, Daoxuan is the only one whose experience matched the purported reason for the *risshi shōsei*, in that he was himself a precepts master. The historic accounts referencing the *risshi shōsei*³² correspond in stating that the two Japanese monks searching for a precepts master encountered Daoxuan soon after arriving. They also sought out the precepts master Jianzhen, but that came about nearly ten years later as they prepared to return to Japan. The *Tōdaiji yōroku* provides the clearest record of the precepts

³² See chapter 3 for comparison of the four major sources.

master solicitation, including Daoxuan's life after he arrived in Japan. In this account, the Japanese monk Ryūson (隆尊; 706-760) despaired that Japan had no one available to transmit precepts, and he appealed to Prince Toneri (舍人親王 *Toneri shinnō*; 676-735) to have the monk Yōei (榮叡, alt. Eiei; d.749) accompany the ninth mission to Tang China to seek a precepts master willing to return to Japan. Toneri agreed, suggesting that the monk Fushō (普照; fl. 733-754) go along.³³

Upon arriving in China, the two monks encountered Daoxuan at Dafuxiansi Temple (大福先寺 *Daifukusenji*) and asked him to go back to Japan with the vice-ambassador.³⁴ The passage skips then to their arrival at the port city of Naniwa (難波),³⁵ where Daoxuan was greeted by the Japanese monks Gyōki and Dōji (道慈; d. 744). In essence, this passage has Daoxuan greeted by two powerful monks who were formative in the overseas monks' lives. As seen in chapters 2 and 3, Gyōki's life intertwined with the Daianji overseas monks in several areas. These included his fundraising efforts for the Great Buddha and Tōdaiji construction projects, as well as his illicit mass ordinations that may have partially inspired the precepts master solicitation. Dōji was the head monk for Daianji and oversaw the temple's reconstruction in the Heijō capital (平城京 *Heijō kyō*) after he returned from spending sixteen years in China. Following this section, the passage briefly iterates Daoxuan's activities in Japan, including becoming a preceptor (律師 *risshi*),³⁶ working with Jianzhen, and retiring to Genkōji Temple (現光寺) at Yoshino (芳野). It ends with

³³ See Appendix B for full translation.

³⁴ Specifically, the *Tōdaiji yōroku* assigned him to Nakatomi Ason Nashiro's ship, suggesting that he could have been one of the three Chinese individuals mentioned in the *Shoku nihongi* passage.

³⁵ Naniwa is the earlier name for modern-day Ōsaka City (大阪市 *Ōsaka shi*). Overseas visitors and returning Japanese missions docked at Dazaifu (太宰府) in the southernmost main island Kyushu until receiving permission to go to the capital, in which case they often sailed to Naniwa before trekking overland to Heijō (平城).

³⁶ The context and character choices elsewhere suggest that this is referring to Daoxuan's role in the *Sōgō*, where he served as preceptor (律師 *risshi*), and not serving as a precepts master for monastic ordinations. See chapter 3.

his enlightenment and death, upon which the common people of the area dreamt that they saw him riding a white elephant, which revealed his true identity as the bodhisattva Samantabhadra (普賢菩薩 *Fugen bosatsu*).

There are two particularly notable aspects to this narrative. The first is that the story of how the overseas monks came to Japan switches midway through to become a hagiography for Daoxuan. Jianzhen, who arguably had the greater influence, was awarded just a single mention. One possible reason for this focus on Daoxuan could relate to the mentions of Ryūson at the beginning of the passage. Both Daoxuan and Ryūson were appointed to the position of preceptor, in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs in 751. Shōmu also assigned them prominent roles in the eye-opening ceremony for the Tōdaiji Great Buddha the following year.³⁷ While scholar Sakuma Ryū (佐久間竜) argues that Ryūson would not have had the knowledge and influence to approach Prince Toneri prior to the mission's departure in 733,³⁸ the author of this *Tōdaiji yōroku* passage would have been well aware of both Ryūson and Daoxuan's shared *risshi* role as well as their mutual interest and experience in monastic precepts. Quite likely, this focus on Daoxuan reflects the author's own interest in these two monks.

The second point of interest from the *Tōdaiji yōroku* passage is the association between Daoxuan and Samantabhadra. This human-bodhisattva pairing is commonly reflected in stories involving another Daianji overseas monk, Bodhisena, especially in relation to Gyōki. Not only is Bodhisena missing from this narrative in the *Tōdaiji. yōroku*, but Daoxuan effectively replaced

³⁷ See chapter 2.

³⁸ He suggests that it could have been Dōji instead. Sakuma Ryū 佐久間竜, *Nihon kodai sōden no kenkyū* 日本古代僧伝の研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983): 242-262. See also Ryū Sakuma, "Ganjin (688-763)," in *Shapers of Japanese Buddhism*, edited by Yūsen Kashiwahara and Kōryū Sonada, translated by Gaynor Sekimori. (Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing Co., 1994): 15-16.

him both in terms of being a human avatar for this bodhisattva as well as the object of Gyōki and Dōji's greeting. Whether the author intended to supplant Bodhisena or merely include Daoxuan into the narrative is unclear. Moreover, it is not obvious which of these stories is earlier. While the narrative involving Gyōki's greeting Bodhisena at Naniwa is included in the much older *Sōjō hi*, it lacks the famous exchange where they reveal one another's inner natures as the bodhisattvas Samantabhadra and Mañjuśrī (文殊菩薩 *Monju bosatsu*), as discussed below. As such, it is possible that Bodhisena's association with Samantabhadra developed after the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account instead of vice versa.

This story connecting Daoxuan and Samantabhadra is also reflected in his biography in the *Enryaku sōroku*.³⁹ As with the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account, the *Enryaku sōroku* states that the night Daoxuan died, commoners dreamt that they saw him riding a six-tusked, white elephant while wearing a white cloak and heading east. This is very clearly an allusion to Samantabhadra's mount, indicating Daoxuan's true nature as this bodhisattva. The *Enryaku sōroku* also correlates with the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s depiction of Daoxuan as committed to studying the *Flower Garland Sutra*. However, the biography provides a few additional biographical details not reflected elsewhere. The *Enryaku sōroku* specifies that prior to taking the tonsure, Daoxuan belonged to the Wei kinship group (衛氏 *Ei shi*) from Xuzhou Province (許州 *Kyoshū*) in modern day Henan, China. It also states that he was a descendent of Duke Ling of Wei (衛靈公 *Ei Reikō*), who appeared in the Chinese classics *Analects* and *Han Feizi*.⁴⁰

³⁹ Kuranaka Shinobu provides a side-by-side comparison of the three major sources for Daoxuan's biography in Kuranaka Shinobu 藏中しのぶ, "Mitsu no Dōsen den: 'Ganjin den sanbusaku' ni okeru Ryūson den Dōsen den" 三つの道璿伝: 「鑑真伝三部作」における隆尊伝・道璿伝, *Tōyō kenkyū* 173 (November, 2009): 15.

⁴⁰ Kuranaka, *Enryaku sōroku* 46-76 (for passage alone, see 48-50).

While the *Enryaku sōroku*, *Tōseiden*, and even the *Tōdaiji yōroku* were all either written by or reflect material made by Jianzhen's disciple Situo,⁴¹ the final biographical source by one of Daoxuan's contemporaries comes from a completely independent source.⁴² The *Densan* was composed by famed courtier Kibi Makibi. Kibi Makibi and the influential monk Genbō (玄昉, d. 746) were among the students and monks who had been sent to China with the eighth diplomatic mission in 717.⁴³ After eighteen years abroad, Makibi and Genbō returned with the ninth mission in 735, the same convoy that transported Daoxuan, Bodhisena and Phât Triệt to Japan. This connection was fortuitous, as it provided the overseas monks with direct access to two men who would soon number among the most powerful influencers at court and within the *Sōgō*.

The Japanese monk Saichō included a biography of Daoxuan in the *Kechimyakufu*, which is considered to be Makibi's original *Densan* or at least to be based upon it.⁴⁴ The *Densan* as seen in the *Kechimyakufu* dates to 760, the same year that Daoxuan died. It lightly refers to Daoxuan's activities in Japan, mentioning his arrival and ascent to the role of *risshi* in the *Sōgō*. It then immediately transitions to his retirement to Hisodera Temple (比蘇寺), an alternative name for Genkōji.⁴⁵ The passage also notes that Daoxuan had a beautiful voice while reciting the *Brahma*

⁴¹ See chapter 3 for the connection between Situo and this passage in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*.

⁴² Kuranaka, "*Mitsu no Dōsen den*," 17.

⁴³ For more on Genbō's life and voyage, see Marcus Bingenheimer, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Japanese Student-monks of the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries: Their Travels to China and Their Role in the Transmission of Buddhism* (München: Iudicium, 2001): 107-112.

⁴⁴ The connection is made clear in the *Naishō Buppō sōjō kechimyakufu* itself, as it states that it was created by Kibi Makibi during his time as a bureaucrat at Dazaifu (太宰府) during the Tempyō Hōji (天平宝字) era, which stretches from 757-765. This time span matches the *Densan*'s listed date of 760. Miyata, 111; Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000): 22-25.

⁴⁵ Heather Blair, *Real and Imagined: The Peak of Gold in Heian Japan* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2015): 145.

Net Sutra (Sk. *Brahmajāla Sūtra*; Jp. 梵網經 *Bonmōkyō*), that he wrote a three volume commentary,⁴⁶ and that he had a deep interest in meditative practices that would later become the foundations of the Zen School of Buddhism (禪宗 *Zenshū*).⁴⁷

The latter half of the *Densan* is dedicated to tracing Daoxuan's lineage back to Bodhidharma (菩提達磨 *Bodaidaruma*, commonly abbreviated to *Daruma*; ca. 6th century CE), the semilegendary sixth-century Indian or Central Asian monk credited with introducing the fundamentals of Zen to China, where it is known as Chan.⁴⁸ This lineage situated Daoxuan under Puji (普寂 *Fujaku*; 651-739), heir to the Northern Chan School (北宗禪 *Hokushū zen*), alternatively known as the East Mountain Teaching (東山法門 *Tōsan Hōmon*). Pei-ying Lin notes that Daoxuan's training at Dafuxiansi Temple provided the monk with a background in Chan, Tiantai (天台 *Tendai*), and *vinaya* teachings as well as forms of meditation associated with Bodhidharma.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ The commentary is no longer extant, but quotations remain in the Saichō biography *Denjutsu isshinkaimon* (伝術一心戒文) by his disciple Kōjō (779-858) and the historian monk Gyōnen's (凝然; 1240–1321) commentary titled *Bonmō kaihō sho nishu shō* (梵網戒本疏日珠鈔). Paul Groner notes that these remaining quotations demonstrate Tiantai (天台) influence and was itself based upon Zhizhou's 智周 (678-733) commentary on the *Brahma Net Sutra*. Groner, *Saichō*, 24.

⁴⁷ Daoxuan did not introduce the Zen school to Japan, especially as the Zen school in China, known as Chan, was still developing. For Zen's official establishment in Japan, we must look to the twelfth-century monks Eisai (榮西; 1141-1215) and Dōgen (道元; 1200-1253). Nonetheless, through Daoxuan, we see evidence of interest and awareness of teachings and meditation practices ultimately associated with Zen. For more on the Chan school's development, see Eric M. Greene, *Chan Before Chan: Meditation, Repentance, and Visionary Experience in Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021): 205-248. See also Henrik H. Sørensen, "The History and Practice of Early Chan," in *Readings of the Platform Sūtra*, edited by Morten Schlütter and Stephen F. Teiser (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012): 53-76.

⁴⁸ For the traditional story of Bodhidharma's life history, see Jeffrey L. Broughton, "Introduction," in *The Bodhidharma Anthology: The Earliest Records of Zen* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999): 1-7. See also Heinrich Dumoulin, "Early Chinese Zen Reexamined: A Supplement to Zen Buddhism: A History," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 20, no. 1 (1993): 32-53.

⁴⁹ Pei-ying Lin "The Rebirth Legend of Prince Shōtoku: Buddhist Networks in Ninth Century China and Japan," in *Buddhist Encounters and Identities Across East Asia*, ed. Ann Heirman, Carmen Meinert, and Christoph Anderl (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2018): 310.

In addition to establishing Daoxuan within the Northern Chan tradition, the *Densan's* lineage also indicates that Daoxuan was well-versed in the *Flower Garland Sutra* and its associated school, known as Huayan in China and Kegon in Japan.⁵⁰ The close compatibility between Huayan and Zen doctrines led to the former's informing and influencing the development of the latter, especially within the Northern School and in Korea's Zen practices, where it is known as Sŏn.⁵¹ Upon arriving in Japan and setting up residence in the Western Tang Hall (西唐院 *Saitōin*) at Daianji, Daoxuan was well placed to share his knowledge and experience with not only *vinaya* precepts, but also the *Brahma Net Sutra*, meditation, and the *Flower Garland Sutra*. It may well have been due to his influence that Ryōben invited Simsang to begin a three-year lecture series on the *Flower Garland Sutra* in 740.

In addition to these biographies, the *Shoku nihongi* provides some additional details to Daoxuan's activities in relation to the court. As noted previously, Daoxuan and Bodhisena first appeared in a record from 736, when Emperor Shōmu provided them both with seasonal robes. The two monks appeared again in 751, when Emperor Shōmu appointed Daoxuan to the *Sōgō* alongside Bodhisena, Ryōben, and Ryūson, the latter of whom shared the post of preceptor with Daoxuan. The following year, these individuals all took on key roles overseeing the eye-opening ceremony for the Great Buddha, also at Emperor Shōmu's appointment. Daoxuan recited an

⁵⁰ For more on Daoxuan's connection with the Kegon School, see Ibuki Atsushi 伊吹敦, "Dōsen ha hontō ni Kegon no soshi datta ka" 道璿は本當に華嚴の祖師だったか, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 60, no. 1 (December, 2011): 79-86.

⁵¹ See Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): 45-48.

invocation (呪願 *jugan*) for the event, perhaps because of his sonorous speaking voice as mentioned in the *Densan*.⁵²

Daoxuan also appears in Gyōnen's works as the progenitor of the Kegon School, part of Saichō's Zen lineage. As will be discussed in chapter 3, in *The Essentials of the Vinaya Tradition*, Gyōnen claimed that Daoxuan could not establish a *vinaya*-based ordination tradition due to the lack of a sufficient number of fully ordained monks in Japan to meet the quorum necessary for this ceremony.⁵³ While I argue that this perception fundamentally misreads the purpose and intention of the 733 mission to Tang China, it nonetheless demonstrates where and how Daoxuan was portrayed in medieval works in relation to the transmission of *vinaya* precepts.

From these basic biographic details, we can tell that while Daoxuan responded to an appeal for a precepts master, he was proficient in several areas outside of the *vinaya* precepts. These sources indicate that he was also deeply interested in bodhisattva precepts, to the degree that he wrote Japan's first commentary on the *Brahma Net Sutra*.⁵⁴ Daoxuan's recorded lineage also demonstrates a strong background in studying meditation as well as the *Flower Garland Sutra*. When considered in light of the emperor's later interest in the *Flower Garland Sutra* in echoing mainland forms of Buddhist state protection, it is clear that Daoxuan was well situated to provide insight on both accounts.

⁵² The invocation (呪願 *jugan*) was generally a *mantra* from the Vedas, and was commonly recited during the construction, rebuilding, or opening ceremony for a temple. Nakamura Hajime 中村元, *Kōsetsu bukkyōgo daijiten* 広説佛教語大辞典 (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2001): 786. See chapter 2 for more on this event.

⁵³ Pruden, *Vinaya Tradition*, 124.

⁵⁴ See chapter 3 for differences among precept types and relevance for the *risshi shōsei*.

1.3.2 Bodhisena

The second monk who traveled over with the returning ninth mission to China is arguably the most well-known of this initial group. Not only was Bodhisena appointed to the top position of superintendent, or *sōjō* (僧正),⁵⁵ in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, but he also personally performed the eye-opening ceremony that enlivened the Great Buddha at Tōdaiji. Much of what is known of the monk comes from the biography written by his disciple Xiurong. The *Sōjō hi* identifies Bodhisena as belonging to the Bhāradvāja (婆羅遲 *Barachi*) family within the Brahman caste. His designation as hailing from “South India” is somewhat ambiguous, as that area covered the majority of the Indian subcontinent within the historical “Five India” (五天竺 *go Tenjiku*) regions. However, in later *setsuwa* works, Bodhisena declared that he hailed from Kapilavāstu, the supposed home of Siddhartha Gautama. Kapilavāstu is also listed as his homeland in the *Biography of Daianji's Bodhi[sena]* in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*.⁵⁶ This would place Bodhisena's home in modern day northern India or Nepal. Whether historically accurate or not, this connection not just to India, but specifically to a location associated with the historical Buddha played a key role in how Bodhisena was portrayed in works from the eighth century as well as from much later.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ It is not clear the degree to which Bodhisena actively oversaw *Sōgō* operations as the *sōjō*, or if it was predominantly a symbolic appointment. We do have some indication of Bodhisena's actions within this role in the *Shoku nihongi*'s record of Empress Kōken's abdication in 758. At this time, one hundred officials presented Kōken and her mother, the retired Empress Kōmyō, with a petition that cited honorific names for them both. The passage states that Bodhisena then spoke on behalf of the Ministry for Monastic Affairs to affirm the suitability of these honorary names. Bodhisena's address contained Chinese and Japanese themes and references to legendary Chinese rulers. As such, the speech may well have been either written or heavily informed by his disciples. It is worth noting that Kōken's honorific name was *Hōji Shōtoku Kōken Kōtei* (宝字称徳孝謙皇帝), which incorporated both the era name of Hōji and her own name of Kōken. The epithet was also somewhat prophetic, as Kōken kept the *shōtoku* characters when she reascended the throne in 765 as Empress Shōtoku (称徳天皇). 758.8.1. *Shoku nihongi* 3, 269-271. Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 758-763*, 71-74.

⁵⁶ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 54.

⁵⁷ While Bodhisena is generally considered to be the only person of Indian origin to have gone to Japan in the premodern period, there are earlier stories of Indians and Central Asians in Japan, although their historical authenticity is dubious. For example, the *Nihon shoki* states that in the year 654, two men and two women from Tokhara (in modern

Xiurong emphasized Bodhisena's Indian origins in the *Sōjō hi* when he made comparisons with Lokakṣema (支讖 *Shisen*; c. 178-198) and An Shigao (安世高 *An Segō*; fl. c. 148-180), both second-century Central Asian Buddhists credited with creating some of the most fundamental Chinese translations of Buddhist sutras. Xiurong compared Bodhisena's journey over the Himalayas with their travels to China, thereby inserting his master into this same sort of missionary travel narrative. Xiurong then continued these comparative allusions to Indian and Central Asian monks who traveled to China when discussing Bodhisena's arrival at Dazaifu (太宰府) in the Japan's southernmost main island of Kyushu.

Long ago, Kāśyapa Mātāṅga and Dharmaratna came at long last [to China], Fotucheng and Kumārajīva [also] went to benefit [others]. Their footprints stayed in China and did not step into Japan's borders. While they covered a long distance and experienced hardships, their virtue is shameful [compared to Bodhisena's]. Unless religious austerities have been perfected and the [bodhisattva] level attained, and the religious practices piled up for eternity, then who could tolerate these hardships?⁵⁸

These “long ago” monks Kāśyapa Mātāṅga (迦葉摩騰 *Kashō Matō*; 1st century) and Dharmaratna (竺法蘭 *Jiku Hōran*; 1st century) were both Indian Buddhists credited with introducing Buddhism to China in the first century.⁵⁹ Fotucheng (仏図澄 *Buttōchō*; 232–348) was a third-fourth-century Central Asian Buddhist missionary to China who was especially known as

day Tajikistan and Afghanistan) and one woman from Śrāvastī (in modern day Uttar Pradesh) washed up on Japan's shores. Aston, W. G., trans. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan From the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* 2 (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972): 246. Another notable figure is Hōdō Sennin (法道仙人), an Indian hermit who legend says came to Japan in the sixth or seventh century and founded several temples. For more on Hōdō Sennin, see Tanaka Yūko 田中夕子, “Hōdō Sennin o meguru shinkō to sono zōkei” 法道仙人をめぐる信仰とその造形, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 49. no. 2 (2001): 696-698. The *Fusō ryakki* (扶桑略記), *Genkō shakusho* (元亨釈書), and the *Zenrin Kokuhōki* (善隣国宝記) state that the Indian translator monk Śubhakarasiṃha (善無畏 *Zenmui*; 637-735) traveled to Japan from China sometime between the years 717-724. Charlotte von Verschuer, “Japan's Foreign Relations 600 to 1200 A.D.: A Translation from *Zenrin Kokuhōki*,” *Monumenta Nipponica*, vol. 54. No.1 (Spring, 1999): 22-23 n44.

⁵⁸ Original translation, based upon Kuranaka, *Nantenjiku baraman sōjō hi*, 37.

⁵⁹ *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, s.v. “Kāśyapa Mātāṅga,” (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014): 425-426.

a thaumaturge.⁶⁰ In the same vein as the others, Kumārajīva (鳩摩羅什 *Kumarajū*; 344-409/413) was a fourth-century Buddhist monk from the Central Asian country of Kucha who was renowned for his numerous translations of Buddhist texts into Chinese as well as introducing fundamental works to China for what would become Three Treaties School of Buddhism (三論集 *Sanron shū*).⁶¹ In essence, Xiurong used these stories of Central Asian and Indian Buddhist pioneers, which he himself would have learned about as a monk in China, in order to contextualize his master's voyage to Japan. In doing so, he elevated Bodhisena above these renowned figures to demonstrate that he went even farther than they did. In essence, the *Sōjō hi* implies that Bodhisena was not simply Japan's equivalent to these renowned Buddhist missionaries, but he was actually their superior.

We see a similar sort of allusion to a Chinese model in another eighth-century source, Empress Kōmyō's (光明皇后 *Kōmyō kōgō*; 701-760) dedication of Emperor Shōmu's treasures to the Shōsōin Repository (正倉院) following the emperor's death in 756. In this document, titled "Register of the Country's Rare Treasures," (国家珍宝帳 *Kokka Chinpō chō*), Bodhisena and Jianzhen are lauded for coming such a long way to Japan and praised for respectively crossing "shifting sands" (流沙 *shūsha*; alt. *ryūsha*) and "blue waters," (滄海 *sōkai*) in their commitment to come to Japan. Inoue Kaoru (井上薫) links these phrases to identical passages from the famed Chinese pilgrim monk Xuanzang's (玄奘 *Genbō*; 600/602-664) travelogue of his journey to India from 627-645, titled *The Great Tang Records on the Western Regions* (大唐西域記 *Daitō Sai'ikiki*).⁶² These allusions indicate that Kōmyō, or possibly the scribe commissioned to write this

⁶⁰ *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "Futuodeng," 304.

⁶¹ *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "Kumārajīva," 452-453.

⁶² Inoue Kaoru 井上薫, "Shūsha o watari raitō rainichi shita Bodaisenna" 流沙を渉り来唐・来日した菩提倦那, in *Ryōsenji to Bodai sōjō kinen ronshū* 靈山寺と菩提僧正記念論集, edited by Horiike Shunpō 堀池春峰 (Nara:

dedication, knew this text. In this way, Bodhisena and Jianzhen are portrayed as Japan's response to Xuanzang, albeit going east instead of west. Many of the items that Kōmyō donated originated in the Middle East and Western Asia and had been given to the emperor by visiting, emigrating, and returning envoys and monks; as such, this comparison may have intended to imply a parallel between Xuanzang's impressive trove of Buddhist texts, relics, and images with the items brought over by these overseas monks.

There are additional examples of Bodhisena's Indian origins being used as a source of validation or at least prestige. Another Bodhisena biography in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* called the "The Biography of the Eye-Opening Priest" credited Bodhisena with bringing two thousand relics of the Buddha with him to Japan, although this is not listed in official histories.⁶³ Japan's geographical distance from the Asian mainland meant that they could not easily access relics, or even spontaneously "discover" relic deposits that could be linked to India's famed Buddhist ruler King Aśoka (d. 232 BCE) as could China.⁶⁴ What they did have, though, was someone who could provide a plausible transmission lineage linking Japan's collection of relics to the Buddhist homeland. While other overseas monks or study abroad monks could arguably provide the same connections to central Buddhist countries like China and Korea, only Bodhisena could make that direct connection with India.

Daihonzan Ryōsenji, 1988): 7-11. See also Inoue Kaoru 井上薫, "Ganjin den no shomondai" 鑑真伝の諸問題, *Bunkazai gakuho* 3 (March, 1984): 19-20.

⁶³ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 53-54. See also Brian Ruppert, *Jewel in the Ashes: Buddha Relics and Power in Early Medieval Japan*, (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2000): 61, 400 n57.

⁶⁴ John S. Strong, "Aśoka and the Buddha Relics," in *Relics of the Buddha*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004): 131.

The temple Ryōsenji (靈山寺) in the capital city of Heijō also cites Bodhisena’s Indian ties to the meaning behind its name. The temple’s founding narrative states that while en route to Heijō from Naniwa, the party stopped at a temple complex on Mount Tomi (登美山 *Tomi san*), the construction of which Emperor Shōmu had personally entrusted to Gyōki. Bodhisena declared that the site greatly reminded him of the Indian holy mountain Vulture Peak (靈鷲山 *Ryōjusen*) and advocated for the site to be named as such.⁶⁵ Despite living out his life at Daianji, the temple’s literature claims that Bodhisena was buried at Ryōsenji upon his death in 760, possibly intended to symbolically return him to his homeland.⁶⁶

Returning to the *Sōjō hi*, Bodhisena’s Indian background and, namely, his purported heritage as a member of the Brahman caste were also referenced in his first meeting with Gyōki. Xiurong’s description of the two monks’ meeting emphasizes an immediate sense of congeniality between them, which is demonstrated through several allusions to Chinese classics describing famous meetings between renowned sages of old.⁶⁷ Xiurong has Gyōki quote a passage from the *Lotus Sutra* (Sk. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*; Jp. 法華經 *Hokkekyō*),⁶⁸ wherein the Buddha stated that the bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (觀音菩薩 *Kannon bosatsu*) would take whatever form would best serve to save others, including, “To those who can be conveyed to deliverance by the body of

⁶⁵ *Ryōsenji* 靈山寺 (Nara: Ryōsenji, n.d.) temple pamphlet. It is not clear which text the temple is referencing in this history. Bodhisena is not included in the earliest foundational story, which dates to the early part of the Kamakura period (鎌倉時代 *Kamakura jidai*; 1192-1333), although he does appear in later tales. See Horiike, *Ryōsenji*, 2-6.

⁶⁶ The *Sōjō hi* states that Bodhisena’s body was taken to Mount Tomi and cremated, but it does not specify a connection with Ryōsenji. Kuranaka, *Nantenjiku baramon sōjō hi*, 53; Nakamura, *Bodhisena*, 47. Inoue states that this is a transmitted story, meaning there is no documented evidence to support the assertion, but he notes that there is no other temple claiming to have a grave for Bodhisena. Inoue, *Shūsha*, 8.

⁶⁷ Nakamura, *Bodhisena*, 45-46. Kuranaka, *Nantenjiku baramon sōjō hi*, 42.

⁶⁸ T 262.9.1c1–62b. As was discussed in chapter 2, both of these texts were respectively paired with the state protection monasteries (国分寺 *kokubunji*) and convents (国分尼寺 *kokubunniiji*) in all provinces in 741.

a Brahman he preaches Dharma by displaying the body of a Brahman.”⁶⁹ Bodhisena was the first such Brahman to arrive in Japan for the purpose of transmitting Buddhism, which Xiurong has Gyōki accredit to the vows of the buddhas and to the emperor’s own devotion.

In short, Xiurong used Bodhisena’s identity as a member of the Brahman caste to signify the fulfillment of Avalokiteśvara’s vow of saving others, possibly implying that Bodhisena was himself Avalokiteśvara’s avatar in brahmanic form. Although this passage depicts Gyōki in glowing terms, he is not referred to as a bodhisattva, in contrast with the *setsuwa* below. However, Bodhisena’s own reverence of bodhisattvas is made clear in the *Sōjō hi* at his time of death. Xiurong notes Bodhisena’s worship of Amitābha (阿弥陀仏 *Amida butsu*) and Avalokiteśvara, including that he made an image of Avalokiteśvara in the *Cintāmaṇi-cakra* form (如意輪菩薩 *Nyōirin bosatsu*).⁷⁰ Bodhisena’s final wish was for his followers to fulfill his vow in making images of the eight bodhisattvas.⁷¹ He also asked them to take his clothing and other belongings and use them to make Amitābha’s Pure Land.⁷²

Alongside his bodhisattva devotion, the *Sōjō hi* states that Bodhisena used to recite the *Flower Garland Sutra* as well as incantations (呪術 *jūjutsu*). These could either refer to mantras

⁶⁹ Leon Hurvitz, trans., *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (The Lotus Sūtra)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976): 25.

⁷⁰ In this form, Avalokiteśvara is often portrayed with six arms, one of which is holding a wheel (*cakra*). For more on Bodhisena’s bodhisattva worship, see Kuranaka Shinobu 藏中しのぶ, “Nantenjiku baramon sōjō hihei jo’ no chinmoku: Bodaisenna no ‘Amida jōdo’ to Kōmyō taikō tsuizen jigyō” 『南天竺婆羅門僧正碑并序』の沈黙：菩提僊那の「阿弥陀浄土」と光明太后追善事業, *Bungaku, gogaku* 218 (March, 2017): 35-44.

⁷¹ It is unclear which eight bodhisattvas are being referenced here, as there are multiple lists of eight in different texts.

⁷² 汝曹宜抽吾帑藏衣物奉造阿弥陀浄土. Kuranaka, Nantenjiku, 53. It is not clear from the passage how the items were intended to be used in crafting Amida’s Pure Land. Possibly what was meant was to take the clothing and other stored belongings and sell them, using the proceeds to sponsor the image’s creation. Alternatively, the passage may indicate that Bodhisena’s personal items were to be incorporated into the Pure Land depiction itself as decorations or perhaps the material upon which the Pure Land was to be painted.

or *dhāraṇīs*, as seen with Daoxuan at the eye-opening ceremony, or to incantations for thaumaturgical practices.⁷³ As noted above, the *Shoku nihongi* included Bodhisena with Daoxuan when Emperor Shōmu granted them clothing, appointed them to the *Sōgō*, and assigned their duties at the eye-opening ceremony. In both of these latter cases, Bodhisena was granted the highest position. With the *Sōgō*, he held the post of superintendent with Ryōben serving as the vice-superintendent, or *shōsōzu* (少僧都), and Daoxuan and Ryūson jointly serving in the third position of *risshi*. At the eye-opening ceremony, Bodhisena personally painted in the Great Buddha's pupils in the former emperor's stead, as Shōmu's health prevented him from doing it personally.⁷⁴

Another source for tracking Bodhisena's legacy is the medieval *setsuwa*. While covering the full breadth of *setsuwa* involving Bodhisena is beyond the scope of this work, they generally share three key points: (1) Bodhisena left India in search of the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī,⁷⁵ (2) *Gyōki* met him at Naniwa, and (3) Bodhisena and *Gyōki* exchanged greetings wherein Bodhisena revealed that *Gyōki* was really the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. In *setsuwa* featuring this episode, *Gyōki*

⁷³ For more on the connection between Bodhisena and incantations, see Mizuguchi Motoki 水口幹記 “Tenjiku sō Bodaisenna no ‘jujutsu’ ni kansuru oboegaki” 天竺僧菩提僊那の「呪術」に関する覚書, *Fujijoshi daigaku kokubungaku zasshi* 99-100 (March, 2019): 1-16. Peter Kornicki also links this reference to incantations (or “spells,” as he translates it) with Empress Shōtoku's *hyakumantō darani* (百万塔陀羅尼) distribution of one million hand-held stupas containing a printed *dhāraṇī*. Although Bodhisena had passed by the time this episode took place, Kornicki suggests that he influenced its development. Peter Kornicki, “The Hyakumantō Darani and the Origins of Printing in Eighth Century Japan,” *International Journal of Asian Studies* 9, no. 1 (2012): 54.

⁷⁴ See chapter 2 and Appendix A.

⁷⁵ This is the case in *Fusō ryakki* (扶桑略記) and *Genkō shakusho* (元亨釈書). Bodhisena's biography in the *Sōgō bunin* (僧綱補任) similarly contains the tale that he went to Mt. Wutai in search for Mañjuśrī, but once there is told by a mysterious old man that the bodhisattva has gone to Japan. These narratives then end with the exchange where Bodhisena reveals that *Gyōki* is the Mañjuśrī that he has been in search of. By comparison, the *Konjaku monogatari shū* (今昔物語集) and *Sanbōe Kotoba* (三宝絵詞) state that he came to Japan in order to attend the eye-opening ceremony for the Great Buddha, despite the fact that this took place sixteen years after Bodhisena's arrival. For a comparison of the medieval *setsuwa* involving this exchange between *Gyōki* and Bodhisena, see Yoshie Akio 義江彰夫, “Bodaisenna Gyōki ni kan suru shijitsu to setsuwaka” 菩提僊那・行基に関する史実と説話化, *Ōkurayama ronshū* 48 (March 2002): 21-62. See also Jonathan Morris Augustine. *Buddhist Hagiography in Early Japan: Images of Compassion in the Gyōki Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005): 107-109.

begins the exchange by declaring that they had sworn vows together in another life in front of Śākyamuni on Vulture Peak, the site of many of the Buddha's sermons. Bodhisena responds in kind, referencing their time together in Kapilavāstu and delighting that he could once again see Mañjuśrī's face.⁷⁶

While the wording of Bodhisena's and Gyōki's greetings is largely the same across the *setsuwa* featuring this episode, it is vastly different from the exchange that Xiurong depicts. As noted above, Xiurong used Gyōki to reveal that Bodhisena fulfilled Avalokiteśvara's vow, suggesting that the Indian monk could be Avalokiteśvara's avatar. By comparison, the *setsuwa* used Bodhisena to reveal Gyōki's bodhisattva nature as Mañjuśrī.⁷⁷ Additionally, since Mañjuśrī was commonly portrayed alongside Samantabhadra, this exchange implies that when Bodhisena saw Gyōki as Mañjuśrī on Vulture Peak, it was in the form of his own bodhisattva alter ego, Samantabhadra.

While Samantabhadra was also paired with Daoxuan, as noted above when Daoxuan was portrayed riding a white elephant at the moment of his passing, the association with Bodhisena was far more long-lasting. One variation of the fourteenth-century war narrative *Heike monogatari* (平家物語), the *Genpei seisuiki* (源平盛衰記), provided Bodhisena with a more dramatic revelation of his bodhisattva nature by having him exit the eye-opening ceremony atop a white,

⁷⁶ Gyōki: The true nature of the vows we swore before Śākyamuni, on the holy mountain [Vulture Peak] have not decayed; We meet [again]! 霊山の釋迦のお前に契りてし真如朽ちせず相見つるかな

Bodhisena: This is the result of the vows we exchanged in Kapilavāstu: Mañjuśrī, I behold your face [again]! 迦毘羅衛に共に契りし甲斐ありて文殊のみかほ相見つるかな. *Konjaku monogatarishū*. vol. 11, no. 7, as quoted in Yoshie, 23. In some versions, instead of declaring joy at seeing Mañjuśrī's face, Bodhisena instead reveals that this is the Mañjuśrī of whom he had been in search.

⁷⁷ There is some evidence that Gyōki was perceived, or at least referred to, as a bodhisattva during his lifetime, and his connection with Mañjuśrī is reflected in the late eighth, early ninth-century *setsuwa* collection *Nihon ryōiki* (日本靈異記), although neither Bodhisena nor this exchange is included in this source. As such, even if it is a later medieval creation, the vow exchange has some historical basis. Augustine, 121

six-tusked elephant. The common people waiting outside then declared their realization that he was Samantabhadra.⁷⁸

Gyōnen includes the Tōdaiji four founders Shōmu, Ryōben, Bodhisena, and Gyōki and the theme of bodhisattva natures in his discussion of the Kegon School and Tōdaiji's establishment in his *Transmission of the Buddha Dharma*. He states that these four individuals were the respective incarnations of the bodhisattvas Avalokiteśvara, Maitreya, Samantabhadra, and Mañjuśri. In these forms, the four bodhisattvas caused the temple to be created and the *Flower Garland Sutra* to be propagated.⁷⁹ The text then states, “the masters such as the one who presided over the eye opening ceremony, the master who fished for the mackerel⁸⁰ (in the Kegon teachings), the master who transmitted the precepts, the master of court music, the carpenters and image makers, all were nothing but reincarnations of the great Mañjuśri Bodhisattva.”⁸¹ In other words, all of those who participated in the eye-opening ceremony, including the other overseas monks, were emanations of Mañjuśri. Considering that Gyōki had died by the time of the eye-opening ceremony, this association preserved his contributions to the temple via his bodhisattva alter-ego.

Xiurong provides another notable piece of information in the *Sōjō hi* that is lacking from other sources, namely the reason why Bodhisena relocated to Japan. Unlike Daoxuan or Jianzhen,

⁷⁸ Kuranaka, *Mitsu no Dōsen den*, 15.

⁷⁹ These bodhisattva pairings were also reflected in medieval stories about the four founding “saints” (四聖 *shishō*) of Tōdaiji: Shōmu, Ryōben, Bodhisena, and Gyōki. This portrayal was depicted in the 1257 “Image of Four Saints” (四聖御影 *Shishō no Mie*) painting, which was created in commemoration of the five hundred year anniversary of Shōmu's death. There is also a 1377 copy of this original. These are the earliest known images of Bodhisena, and they were used as inspiration for later statues at Ryōsenji and Daienji. For more on *setsuwa* featuring these “four saints” and images in which they appear, see Kojima, 216-218.

⁸⁰ The passage goes on to mention a master putting eighty mackerel into a basket, and that the eighty mackerel represented the eighty fascicles of the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Ronald Green and Chanju Mun point to a legend of a man carrying eighty mackerel in a basket, who Gyōnen suggested was really Mañjuśri. Green and Mun, 134-135 n.11.

⁸¹ Green and Mun, 134-135.

he had no stated authority as a precepts master. And while the *setsuwa* are split regarding whether he relocated due to being told that Mañjuśrī had gone to Japan or because he anticipated the Great Buddha being built and wanted to be there for the eye opening,⁸² the *Sōjō hi* offers a more pragmatic explanation. Xiurong states that the mission’s ambassador Tajihi Mahito Hironari and the scholar monk Rikyō (理鏡; fl. 733-736) were impressed by the Indian monk and invited him to return to Japan with them, which he accepted. What is particularly notable about this reference is that it suggests a broader motive behind the ninth embassy’s mission to Tang China. Taken in connection with the other overseas individuals listed with Nashiro’s arrival in 736, it is clear that Yōei and Fushō were not the only members of the party intent on finding and inviting specialists to relocate to Japan. It seems likely that this was an overall interest at this time that went well beyond precepts and ordinations.

Outside of Bodhisena’s promotion of the *Flower Garland Sutra* and bodhisattva worship, he was also credited with teaching Sanskrit to other monks at Daianji. Evidence of this is seen in Bodhisena’s recommendation that Hata Ōkura Yoshitatsu (秦大蔵喜達) be ordained in part due to his ability to read Sanskrit *dhāraṇīs* (梵本陀羅尼 *Bonpon darani*).⁸³ Additionally, the ninth-century monk Annen (安然 841-ca. 915) stated that Phât Triệt brought a Siddham primer (*Shittan shō*) to Japan with him.⁸⁴ This shared language along with Annen’s designation of Phât

⁸² This would have been rather prescient, as Shōmu did not begin the construction process until 743, seven years after Bodhisena arrived in Japan.

⁸³ *Dai Nihon komonjo* 大日本古文書 2 (Tokyo: Tōkyō Teikoku Daigaku Bunkabu Shiryō Hensangakari, 1901): 314-315. According to Yoshikawa Shinji, Bodhisena recommended that Hata Ōkura Yoshitatsu be assigned to Yamato no kuni Konkōmyōji Temple (大養徳国金光明寺), one of Tōdaiji’s previous iterations. Yoshikawa Shinji 吉川真司, “*Tenpyō bunkaron*” 天平文化論, in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi dai 3 gyō kodai 3* 岩波講座日本歴史, edited by Ōtsu Tōru 大津透 et al. vol. 3. (Tokyo: Iwanamishoten, 2014): 225. See also Mizuguchi Motoki 水口幹記, “*Tenjikusō Bodaisenna no ‘jūjutsu’ ni kan suru oboegaki*” 天竺僧菩提僊那の「呪術」に関する覚書, *Fuji joshidaigaku kokubungaku zasshi* 99-100, (2019): 1-16, especially page 9.

⁸⁴ Shinkawa, 217. This reference appears in Annen’s catalog of esoteric Buddhist materials that were transported to Japan, the *Sho ajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* (諸阿闍梨真言密教部類総録). Lucia Dolce and Shinya Mano,

Triệt as Bodhisena’s disciple (門人 *monjin*) supports common portrayals of Bodhisena and Phật Triệt as being friends, companions, and fellow teachers.

1.3.3 Phật Triệt

Phật Triệt, the next of the Daianji overseas monks considered here, is closely tied with Bodhisena. The *Sōjō hi* states that when Bodhisena set out with the embassy, he was accompanied by Daoxuan as well as the monk Phật Triệt from Lâm Ấp (林邑 *Rinyū*), also commonly known by its Chinese name of Linyi, in modern-day central Vietnam.⁸⁵ This area is more commonly known as Champa, especially from the tenth century onward.⁸⁶ However, the relatively sparse materials referencing Phật Triệt have led to disagreements about not only his country of origin, but also the cultural background to the music and dances that he is accredited with transmitting in Japan.⁸⁷

Phật Triệt’s greatest contribution to Japan can be inferred from the presence of three Cham-style musical entertainments, known as *Rinyūgaku* (林邑樂), performed at the multicultural

“Godai’in Annen,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, edited by Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: Brill, 2011): 770.

⁸⁵ For an overview of research related to Phật Triệt and Japan’s relations with Champa, see “Nichitsu kōryū ni okeru Rinyūsō Buttetsu no jiseki,” 日越交流における林邑僧仏哲の事跡 in *Cham Studies*, November 19, 2015, <https://chamstudies.wordpress.com/2015/11/19/日越交流における林邑僧仏哲の事跡/>.

⁸⁶ Despite the fact that the area’s title was not Champa during Phật Triệt’s life, I am choosing to use this name on account of the fact that Champa itself refers to a polity of states governed by the Cham people, any of which could also be called Champa. Moreover, the name existed in Chinese records as 占城 (*Senjō*) or 膽波 (*Chanpa*) before Lâm Ấp’s fall. For more on Champa’s early history, see Michael Vickery, “A Short History of Champa” in *Champa and the Archaeology of Mỹ Sơn (Vietnam)*, edited by Andrew Hardy, Mauro Cucarzi, and Patrizia Zolese, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2009): 45-60; Jean-François Hubert, *The Art of Champa* (London: Parkstone International, 2005); and Hans Bielenstein, *Diplomacy and Trade in the Chinese World, 589-1276* (Leiden: Brill, 2005): 36-50.

⁸⁷ For a review of different theories on Phật Triệt’s origins or existence, see Takako Inoue, “Indigenisation of Traditional Performing Arts in Japan: Transformation of Indian Elements in Gagaku,” (paper presented at India and Japan: Unearthing lesser-known 16th to early 20th century linkages, New Delhi, November 15-17, 2018): 8.

spectacle that followed the Great Buddha’s eye-opening ceremony in 752.⁸⁸ While there are no contemporaneous texts mentioning Phật Triệt’s role in performing and teaching these dances, there are later references that support this assumption. For example, in “Biography of Daianji’s Bodhi[sena],” Phật Triệt is identified as a “*gagaku* priest” (雅樂之師 *gagaku no shi*) during the eye-opening ceremony, referencing the category of continental court music that included *Rinyūgaku*. The text goes on to note that the three *Rinyūgaku* pieces performed were the *bosatsumai* (菩薩舞), the *bairo* (陪臚) and the *batōmai* (拔頭舞).⁸⁹ The Japanese Buddhist history text *Genkō shakusho* (元亨釈書) from 1322 also states that *Rinyūgaku* was performed at the time that Jianzhen established an ordination platform at Tōdaiji in 754. It specifies that Phật Triệt personally performed while Jianzhen conferred the bodhisattva precepts upon Shōmu, and that there was an imperial order to study Cham dances (林邑舞 *Rinyūmai*), specifically the *bosatsumai* and the *batōmai*.⁹⁰

Compared with Daoxuan and Bodhisena, whose motivations for relocating to Japan are discussed in their biographies, when and why Phật Triệt joined the Japanese envoy are entirely unknown. Paul Demiéville cites a legend about Phật Triệt meeting Bodhisena in the South Seas

⁸⁸ See chapter 2. For more on the types of music Phật Triệt brought to Japan, see Kōno Ryōsen 河野亮仙 “Buttetsu no motarashita Shittan shōmyō Rinyūgaku to wa nani ka” 仏哲のもたらした悉曇・声明・林邑樂とは何か, *Sange Gakkai kiyo* 2, (June, 1999): 98-106.

⁸⁹ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 56. In this case, *bairo* is represented as 部侶. For descriptions on these three dances, see Inoue, *Indigenisation*, 17-18.

⁹⁰ *Nihon kōsōden yōbunshō gai yonbu* 日本高僧伝要文抄外四部, in *Dai Nihon bukkyō zensho* 大日本仏教全書, 101 (Tokyo: Bussho kankōkai, 2007): 273. As discussed in chapter 3, though, there is some debate as to whether Jianzhen even conducted this bodhisattva precepts ordination with Shōmu, let alone whether it coincided with a *Rinyūgaku* performance.

after Phật Triệt suffered a shipwreck, and they decided to travel to China together.⁹¹ The twelfth-century Japanese history *Fusō ryakki* (扶桑略記) also associates Phật Triệt with the sea, stating that he went to visit the dragon king in search of a wish-fulfilling jewel that he wanted to use for the wellbeing of all sentient beings.⁹² However, as with the Bodhisena *setsuwa* discussed above, these later tales largely provide insight into these monks' legacies rather than biographical details.

Part of the confusion concerning Phật Triệt's background is tied to the *Rinyūgaku* musical pieces themselves. In addition to the three listed above, there were five others that comprised the so-called "Eight Musical Pieces of Champa" (林邑八樂 *Rinyū hachi gaku*) that were part of the Japanese court's *gagaku* repertoire.⁹³ Despite these pieces' designation as deriving from Southeast Asia, their subject matter was heavily influenced by Indian and Central Asian motifs and styles.⁹⁴ This has led scholars such as Takako Inoue to suggest that Phật Triệt traveled to India to study these pieces and met Bodhisena there,⁹⁵ or that he may have been from India to start with. This latter argument is supported by Annen's claim that Phật Triệt transported a Siddham syllabary to

⁹¹ He does not specify which legend or the source for it. Paul Demiéville, ed., "Bugaku," *Hōbōgirin Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'Après les Sources Chinoises et Japonaises* vol. 2, (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1929): 152.

⁹² Brian Ruppert, "Pearl in the Shrine: A Genealogy of the Buddhist Jewel of the Japanese Sovereign" *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 29 no. 1-2 (2002): 7.

⁹³ For the list of eight pieces, see Demiéville, Bugaku, 153. However, Robert Garfias states that there are multiple lists of these "eight pieces," leading to some confusion as to which were being referenced. Robert Garfias, *Music of a Thousand Autumns: The Tōgaku Style of Japanese Court Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975):14.

⁹⁴ See Terence A. Lancashire, "Entertainments of Foreign Derivation and Stage Entertainments," in *An Introduction to Japanese Folk Performing Arts* (London: Routledge, 2011): 95-96; Watanabe Shinichirō 渡辺信一郎, "Gagaku no kita michi: Kentōshi to ongaku" 雅楽の来た道: 遣唐使と音楽, *Senshū daigaku higashi Ajia sekaishi kenkyū sentaa nenpō* (March, 2009): 8. Garfias and Demiéville point to the appearance of several of these pieces in Chinese annals, suggesting that they had already been part of Chinese performative repertoire and may have already been brought over to Japan as part of "Tang-style music" (唐樂 *Tōgaku*) being performed in the Japanese court. Garfias, 13-14.

⁹⁵ Inoue, Indigenisation, 6-8, 16. One of the early proponents of the theory that Phật Triệt was actually Indian was Indologist Tanaka Otoya (田中於菟彌). For a summary of this argument, see Kōno.

Japan.⁹⁶ The *Biography of Daianji's Bodhi[sena]* also refers to Champa as being in “Northern India” (北天竺 *Kita Tenjiku*), despite this not conforming with the “Five Indias” geography of the period.⁹⁷

However, presuming that evidence of Indian influence in *Rinyūgaku* indicates that the pieces and Phật Triệt himself originated in India neglects to take into consideration how much Southeast Asia was influenced by Chinese and Indian culture during this time. As Edward Schafer notes in *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand*, Champa and other countries in the Indochinese Peninsula were key to transmitting Indian music, including those performing stories and themes from Buddhist texts.⁹⁸ As such, Phật Triệt could well have learned the *Rinyūgaku* pieces while in Champa and traveled to China as part of a performing arts troupe. Alternatively, Champa presented gifts to the Tang court throughout the years that Japan's ninth embassy was in China,⁹⁹ meaning that Phật Triệt could well have accompanied his own country's envoy and elected to leave with another's. Given the degree to which individuals and cultural expressions were circulating throughout the Asian continent during this time, the most that can be determined for certain is that there are indications of Indian influence in *Rinyūgaku*, but where they were practiced and who transported them cannot be discerned.

The lack of additional resources on Phật Triệt makes his background and the origin of *Rinyūgaku* difficult to determine. Nonetheless, Phật Triệt's presence in Japan is indicative of the

⁹⁶ Yoshikawa, 225-226; Shinkawa, 217.

⁹⁷ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 56. In this case, Phật Triệt is identified as a monk from Champa (瞻婆國 *Senba koku*) as well as Lâm Ấp.

⁹⁸ Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T'ang Exotics*, (Berkeley, Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963): 52.

⁹⁹ Bielenstein, 38.

high degree of trade and exchange occurring throughout Asia at that time. Additionally, these meager references provide glimpses into how other countries and cultures were understood in Japan at that time, regardless of the historical accuracy of the details in these references. As far as eighth-century Japan was concerned, *Rinyūgaku* reflected mainland Southeast Asian culture. As will be discussed in chapter 2, even if this is a misidentification, it is no less accurate than referring to “Music from Tang China” (唐樂 *Tōgaku*) or “Music from the former Korean kingdom of Koguryō” (高麗樂 *Komagaku*), as we see with other performances at the eye-opening ceremony.¹⁰⁰ At best, these designations indicate the countries from which these musical styles were likely carried to Japan, but the titles fail to account for the generations of cross-cultural influence and transmutation that contributed to their development. In a similar way, the Daianji overseas monks represented much more of the world’s culture than their assumed countries of origin.

1.3.4 Jianzhen

The fourth monk, Jianzhen, is the last to have relocated to Japan as a result of the *risshi shōsei* campaign that was also responsible for Daoxuan, Bodhisena, and Phật Triệt’s relocations. Jianzhen arrived in 754, after an eleven-year campaign to reach Japan that left him blind following his fifth failed attempt.¹⁰¹ He finally succeeded on his sixth attempt. Of all overseas monks who relocated to Japan throughout its premodern history, Jianzhen is arguably the most renowned. Jianzhen is credited with establishing three things: 1) *vinaya*-based ordination ceremonies, 2)

¹⁰⁰ I discuss these multicultural performances in more detail in chapter 2.

¹⁰¹ According to the *Tōseiden*, Jianzhen’s eyesight was affected by traveling through hot climates and faded completely following a failed treatment. Bingenheimer, part 2, 153. However, his signature appears on documents from the Shōsōin, suggesting that his vision may have been dimmed but not totally lost. Bryan Lowe, private communication, August 2, 2021.

ordination platforms that restricted the location for monastic ordinations, and 3) Tōshōdaiji Temple (唐招提寺), the headquarters for the Ritsu school (律宗 *Risshū*), which was dedicated to studying the *vinaya*.¹⁰² His actions also had the most long-lasting repercussions, especially with regard to how Japan’s monastic ordinations were carried out. Moreover, his voyage and legacy were the best documented compared to the other four overseas monks considered in this dissertation, especially through the biographies created or influenced by his disciple Situ, as noted above.¹⁰³

Although Jianzhen’s impact on Japanese Buddhism was monumental, this study largely focuses on events prior to his arrival. Additionally, as he did not ever live at Daianji, he is not technically one of the Daianji overseas monks. Nonetheless, I include him with this group because he functioned as the “capstone” to the *risshi shōsei*, and also because it is necessary to account for Jianzhen’s influence while viewing any of the other overseas monks included here. Moreover, his legacy provides additional insight into the role of overseas monks in premodern Japan in general. His activities regarding precepts and ordinations are discussed in more detail in chapter 3, whereas in this chapter I provide more background concerning his relocation to and life in Japan.

According to the *Tōseiden* and *Enryaku sōroku*, Jianzhen was from Yangzhou Province (揚州 *Yōshū*) and spent time studying Buddhism in the Chinese capitals of Chang’an (長安 *Chōan*) and Luoyang (洛陽 *Rakuyō*) before returning to Damingsi Temple (大明寺 *Daimyōji*) in

¹⁰² Jianzhen is often credited with establishing the Ritsu school. However, there was already a study that was dedicated to the study of *vinaya* before his arrival, participants of which were located at all of the major temples in the capital city. Jianzhen’s distinction is that he centralized the study of *vinaya* at a single temple. Sakuma, Ganjin, 20, 23. Futaba Kenkō similarly indicates that the study of *vinaya* predated Jianzhen’s arrival. Futaba Kenkō 二葉憲香, “Nara jidai ni okeru risshū to kairitsu” 奈良時代における律宗と戒律, *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 13, no. 1 (1965): 292.

¹⁰³ For a general overview of Jianzhen’s life and activities, especially in Japan, see Dorothy Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645-770*, (Singapore: NUS Press, 2018): 221-250.

Yangzhou.¹⁰⁴ This is where Yōei and Fushō met the master in 742, as they prepared to return home rather than waiting for Japan's next diplomatic envoy. By that time, Jianzhen was in his mid-fifties and had been trained in the Nanshan (南山 *Nansan*) school¹⁰⁵ of *vinaya* studies, focused on the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* (四分律 *shibun ritsu*).¹⁰⁶ The *Tōseiden* states that while the Japanese monks were not necessarily looking for the *vinaya* master himself to volunteer to go, he did so when none of his disciples would step forward. Perhaps emboldened by their master's willingness, after this his followers declared their intention to join.¹⁰⁷

The highlight of Jianzhen's biographies is his voyage from China to Japan, which by all accounts was a harrowing experience. According to the *Tōseiden*, it took eleven years and five failed attempts before he was able to arrive in Japan. The last failed attempt took the party so off course that they were unable to make another attempt for three years.¹⁰⁸ In the intervening time, Jianzhen lost his eyesight and Yōei died. Finally, members of a specially arranged Japanese delegation successfully smuggled the master out of China in 753.¹⁰⁹ During each expedition,

¹⁰⁴ For English iterations of Jianzhen's early life and travels to Japan, see Zhenping Wang, *Ambassadors From the Islands of Immortals* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2005): 207-215; Wong, *Pilgrim-Monks*, 221-239; Dorothy Wong, "Jianzhen (Ganjin)" in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 2 (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 571-575; Sakuma, *Ganjin*, 14-25. For Japanese biographies on Jianzhen, see Andō Kōsei 安藤更生, *Ganjin 鑑真* (Tokyo: Bijutsu shuppansha, 1958); Andō Kōsei 安藤更生, *Ganjin daiwajō den no kenkyū 鑑真大和上傳之研究* (Tokyo: Heibonsha, 1960); and Tōno Haruyuki 東野治之, *Ganjin 鑑真* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009).

¹⁰⁵ According to the *Tōseiden*, Jianzhen was trained Daoan (道岸 *Dōgan*; 653-717) and Hongjing (弘景 *Kōkei*; n.d.), who were themselves disciples of the *vinaya* master and Nanshan founder Daoxuan. Bingenheimer, part 1, 168, 169 n20. See also Tōno, *Ganjin*, 8-9, 20-21. For more on the Nanshan school, see Ann Heirman, "Indian Disciplinary Rules and Their Early Chinese Adepts: A Buddhist Reality," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 128, No. 2 (Apr. - Jun., 2008): 257-272.

¹⁰⁶ Commonly known by its Chinese name, *sifen lü*.

¹⁰⁷ Bingenheimer, part 1, 173.

¹⁰⁸ Wong, *Jianzhen*, 572.

¹⁰⁹ The envoys had petitioned the Tang court for permission to take Jianzhen with them, but the emperor refused unless they would also take Taoist priests. The delegation refused on the grounds that the Japanese emperor did not practice

Jianzhen's followers prepared numerous materials and a large company of not only monks, but also craftsmen and artisans to go with him. The final group of followers numbered twenty-four, including three nuns.¹¹⁰ While this number pales in comparison with earlier attempts,¹¹¹ it was enough to establish the requisite quorum of ten full monks for an orthodox ordination tradition for Japan's monks, although not for nuns.

In looking not only at Jianzhen's activities in Japan but also the preparations for his six attempted journeys to Japan, it is clear that Jianzhen had a personal mission to establish the forms of Buddhism that he was familiar with in this strange new land. Object lists for his second and sixth trips detail not only texts, but also images, decorations, and ritual items.¹¹² Moreover, he brought craftsmen and artisans with him, several of whom he relied upon when building his own temple Tōshōdaiji in 759.¹¹³ Even the temple's title indicates his origins, as it translates to "temple of [the one] beckoned from Tang [China]."

Given the pomp and circumstances surrounding Jianzhen's arrival in Japan and transport to the capital city as described in the *Tōseiden*, Jianzhen may have started overshadowing the other overseas monks from the moment he set foot onto Japanese soil in early 754. The *Tōseiden* states that more than thirty people were sent out to greet the monk upon his arrival in Naniwa, including

Taoism, but they did leave behind four members to study Taoism. Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 245-247.

¹¹⁰ See Bingenheimer, part 2, 160-161.

¹¹¹ Wong notes that Jianzhen's second attempt included eighty-five artisans, all of them skilled in trades related to making images and temples. Wong, *Pilgrim-Monks*, 233. According to Gyōnen, thirty-six monks and laymen died, including Yōei, and two hundred eighty people turned back over the course of the five failed attempts. Pruden, *Vinaya Tradition*, 126.

¹¹² See Bingenheimer, part 2, 161-167.

¹¹³ Of particular note is the Central Asian builder Rubao (如寶 *Nyohō*; n.d.), who is credited with making Tōshōdaiji's architecture and sculptures. Wong, *Jianzhen*, 573.

one of Daoxuan's disciples. The day after Jianzhen settled in at Tōdaiji, Daoxuan and Bodhisena are recorded as going to visit him, followed by the courtier Kibi Makibi who presented an address on Empress Kōken's behalf declaring that all matters related to precepts and the *vinaya* were entirely in the newly arrived monk's hands.¹¹⁴

While the *Tōseiden* is clearly hagiographic in its praise of Jianzhen, there is no question that he superseded his predecessors, especially in relation to precepts and ordinations. Jianzhen was a renowned *vinaya* master in China, and the first of his attempted voyages to Japan failed due to his own disciple turning him in to authorities for trying to leave the country without approval. Although it is debatable if the Japanese court had indeed been longing for a *vinaya* master to establish an ordination platform at Tōdaiji as the *Tōseiden* suggests,¹¹⁵ the platform was purportedly established in time for Jianzhen to oversee a mass ordination ceremony in the fourth month of 754, which featured over four hundred monks, the retired emperor and empress, and the reigning empress herself. However, despite Jianzhen's prominence as a *vinaya* master, this first reference to an ordination ceremony featured an entirely different type of precepts known as the bodhisattva precepts (菩薩戒 *bosatsukai*).¹¹⁶ Although the source of the bodhisattva precepts is

¹¹⁴ Bingenheimer, part 2, 169.

¹¹⁵ See chapter 3.

¹¹⁶ As discussed in chapter 3, Marcus Bingenheimer and Fukuyama Toshio suggest that this story was actually taken from the *Gyōgi nenpu* (行基年譜), which stated that the Japanese monk Gyōki ordained the imperial family in 749, five years before Jianzhen's arrival. Bingenheimer, part 2, 170-171 n99, citing Fukuyama Toshio 福山敏男, "Tōshōdaiji no konryū" 唐招提寺の建立, *Rekishi chiri* 60, no. 4 (Oct. 1932): 345-346. However, a manual on conducting ordinations at Tōdaiji states that Jianzhen required his disciples to follow the *Brahma Net Sutra*'s repentance ceremony while receiving *vinaya* precepts. Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999): 49. Bodhisattva precepts and *vinaya* precepts were not mutually exclusive, and Jianzhen clearly promoted both. Nonetheless, considering the emphasis in Jianzhen's biographies on overseeing *vinaya* precepts, it is notable that his first precepts ordination had no connection with the *vinaya*.

not specified in his biographies, the most commonly used version at the time came from the *Brahma Net Sutra*, the same text upon which Daoxuan had written Japan's first commentary.

In addition to his activities promoting *vinaya*, Jianzhen also joined the Ministry for Monastic Affairs in 756, soon after Shōmu's death and funeral. Empress Kōken appointed both Jianzhen and Ryōben to positions of "senior vice-superintendent" (大僧都 *daisōzu*). While Bodhisena still held the top position of superintendent, Daoxuan and Ryūson had retired from the *Sōgō* just the year before, which Sakuma suggests could have been due to annoyance that their fellow precepts master had so far eclipsed them.¹¹⁷

Alongside Daoxuan and Ryūson's joint retirements, there are additional indications of disgruntlement among monks who did not agree with Jianzhen's monastic reforms. One such episode is included in the *Enryaku sōroku*, which is all the more notable considering that Jianzhen's disciple Situo wrote it. The passage states that just prior to Emperor Shōmu's death, monks assembled eighteen ritual implements in front of the Tōdaiji Vairocana and conducted a ceremony for the sake of Shōmu's *karma* (羯磨 *konma*; alt. *katsuma*).¹¹⁸ Jianzhen called forth only the Chinese monks and bestowed precepts upon them. Monks from Kōfukuji Temple (興福寺) then raised a ruckus in protest.¹¹⁹ Whether they were protesting seemingly preferential treatment towards the Chinese monks, expressing jealousy, or resisting receiving precepts from Jianzhen is

¹¹⁷ Sakuma, Ganjin, 21.

¹¹⁸ In this case, referring to monastic propriety or as part of a confessional penance ritual. Nakamura Hajime 中村元, *Kōsetsu bukkyōgo daijiten* 広説佛教語大辞典 (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2001): 530. Bryan Lowe, private communication, August 2, 2021.

¹¹⁹ While the details are missing from the *Shoku nihongi*, there are references to ceremonies dedicated to Shōmu's health just prior to his death, and Kōken promoted several monks, including the new members of the *Sōgō*, on account of their efforts on her father's behalf. 756.5.24 *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 3, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 13, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992): 158-165. Bender, *Nara Japan, 749-757*, 177-179.

unclear.¹²⁰ Situo also indicates that there was disapproval at the time when Jianzhen left both the *Sōgō* and Tōdaiji to settle into Tōshōdaiji on the opposite side of the city in 758. Sakuma posits this could have due either to the new temple's unprecedented specialization in studying monastic precepts, or because Jianzhen transferred income away from his previous residence to his new temple.¹²¹ That these even seemingly minor indications of resistance can be read between the lines of a devoted follower and biographer such as Situo suggests that there may have been greater personality clashes between the *vinaya* master and his new Buddhist community.

1.3.5 Simsang

The final monk considered here did not come to Japan as a result of the *risshi shōsei* and was likely already residing in Daianji at the time that Ryōben invited him to conduct a three-year lecture series at Tōdaiji's preceding temple. Nonetheless, Simsang entered the historical record as a result of a Japanese monk's invitation, similar to the other Daianji overseas monks. Moreover, he not only contributed to the increased prominence of the *Flower Garland Sutra* at Daianji, Tōdaiji, and the court in general, but Gyōnen states that he also provided a direct link to the renowned *Flower Garland Sutra* monk Fazang.

In addition to promulgating the study of this text, Fazang was also spiritual advisor to China's Empress Wu Zetian.¹²² In her reliance on Buddhist legitimization themes to justify her position as an independently reigning empress, an ideal ruler known as a *cakravartin*, and a living bodhisattva in female form, Empress Wu served as a powerful inspiration to Shōmu in his own

¹²⁰ For full episode, see Tōno, *Ganjin* 89-93.

¹²¹ Sakuma, *Ganjin*, 24.

¹²² Jinhua Chen, "More Than a Philosopher: Fazang (643-712) as a Politician and Miracle Worker," *History of Religions*, Vol. 42, No. 4 (May 2003): 320. Chen points to both Simsang and another renowned Korean Buddhist disciple, Ūisang (625–702), who is credited with the school's introduction to Korea, where it is known as Hwaōm.

Buddhist initiatives. Considering Fazang’s role in Empress Wu’s embrace of the *Flower Garland Sutra* and Vairocana in support of her own controversial reign, this connection by way of Simsang points to the direct access these monks offered in terms of continental religious and political technology and trends.

As with several of the other Daianji overseas monks, one of the fundamental references to the monk appears in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*.

Day eight of the tenth month [of the year 740]. The high priest¹²³ Ryōben from Konshūsenji Temple asked the monk Simsang to give the first lecture on the *Flower Garland Sutra* for the benefit of the court. The lecture was established in celebration of the emperor’s fortieth [birthday] that year. When [Simsang] began lecturing, purple clouds appeared in the sky.¹²⁴

In this passage, we see Ryōben soliciting Simsang, Simsang’s connection to the *Flower Garland Sutra*, the text’s association with Tōdaiji in its earlier incarnation of Konshūsenji (金鐘山寺) – elsewhere referred to in this work as Konshūji (金鐘寺) – and the direct link between the text and Emperor Shōmu. There is another record in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* called the “The Origins of the Tōdaiji Ceremony on the *Flower Garland Sutra*” that also recounts several of these details about the founding of the *Flower Garland Sutra* lecture series at Tōdaiji and Simsang’s role in it.¹²⁵ What is missing from both, though, is any mention of Simsang’s Korean origin or residence at Daianji. For those details, we need to look instead to Gyōnen.

Gyōnen introduces Simsang in *Transmission of the Buddha Dharma* after listing Daoxuan’s activities in Japan and his transmission lineage from Bodhidharma. The narrative then

¹²³ This title given is *sōjō* (僧正), or superintendent, and may reflect Ryōben’s later role in the *Sōgō*. However, he was not yet a *sōjō* at this time.

¹²⁴ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 10. This passage comes from the first fascicle in the earliest part of the text. Translation is my own.

¹²⁵ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 156-157.

shifts to focus on the *Flower Garland Sutra* and its promulgation in Japan. Gyōnen was a monk at Tōdaiji and had interests in both the *Flower Garland Sutra* and the *vinaya*. Introducing Daoxuan, Bodhisena, and Simsang in relation to the *Flower Garland Sutra* was part of tracing his own institution's establishment and may have led to additional embellishment. While Gyōnen's account of Simsang preserved some of the same details from the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s passage, additional auspicious elements are reminiscent of *setsuwa*.

This section begins with Gyōnen bemoaning the fact that Japan had the *Kegon* texts but no one to teach and transmit them, comparable to Ryūson's complaint in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*. He states that Ryōben wanted to promote the text, and in a dream was told to search out the “*genchi*” (嚴智 alt. *gonchi*) monk. Ryōben knew of a monk by this name at Gangōji Temple (元興寺), but when approached, Genchi told Ryōben that while his name had those characters, respectively meaning “strictness” and “knowledge,” he did not personally have those qualities. Instead, he directed Ryōben to the Silla monk Simsang, who lived at Daianji.

Sōjō Ryōben went to the temple and invited Master (Simsang). The Virtuous Master declined his invitation twice and a third time. Even though Ryōben was sincere in his invitation to the master, the master continued to decline without considering it. So, Sōjō Ryōben sent a petition to the court that the court should issue an edict and make the master accept his invitation. On the eighth day of the tenth month of the twelfth year of the Tenpyō Era (in 740), there was a large gathering of eminent monks and virtuous masters of the capital (Nara) in the Kinchō dōjō (Rasaku Hall of Tōdaiji Temple, also known as the Hokke, Lotus, Hall). At that time, Master Simsang, who was considered the master of the assembly, lectured on the great *Avatamsaka Sūtra* [*Flower Garland Sutra*] (in sixty fascicles). When he first lectured on the sūtra, a purple cloud appeared in the sky and covered Higashi no Yama (the eastern mountain). The emperor saw the miraculous scene and having limitless admiration for the phenomenon, conferred more than a thousand rolls of colorful silk to the master. The emperor, empress, and various high officials also donated clothes to him, the quantity of which cannot be calculated.¹²⁶

¹²⁶ Green and Mun, 130-131.

In this passage, Gyōnen preserved several details also seen in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*, namely Ryōben's soliciting Simsang, the date, the emperor's birthday (seen in the following section), and the auspicious appearance of purple clouds. However, there are a few notable additions. First, Ryōben was led to Simsang through a dream and the intercession of the Gangōji monk Genchi, who later became a lecturer of the *Flower Garland Sutra* as part of Simsang's lecture series.¹²⁷ Next, Simsang did not comply with Ryōben's request, resulting in the court's intercession and involvement. The emperor saw the auspicious signs and responded with donations to Simsang. The passage then showed Shōmu's great support of the *Flower Garland Sutra* and Kegon's establishment at Tōdaiji.

The addition of the portentous dream and the expanded reaction to the auspicious purple clouds amplify the significance of Simsang's role in this passage. Moreover, by having the court mandate that Simsang give the lecture, Gyōnen directs the attention of the emperor and the court at large upon this text's promulgation. Considering the temple's later incarnation as Tōdaiji and as the center for the study of this text, this event functionally marked the beginning of that transition. It did so with a monk who had personally studied with a man who was by Gyōnen's time perceived to be the third patriarch of the Huayan school, Fazang.

Gyōnen's depiction of Simsang's encounter with Fazang is fairly sparse, stating only that the Silla monk had gone to Tang China, studied this form of Buddhism with the patriarch, and became a master scholar on the text in his own right.¹²⁸ Additionally, Gyōnen says that Simsang used Fazang's commentary *Tanxuang ji* (華嚴經探玄記 *Kegon kyō tangen ki*)¹²⁹ in his lecture

¹²⁷ Green and Mun, 133-134.

¹²⁸ Green and Mun, 133.

¹²⁹ T.35n1733.

series, thereby creating an even stronger connection between Fazang and Daianji's *Flower Garland Sutra* specialist.

However, there are a few complications with Gyōnen's history of Simsang, starting with his fundamental identity as a monk from the Korean kingdom of Silla. Scholars Fukuyama Toshio (福山敏男) and Horiike Shunpō (堀池春峰) state that Gyōnen's presumption that Simsang is Korean on the basis of his designation as a "Silla scholar monk" (新羅学僧 *Shiragi gakusō*) is a misunderstanding. As seen in references to "Tang scholar monk," (唐学僧 *Tō gakusō*), or "Koguryō scholar monk" (百济学僧 *Kudara gakusō*) in other eighth- and ninth-century works, this format indicates a customary title given to a Japanese monk who had gone overseas to study and returned.¹³⁰ Horiike also points to a reference from the *Kegon ichijō kaishinron* (華嚴一乘開心論), written by the Kegon monk Fuki (普機; fl. 9th century) in the year 830. Fuki mentions "the virtuous scholar Shinjō [Simsang], who was a scholar in *Seikyū*" (青丘留学華嚴審詳大德 *Seikyū ryūgakusō Kegon Shinjō daitoku*). As *Seikyū*, literally "blue hill," is an early Chinese epithet for Chosōn, the individual here is identified as a Japanese scholar who went to the Korean Peninsula. The passage goes on to state that the monk held a lecture on the eighth day of the tenth month in 740, which became the "religious service on the wisdom of the *Flower Garland Sutra*" (知識華嚴別供 *Chishiki Kegon bekkū*).¹³¹ This same title corresponds with the name of the lecture series in the "The Origins of the Tōdaiji Ceremony on the *Flower Garland Sutra*" in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*.

Given these correspondences, there is no question that Fuki was referring to Simsang, and this passage's emphasis upon his being a "study abroad" monk (留学僧 *ryūgakusō*) removes any

¹³⁰ Fukuyama Toshio 福山敏男, *Nihon kenchikushi kenkyū* 日本建築史研究, vol. 2 (Tokyo: Bokusui Shobō, 1971): 79 and Horiike Shunpō 堀池春峰 *Nantō Bukkyō shi no kenkyū* 南東仏教史の研究, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1980): 396.

¹³¹ Horiike, *Nantō bukkyō*, 389.

ambiguity over the monk's connection with Korea. While there is still very little material on Simsang prior to Gyōnen's works, what does exist makes a compelling case for his not being an overseas monk at all, but rather a Japanese monk by the name of Shinjō or Shinshō who had studied in another country in the same manner as Dōji or Genbō.¹³²

Another issue with Gyōnen's history of Simsang is his connection with Fazang.¹³³ Since Simsang's exact dates are not known, it is possible that he could have worked with the Sogdian monk while he was still a young man, prior to Fazang's death in 712. Nonetheless, there is a gap of approximately thirty years separating Fazang's later years and Simsang's lecture series at Tōdaiji. Simsang is not listed in extant documents of Japanese monks who went to Tang China, although it should be noted that these are incomplete and Simsang could have gone to China via Korea, as Gyōnen indicates. However, it is curious that Simsang was not known as a "Tang scholar monk" in addition to or instead of his affiliation with Silla, particularly given the comparatively greater prestige of both going to Tang and working with Fazang.

Additionally, Gyōnen's linking Simsang to Fazang is a departure from his earlier *Eight Traditions*. In that work, Gyōnen states that it was Daoxuan who studied with Fazang and subsequently transmitted the *Flower Garland Sutra* to Ryōben.¹³⁴ Translators Ronald S. Green and Chanju Mun claim that *Transmission of the Buddha Dharma* was intended to be a supplement

¹³² Horiike also notes that the story of the monk's going to Silla is supported by Simsang's extensive personal library, the bulk of which was composed of works by prominent Silla scholars. Horiike, *Nantō bukkyō*, 396; for list of works, see Horiike, *Nantō bukkyō*, 423-431.

¹³³ It should be noted that Horiike does not dispute the Fazang narrative, and he even claims that Simsang would have likely been accompanied by the Japanese monk Jikun (慈訓; 691-777). Horiike, *Nantō bukkyō*, 396. Gyōnen listed Jikun as one of the vice-lecturers (講復師 *kōfukushi*) assisting with the *Flower Garland Sutra* lecture series. Jikun later went on to become the first head administrator (別当 *bettō*) of the Fujiwara familial temple *Kōfukuji* (興福寺) and also joined the *Sōgō* as the junior vice-superintendent at the same time that Ryōben and Jianzhen were established as the senior vice-superintendents.

¹³⁴ Pruden, *Eight Traditions*, 101.

to *Eight Traditions*,¹³⁵ and so this discrepancy in the transmission lineage could be viewed as a correction, especially given the likelihood that Gyōnen encountered additional sources in the more than forty years separating the two works. Nonetheless, it is notable that he preserved a direct line of transmission between Fazang and one of the overseas monks, even if the identity of that monk changed. As such, the pedigree that Gyōnen gave initially to Daoxuan and then later to Simsang was not only impeccable, but it also placed them — and Japan’s Kegon School — only a single generation away from one of the China’s most influential Buddhist figures.

1.4 Conclusion

Upon looking through the five monks’ biographies, several key themes emerge, including their participating in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, promoting the *Flower Garland Sutra*, contributing to the Great Buddha’s eye-opening ceremony, bestowing different forms of precepts, promoting various aspects of Buddhist scholarship and practice, studying with elite personages and lineages, and transmitting overseas culture or awareness. These common traits demonstrate not only the diverse array of activities these monks participated in throughout their time in Japan, but also the benefit of considering them as a comprehensive unit. In doing so, we are able to understand how these overseas monks contributed to the Japanese state and linked their newly adopted country to the rest of the Buddhist world.

All of these above activities contributed to Emperor Shōmu’s reliance upon continental models for using Buddhism to support his beleaguered reign and health concerns. Of particular note is the correlation between the monks’ rise in prominence and Shōmu’s increased interest in the *Flower Garland Sutra*. This Buddhist text was already a subject of major study in China and

¹³⁵ Green and Mun, ix.

Korea, and the overseas monks brought with them the latest commentaries and translations of this work, which is especially seen through Simsang's impressive library.¹³⁶ Moreover, the sutra's primary themes, cosmology, and Buddhist worldview can readily be observed in not only artwork from the period, but also its utilization in these countries' Buddhist state protection policies.¹³⁷ In essence, this text inspired the latest in religious and cultural trends on the continent, and Japan was brought into that development through the overseas monks.

Part of what made the overseas monks so appealing to the Japanese court was not only their knowledge of Buddhist texts and rituals but also their understanding of how other rulers were using these very elements to support their own regimes. Through the overseas monks, Shōmu had first-hand accounts of the effects of Empress Wu's Buddhist legitimization efforts, and potentially had access to one of its architects as well, presuming Gyōnen's connections between Simsang and Fazang are correct. Even if not, these monks connected Japan to major Buddhist centers and individuals throughout the Asian continent. Through Bodhisena and Jianzhen, we see parallels made to the semilegendary Central and South Asian Buddhist pilgrim monks and translators who introduced the religion to China. However, Japan's equivalents were portrayed as superior to these storied evangelists of old since they went even farther and encountered even greater struggles. Through Daoxuan, Japanese monks could claim a transmission lineage to the great Indian Buddhist patriarch Bodhidharma. Phật Triệt brought in new forms of music and dance that became an

¹³⁶ Horiike, *Nantō bukkyō*, 423-431.

¹³⁷ Dorothy Wong has written extensively on the *Flower Garland Sutra*'s influence and presence in Chinese, Korean, and Japanese art during this period. See in particular Dorothy Wong, "The Art of Avataṃsaka Buddhism at the Courts of Empress Wu and Emperor Shōmu/Empress Kōmyō," in *Avataṃsaka Buddhism in East Asia: Huayan, Kegon, Flower Ornament Buddhism Origins and Adaptation of a Visual Culture*, edited by Robert Gimello, Frédéric Girard, and Imre Hamar. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012): 223-260; Dorothy Wong, "The Huayan/Kegon/Hwaōm Paintings in East Asia," in *Reflecting Mirrors: Perspectives on Huayan Buddhism*, edited by Imre Hamar. (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2007): 337-384; and *Pilgrim-Monks*. See chapter 2 for more details on the text's cosmology.

established part of Japan's performative repertoire in a manner that was comparable to the diverse array of cultural displays available at Chang'an and Luoyang.

In addition to demonstrating what the Daiianji overseas monks offered beyond the monastic ordinations and precepts commonly associated with the precepts master solicitation, this coterie of monks provides a case study for how other monks of overseas origins probably functioned within early Japan. As evidenced by the unlisted names of the three Chinese and one Persian who entered with Nakatomi Nashiro, as referenced at the beginning of this chapter, these five monks were certainly not the only people who relocated from other parts of Asia to Japan at this time. The only reason we know of their names is because each of these five monks offered something unique or valuable to Japan. Their continental origins provided a form of cultural capital and authority, as seen with medieval *setsuwa* featuring Bodhisena revealing that Gyōki was really a bodhisattva, or with Ryōsenji's origin tale as Japan's visual "twin" to Vulture Peak. With Daoxuan and Simsang, Gyōnen created a direct link between his own Kegon School and its perceived progenitor in China.

Even in cases where there is ambiguity over the monks' country of origin, as with Phật Triệt and Simsang, there is nonetheless opportunity to further explore what this inconclusiveness indicates about both Japan's premodern global awareness and the degree to which individuals and cultures were circulating throughout Asia during this time. The fact that a series of musical pieces reflecting Indian influence were associated with Southeast Asia does not immediately imply that their geographical designation was incorrect. Instead, it invites further consideration and speculation as to the route by which these pieces arrived. The possibility that Simsang was a Japanese monk who studied in Silla rather than a Silla monk who relocated to Japan similarly calls for additional consideration into the overlaps between overseas monks and the large population of monks in Japan with overseas hereditary ties. For example, Ryōben, Gyōki, and Dōji were all

reputed to come from kinship groups with overseas origins. As such, there is the distinct possibility even if Simsang was indeed born in Japan, he could have still had Korean heritage.

Through the Daianji overseas monks, we see not only the forms of Buddhist practice and studying circulating throughout this time period, but also how different cultures and customs were an important part of the religion's transmission. In the next chapter, I argue that demonstrating an array of cultural expressions and peoples was seen as an important part of Japan's grand emergence as a Buddhist nation. Buddhism was fundamentally a pan-Asian religion, and practicing it properly mandated that the Japanese court embrace the diverse influences on the religion's multisensory experience. To do so, they naturally turned to the local population of overseas consultants living at Daianji.

Chapter 2: Celebration and Celebrants: The Multicultural Spectacle of Tōdaiji Temple’s Eye-Opening Ceremony

On May 26, 752, Japan’s political, military, and monastic forces gathered to witness the eye-opening ceremony of the Great Buddha, or *daibutsu* (大仏), at Tōdaiji Temple (東大寺) in the then-capital city of Heijō kyō (平城京).¹ On this occasion, the Great Buddha’s pupils were painted in, thereby enlivening the statue and transforming it into a religious icon. This activation ceremony, known in Japanese as the *kaigen kuyō* (開眼供養), comprised both local and overseas religious specialists, as well as music and dance troupes specializing in performing arts from various parts of mainland Asia. Through the ceremony and the multicultural festivities that followed, the Japanese court announced its presence as a cosmopolitan Buddhist country with the technological prowess, command of the latest trends in Buddhist legitimation enterprises, and mastery of external forms of cultural capital that were along the lines of its East Asian neighbors. This extravaganza was, in essence, Japan’s big “coming out,” but in a manner that was less concerned with elevating native forms of culture than it was with showing off its knowledge of the outside world.

In this chapter, I portray the multicultural flavor of this event as demonstrating Emperor Shōmu’s (聖武天皇 *Shōmu tennō*; 701-756; r. 724-749) perception that in order for Japan to broadcast its position as both a Buddhist country and also an empire in the same style as Tang

¹ For more on the construction of Tōdaiji Temple and the Great Buddha, see Isobe Takashi 磯部隆, *Tōdaiji daibutsu to Nihon shisōshi: daibutsu zōryū no imi o tou* 東大寺大仏と日本思想史：大仏造立の意味を問う (Okayama-shi : Daigaku Kyōiku Shuppan, 2010): 1-85; Morimoto Kōsei 森本公誠, *Tōdaiji no naritachi* 東大寺のなりたち (Tokyo: Kabushiki Kaisha Iwanami Shoten, 2018).

China, it needed to highlight this very sort of interregional blending and multicultural expression. Not only did Buddhism originate in a distant land, but its cosmology, arts, teachings, and rituals were also infused and shaped by the myriad of countries through which the religion had passed en route to Japan. Shōmu was well aware of the religion's cultural richness thanks to the diverse array of items transported through trade and diplomatic routes as well as reports from monks and courtiers living overseas. Moreover, he would have heard tales of the dynamic assortment of entertainments being performed by visiting emissaries from nearby countries and regions as part of the far-reaching Chinese investiture system. By employing this same model for the Great Buddha's enlivening, Shōmu was not merely offering entertainment, he was also demonstrating Japan's cultural sophistication and familiarity of Buddhism's position as a pan-Asian religion.

In addition to proclaiming the emperor's religious zeal and Japan's cosmopolitan nature, this event also spread a warning to political opponents both inside and outside of the country. Years of drought, pestilence, and political in-fighting had driven Shōmu and his immediate family from the Heijō capital in 740, and sparked a massive building spree that showed his increased reliance on Buddhist forms of protection and legitimation.² By the time he returned to Heijō five years later, Shōmu had established a series of state protection temples known as *kokubunji* (国分寺) throughout the realm, increasingly patronized the study of the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Sk: *Avatamsaka sūtra*; Jp: 華嚴經 *Kegon kyō*),³ and begun an ambitious project to construct an enormous Vairocana Buddha (盧舍那仏 *Rushana butsu*) statue. In doing so, Shōmu sidestepped

² For more on this time period, see Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): 251-262. See also William Wayne Farris, *Japan to 1600: a Social and Economic History* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 36-37 and William Wayne Farris, *Population, Disease, and Land in Early Japan, 645-900*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1985), 53-69.

³ T 279.10.1b-444c. For more on this text, see Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2009): 129-148.

local, traditional forms of political and religious support and incorporated Buddhist protection models that were already in use on the continent. Moreover, by making Tōdaiji the epicenter of his state protection projects at Tōdaiji, he interwove the country's stability with his own lineage. The *daibutsu* was not merely protecting Japan, it was looking out for the emperor and his children, specifically those by his favored consort, Empress Kōmyō (光明皇后 *Kōmyō kōgō*, alt. 光明子 *Kōmyōshi*; 701-760).

In order to carry out the eye-opening ceremony as well as the era's broader paradigmatic shift to Buddhist forms of legitimation and security, Shōmu relied upon the knowledge, experience, and expertise of locally based monks, craftsmen, and performers who either hailed from or had familial ties overseas.⁴ Chief among them were four⁵ overseas monks living at Daianji Temple (大安寺) in the southern part of Heijō. Through their knowledge of continental Buddhist rituals and political legitimation trends as well as their own ties to mainland Buddhist strongholds, these monks rose to be among Japan's most powerful and important religious leaders.

2.1 Chapter Overview

Within this chapter, I examine the *daibutsu*'s eye-opening ceremony, as seen through historical and temple records as well as objects remaining from the event itself. In particular, I focus on the activities of the Daianji overseas monks as well as the multicultural extravaganza that

⁴ This population includes those whose ancestors emigrated to Japan generations beforehand, especially if the kinship group maintained a sense of foreign identity as seen through their surname, occupation, religion, language, and continued transoceanic ties for trade and communication. For more on Japan's overseas population, see Nadia Kanagawa, "Making the Realm, Transforming the People: Foreign Subjects in Seventh- Through Ninth-Century Japan," PhD diss., (University of Southern California, 2019); Nadia Kanagawa, "Approach and Be Transformed: Immigrants in the Nara and Heian State," in *Hapa Japan: History*, edited by Duncan Ryūken Williams (Los Angeles: Ito Center Editions, an imprint of Kaya Press, 2017): 1-16.

⁵ The fifth monk considered in this work, Jianzhen, did not arrive until two years later in 754. As discussed in chapters 1 and 3, though, Jianzhen later contributed to Tōdaiji's development as the center for monastic ordinations. He is also credited with overseeing the engraving of the Buddhist world map as reflected in the *Flower Garland Sutra* into the lotus petals surrounding the *daibutsu*'s dais. Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*, 182.

followed the ceremony.⁶ It is a central thesis of this chapter that Shōmu used foreign cultural capital to portray Japan as culturally and religiously on par with other countries in the Sinitic world. The festivities also celebrated the supernatural support that was present not just within the capital, but actually inside what was essentially Shōmu and his family's personal temple. Because Tōdaiji also functioned as the headquarters for the *kokubunji* state protection temple system, the eye-opening ceremony symbolically activated a power source that connected the entire country within the Great Buddha's protection. This theatrical display was more than mere entertainment; it was a message to Japan's neighbors and to Shōmu's opponents that Japan and, more crucially, Shōmu and his family were watched over by the *daibutsu*.

In examining this topic, I compare two written accounts of the event and contextualize them with remaining artifacts. Throughout this analysis, I emphasize not only the sequence of events, but also evidence of newly introduced forms of overseas cultural capital and standardized methods for conducting Buddhist ceremonies. Chief among these are the music and dance that are identified as deriving from Tang China, the former Korean kingdom of Koguryō, and Champa in modern day Vietnam. I argue that Shōmu aimed to portray Japan as a cosmopolitan country capable of duplicating these indications of civilization, as evidenced through ceremony, ritual, and entertainment. In doing so, he also demonstrated his reliance upon and access to a powerful buddha who, by virtue of his location, was directly invested in Shōmu's wellbeing. In order to accomplish these goals, Shōmu relied upon those with continental ties and heritage, starting with the Daianji overseas monks.

⁶ For more on connections between the Tōdaiji eye-opening ceremony and Daianji, see Kuranaka Shinobu 藏中しのぶ, *Narachō kanshibun hikaku bunkateki kenkyū* 奈良朝漢詩文比較文化的研究 (Tokyo: Kanrin shobō, 2003): 428-463.

2.2 The Overseas Monks and the *Flower Garland Sutra*

While the intended audience of this cultural spectacle was, to some degree, Vairocana and other members of the Buddhist pantheon,⁷ the human observers were no less important. In the court record *Shoku nihongi*'s (続日本紀) account of the event, we see representatives from Japan's military, government, and religious organizations in attendance. However, it was also conducted with the outside world in mind. In the days leading up to the event, the *Shoku nihongi* states that Silla's Prince Kim T'aeryōm (金泰廉 *Kin Tairen*; d. 768) and over seven hundred others arrived at Kyushu, purportedly on a mission to present tribute.⁸ Whether the prince and other envoys made it to the capital in time or not to witness the eye-opening is unclear, but the timing suggests that he came specifically for this historically significant event.

For a country that was viewed as a distant, cultural backwater by its Chinese neighbors,⁹ the Great Buddha's eye-opening ceremony provided evidence of just how refined and culturally

⁷ We see Shōmu's interest in Buddhist deities beyond Vairocana in a text invoking the wrath of "...Brahma, Indra, the four heavenly kings, as well as celestials, dragons, and the eight kinds of beings" in the case of masters or ministers who failed to properly cultivate Buddhist practice. As quoted in Bryan D. Lowe, *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017): 203.

⁸ 752.i3.22 *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 3, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系 13, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992): 118-119. Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 749-757: A Study and Translation of Shoku Nihongi, Tenpyō shōhō 1–Tenpyō Hōji 1* (Self-published, CreateSpace, 2015): 116-117. This passage and the depiction of T'aeryōm's meeting with Empress Kōken on 752.6.14 portrays this visit as Silla paying tribute to Japan. However, David Abulafia notes that the meeting is missing from Korean annals, and T'aeryōm is only listed as a traitor who was killed for rebelling against the king. David Abulafia, *The Boundless Sea: A Human History of the Oceans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019): 193, citing Kim Pusik, *The Silla Annals of the Samguk Sagi*, edited and translated by Edward J. Shultz and Hugh H.W. Kang with Daniel C. Kane (Seongnam-si: Academy of Korean Studies Press, 2012): 308. See also Bruce Batton, *Gateway to Japan: Hakata in War and Peace, 500-1300* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006): 55-59.

⁹ One notable example of this portrayal can be seen in poems written by friends of Abe Nakamaro (阿部仲麻呂; 698-770), on the occasion of his anticipated return to Japan after several years living in Tang China. While he never returned home, the poems nonetheless decry the uncivilized land he was going back to. Edward H. Schafer, "Fusang and Beyond: The Haunted Seas to Japan," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 109 no. 3 (July-September, 1989): 379-399.

advanced Japan had become. To carry this off, Shōmu relied upon the group of overseas monks whose insights into continental uses of Buddhism for state protection and legitimation had already influenced his provincial state protection temples system and his interest in both the *Flower Garland Sutra* and its central figure, the “cosmic” or “celestial” buddha Vairocana. While most of these monks arrived in response to an appeal for a precepts master,¹⁰ it was their deep understanding of mainland cultures, proficiency in Buddhist ceremonies, and their embodied otherness that was of most interest and benefit to Emperor Shōmu.

By the time of the eye-opening ceremony in 752, Shōmu had already abdicated in favor of his daughter, who independently reigned as Empress Kōken (孝謙天皇 *Kōken tennō*; 713-770) from 749-758 and again as Empress Shōtoku (称徳天皇 *Shōtoku tennō*) from 764-770. Despite stepping down from the throne, Shōmu remained actively involved with planning the ceremony, even to the point of assigning the monks who would oversee the various parts of the event itself. Most notably, he appointed the Indian Brahman monk Bodhisena (菩提僊那 *Bodaisenna*; 704-760) to take on the role of painting the eyes (開眼師 *kaigenshi*). In the years beforehand, Bodhisena had risen to the highest position of superintendent, *sōjō* (僧正), in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, or *Sōgō* (僧綱). Accordingly, his role in the *kaigen kuyō* reflected his preeminent rank. As noted in chapter 3, all of the monks serving in the *Sōgō* at this time were either overseas monks or had been personally involved with these monks’ relocation to Japan. In looking at the ceremony’s events and the theatrical spectacle that followed, it was no coincidence that Shōmu appointed those with overseas ties to carry out the ceremony’s main actions.

¹⁰ See introduction and chapter 3.

In addition to Bodhisena, the other Daianji overseas Buddhist monks also participated in this event in some manner.¹¹ Shōmu appointed the Chinese precepts master Daoxuan (道璿 *Dōsen*; 702-760) as the invocation priest (呪願師 *juganshi*). The fourteenth-century text *Genkō shakusho* (元亨釈書) notes that Daoxuan was skilled at performing Buddhist liturgical chant known as *bonbai* (梵唄), and so he may have also contributed to the “four essential pieces” (四箇法要 *shika hōyō*) performed during the eye-opening ceremony.¹² His biography *Dōsen wajō densan* (道堵和上傳纂) similarly notes the beauty and resonance of Daoxuan’s voice when he recited the *Brahma Net Sutra* (Sk. *Brahmajāla Sūtra*; Jp. 梵網經 *Bonmōkyō*).¹³

The monk from Champa¹⁴ who accompanied Bodhisena and Daoxuan to Japan, Phật Triệt (仏哲, alt. 仏徹 *Buttetsu*; fl. 735), is also thought to have participated in event’s musical offerings. During the post-ceremonial festivities, there were three Cham pieces that were performed that Phật Triệt likely transmitted and possibly performed in. In a lesser known account of the event, *Biography of Daianji’s Bodai[sena]* (大安寺菩提傳來記伝 *Daianji Bodai denrai kiden*, Phật Triệt is called a “*gagaku* priest” (雅樂之師 *gagaku no shi*),¹⁵ referencing his participation in a general category of court music that derived from the continent. If that account is correct, then Phật Triệt was also physically present at the *kaigen kuyō*.

¹¹ See chapter 1 for details and biographies regarding these overseas monks and the process behind their relocations to Japan.

¹² According to the *Genkō shakusho*, Daoxuan “moved all his listeners by the purity of his voice which was like the sound of metal or stone” when he chanted the *Brahma Net Sutra*. Paul Demiéville, ed., “Bombai,” *Hōbōgirin Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d’Après les Sources Chinoises et Japonaises* vol. 1-2, (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1929): 98. Exact wording taken from an English version of this article, Lillian Nakai, trans. “Bombai” (Honolulu: English Department of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii, ca. 1957): 18.

¹³ T 1484.24.997a–1010a. See Appendix C for translation of the *Dōsen wajō densan*.

¹⁴ Champa is located in modern-day Vietnam. See introduction and chapter 1.

¹⁵ *Tōdaiji yōroku* 東大寺要録, ed. Tsutsui Eishun 筒井英俊 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1982): 56.

The Korean-trained¹⁶ monk Simsang (審祥, alt. 審詳 *Shinjō*; d. ca. 751) is not directly referenced in the event, but his influence can be seen through the fact that the *Flower Garland Sutra* was recited and lectured on at the ceremony.¹⁷ As was discussed in the previous chapter, Simsang entered the written record in response to the monk Ryōben's direct petition that he begin a three-year lecture series on this same text. The timing of the lecture may well have been intended to capitalize on Shōmu's sudden interest in Vairocana and, by extension, the text that featured him.

The final member of this group of overseas monks, Jianzhen (鑑真 *Ganjin*; 688-763), arrived the year after the ceremony and so did not partake of the festivities himself. Nonetheless, his connection to this statue is apparent through the addition of a Buddhist world map carved into the Great Buddha's lotus dais, purportedly under his direction.¹⁸ Jianzhen was also the only one of this cluster of overseas monks appointed to live at the newly built Tōdaiji instead of Daianji Temple.

The ceremony also featured two Japanese monks who were closely connected with the Daianji overseas monks. Ryūson, (隆尊; 706-760), whom temple records state initiated the appeal for a precepts master that resulted in the arrivals of all but Simsang, was the lecturer (講師 *kōshi*). He also shared the role of preceptor (律師 *risshi*) with Daoxuan in the *Sōgō*. Ryōben (良弁 alt. *Rōben*; 689-773) is not mentioned in these passages as having participated, but there is no question

¹⁶ There is some debate as to whether Simsang is a Korean monk from Silla who traveled to Japan, or a Japanese monk who returned home after years spent studying in Korea and China. For the purposes of this study, he will be referred to by his Korean name, since his training and connection to continental religious figures is central to his importance in Japan. Additionally, this is the name by which he is commonly known in English scholarship. For more on the debate regarding his homeland, see chapter 1.

¹⁷ Simsang was invited to lecture on the *Flower Garland Sutra* by Ryōben (良弁 alt. *Rōben*; 689-773, the head monk of Tōdaiji (then known as Konshūji 金鐘寺). While it is unclear when this invitation was issued and when Simsang arrived in Japan, the three-year lecture series began in 740.

¹⁸ Dorothy Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645-770* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2018): 182. See introduction.

that he would have been involved. Ryōben was the final member of the *Sōgō*, acting as the vice-superintendent (少僧都 *shōsōzu*) under Bodhisena. He is also thought to have been Simsang's disciple and likely served as the general master of ceremonies (供養師 *kuyōshi*) at the eye-opening ceremony due to his role as Tōdaiji's head monk (別当 *bettō*). Ryōben was also responsible for establishing the study of the *Flower Garland Sutra* at Tōdaiji. This later developed into the Kegon School (華嚴宗 *Kegon shū*). Since all of the overseas monks are connected with the promotion of this text and consequently this school in Japan, to some degree this is all of their legacy.

2.3 The *Flower Garland Sutra* and Tōdaiji Temple

The pervasive influence of both these overseas monks as well as the *Flower Garland Sutra* can also be seen in *daibutsu* itself. The actual form is that of Vairocana Buddha, which is the *dharmakāya*, or “transformation body,” of the historical buddha Śākyamuni (釈迦 *Shaka*; fl. 5th century BCE) at the moment he became a buddha.¹⁹ Vairocana is the central figure in both the *Flower Garland Sutra* as well as the *Brahma Net Sutra*. These texts were often used together at this time because of their complementary content.²⁰ Shōmu appears to have been at least nominally familiar with the *Flower Garland Sutra* and Vairocana from at least the early 730s, as evidenced by a scroll written by Shōmu and dated 731. This text includes a copied inscription from a Vairocana image that had been brought to Japan.²¹

¹⁹ For more on this relationship, see Susumu Ōtake, “Śākyamuni and Vairocana,” in *Avatamsaka Buddhism in East Asia: Huayan, Kegon, Flower Ornament Buddhism: Origins and Adaptations of a Visual Culture*, edited by Gimello, Robert, Frédéric Girard, and Imre Hamar (Weisbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2012): 37-52.

²⁰ Overlapping the *Flower Garland* and *Brahma Net Sutras* emphasizes the interpenetrating and interrelatedness of the universe as a whole and, more specifically, Śākyamuni and Vairocana. Amy McNair, *Donors of Longmen: Faith, Politics, and Patronage in Medieval Chinese Buddhist Sculpture* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007): 116-117. For more on the *Brahma Net Sutra* and its use in Japan at this time, see chapter 3.

²¹ Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*, 179. This text, titled “Miscellaneous” (雜集 *zasshū*), contains a collection of excerpts from China's Six Dynasties, Sui, and Tang periods selected and written by Shōmu. The scroll can be viewed

Shōmu's interest in the *Flower Garland Sutra* is especially notable in his decision to change the name of the temple that preceded Tōdaiji from Sanbō (山房) to Konshūji (金鍾寺)²² in 738. This name change coincided with appointing his daughter as his successor. The name Konshūji, meaning “Temple of the Golden Pitcher,” points to a story found in the *Flower Garland Sutra* wherein a universal king uses a golden pitcher to anoint a son by his primary consort as his heir.²³ Since Kōken/Shōtoku was the only remaining child by his primary consort Empress Kōmyō, Shōmu may have selected this story specifically to justify why he selected her instead of his living son by another consort. The original temple itself was initially built as a memorial to Shōmu and Kōmyō's only other child, commonly known as the Crown Prince Motoi (基王 *Motoi ō*; 727-728),²⁴ and so this name change functionally demonstrated the fact that the temple continued to be tied to Shōmu and Kōmyō's lineage.

Shōmu's reliance upon this text and its central figure grew significantly following a visit to Chishikiji Temple (知識寺) in Kawachi Province (河内国 *Kawachi no kuni*) soon after he departed Heijō in 740. The temple's Vairocana statue was likely the first that he had observed, and

online at “*Zasshū* (miscellany)” 雑集, The Imperial Household Agency website, <https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/treasures?id=0000010020&index=8>.

²² Also written as Konshu Sangō (金鍾山房), Kinshōji Temple (金鍾寺), and Kinshōsenji Temple (金鍾山寺).

²³ Kōsei Morimoto, “The Reign of Emperor Shōmu and the Flower Ornament Sutra,” in *Avatamsaka Buddhism in East Asia: Huayan, Kegon, Flower Ornament Buddhism: Origins and Adaptations of a Visual Culture*, ed. Robert Gimello, Frédéric Girard, and Imre Hamar (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012): 299-300. For the passage in question, see Thomas Cleary, *The Flower Ornament Scripture: A Translation of the Avatamsaka Sutra*. (Boston and London: Shambala Press, 1993): 792.

²⁴ An alternative set of characters used for this prince, 某王 (*bō ō*), translate to “a certain prince,” or “prince so-and-so.” Presuming that 基 is a misrendering of 某, the child's name is likely unknown. Bryan D. Lowe, *Ritualized Writing: Buddhist Practice and Scriptural Cultures in Ancient Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2017): 190. Nonetheless, for heuristic purposes, I am retaining the designation of Prince Motoi.

it clearly had a profound effect upon him. While the order to create the *daibutsu* did not take place for another three years, it is possible that this is when Shōmu decided to make his own version. Simsang also first appears in Tōdaiji's temple records in 740,²⁵ with the note that he started lecturing on the *Flower Garland Sutra* in response to being personally invited by Ryōben. Simsang may have also been instrumental in directing Shōmu's attention to ways in which overseas rulers had similarly used both this text and Vairocana in support of their own rules. Foremost among these is China's Empress Wu Zetian (武則天 *Bu sokuten*; 624-705; r. 690-705), whose spiritual advisor Fazang (法藏 *Hōzō*; 643–712) was not only a notable scholar of the *Flower Garland Sutra*, but is also said to have been Simsang's teacher.²⁶

Empress Wu utilized religious methods for support and legitimation by portraying herself as the living embodiment of the future buddha Maitreya and a *cakravartin*.²⁷ The *Flower Garland Sutra* proved especially useful in this endeavor, especially when viewed through Fazang's interpretation that its metaphor of a jeweled net was representative of a *cakravartin*'s universal sovereignty.²⁸ Even before she usurped the throne in 690, Wu was clearly utilizing themes from

²⁵ 740.10.08. *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 10. See chapter 1 for more details on Simsang's *Flower Garland Sutra* lecture series.

²⁶ See chapter 1.

²⁷ For more on Empress Wu's reliance on Buddhist forms of support, see Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*; McNair; April D. Hughes, *Worldly Saviors and Imperial Authority in Medieval Chinese Buddhism* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2021); Jinhua Chen, "Śarīra and Scepter: Empress Wu's Political Use of Buddhist Relics," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 25, no.1-2 (2002): 33-150; Jinhua Chen *Philosopher, Practitioner, Politician: The Many Lives of Fazang (643-712)*, (Leiden: Brill Academic Publisher, 2007); Robert Gimello, Frédéric Girard, and Imre Hamar *Avatamsaka Buddhism in East Asia: Huayan, Kegon, Flower Ornament Buddhism: Origins and Adaptation of a Visual Culture* (Weisbaden: Harrossowitz Verlag, 2012); N. Harry Rothschild, *Emperor Wu Zhao and Her Pantheon of Devis, Divinities, and Dynastic Mothers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Antonino Forte *Mingtang and Buddhist Utopias in the History of the Astronomical Clock: The Tower, Statue and Armillary Sphere Constructed by Empress Wu* Serie Orientale Roma; v. LIX. (Rome Paris: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente; Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient, 1988).

²⁸ McNair, 119. Wu also ordered Fazang to hold an assembly for reciting the *Flower Garland Sutra* just before she assumed the throne in 690. Jinhua Chen, "More than a Philosopher: Fazang (643-712)" *History of Religions* 42, no. 4 (May 2003): 326.

the *Flower Garland Sutra* in her sponsorship of major Buddhist building projects. The most notable of which is the fifty-two foot Vairocana stone carving located at Fengxiansi Temple (奉先寺 *Hōsenji*) in the Longmen grottoes (龍門石窟 Ch. *Longmen shiku*; Jp. *Ryūmon sekkutsu*) of Western China.²⁹ Both the Longmen and Tōdaiji Vairocana statues incorporate themes from the *Flower Garland* and *Brahma Net Sutras*, resulting in similar iconography.³⁰

Since Shōmu himself had *cakravartin* aspirations and was already experiencing challenges to his decision to have his daughter succeed him,³¹ he looked to Wu and other East Asian rulers as a model for how to use Buddhist means to ward off opposition and develop a supernatural defense system composed of Buddhism's diverse pantheon of protective deities.³² Sutras such as the *Golden Light Sutra* (Sk. *Suvarṇabhāsottama sūtra*; Jp. 金光明經 *Konkōmyō kyō*)³³ and *Humane Kings Sutra* (仁王經 *Ninnō gyō*)³⁴ promised that any ruler who properly venerated the text and enacted its ceremonies could call forth the full host of *devas* (天 *ten*) led by the Four Heavenly

²⁹ For more on this statue and its connection with Empress Wu, see McNair *Longmen*, especially chapter 6, "Rouge and Powder Money," 111-122.

³⁰ Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks*, 182. See also Dorothy C. Wong, "The Art of *Avatamsaka* Buddhism at the Courts of Empress Wu and Emperor Shōmu/Empress Kōmyō," in *Avatamsaka Buddhism in East Asia: Huayan, Kegon, Flower Ornament Buddhism Origins and Adaptation of a Visual Culture*, edited by Robert Gimello, Frédéric Girard and Imre Hamar (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2012): 223-260.

³¹ While there had been independently reigning empresses before Kōken's ascension, in all prior cases they stepped into the role following the death of the emperor, to whom they had been closely related by marriage or family ties. Their role was to essentially govern until a worthy male successor was either appointed or came of age. Empress Kōken was the first empress regnant directly appointed as the intended heir. Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 84.

³² I previously examined these overseas precedents and Buddhist protection in my Master's thesis. Abigail I. MacBain, "Temples and Sutras: Nara Japan's National Defense System." Master's thesis, McMaster University, 2008. <http://hdl.handle.net/11375/10766>.

³³ T 663.

³⁴ T 246.8.834–845. As a sutra of Chinese origin (also known as a Buddhist apocrypha, post-canonical text, or a spurious sutra), there is no Sanskrit title for this text.

Kings (四天王 *shitennō*).³⁵ These deities would thereby protect the ruler and realm from natural disasters, uprisings, and invasions. This was doubtlessly an attractive draw for a ruler who had weathered personal and political challenges as well as natural disasters and ill health throughout his reign.

In order to properly engage the services of these beings, though, Shōmu needed religious practitioners well versed in not only how to carry out these sutra recitations and ceremonies locally, but also how they were being used elsewhere. As Japan continued to fear potential invasion from China and Korea, it could not afford to be out of date in methods for calling forth this source of supernatural defense. Vairocana presented the latest trend in Buddhist legitimacy and protection, especially for a ruler aspiring to *cakravartin* status.

These state-supporting efforts not only reflect court concerns with insecurity and divine protection, but they also offer evidence of the Japanese court's general interest in foreign goods, peoples, and cultures. This curiosity is especially evident in the Tōdaiji *kaigen kuyō*, which highlighted newly established ceremonial customs that conformed with continental standards and placed Japan's overseas community at center stage. In this one event, Shōmu and Kōken provided a public display of the country's artisanship and technology, Buddhist patronage and dedication, knowledge of "appropriate" religious ceremony and worship, access to overseas cultural capital, and awareness of the known world outside their borders.

2.4 Review of Sources

In this chapter, I am using three primary resources for information on the Tōdaiji eye-opening ceremony, two textual and one comprised of artifacts. The first is the official court history

³⁵ For more on the role of the Four Heavenly Kings in relation to kingship and protection, see Lowe, 171-208.

covering years 697-791, the *Shoku nihongi* (続日本紀).³⁶ The second resource is Tōdaiji's first collection of temple records, the *Essential Records of Tōdaiji*, hereafter referred to by its Japanese title, *Tōdaiji yōroku* (東大寺要録). This text was compiled in three parts, dating to 1106, 1234, and 1241. The clearest accounts for the eye-opening ceremony, as well as the clearest references of the overseas monks' involvement with the ceremony itself, come from the final addition, which incorporated records from Daigoji Temple (醍醐寺).³⁷

It is worth noting the significant time gap between the Daigoji additions and the event in question. However, the individuals and the historical references therein generally align with accounts from the *Shoku nihongi* as well as even older sections of the *Tōdaiji yōroku*. Moreover, there are remaining props, instruments, and costumes that were used or donated for the event that correspond with the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s depiction of the *kaigen kuyō*, providing added support for the passage's authenticity and reliability. These corresponding items and the fact that no other known historical accounts discuss this event and its participants in a comparable manner suggest that this is possibly an original record rather than copied or constructed based upon an alternate source.

These artifacts associated with the eye-opening ceremony are predominantly located in the Shōsōin Repository (正倉院), which comprises the third main source for examining this event.³⁸

³⁶ For more on the *Shoku nihongi* and its composition, see Sakamoto Tarō, *The Six National Histories of Japan*, translated by John S. Brownlee (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991): 90-122.

³⁷ For more on the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s history and research on its formulation, see Sakaehara Towao 栄原永遠男, "'Tōdaiji yōroku' no gen kōzō" 『東大寺要録』の原構造 in *Kodai Tōdaiji no sekai: Tōdaiji yōroku o yominaosu* 古代東大寺の世界：『東大寺要録』を読み直す. The Great Buddha Symposium 14 (Nara: Tōdaiji Temple, 2017): 7-36.

³⁸ The Shōsōin's design was based upon grain storage caches that were made to keep grain dry in Japan's notoriously damp climate. As such, the items inside have been kept in astonishingly good condition, although there is notable indication of age and disintegration. Not all of the textual remains are not in as good condition as the clothing, instruments, and other items, although even scraps of paper contribute to the overall understanding of this time period and this event in particular. Lowe, 22. In this dissertation, I predominantly restrict references to materials in the

The Shōsōin was originally constructed as a storehouse for Tōdaiji's surplus items. Upon Shōmu's death in 756, Kōmyō gave several of his most valued items to Tōdaiji to be stored there. As many of these arrived through Silk Road diplomatic and trade routes, they reflect both the emperor's keen interest in foreign goods and technologies as well as Japan's overseas interactions.³⁹ Of the approximately nine thousand items, a handful of them bear the date of the eye-opening ceremony, indicating that they were used or presented on this date. There are also numerous texts that provide additional details on the eye-opening ceremony or the overseas monks.⁴⁰

Among the items related to the *kaigen kuyō* are the brush and rope reputedly used in dotting the eyes of the Vairocana Buddha, as well as numerous instruments and costumes that correspond to the musical worship and entertainment as detailed in the passage. Another item from the Shōsōin that provides some insight into what the post-ceremonial music and dance spectacle would have looked like is the *Dankyū* (彈弓) Bow. While appearing as a standard archery bow, the underside

Shōsōin to objects used during the eye-opening ceremony. In future research, I intend to supplement this work with documents from the collection as well.

³⁹ Pieces of the collection are displayed on an annual basis at the Nara National Museum every autumn. The 2019 exhibition included several items associated with the eye-opening ceremony. See *Go sokui kinen dai 71 kai shōsōin ten* ご即位記念第71回正倉院展 *In Commemoration of the Enthronement The 71st Annual Exhibition of Shōsō-in Treasures* (Nara 奈良: Nara National Museum 奈良博物館, 2019). In the same year, the Tokyo National Museum also held a special exhibit featuring prized items from the Shōsōin in commemoration of the enthronement of the new emperor and the beginning of the Reiwa (令和) era. For more on this exhibit, see catalog *Shōsōin no sekai: kōshitsu ga mamori tsutaeta bi* 正倉院の世界：皇室がまもり伝えた美 *Shōsōin Essential Treasures of Ancient Japan Passed Down by the Imperial Family* (Tokyo: Tokyo National Museum, 2019).

⁴⁰ One particularly notable textual collection is the group of twenty-four tightly rolled scrolls collectively titled, “Name register of the monks at the buddha Vairocana's eye-opening ceremony at Tōdaiji” (東大寺盧舎那仏開眼供養僧名帳 *Tōdaiji Rushana butsu kaigen kuyō meichō*), which has the potential to offer the best support for the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s account of the event and who participated. Unfortunately, the scrolls suffered extreme humidity damage that leaves them unable to be opened at present. These are the so-called “candlestick texts” (蠟燭文書 *rōsoku monjo*), presumably on account of their tightly wound appearance, in the “rubbish” (塵芥 *jinkai*) section of the Shōsōin documents. While a small amount of material has been gleaned by using infrared cameras on their exterior to see what is written on the obverse, the majority of their content remains hidden. *Shōsōin komonjo eiin shūsei* 正倉院古文書影印集成, ed. Kunaichō Shōsōin jimusho 宮内庁正倉院事務所, vol. 17 (Tokyo 東京: Yagi shoten 八木書店, 2007): 213-214 and 153-157. See also *Shōsōin monjo mokuroku* 正倉院文書目録, ed. Tōkyō daigaku shiryō hensanjo 東京大学史料編纂所, vol. 5 (Tokyo 東京: Tōkyō daigaku shuppankai 東京大学出版会, 2004): 408-420.

of the limbs bears ink drawings depicting festive dancing and musicians.⁴¹ The acrobatics in particular resemble those associated with *Sarugaku* (散楽), which are thought to derive from the Chinese *Tōsangaku* (唐散楽).⁴² As seen in the table of performances, *Tōsangaku* was included in the eye-opening post-ceremonial entertainment. The bow's images show individuals wearing a variety of different hats and costumes that are likely intended to indicate the cultural dress of the performing groups, and these portrayals may reflect the performance troupes with overseas heritage residing in Japan at this time.

2.5 Music and Dance at the Eye-Opening Ceremony

In order to understand the significance of the array of music and dance pieces described in the textual accounts below, it is necessary to further examine the performative aspect of Japanese religious services at this time. In addition to contributing to the eye-opening ceremony through participating in the main event itself, the overseas monks also brought direct insight into the cultural aspects of how such a major event would have taken place in other parts of Asia. Together with the Japanese monks who had spent several years at Chinese and Korean temples before returning (留学僧 *ryūgakusō*), they infused the ceremony with appropriate trappings to make Japan's ceremonies more closely resemble what was taking place on the Asian mainland. This included decorative elements such as handmade flowers and embroidered banners as well as

⁴¹ “*Dankyū* bow with ink painting, No. 1.” 墨絵弾弓 第1号 The Imperial Household Agency website, <https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/treasures?id=0000012213&index=4>. Eta Harich-Schneider provides a detailed breakdown of the particular individuals and cultures portrayed in this bow. However, some of the descriptions of ethnicities and heritage are arguably offensive or outdated, and assumptions made about the peoples represented are questionable at times. Eta Harich-Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973): 55-58.

⁴² Robert Garfias, *Music of a Thousand Autumns: The Tōgaku Style of Japanese Court Music* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975): 13.

music. As will be seen in the textual evaluations below, music was a key component for both the ceremony and the following celebrations.

In addition to pieces traditionally associated with Japan, there were also several described as being Chinese or Korean in origin. In some cases, a kinship group with overseas origins is listed as having performed it. In others, the gender or costumes are specified, which may in and of themselves be suggestive of the pieces' backgrounds or origins. Beyond the entertainment aspect, the performances reflected what, to Japan, would have been the known Buddhist world. These international elements may have been intended to make the Vairocana buddha feel more at home. They could have also been a way for Shōmu to show off that he had access to a diverse array of cultural expressions similar to what his own courtiers had witnessed in the Tang capitals. In either case, the performances were an especially important part of this event and demonstrate the degree to which those with overseas ties were incorporated into the eye-opening ceremony.

The music performed in the ceremony itself includes among one of the earliest occasions that Indian Buddhist liturgical chants known as *bonbai* or *shōmyō* (声明) took place in Japan.⁴³ According to the lists of participants in the alms-giving section of the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account, the *bonbai* section consisted of four selections collectively known as the “Four essential pieces,” which will be discussed in more detail below. Additionally, as was noted above, the monks Daoxuan and Phật Triệt were also musical and likely participated in both the ceremonial and post ceremonial music.

⁴³ The fourteenth-century text *Genkō shakusho* states that the Chinese monk Daorong (道榮 Dōei) introduced *bonbai* to Japan just a few decades before in the year 719. Demiéville, *Bombai*, 98. See Atuko Sawada, “Buddhist Music in Japan,” *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music*, vol. 7 East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea (New York and London: Routledge, 2002): 611-618 for more.

In light of the fact that monks were forbidden from partaking of or participating in music or dance by the *vinaya* monastic precepts, this event's emphasis upon musical entertainment is striking. This opposition to performing arts was reinforced by the "Monastic Code for Monks and Nuns," *Sōniryō* (僧尼令), compiled by the Japanese court in 720 and promulgated in 757.⁴⁴ However, music intended as offerings or veneration to a buddha, or to increase attendees' interest in the ceremony itself, was actively encouraged.⁴⁵ Beyond this acceptance of liturgical music, though, many forms of "secular" entertainment were entrenched within temples and, in actual practice, there does not appear to have been a functional rejection of music and dance. In fact, as discussed below, several performance troupes were so closely affiliated with particular temples that the temples themselves became headquarters for training and continuing those traditions.

It is understandable that many temples would specialize in particular forms of music or dance connected to external countries or cultures considering that many Buddhist temples in Japan were founded by or maintained close connections with families that originated overseas. As will be discussed below, when the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account ends the ceremony by noting that the four major temples of Daianji, Yakushiji (薬師寺), Gangōji (元興寺), and Kōfukuji (興福寺) came forth and presented various "marvelous gifts" (奇異物 *kii mono*), it is possible that these gifts were the musical events that followed.

⁴⁴ Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞 et al. "Sōniryō 僧尼令," in *Ritsuryō 律令 Nihon shisō taikai* 日本思想大系 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976): 216-223. For English version, see Bowring, 55-58 and George Sansom, "Early Japanese Law and Administration (Part II)," *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, second series, 11 (1934): 127-134. Joan Piggott has also created English translation as part of the University of Southern California *Ritsuryō* Translation Project. <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ppjs/ritsuryo-translation-project/>. Piggott, Joan trans. "The Yōrō Ritsuryō Sōniryō: Laws on Monks and Nuns." https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/63/docs/Ritsuryo_Soniryo-Piggott.pdf.

⁴⁵ Paul Demiéville, ed., "Bugaku," *Hōbōgirin Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'Après les Sources Chinoises et Japonaises* 2 (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1929): 151-152.

When looking at the types of music referenced in the post-ceremonial festivities, there are two particularly notable aspects. The first is that there was a combination of both Japanese and overseas forms of music and dance. For heuristic purposes, these pieces are categorized as either *Wagaku* (和楽) “Japanese music” and *Bangaku* (蕃楽) “foreign music,” although it is worth noting that the texts themselves do not make this distinction.⁴⁶ In looking at the *Bangaku* pieces, most are defined as either being “Chinese” (唐 *Tō*) or “Korean” (高麗 *Koma*).

Despite these categorizations, the performances were likely even more diverse than the Japanese court realized. For example, the pieces containing the word *Koma* (高麗) specifically reference the Korean kingdom of Koguryō. As Koguryō had been annexed by the neighboring kingdom of Silla nearly a century before, it is possible that the term merely meant any form of music or dance connected with the Korean Peninsula.⁴⁷ However, Japan also maintained a diplomatic relationship with Parhae, a state that existed from 698-926 and was founded by refugees from Koguryō. As such, these *Koma* dances may have been transmitted by people from Parhae even after Koguryō’s fall. Parhae itself was a blended community of peoples living in and around what even today is a highly diverse area, given its location overlapping parts of modern-day North Korean, Russia, and China. There were not only people from Koguryō and Manchuria in the area,

⁴⁶ The *Wagaku/Bangaku* system is adopted from Yoshikawa Shinji 吉川 真司, “Kodai Tōdaiji no gakubu to gakujin” 古代東大寺の楽舞と楽人 in *Kodai Tōdaiji no sekai: Tōdaiji yōroku o yomi naosu* 古代東大寺の世界: 『東大寺要録』を読み直す, The Great Buddha Symposium 14 (Nara: Tōdaiji Temple, 2017): 60. There are alternative categorizations for musical types in early Japan, including employing the term *Tōgaku* (唐楽) to refer to all non-Japanese music, or dividing all overseas-originated music and dance into the categories of *Tōgaku*, “Tang music” and *Komagaku* (高麗楽) “Korean music (related to the kingdom of Koguryō).” This bifurcation of foreign music into 2 categories overlaps with official divisions of Left (*Tōgaku*) and Right (*Komagaku*) in relation to the Ministers of the Left and Right, with Left ranking higher. However, these categories overly simplify the musical styles’ countries of origin or excludes types like *Rinyūgaku* (林邑楽), which has its roots in Southeast Asia. Moreover, as this system developed in the ninth century, it is not appropriate to use for discussing a mid-eighth century event. Yoshikawa Shinji 吉川 真司 “Tenpyō bunkaron” 天平文化論, in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* 岩波講座日本歴史 *Kodai* 古代 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2014): 219.

⁴⁷ Yoshikawa, “Tenpyō bunkaron,” 219.

but also Khitans, Mohe tribes, and more.⁴⁸ Any forms of music and dance coming from this region would have been infused with cultural influences from this diverse population. Moreover, whether coming from Parhae or the Korean Peninsula, *Komagaku* was also influenced by Chinese culture, as seen by the instruments utilized in these performances.⁴⁹

What would have been considered “Tang Chinese” music is even less clear than with *Komagaku*. The musicality of the era was flavored by cultural forms of music and dance from surrounding tributary states and rural parts of the Tang Empire. In fact, this sampling was very much an attribute of Tang imperialism and the multicultural makeup of its capital city of Chang’an (長安). With cultural interactions and exchanges, the predominant styles of popular music throughout Tang China took on notably Central Asian and Indian flairs through the adoption and adaptation of particular melodies and instruments.⁵⁰ As tradesmen, monks, translators, performers, artisans, and diplomats from all over the known world passed through major Chinese cities, they were exposed to this culturally diverse array of performing arts and transported pieces of them back home with them. We see evidence of this transmission in the impressive collective of various continental instruments preserved in the Shōsōin. Additionally, this diverse array of musical styles is precisely what the *kaigen kuyō*’s post-ceremonial extravaganza attempted to portray.

⁴⁸ Alexander Kim, “Relations Between Bohai and Silla (7th to 9th Centuries): A Critical Analysis” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, vol. 64, no. 3 (September 2011): 345-356.

⁴⁹ Garfias, 7.

⁵⁰ Edward H. Schafer, *The Golden Peaches of Samarkand: A Study of T’ang Exotics* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1963), 50-57. For more on daily life in Chang’an, see Linda Rui Feng, *City of Marvel and Transformation: Chang’an and Narratives of Experience in Tang Dynasty China* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015). For Tang China’s political relations with neighboring countries, see Wang Zhenping, *Tang China in Multi-Polar Asia: A History of Diplomacy and War* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2013).

Even in cases where performances' names indicated specific locations, this does not mean that they portrayed truly traditional forms of cultural entertainment associated with those areas. *Gigaku* (伎楽), for example, can be translated to “music from the Kingdom of Wu” (伎 or 吳 *gi* or *go*) in Southern China. In Japan, it refers to a type of masked drama similar to *Noh* (能), in that it depicts a limited number of characters with noted features and attributes. The *Gigaku* masks that were used in the eye-opening ceremony⁵¹ and also the seventh-century examples from Hōryūji Temple's (法隆寺) collection⁵² depict an Indian Brahman, a Persian king, a *Garuda* bird, and evidence of other influences from well beyond Southern China. Whether *Gigaku* truly developed in this region of China or was transmitted by someone associated with Wu is unclear. It is unlikely that anyone in eighth-century Japan had the geographical insight to differentiate among Wu, India, or Central Asia to make this sort of distinction. Nonetheless, through this method of cultural transmission, members of the Japanese court were at least nominally familiar with concepts like Brahmans and Persians at least a century before they encountered the Brahman monk Bodhisena and the Persian who arrived by the same envoy.⁵³

⁵¹ The Shōsōin has over ninety *Gigaku* masks, including ones used in the eye-opening ceremony. These are available to view on the Imperial Household Agency website, <https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/search-result?p=1&per=30&type=treasures&keyword=gigaku&operator=AND>. For more on *Gigaku*, see Shinkawa Tokio 新川 登亀男, “Gigaku ron jōsetsu” 伎楽論序説, *Nihon bukkyō shigaku* 日本仏教史学, 22 (1987): 17-31.

⁵² Much of Hōryūji's collection of *Gigaku* masks were donated to the Tokyo National Museum. For more on them, see *Hōryūji hōmotsu den* 法隆寺宝物館 The New Gallery of Horyuji Treasures (Tokyo: Tōkyō Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan 東京国立博物館, 2016): 72-95.

⁵³ As was noted in the chapter 1, the *Shoku nihongi* passage discussing the arrival of the first group of the Daianji overseas monks neglects to account for anyone from India, yet mentions someone from Persia arriving. Since the next passage mentions Bodhisena, he must have entered Japan on or before this date. There is another passage soon afterwards talking about a Persian named Li Mitsuei (李密翳) meeting with Emperor Shōmu; this presumably accounts for the Persian who came with Daoxuan and the others. See James Harry Morris, “A New Analysis of Persian Visits to Japan in the 7th and 8th Centuries,” *Journal of International and Advanced Japanese Studies* 国際日本研究, vol. 12 (February 2020): 105-120. The *Tōdaij yōroku* account of the arrival specifies Daoxuan, Bodhisena, and Phật Triệt arriving at this time.

There is also some contestation over whether Phậ̄t Triệ̄t and his *Rinyūgaku* (林邑樂) performances were actually reflective of Southeast Asia. As was discussed in chapter 1, there are discrepancies in historical sources about Champa and its location. The Japanese term *Rinyū* does not necessarily correspond with Champa, and the *Biography of Daianji's Bodai[sena]*⁵⁴ in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* refers to Champa as being in “North India,” (北天竺 *Kita Tenjiku*). While not accurate by modern understandings, this association may reflect geographic awareness for the period when the text was written. Although most scholars agree that Phậ̄t Triệ̄t was likely from Southeast Asia, there are those who contend that the three *Rinyūgaku* pieces actually reflect Indian performing arts, either due to Phậ̄t Triệ̄t having been from India himself or from his traveling to India and learning the pieces there.⁵⁵ Considering the high level of Indian influence on Southeast Asia that is also reflected within the performances themselves, we can at the very least concur that the preserved *Rinyūgaku* pieces still performed today are not unadulterated reflections of Southeast Asian culture.

The second notable point with these performances is that several of them are listed as having been performed by women.⁵⁶ Shōmu's reign was surprisingly inclusive of women, despite the restrictive Confucian-inspired gender roles imposed by Japan's *Ritsuryō* (律令) government, so called because of the degree to which Japan's bureaucracy was informed by Chinese civil and

⁵⁴ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 54.

⁵⁵ Takako Inoue, “Indigenisation of Traditional Performing Arts in Japan: Transformation of Indian Elements in Gagaku,” (paper presented at India and Japan: Unearthing lesser-known 16th to early 20th century linkages, New Delhi, November 15-17, 2018): 16.

⁵⁶ See table below.

administrative (律 *ritsu*)⁵⁷ as well as penal (令 *ryō*) codes. On the one hand, the roles of female mediums significantly declined during this time,⁵⁸ but on the other, we also see equal numbers of convents and monasteries comprising the *kokubunji* state protection temple network.⁵⁹ While the dances themselves may have always been performed by women, it is possible that they were also added to this performance as an avenue for female participation.

Of the thirteen pieces mentioned in the *Shoku nihongi* and *Tōdaiji yōroku*, four are identified as having been performed by women, in some cases from specific kinship groups with overseas connections or wearing particular attire.⁶⁰ Some traditional Japanese dances also featured women, even if not explicitly identified as such. One example is the *Gosechimai* (五節舞),⁶¹ which was held in association with two major imperial festivals, the *Niname* (新嘗) celebrating the first harvest, and the *Daijosai* (大嘗祭) marking a new imperial succession. The *Gosechimai* was carried out by five women at court, including in one occurrence Empress Kōken when she was still a princess.⁶² While not mentioned in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account of the eye-opening ceremony,

⁵⁷ This is the same character used to refer to *vinaya* monastic precepts. In both cases, the character conveys the meaning of rules and conventions.

⁵⁸ Lori Meeks, “The Disappearing Medium: Reassessing the Place of Miko in the Religious Landscape of Premodern Japan,” *History of Religions*, Vol. 50, No. 3, (Feb. 2011): 213.

⁵⁹ The temple network in general is referred to as the *kokubunji*, but technically this only refers to the monasteries. The convents were known as the “state protection convents,” or *kokubunniji* (国分尼寺). It is worth noting that while numbers of monasteries and convents were equal, or largely so, the sizes of the complexes and numbers of monks and nuns assigned to them were significantly different.

⁶⁰ Of particular note is the *Tōnyōmai* (唐女舞), which featured twenty women in *hakama* (袴) style trousers.

⁶¹ Despite being one of the traditional Japanese dances, the *Gosechimai* has a strong Confucian affiliation and may be Chinese in origin. The name may be in reference to five seasonal festivals, five modulations of tempo, or the five ways that the dancers raise their sleeves. This latter explanation relates to a story involving the Chinese Duke Zhao (昭公 *Shō kō*; d. 613 BCE; r. 633-613 BCE) demanding that women show moderation (節 *sechi*) when approaching him. Demiéville, *Bugaku*, 150-151.

⁶² 743.5.5. *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 2, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 13, (Tokyo: Iwanami

it is likely implied in the reference to the “Great Dances” (大御舞 *Ōmimai*), meaning that at least five of the thirty people mentioned in that performance were women. In an event predominantly overseen by men, the dancing provided a stage for women not only to participate, but also to be featured. Moreover, their involvement contributed to matching what Japanese diplomats would have observed in China, especially with the presence of female dancing troupes from various parts of Central Asia.⁶³

The music and dance performed during and after the *kaigen kuyō* was not intended to merely entertain the *daibutsu* and attendees, but also to create a statement about Japan’s place in the world. As will be seen below, Sakaehara Towao (栄原永遠男) posits that Shōmu intended for the festivities to provide a means of repairing court relationships through fealty pledges to both the Vairocana and to the throne. Alternatively, Yoshikawa Shinji (吉川真司) offers a counterargument that anything overtly political about the event paled in comparison with the fact that this was simply in keeping with period appropriate religious ceremonies. Regardless of the motivations, though, it is clear that musicians and dancers played a vital role alongside monks and attendants when it came to commemorating what was, at that time, the pinnacle of Japanese Buddhist achievement.

2.6 The *Shoku Nihongi*’s Account

Looking now to the textual accounts of the *kaigen kuyō*, the *Shoku nihongi*’s account provides a basic overview of the attendees, activities, and general splendor of the event itself. The

shoten, 1990): 418-419. See also Joan Piggott, *The Emergence of Japanese Kingship*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997): 385 n59.

⁶³ Schafer, 55-56.

passage dates to the ninth day of the fourth month in Tempyō Shōhō year 4, which corresponds to May 26, 752.

The statue of the Vairocana Great Buddha having been completed, the first eye opening was carried out. On this day, [Empress Kōken] paid a visit to Tōdaiji Temple. The empress herself led the [procession] of all of the literary and military officials and set up a great feast. This occasion was just like New Year's Day. The level five and above [officials] wore ceremonial dress, while level six and below [officials wore their level-] appropriate colors. Ten thousand monks were summoned.

Meanwhile, musicians from the Office of Court Music (雅樂寮 *Gagakuryō*) and various temples all gathered together. Then, imperial retainers and various kinship groups carried out music and dance, such as the *Gosechi* (五節), the *Kumemai* (久米舞), the *Tatafushi* (楯伏), the *Tōka* (踏歌), and the *Hōko* (袍袴). Voices called out from east and west, and [the musicians] divided [and walked into] the garden. It was a thing so miraculously resplendent that it exceeds the ability to be recorded. Since the time that Buddhist law came eastward [to Japan], such a celebration had never before been held. That evening, the empress returned to the Tamura (田村) residence of Chief Counsellor of State Fujiwara Ason Nakamaro (藤原朝臣仲麻呂), and she took it as her own.⁶⁴

While incorporating the general record of events, this account is relatively generic compared to the much lengthier passage in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*. All monastic participants and attendees were consolidated into the vague reference to “ten thousand monks,” and mentions of the post-ceremonial entertainment were largely restricted to those dances with strong court affiliations.⁶⁵ In other words, the account reflects the chronicler's prerogative in reviewing the activities of members of court, with little care in or interest about the temple's activities or the multicultural events that stretched into the night.

⁶⁴ Original translation, based upon 752.4.9. *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 3, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 14, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992): 118-121. For an alternative translations, see Harich-Schneider, 74 and Bender, 117-118.

⁶⁵ Of particular note are the *Gosechi* and the *Kumemai*, the latter of which was performed for the *Daijōsai* (大嘗祭) coronation ceremony.

By comparison, the *Tōdaiji yōroku* includes multiple references pertaining to the eye-opening ceremony.⁶⁶ The most notable, though, is the lengthy passage titled “The Eye-opening Ceremony” (開眼供養会 *kaigen kuyōe*). It is this passage that provides the greatest detail about the events and the opulence, and also about the specific individuals who were involved, including the overseas monks. Compared to the *Shoku nihongi* passage, there is more immediate attention paid to Retired Emperor Shōmu’s actions in the days leading up to the *kaigen kuyō* than to his daughter’s.⁶⁷ By necessity, Empress Kōken is discussed as attending, but the account is more focused on preserving a record of the participants, processions, and sequence of events than it is on tracking her movements.

2.7 The *Tōdaiji Yōroku*’s Account

For heuristic purposes, the passage is divided into five sections on the basis of the major activities occurring within those specific sections. First is the Preamble, where Shōmu appoints specific monks to carry out the major parts to the *kaigen kuyō*. Next is the Procession, where the imperial family travels to the temple as well as assigns representatives to care for the capital while Empress Kōken was away. The third section, Ceremony, focuses on the events involving the eye-opening act itself, including the grand entrances of imperial guests, officiating monks, and notable monks and temples. Fourth is Musical Celebration, which contains the discussion of music and dance following the main ceremony. This section includes a lengthy list detailing the different types of Japanese and mainland Asian music and dance performed. Finally, there is the Alms-giving discussion, where donations of various types of cloth were given to the monks and nuns

⁶⁶ Most of these additional passages are taken from other temple records, notably Gangōji’s, or refer to later eye-opening ceremonies following recastings of the Great Buddha due to damage from fire and earthquake.

⁶⁷ Quite possibly, this focus on Shōmu reflects the compiler’s interests in the former emperor as Tōdaiji’s founder and patron.

responsible for the different sections of the *kuyō* in accordance with role and rank. In addition to identifying previously unmentioned participants, this part also indicates which offices or bureaucrats were responsible for giving the alms themselves. The full translation and the added section headings can be found in Appendix A.

2.7.1 Preamble

This section is mainly notable in that it is when Shōmu assigned specific monks to their roles in overseeing the eye-opening ceremony. As was noted above, Bodhisena was appointed to paint the eyes of the Vairocana, Ryūson to lecture on the *Flower Garland Sutra*, and Daoxuan to give the invocation. The fourth monk listed in this section is Keisei (景静 alt. *Kyōjō*; fl. 752), who acted as preacher (都講 *tokō*). Other than the fact that he was dubbed a “meditation priest” (禪師 *zenji*), the only known detail about Keisei is that he was a top disciple of Gyōki (行基; 668-749), who died three years before the eye-opening ceremony.⁶⁸

It was likely Keisei’s association with Gyōki that led to his involvement in this event. Although not an overseas monk or associated with Daianji, Gyōki nonetheless appears throughout the entirety of the Daianji overseas monks’ narrative. As seen in chapter 1, he and Bodhisena famously exchanged greetings upon the Indian monk’s arrival at the port city of Naniwa (難波). This encounter was used in later tales as evidence of Gyōki’s hidden bodhisattva nature. In chapter 3, we will see that Gyōki’s propensity for independently ordaining laypeople may well have inspired parts of the *Sōniryō* code of conduct for Japan’s monks and nuns as well as the precepts master solicitation itself. Gyōki’s many valuable public construction projects as well as his general popularity with commoners made him relatively untouchable to the Heijō elite.

⁶⁸ Yoshikawa, “*Tenpyō bunkaron*,” 218.

Despite this previously antagonistic relationship, Shōmu harnessed Gyōki's connections and put him in charge of fundraising for both the *daibutsu* and Tōdaiji itself. In recognition of his contributions, Shōmu appointed Gyōki *daisōjō* (大僧正), or “great superintendent,” a rank that feasibly placed him above all members of the *Sōgō*, including Bodhisena. According to the *Record of Gyōki* (行基年譜 *Gyōgi nenpu*), the formerly errant monk even bestowed bodhisattva precepts (菩薩戒 *bosatsu kai*) upon the imperial family soon after Shōmu's abdication in 749.⁶⁹ In this case, the bodhisattva precepts marked Shōmu, Kōmyō, and Kōken's induction into Buddhist orders. This passage is notable not only for demonstrating Gyōki's prominence and this category of precepts, but also for portraying Shōmu as choosing not to be ordained by the resident precepts master and preceptor in the *Sōgō*, Daoxuan. As Gyōki's passing prevented him from personally participating in the eye-opening ceremony, including his disciple was undoubtedly intended as a sign of respect and recognition of Gyōki's contributions.

Returning to the passage, there are some curious points about the preamble's language and structure that suggest it may have either been added at a later date or from a different source. The first two appointments begin with the phrase “the emperor summoned” (皇帝勅請 *kōtei chokushō*), and the latter two contain a reference suggesting that the appointment process was the same for them as well. While the text does not specifically state which ruler it was who made these appointments, the details in the first segment indicate that it was Shōmu, as his body was described as weak and incapable of carrying out the eye-opening himself. This frail depiction is consistent with passages from the *Shoku nihongi* as well. However, in the section immediately following, the

⁶⁹ Marcus Bingenheimer notes that there is a strong possibility that this event got “transferred” by Jianzhen's disciple Situo, thereby explaining why two common biographies of the Chinese precepts master state that he was the one to bestow bodhisattva precepts onto the imperial family. Marcus Bingenheimer, “A Translation of the *Tōdaiwajo Tōseiden* 唐大和尚東征傳 [T. 2089 (7)],” part 2, *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 5 (2004): 170, n99.

Procession, Shōmu is identified as the abdicated emperor (太上天皇 *daijōtennō*), and Kōken is the emperor (天皇 *tennō*). The date that follows the preamble indicates that it occurred approximately one month prior to the eye-opening ceremony, and so it could not have taken place before Shōmu's abdication in 749; moreover, the three monks who belonged to the *Sōgō* were only appointed to those positions the year before in 751, meaning that they would not have held their specific titles before this period. Nonetheless, the language used, even indicating that it is an imperial rescript, suggests that the person recording this segment still viewed Shōmu as the emperor.

There are two additional discrepancies between the preamble and the rest of the account. The first is the difference in date. According to the preamble, the assigned monks were to conduct the ceremony on the eighth day of the fourth month. Considering that this date was traditionally celebrated as the historical buddha's birthday, it is a highly appropriate day for enlivening the *daibutsu*, marking its transition from statue to religious icon and thereby conflating the statue's birthday with Śākyamuni's.⁷⁰ Moreover, as will be discussed below, some of the musical festivities following the ceremony were customarily performed during this event anyway. However, both the passage that follows and the *Shoku nihongi* account state that the eye-opening took place on the ninth. This later date is also consistent with dated items from the Shōsōin repository.

While there is no written explanation for the date change, historian Sakaehara Towao suggests that this shift may have occurred due to weather problems, especially considering how

⁷⁰ Although Vairocana is the emanation of Śākyamuni's transformation into a buddha, their birthdates are celebrated separately. Nonetheless, it is notable that Shōmu selected Śākyamuni's birthdate for this event.

many monks and performers had to wait outside for the festivities.⁷¹ Sakaehara also notes the highly symbolic nature of this date. Not only was it the Buddha's purported birthday, but the year corresponded with the two hundredth year anniversary of Buddhism's official introduction to Japan.⁷² Sakaehara suggests that the reason why the ceremony took place well before the statue and temple structure were finished was in order to take advantage of this auspicious date.

The second discrepancy lies in the fact that one of the monks who appears as one of the ceremony officiants, Enpuku (延福; fl. 752), is not listed here.⁷³ As will be seen in the third section, the monk Enpuku served as the reader (読師 *dokushi*) in the ceremony. Historian Yoshikawa Shinji suggests that Enpuku was a mountain ascetic monk (山林修行僧 *sanrin shugyō sō*) affiliated with Tōdaiji.⁷⁴ This latter possibility is supported by the fact that there are two additional officiators that appear in the alms-giving section that are not reflected in either the preamble or the ceremony section. The first is the priest who oversaw the service, quite possibly Ryōben in his official capacity as the head of the temple. The second is the rector (維那師 *inashi*), which was one of

⁷¹ Sakaehara Towao, 栄原 永遠男 “*Daibutsu kaigen kuyō no kōzō to sono seijiteki ishiki*” 大仏開眼会の構造とその政治的意識, *Toshi bunka kenkyū* 2 (2003): 24n2. It should be noted that there is no indication of poor weather, divination, or any other indication that there was a conscious choice to change the date.

⁷² According to the historical record *Nihon shoki*, King Seong of Paekche in Korea presented the Japanese ruler Kimmei with an image of Śākyamuni made of bronze and gold in the year 552, which marks the official introduction of Buddhism to Japan. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan from the Earliest Times to A.D. 697*, trans. W. G. Aston, vol. II (Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972): 65-66. By comparison, the temple record for Gangōji Temple, titled *Circumstances Leading to the Founding of the Monastery Complex of Gangōji and a List of its Accumulated Treasures* (元興寺伽藍縁起并流記資財帳 *Gangōji garan engi narabi ruki shizaichō*), as well as the *Record of the Dharma Ruler Shōtoku of the Upper Palace* (上宮聖徳法王帝説 *Jōgū shōtoku hōō teisetsu*) instead ascribe this official introduction of Buddhism to the year 538. For a brief overview on this dating discrepancy, see William Deal and Brian Ruppert, *A Cultural History of Japanese Buddhism* (Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley Blackwell, 2015): 19.

⁷³ Morimoto Kōsei provides a little more insight into Enpuku in Morimoto Kōsei 森本公誠, “Sōsōki no Tōdaijisō ni omoi o hasete” 草創期の東大寺僧に思いをはせて, in *Kodai Tōdaiji no sekai — Tōdaiji yōroku o yomi naosu* 古代東大寺の世界: 『東大寺要録』を読み直す, *The Great Buddha Symposium* 14 (Tōdaiji Temple: Nara, 2017): 50.

⁷⁴ Yoshikawa, “Tenpyō bunkaron,” 218.

three top temple administrators.⁷⁵ Given the close connection between these two roles and Tōdaiji itself, they may have been assigned by the temple's bureaucracy directly.

Despite discrepancies between the preamble and the sections that follow, it nonetheless establishes three important things. First, it assigns four of the main actors in the ceremony, most of whom are referred to later on as well. Second, it demonstrates the degree of oversight Shōmu had with this event, or at least was presumed to have had. The language choices indicate that the author viewed Shōmu as the emperor, even though he abdicated three years beforehand. It is possible that the author viewed Shōmu as still possessing the authority and power of an emperor at this time, or perhaps it was written at a later time by a chronicler who was unaware of exactly when Shōmu retired. Finally, in identifying the four monks' identities, the preamble demonstrates the diverse composition of the event itself, in both countries of origin and specializations. Bodhisena and Daoxuan were Indian and Chinese, with respective specializations in Sanskrit and monastic precepts, and both were interested in the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Of the two Japanese priests, another was also identified as a precepts master, and the other a monk with direct ties to Gyōki.

2.7.2 Procession

Moving now to the Procession section of the account, this passage discusses the bureaucratic details and preparations necessary for the imperial family to be able to attend this event, all of which are missing from the *Shoku nihongi* account. Despite the temple's position to the immediate east of the Heijō palace, the empress' visit was treated in the same manner as an

⁷⁵ Along with the abbot (上座 *jōza*) and the administrative chief (寺主 *jishu*), the rector aided with temple duties, especially the delegation of duties. Nakamura Hajime 中村元, *Kōsetsu bukkyōgo daijiten* 広説佛教語大辞典 (Tokyo: Tokyo Shoseki, 2001): 78.

official procession outside of the capital, even to the degree that officials were appointed to serve as an absentee government (留守官 *rusukan*) while Kōken was away. This appointment may have also been intended as a means to mollify or pay respect to those otherwise unable to attend the ceremony.⁷⁶

Whether because of the necessity for additional travel time due to Shōmu's known infirmity or in order to oversee final preparations, the passage states that Shōmu and Kōmyō went to Tōdaiji five days in advance of the celebration. Two days later, four hundred soldiers were called forth to protect the left and right halves of the city, presumably to keep the order as well as prepare a safe path for the empress regnant and other officials going to the ceremony.⁷⁷

The following day, hand-made flowers were donated by local households. These flowers likely held three functions. The first was decorative, as the description of the Buddha Hall at the bottom of this section describes it as being adorned with hand-made flowers. The second was for the purposes of being strewn from the ceiling. Scattering flowers, or *sange* (散華), brings to mind sutras' descriptions of flowers falling during especially auspicious moments, and we see from a reference in the Alms-giving section that a *sange* was performed to purify the ceremonial space. The third usage is not directly pointed to in the text, but rather is suggestive of the theme of shared *karma* seen with this particular Vairocana. When announcing his intention to have the *daibutsu*

⁷⁶ For example, the mention of Major Counselor Kose (大納言巨勢卿 *Dainagon Kose kyō*) was presumably referencing Kose Ason Natemaro (巨勢朝臣奈氏麻呂; ca. 670-753), who became the Major Counselor (大納言 *dainagon*) in 749, and had previously been one of the ministry members who remained to oversee government matters when Emperor Shōmu was traveling. Given his approximate age of 82 years old, the trip to Tōdaiji may have also been too strenuous for him. See Sakamoto Tarō 坂本 太郎 and Hirano Kunio 平野 邦雄, eds., "Kose Ason Natemaro 巨勢朝臣奈氏麻呂," in *Nihon kodai shizoku jinmei jiten* 日本古代氏族人名辞典 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1990): 301.

⁷⁷ The passage refers to these troops as the capital protections soldiers (護裏京使 *gorikeishi*) and denotes the left and right flanks. I am borrowing Sakaehara Towao's translation that this refers to the two halves of the capital itself. Sakaehara, "Daibutsu," 21.

created in 743, Shōmu proposed a fundraising campaign as a countrywide cooperative effort.⁷⁸ Whether this initiative came from a desire to share in the positive merit resulting from its construction or to deeper financial pressures, the theme of shared karma can also be seen in the act of donating flowers to the ceremony as well as in the eye-opening act itself, as will be discussed below.

Looking now to the initial descriptions of the ceremony, the imperial family was seated together, and there is the observation that the event mirrored New Year's Day, minus the presence of chamberlains (侍従 *jijū*). These chamberlains functioned as servants to the emperor. Their noted absence perhaps designates that this is a religious rather than court function, or it may indicate Empress Kōken's preference. The reference to New Year's Day is especially interesting given that the *Shoku nihongi* also makes this comparison. As will be reviewed below, Sakachara suggests that this allusion to New Year's Day is indicative of a deeper political motivation that intended to use this ceremony to repair fractured court relations.

The final notable point from this section is the presence of *kanjō* (灌頂) banners. While *kanjō* banners have a particular association with monastic ordinations and baptisms, they were also used for ceremonies in general.⁷⁹ In this case, their presence may have simply intended to provide

⁷⁸ 743.10.15. *Shoku nihongi*, 430-433. For English translation of this proclamation, see De Bary, Wm. Theodore, and Yoshiko Kurata Dykstra, ed., "Proclamation of the Emperor Shōmu on the Erection of the Great Buddha Image," in *Sources of Japanese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*. Volume 1. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001): 114-115.

⁷⁹ *Kanjō* refers to an ablution ceremony with initial ties to Indian consecration rites that was integrated into Buddhism as a part of a novice's initiation ritual, comparable to a baptism. Washing a religious icon by pouring water over it is also a form of *kanjō*. In the late seventh century, one of Prince Shōtoku's consorts donated a couple of bronze *kanjō* banners to Hōryūji Temple, which are still extant in the Tokyo National Museum's collection. One of these banners included embroidered tassels that may give some indication of the technique used here, although it should be noted that the majority of *kanjō* banners were composed of cloth rather than bronze. See plates 20-1 and 20-2 as well as 22-1 through 22-8 from museum catalog *Shūri kansei kinen tokubetsuten, ito no mihotoke: kokuhō tuzureori Taima mandara to shūbutsu* 修理完成記念特別展, 糸のみほとけ：国宝綴織當麻曼荼羅と繡仏 (Nara: Nara Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan, 2018): 38-44; 228; 253.

ornamentation that matched the importance of the event, or there may be added significance from their placement and colors. The passage states that embroidered *kanjō* banners were located in the east and west, as well as five-colored *kanjō* banners in each of the four cardinal and four ordinal directions. As such, there would have been at least eight of these embroidered banners, and possibly far more. When considering the composition of remaining pieces from the Shōsōin and Hōryūji Temple (法隆寺), their patterns and subject matters often reference Central Asian, Indian, and Chinese motifs and techniques that indicate they were either brought over by diplomatic and trading routes, or created in Japan by overseas-trained artisans. As such, the multicultural flavor of the event was evident not only in the officiants and performers, but also in the decorations.⁸⁰

2.7.3 Ceremony

This section covers the arrivals of the main officiants, the eye-opening itself, subsequent reading and lecture from the *Flower Garland Sutra*, and the procession of additional monks and bureaucrats. The grand entrances made by the officiants Bodhisena, Ryūson, and Enpuku by palanquin are especially notable. As mentioned previously, Enpuku was not included in the preamble where Emperor Shōmu appointed the monks who officiated over the ceremony. The absence of this passage may indicate that he was assigned by Tōdaiji itself.

Given the time and attention paid to the lead-up to this event and the ensuing festivities, the actual account of the eye-opening is surprisingly brief. Nonetheless, it does contain the main event: the physical enlivening of the Vairocana *daibutsu* by means of painting in the pupils.

⁸⁰ For hand-drawn comparisons of the Hōryūji and Shōsōin *kanjō* banners and an overview of these objects in general, see Monica Bethe, “Sacred Textile Banners of Japan” (Textile Society of America Symposium Proceedings, 1996): 9-18. <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1865&context=tsaconf>. For more on the international influence on Japanese religious art during this period, see Cynthia Bogel, “Un cosmoscape sous le Bouddha : le piédestal de l’icône principale de Yakushi-ji, soutien de l’empire des souverains,” translated by Étienne Gomez. *Perspective: actualité en histoire de l’art*, Vol. 1 (2020): 141-166.

Bodhisena instructed attendees to grab a cord that was attached to the brush and thereby collectively participate in the meritorious action. Considering Shōmu's original intention to personally paint in the eyes of the Vairocana Buddha statue, as stated in the Preamble, this cord may have been the best manner by which he and his family could still take part of the activity and receive any ensuing *karma*. The theme of shared *karma* can also be seen in the request for countrywide crowdfunding to construct the *daibutsu* in the first place as well as the handmade flowers donated in the procession to the temple.

While not reflected in the *Shoku nihongi* or other known records of the period, the narrative regarding the Tōdaiji *daibutsu*'s communal participatory aspect is supported by items stored in the Shōsōin collection.⁸¹ There are two brushes ascribed to being the utensil that Bodhisena used for the eye-opening. The first, identified as the “Tenpyō Treasure Brush” (天平宝物筆 *Tenpyō hōmotsu fude*) has a handle made of black bamboo (ハチク *hachiku*) and bristles composed of horse hair, deer fur, and feathers intertwined between layers of paper wrapping. According to its inscription, the brush was used again by the retired emperor Go-Shirakawa (後白河) for the eye-opening ceremony in 1185, marking the temple and statue's restoration following their destruction in 1180 during the Genpei War (源平合戦 *Genpei kassen*).⁸²

The second brush, titled “Unfinished Aloes Wood Brush Handle” (未造了沈香木画筆管 *mizōryō jinkōmoku ga no fude no kan*) is made from Japanese timber bamboo (マダケ *madake*), although there is no brush head. The decorations on this brush are more elaborate, with painted

⁸¹ In addition to the brushes and cord mentioned here, Yoshikawa states that the repository also contains ink used for the eye-opening as well as a cushion used for the lecture on the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Yoshikawa, “*Tenpyō Bunkaron*,” 220.

⁸² “Writing brush, ‘*Tenpyō* treasure’” 天平宝物筆, The Imperial Household Agency website, <https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/treasures?id=0000011867&index=6>.

gold lines as well as ivory and black persimmon wood marquetry.⁸³ While not exhibited to the extent of the other brush, the Imperial Household Agency (宮内庁 *Kunaichō*) Shōsōin inventory nonetheless describes each as having been used in the 752 eye-opening ceremony.

Whether either brush touched Bodhisena's hands cannot be known, but they nonetheless give an impression of eighth-century brush construction as well as what the actual article would have looked like. Given their age and the fact that they were placed in Tōdaiji's own storehouse, their potential authenticity is reasonably high. The same could be said for the indigo cord (縹縷 *hanadanoru*), which was purportedly tied to one of these brushes for attendees to grasp. The cord described in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* would have had to have been quite long in order for multiple people to hold onto as well as traverse the length of the scaffolding that Bodhisena would have needed to ascend in order to reach the *daibutsu*'s eyes. As it is preserved in a coiled bundle, the cord's precise length is uncertain, but given the Shōsōin cord's diameter of approximately 1/5 inch (.5 cm) and the coil's diameter of 17.7 inches (45 cm), it certainly would have stretched for several meters upon being unwound.⁸⁴

When comparing this segment with the post-ceremonial alms-giving section, it is notable that not all participants are mentioned. The Alms-giving section states that there were six officiants: (1) the eye-opening priest (開眼師 *kaigenshi*), (2) master of ceremonies (供養師 *kuyōshi*), (3) the reader (読師 *dokushi*), (4) the invocation priest (呪願師 *juganshi*), (5) the preacher (都講師 *tōkōshi*), and (6) the rector (維那師 *inashi*). Between this section and the preamble, it is already clear that Bodhisena was the eye-opening priest (1), Enpuku the reader (3),

⁸³ "Brush handle decorated with marquetry in *jinkō*." 未造了沉香木画筆管, The Imperial Household Agency website, <https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/treasures?id=0000011890&index=7>.

⁸⁴ "Blue silk cord, No. 1" 縹縷 第1号, The Imperial Household Agency website, <https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/treasures?id=0000014723&index=30>.

Keisei the invocation priest (4), and Daoxuan the preacher (5). As noted previously, the master of ceremonies (2) was probably Ryōben. The remaining member, the rector (6), is unclear; however, as this was one of three administrative positions within the temple itself, it was likely a member of Tōdaiji's community.

Alongside these officiants, the alms-giving section indicates that there were two hundred monks chanting (梵音 *bonnon*), two hundred monks performing with three-ringed staffs (錫杖 *shakujō*), ten intoning (唄 *bai*), and ten monks performing flower scattering (散花 *sange*). There were also twenty monks carrying incense (定者 *jōsha*)⁸⁵, as well as three hundred thirty monks in patchwork robes (納 *nō*) and an additional three hundred thirty in robes incorporating a hexagonal pattern (甲 *kan*)⁸⁶.

Of particular note are the first four activities. These four pieces — *bonnon*, *shakujō*, *bai* (short for 如来唄 *nyoraibai*), and *sange* — are the previously mentioned “four essential pieces” of Buddhist liturgical chant, or *bonbai*, that were commonly performed at the beginning of Buddhist rituals. The pieces started with intoning a four-part Buddhist verse known as a *gatha* (偈 *ge*), intended to calm the hearts and minds of the listeners. The flower scattering took place concurrently and was intended to purify the space by driving out evil. The Sanskrit chanting also comprised a *gatha*, this time in eight verses. Finally, a group of monks carrying staffs chanted a *gatha* in three stanzas and twenty-three lines. At the end of each stanza, they flourished their

⁸⁵ The actual actions of this category of monk are not entirely clear. Hajime Nakamura notes that a *jōsha* could be a meditation or yoga practitioner. However, his additional definition of this referring to a low-ranking priest (小僧 *kosō*) who bears a long-handled censor in advance of the procession appears more suitable for the context. Moreover, there are many examples of censors dating to this period in the Shōsōin. Nakamura, *Kōsetsu bukkyōgo*, 680.

⁸⁶ Presumably referencing 納衣 (*nōe*), which are monastic robes composed of rags in a patchwork format, and 甲袈裟 (*kōgesa*), which are monastic robes bearing a hexagonal, honeycomb pattern. Nakamura, *Kōsetsu bukkyōgo*, 431, 1337.

staffs.⁸⁷ The fact that the four *bonbai* pieces were only mentioned in passing in the alms-giving section and not the ceremony suggests that the chronicler did not view them in the same manner as the actions of the three officiants Bodhisena, Daoxuan, and Enpuku, or even the procession of the monks that followed. This absence is all the more notable when contrasted with the section immediately afterward, wherein tumultuous music poured forth and the various performers came forward.

2.7.4 Musical Celebration

In addition to being the lengthiest part of the passage, this section provides key information on the post-ceremonial musical celebrations as well as identifies which government officials and agencies were present at this event. There are three distinct parts to this section: (1) the entrance of specific music and dance troupes, (2) specific performances, numbers of dances, and participants, and (3) the imperial family retiring for the day. The core material is the lengthy list of performances, the government officials who led them in, and the numbers of people and kinship groups that performed each one.

The list of performances is far lengthier and more detailed than that in the *Shoku nihongi*, which only lists the *Gosechi* (五節), the *Kumemai* (久米舞), the *Tatafushi* (楯伏), the *Tōka* (踏歌), and the *Hōko* (袍袴). As noted previously, the *Shoku nihongi*'s chronicler restricted his record of the account to those performances that would customarily be performed at court, thus demonstrating both his bias and perspective as a member of court. By comparison, the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s account includes these five⁸⁸ performances and as well as nine more, not including the

⁸⁷ Nakamura, *Kōsetsu bukkyōgo*, 624.

⁸⁸ The *Gosechi* is not mentioned in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account, but the *Ōmimai* (大御舞) is. In his examination of the music and dance at the Great Buddha's eye-opening, Shinji Yoshikawa mentions the *Daisechimai* (大節舞) instead of *Ōmimai*. It is likely that this is what he was referring to. Yoshikawa, "Kodai Tōdaiji," 60.

Toragaku (度羅樂)⁸⁹ troupe that accompanied members from the four major temples of Daianji, Yakushiji, Gangōji, and Kōfukuji, or the sixty individuals who played drums for *Gigaku*. The *Gigaku* section divides the *Wagaku* and *Bangaku* performers, perhaps indicating an intentional separation between the groups. The lack of direct reference to a *Gigaku* troupe is surprising, given that the number of masks preserved in the Shōsōin indicate that it was a definite presence at this event. As such, even this lengthy account may not record all of the event’s performances.

As mentioned above, the Daianji overseas monks Phât Triệt is thought to have either personally participated in the post-ceremonial performances or at least taught the three *Rinyūgaku* pieces performed then. A separate account of the *kaigen kuyō* in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* titled *Biography of Daianji’s Bodhi[sena]* provides a little more insight into Phât Triệt’s musical contributions. In this passage, the three *Rinyūgaku* pieces performed towards the end of the event were the *bosatsumai* (菩薩舞), the *bairo* (陪臚) and the *batōmai* (拔頭舞).⁹⁰ In addition to these three, there were five other pieces also preserved in the so-called “Eight Musical Pieces of Champa” (林邑八樂 *Rinyū hachi gaku*) that were performed at court and major Buddhist festivals, seven of which were recorded as being imported and one of which was composed in Japan. As noted above, these pieces indicate strong evidence of influence from India and, quite possibly,

⁸⁹ *Toragaku* is something of a mystery, in that the Japanese name *Tora* (or *Dora*) has not been preserved, and so it is not clear what country was intended. Robert Garfias states that “speculation ranges from Central Asia to India to Southeast Asia and even Bali.” Garfias, 8. One common presumption is that the music springs from Jeju Island off the coast of Korea. See also David Waterhouse, “Where did Toragaku Come From?” in *Musica Asiatica*, ed. Allan Marett (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991): 73-94.

⁹⁰ *Tōdaiji yōroku*, p. 56. In this case, *bairo* is represented as 部侶. For descriptions on these three dances, see Inoue, 17-18.

Central Asia and Western China as well.⁹¹ As a result, there is some speculation that they are not from Champa at all, but rather India.

Of particular note is the fact that these musical troupes were led by government officials. It is possible that this was intended to signal a shift from the “religious” to the “secular” entertainment, especially in light of the ban against monks partaking in non-liturgical music as stated in the monastic precepts and the *Sōniryō*. However, as was noted previously, this rule does not appear to have been practiced in reality, or at least it did not apply to these particular troupes, many of which were directly affiliated with the temples that were represented. Additionally, given the fact that the four major temples are stated to have presented “marvelous gifts” just beforehand, it is quite possible that their gift was the music or the means to perform the music.

Historian Yoshikawa Shinji in particular makes this argument, noting that the number of extant instruments in the Shōsōin or listed in its inventories are far more numerous than would have been necessary for this single event. Instead, he argues that the “marvelous gifts” from the four major temples may have been the performances as well as the instruments, costumes, and props that were intended to be used by Tōdaiji for many ceremonies to come.⁹² The probability that the temples intended to present music and instruments as their gift becomes clearer when considering the close tie between these temples and the very performances that were to follow. Yoshikawa points out that from this period onward, Tōdaiji specialized in music from the Korean Peninsula known as *Komagaku*; Kōfukuji was connected with pre-Tang music known as *Tōkogaku* (唐古樂); Gangōji specialized in new Tang music called *Tōshingaku* (唐新樂); Daianji featured

⁹¹ For descriptions of these dances, see Demiéville, *Bugaku*, 153-156.

⁹² Yoshikawa, “*Kodai Tōdaiji*,” 61.

Table 1: Musical Performances and Performers at the Tōdaiji Great Buddha’s Eye-Opening Ceremony in 752 According to the *Tōdaiji yōroku*.

Order	Music/Dance	Performers/Dances	Category	Country of Origin
1	<i>Ōutame</i> (大歌女)*†	30 people	Wagaku	Japan
	<i>Ōmimai</i> (大御舞) likely including <i>Gosechimai</i> (五節舞)* (†)		Wagaku	Japan
2	<i>Kumemai</i> (久米舞)*	20 from Ōtomo (大伴) 20 from Saeki (佐伯)	Wagaku	Japan
3	<i>Tatafushimai</i> (楯伏舞)*	20 from Hinokuma Imiki (檜前忌寸) 20 from Haji Sukune (土師宿禰)	Wagaku	Japan
4	<i>Tōka</i> (踏歌)*†	120 women from the Aya (漢)	Bangaku	China
5	<i>Tobukona</i> (跳子名)	100 people	Bangaku (presumed)	Unclear
6	<i>Tōkogaku</i> (唐古樂頭)	1 dance	Bangaku	China
7	<i>Tōsangaku</i> (唐散樂)	1 dance	Bangaku	China
8	<i>Rinyūgaku</i> (林邑樂)	3 dances	Bangaku	Vietnam (Champa)
9	<i>Komagaku</i> (高麗樂)	1 dance	Bangaku	Korea (Koguryō)
10	<i>Tōchūgaku</i> (唐中樂頭)	1 dance	Bangaku	China
11	<i>Tōnyomai</i> (唐女舞)†	1 dance 20 women in <i>hakama</i> (袴) trousers	Bangaku	China
12	<i>Komagaku</i>	3 dances	Bangaku	Korea (Koguryō)
13	<i>Komanyogaku</i> (高麗女樂)†		Bangaku	Korea (Koguryō)

* Also mentioned in the *Nihon shoki* account

† Recorded as performed by women; (†) women likely involved

music from the Champa area called *Rinyūgaku*, likely from Phât Triệt; and Hōryūji (法隆寺) had *Gigaku*.⁹³

The fact that government officials led in the various *Wagaku* and *Bangaku* troupes demonstrates that this later entertainment was not intended to create a secular break from the religious ceremony, but rather do exactly the opposite and incorporate Japan's government agencies into this major Buddhist ceremony. Several of the bureaus mentioned were already deeply involved with the ceremony, temples, or performers. Of particular note was the Agency of Foreign and Buddhist Affairs, *Genbaryō* (玄蕃寮), which oversaw the *Sōgō*. There were also several members of the Ministry of Civil Administration, *Jibushō* (治部省), which similarly oversaw the *Genbaryō*. The Office for Court Music, *Gagakuryō* (雅楽寮), was also understandably represented.

While these officials' presence at the heads of these processions may have been intended to acknowledge their participation in this extraordinary event, there may have been additional, political implications. As noted above, by the time he called for the *daibutsu*'s creation in the year 743, Shōmu had faced natural disasters, a devastating pestilence, political opposition, and succession challenges throughout his reign. Sakaehara Towao takes the position that the eye-opening ceremony and the Vairocana itself were intended to remedy those court divisions through countrywide devotion to both the *daibutsu* and the imperial family.

Sakaehara focuses on the shared mention in both the *Shoku nihongi* and *Tōdaiji yōroku* accounts that the event was similar to New Year's Day. He suggests that the New Year holiday's customary well-wishing ceremony (元日朝賀 *ganjitsu chōga*) was also performed at this event,

⁹³ Yoshikawa, "Kodai Tōdaiji," 63. It should be noted that even though Hōryūji is not listed as having attended, it was nonetheless an important temple and likely participated.

including its renewed pledge of fealty. With the existence of several, if not all, of Japan's religious, political, and military leadership present, Sakaehara theorizes the attendees pledged loyalty to both the empress and the Vairocana Buddha on behalf of the nation at large. As such, the eye-opening ceremony functioned to bring disparate groups together under a combined umbrella of imperial and Buddhist protection and governance. Moreover, by incorporating officiants from Japan, China, and India as well as artists performing music hailing from Japan, China, Korea, and Vietnam, Shōmu was presenting the world in microcosm to Vairocana.⁹⁴

Yoshikawa does not dispute that there may have been a political aspect to the ceremony, but he argues that it was a lesser concern. Instead, these performances were indicative of what would have been presented at a major Buddhist ceremony in general, especially for the Buddha's birthday ceremony. By combing through other literary references from the Nara and Heian period as well as from the Tang dynasty, Yoshikawa provides more context for the musical extravaganza. In particular, he notes that there are numerous references pertaining to *Gigaku* and *Tōgaku* being performed at the Buddha's birthday ceremony on the eighth day of the fourth month, as well as *Gigaku* and *Komagaku* at the *Bon* (盆) festival for the dead on the twenty-fifth day of the seventh month.⁹⁵ Moreover, when examining the Japanese god Hachiman's (八幡)⁹⁶ visit to Tōdaiji just a few years before in 749, Yoshikawa points out that Hachiman received comparable fanfare, albeit

⁹⁴ Sakaehara, "Daibutsu kaigen," 21-22.

⁹⁵ One document that Yoshikawa relies on is the "Order for the loss of musical instruments" (*Rakugu kesshitsu chūmon* 樂具欠失注文), which identifies each time instruments, costumes, props were signed out of the Shōsōin storage for use in a ceremony and were not returned, namely between the years 764-767. Yoshikawa, "Kodai Tōdaiji," 65-66.

⁹⁶ For more on the relationship between Hachiman and the Great Buddha's eye-opening, see Kiyosuke Michio 清輔道生, *Daibutsu kaigen to Usa Hachimanjin: ōgon no shutsudo, Hōren, Rōben* 大仏開眼と宇佐八幡神：黄金の出土・法蓮・良弁 (Tokyo: Sairyūsha, 2002).

on a smaller scale.⁹⁷ In sum, what we see at the *kaigen kuyō* in 752 was appropriate for Buddhist ceremonies at this time, especially at Tōdaiji.

Whether for direct political motives or reflecting an appropriate Buddhist ceremony, these musical displays indicate the degree to which Shōmu and the Japanese court in general looked to these overseas specialists and artisans to craft and conduct a ceremony befitting of this cultural, technological, and religious marvel. The music and dances themselves reflected more of the pastiche of circulating trends, motifs, melodies, and instruments occurring throughout Central and East Asia at this time than their simplistic names suggest. Moreover, they demonstrate Japan's awareness of how the Tang court was similarly using these multicultural performances not only for entertainment, but also as indications of their imperial breadth. Through these performances, Japan announced its presence as a major Buddhist country not only with a massive statue and temple complex, but also by mirroring the world's culture back to it.

2.7.5 Alms-giving

The majority of the alms section comprises what offerings were made to which officiants and monastics involved with the event as well as which officials or government offices provided them. There is also a summary of how many monks and nuns participated in various positions, with an addendum to note that, in total, there were 10,026 people involved with 10,000 offerings made to monks and nuns. While the amount varied depending upon what role they had played, all of the alms were in the form of cotton, linen, or silk. As has already been shown, this section provides additional insights into the number of participants and roles that were otherwise missing from the account.

⁹⁷ Yoshikawa notes that performances from “Great Tang” (大唐) and Parhae as well as *Gigaku*, *Gosechitamai* (五節田舞), and *Kumemai* were performed at this event. Yoshikawa, *Kodai Tōdaiji*,” 62.

While the alms segment follows the description of the day’s festivities ending, it concludes with the curious note that there was one additional worshipper who went to Tōdaiji the day after the festivities for her own private celebration. Although only referenced to as the “Central Palace,” Sakaehara notes that this refers to the Central Palace’s resident, who at this point was Shōmu’s mother and Kōmyō’s elder half-sister, Fujiwara Miyako (藤原宮子; d.754).⁹⁸ Whether her late arrival was a reflection of ongoing estrangement with her son⁹⁹ or perhaps poor health on the day of the event or an inclination to avoid crowds, it is nonetheless notable that musicians were still on hand to provide a second round of festivities. It is somewhat strange that this passage would appear after the description of alms and may be evidence that the compiler inserted a separate list of alms between references regarding royal family members’ movements on the ninth and tenth days.¹⁰⁰

2.8 Conclusion

For a century that is often portrayed as foundational for Japanese art, culture, religion, and politics, this eye-opening ceremony demonstrates the prominent role played by the cultural displays of overseas actors in shaping the core of Japanese ritual and political performance. As the court sought to represent Japan as a cosmopolitan, Buddhist nation, it showcased not indigenous cultural forms, but rather its ability to conform and duplicate what their monks and diplomats had

⁹⁸ Sakaehara, 22.

⁹⁹ Miyako separated from her son soon after childbirth, and the two did not reunite until much later. For more on Fujiwara Miyako and Shōmu’s early life, see Tōyama Mitsuo 遠山美都男, *Tenpyō no sanshimai: Shōmu Kōjo no kyōji to higeki* 天平の三姉妹：聖武皇女の矜持と悲劇 (Tokyo: Chūō Kōron Shinsha, 2010).

¹⁰⁰ This is not the only indication of an inaccurate insertion in this passage. In addition to the discrepancies listed in the Preamble, the fourth section includes a reference to Tsuzumi hand drum players entering with no stated leader. Later on, there is a leader, but no mention of what they preceded. Sakaehara states that the drummers were likely listed out of order and should actually follow this leader. Sakaehara, 20-21.

observed in Tang China and Silla.¹⁰¹ In order to carry off this grand spectacle, Shōmu and Kōken relied upon the local population of craftsmen, artisans, and performers with overseas origins, foremost among them the overseas monks of Daianji.

Inasmuch as the *kaigen kuyō* marked Japan's figurative debut as a cosmopolitan Buddhist state, the eye-opening ceremony also demonstrated the country's awareness and access to forms of foreign culture in a manner that is reminiscent of Tang imperial entertainments and major Buddhist ceremonies. The post-ceremonial festivities incorporated a multitude of music and dance attributed to Japan, Tang China, Koguryō, and Champa. These, in turn were infused with additional layers of Central Asian, South Asian, and even Middle Eastern entertainments. As such, these performances reflected the circulation of musical trends, instruments, motifs, and dances occurring within the Asian continent of which Japan itself was likely unaware. Nonetheless, Japan's part in this musical *mélange* is preserved in the costumes, instruments, and props from the Shōsōin Repository¹⁰² as well as traditional Japanese performing arts that incorporate elements from both *Wagaku* and *Bangaku* music and dance.

The eye-opening ceremony of the Great Buddha also showed off the technological skills and artistry that Japan was capable of. While Shōmu's *daibutsu* was likely inspired by Empress Wu's, his version amplified known bronze casting techniques to a scale not yet seen on the

¹⁰¹ I am reminded of the visit of the British Ambassador in the Rogers and Hammerstein musical, *The King and I*. In both cases, the desire to portray "civility" meant duplicating and mirroring what would be recognizable indications of cultural development to an external audience.

¹⁰² One particularly notable example of this cultural fusion is the "Five-stringed *biwa* lute of *shitan* with mother-of-pearl inlay 螺鈿紫檀五絃琵琶" Imperial Household Agency website <https://shosoin.kunaicho.go.jp/en-US/treasures?id=0000010076&index=2>. In addition to being the only known version of a five-stringed lute, this instrument is made of sandalwood and embedded mother-of-pearl embellishments. In the center is a Persian style musician playing the same sort of lute while atop a camel in front of a palm tree. In this one item, we see an instrument with a purported Indian origin, clearly made in the Middle East or Central Asian or at least influenced by Middle Eastern/Central Asian motifs, and transported to Japan through Chinese or Korean trade networks.

international stage. Even though the eye-opening ceremony took place before either the temple or even the statue's gilding were complete, the effect would have nonetheless demonstrated Japan's great technical achievement.¹⁰³ The *daibutsu*'s construction was thus not merely an act of spiritual faith, but also faith in Japan's innovative craftsmen and carpenters.

In addition to this cultural posturing to Japan's foreign neighbors, the eye-opening ceremony was almost certainly also understood as an act of domestic political theater. With this event, Shōmu and Kōken demonstrated their command and control of the country, the Buddhist community, and the Buddhist pantheon as well. Although Shōmu's interest in the *daibutsu* was undoubtedly motivated by the political and health challenges that confronted him, Shōmu may have also staged the event with Kōken's interests in mind. From its inception as a memorial temple to Shōmu and Kōmyō's son Motoi through the renaming of the temple when Kōken was designated as Shōmu's heir, the structure itself was fundamentally connected to Shōmu and Kōmyō's children. From this perspective, the eye-opening ceremony functioned as Kōken's global "coming out" as much as it was Japan's.

¹⁰³ For a brief summary of the construction process, Sakaehara, 15-16.

Chapter 3: Precepts and Politics: Monastic Ordination Reform and Political Control

[The *śramaṇa* Ryūson of Gangōji Temple realized that] in this country there was already a *vinaya* text, [but] we lacked someone to transmit precepts. [We] happily had the profound approach, [but] not the moral fundamentals! [Ryūson] promptly appealed to Prince Toneri, saying, “Japan has not yet been provided with the precepts. [By the] granting of the prince’s power, dispatch the monk Yōei and have him enter Tang [China, where he will] request a precepts scholar to send back to our court. [That person will] teach [us] to receive the precepts.” Prince Toneri promptly had Ryūson report to the emperor. By imperial decree, the aforementioned Yōei was ordered to go to Tang [China]. Additionally, the monk Fushō was ordered to accompany Yōei of Kōfukuji Temple.¹

The above passage describes the motivations behind the search for a precepts master in 733 that resulted in the relocations of four overseas monks to Japan in the years 736 and 754, an event commonly referred to in academic literature as the *risshi shōsei* (律師招請)² or the *kaishi shōhei* (戒師招聘).³ The final monk to arrive as a result of this campaign was Jianzhen (鑑真 *Ganjin*; 688-763), who looms large both in the history of Japanese ordination procedures and in historical understandings of the goals and agendas of the precepts master solicitation. Jianzhen revolutionized how Japan’s novice monks ceremonially advanced to full monks by grounding the ordination ceremony in monastic codes of conduct from a category of texts known as the *vinaya*

¹ *Tōdaiji yōroku* 東大寺要錄, ed. Tsutsui Eishun 筒井英俊 (Tokyo: Kokusho Kankōkai, 1982): 7-8. For full translation, see Appendix B.

² The terms preceptor and precepts master both relate to the Japanese term *risshi* (律師). I use both words to differentiate between two functions; the first, preceptor, refers to the administrative position in the Ministry of Monastic Affairs. I also use this term for a *risshi* who serves in major Buddhist ceremonies, as was seen in the previous chapter. The second, precepts master, I use for senior monks overseeing monastic ordinations and bestowing monastic precepts (the Japanese term *kaiwajō* 戒和上/戒和尚 also functions as a precepts master in ordinations).

³ Both terms appear frequently in Japanese literature. I have elected to use *risshi shōsei* due to its relatively more common usage, although, as will be shown, the *kaishi* (戒師) characters better reflect the primary source literature. The former term translates to “precepts master solicitation,” and the latter is “precepts master invitation.”

(律 *ritsu*),⁴ by instituting a quorum of ten fully ordained monks to oversee and authenticate those ceremonies,⁵ and by restricting the ceremonies initially to a single ordination platform (戒壇 *kaidan*) at Tōdaiji Temple (東大寺). This was later followed by two more platforms established in border regions along with another platform constructed at Jianzhen’s own temple dedicated to the study of *vinaya*, Tōshōdaiji (唐招提寺).⁶

The ordination ceremony was a key mechanism for the court to maintain control over which and how many novices were approved for elevation to becoming a full monk. Monks at state-supported monasteries, in fact, were so closely tied to the state that in many ways their status can be compared to that of civil servant, with an obligation to perform religious services for the benefit of the country. Jianzhen’s changes in ordination procedures allowed for greater governmental oversight of the monastic establishment, thereby cutting down on the incidence of unauthorized monks who often took the tonsure to avoid taxation, corvée labor, and other societal responsibilities. Under this new system, ordinations were restricted to key locations and to only a few times each year, thereby making it more difficult to forge governmental ordination certificates (戒牒 *kaichō*).⁷ By implementing state-approved *vinaya*-based ordinations, Jianzhen also helped

⁴ What is meant by *vinaya* varies depending upon the usage; in some cases, it refers to the overall category of monastic codes of conduct and temple regulations. However, it could also refer to one specific version of the *vinaya*, or the sections of a *vinaya* text related to forbidden behavior by monks and nuns as well as the corresponding punishments. This latter understanding of *vinaya* is technically the *vinaya pratimokṣa*, and this is what is meant by the term “monastic precepts.” For more on *vinaya* in general, including the extant copies of texts, see Shayne Clarke, “Vinayas,” in *Brill’s Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 1, edited by Jonathan Silk (Leiden: Brill, 2015): 60-87.

⁵ For list of monks in Jianzhen’s committee of ten monks who oversaw ordinations, see Tōno Haruyuki 東野治之, *Ganjin* 鑑真 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2009): 20-21.

⁶ The platforms in the border regions were established in 761 at Kanzeonji Temple (觀世音寺) in Chikuzen (筑前) and Yakushiji Temple (薬師寺) in Shimotsuke (下野).

⁷ Along with initiation certificates (度牒 *dochō*), ordination certificates indicated both government approval and proof of renunciation. China had engaged in a similar practice to cut down on illicit monks, although during the An Lushan Rebellion (安史之乱 *Anshi no ran*) of 755-763, the Tang government encouraged the sale of these certificates to fund their military response. Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism Under the T’ang* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press,

bring Japanese monastic institutions in line with contemporaneous practices in Tang China as well as channel their practice to better serve the state.

Jianzhen's precepts reforms in turn also influenced the actions of the ninth-century monk Saichō (最澄; 757-822), the founder of Japan's Tendai (天台) School of Buddhism. Saichō made a dramatic break from the *vinaya* precepts by creating separate ordination procedures for his followers that were based upon bodhisattva precepts (菩薩戒 *bosatsukai*).⁸ In order to have greater control over his monks' ordination process, Saichō petitioned the court for permission to establish a separate ordination platform for his own monks. The result was that by having its own ordination platform, the Tendai community functionally divorced its monks from the *vinaya* precepts that Saichō had deemed to be inferior. This action was ultimately copied by other Japanese Buddhist ordination lineages to the detriment of *vinaya*-based ordinations. Saichō simultaneously built upon and diverged from Jianzhen's legacy as he wrested control over his own ordinands from the Japanese state.⁹

1987): 59-65. For ordination certificates in Japan, see Ryū Sakuma, "Ganjin," in *Shapers of Japanese Buddhism*, edited by Yūsen Kashiwahara and Kōyū Sonoda (Tokyo: Kōsei Publishing, 1994): 20-21 and Ryūichi Abé, *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999): 76-77.

⁸ Whereas *vinaya* precepts developed in India prior to the Mahāyāna branch developing, the bodhisattva precepts were created within Mahāyāna settings; as Mahāyāna teachings and ethics were dominant throughout much of East Asia, including Saichō's own Tendai (天台) school of Buddhism, arguably the bodhisattva precepts were more applicable to Saichō and his followers.

⁹ As was noted in chapter 1, Saichō was trained by one of Daoxuan's (道璿 Dōsen; 699-757) top disciples, Gyōhyō (行表; 724-797), and so Saichō may have been more prone to promote his lineage via Daoxuan as opposed to Jianzhen. However, Jianzhen also introduced early Tiantai teachings to Japan, where it became known as Tendai. Even though the dedicated study of Tendai would not truly become established until after Saichō returned from China, Jianzhen's disciples had nonetheless planted early seeds. As such, Saichō was not necessarily looking to separate himself from Jianzhen's lineage. Paul Groner, *Saichō: The Establishment of the Japanese Tendai School* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2000): 7.

One of the central themes of this chapter will be that the historical importance of Jianzhen and Saichō's innovations has led to a common presumption within academic scholarship that the precepts master solicitation was undertaken with these outcomes in mind. Even though the *risshi shōsei* also resulted in a precepts master named Daoxuan (道璿 *Dōsen*; 699-757) relocating to Japan eighteen years prior to Jianzhen, Daoxuan's contributions are often dismissed as having been ineffective simply because he did not implement ordination changes that were comparable to those institutionalized by Jianzhen.¹⁰ This perspective can be traced even as far back as the medieval historian monk Gyōnen (凝然; 1240-1321), who asserted that Daoxuan had been powerless to perform *vinaya*-based ordinations before Jianzhen because Japan did not have enough fully ordained monks to preside over the ordination ceremonies.¹¹

In a similar vein, Gyōnen also asserted that Japan's first monastics had to go to the Korean kingdom of Paekche to receive the precepts because, "the various conditions [for bestowing precepts] were incomplete,"¹² meaning that Japan lacked an oversight body consisting of a quorum of ten fully ordained monks. We see the same explanation in the *Circumstances Leading to the Founding of the Monastery Complex of Gangōji and a List of its Accumulated Treasures* (元興寺伽藍縁起并流記資財帳 *Gangōji garan engi narabi ruki shizaichō*), hereafter *Gangōji garan engi* (元興寺伽藍縁起). While the text's postscript dates its compilation to 747, I adopt Yoshida

¹⁰ Dorothy Wong, "Jianzhen (Ganjin)," in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. II (Leiden: Brill, 2019): 572; Bingenheimer, part 1, 169-170 n22; Marcus Bingenheimer, *A Biographical Dictionary of the Japanese Student-monks of the Seventh and Early Eighth Centuries: Their Travels to China and Their Role in the Transmission of Buddhism* (München: Iudicium, 2001): 60; Yuzhi Zhou, "Ganjin: From Vinaya Master to Ritsu School Founder," *Journal of Asian Humanities at Kyushu University* 1 (March, 2016): 49, 51.

¹¹ Leo M. Pruden, *The Essentials of the Vinaya Tradition by Gyōnen*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 97-I (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995): 124.

¹² Pruden, *Vinaya Tradition*, 123.

Kazuhiko's (吉田一彦) argument that this work likely dates to the early ninth century with later revisions in the eleventh and twelfth century.¹³ As with Gyōnen, this text states that attempts to establish an ordination tradition in Japan failed due to a lack of ten fully ordained monks,¹⁴ requiring Japan's earliest monastics go to Paekche to be ordained.

This emphasis on an insufficient number of fully ordained monks¹⁵ to oversee ordinations remains to this day the predominant explanation for not only the lack of changes during Daoxuan's tenure as Japan's only precepts master, but also as the fundamental reason for setting out to find a precepts master in the first place.¹⁶ As summarized by Richard Bowring: "Strictly speaking... no one in Japan had ever been ordained correctly because the regulations clearly stated that for an ordination to be valid ten fully ordained members had to be present... In theory, therefore, one

¹³ Kazuhiko Yoshida, "The Credibility of the *Gangōji engi*," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 42, no. 1 (2015): 89–107. I see evidence of this later creation in the passage involving Japan's earliest monastics. In this case, the fact that Japan did not have a precepts master (戒師 *kaishi*) or enough ordained monks was the reason given why Japan's first three monks asked to go to Paekche for ordination. However, this passage conflates two types of precepts by applying the requirements for receiving *vinaya* precepts with taking *śīla* precepts, the difference between which will be explained in more detail below. I suspect this usage reflects a post-Jianzhen, ninth-century mentality towards ordinations, as opposed to the period between Daoxuan and Jianzhen's arrivals when the text is supposed to have been written.

¹⁴ Technically, they were lacking twenty fully ordained monastics. This early community involved three nuns, whose ordinations required quorums of ten nuns and ten monks. In the *Gangōji garan engi*, it was the lack of monks that was specifically pointed out as the main problem, although the nuns themselves noted that even when bringing in six fully ordained monks from Paekche, they were well below the needed twenty.

¹⁵ In other words, monks and nuns who had themselves been through an ordination ceremony overseen by ten fully ordained monks or nuns.

¹⁶ See, for example, Kojima Yasuko 小島 裕子 "Daibutsu o kaigen shita Bodaisenna: Nihon bunka no naka ni kōchiku sareta 'Indo'" 仏を開眼した菩提僊那(ボーディセーナ): 本文化の中に構築された「印度」, *Tsurumi daigaku bukkyō bunka kenkyū kiyō* 24 (March 2019): 227; Ishida Mizumaro 石田瑞麻, *Ganjin: sono kairitsu shisō* 鑑真: その戒律思想 (Tokyo: Daizō Shuppan, 1974): 145; Yoshikawa Shinji 吉川 真司 "Tenpyō bunkaron" 天平文化論, in *Iwanami kōza Nihon rekishi* 岩波講座日本歴史 No. 3 *Kodai* 古代 3 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2014): 234; Minowa Kenryō, "The Movement for the Revival of the Precepts by the Ritsu School in Medieval Japan," translated by Elisabetta Porcu, *The Eastern Buddhist*, 39, No. 2 (2008): 127; Groner, Saichō, 6; Florin Deleanu, "Transmission and Creation: Ordinations for Nuns in Ancient and Early Mediaeval Japan," *Kokuritsu bukkyōgaku daigakuin daigaku kenkyū kiyō* 14 (2010): 38; Zhou, 49.

could argue that the whole Buddhist enterprise in Japan was illegitimate.”¹⁷ It can be interpreted that what Jianzhen brought was not only structure and organization, but also orthodoxy and legitimacy.

This stated need for ten fully ordained monks relates to the Three Masters and Seven Witnesses (三師七証 *sanshi shichishō*) system for *vinaya*-based ordinations.¹⁸ This required that three of the members overseeing the ceremony functioned respectively as: (1) precepts master (戒和尚 *kaiwajō*), who would guide initiates through the process; (2) reciting master (羯摩師 *katsumashi*), who was in charge of the actual professing of the precepts; and (3) instructional master (教授師 *kyōjushi*), who would speak of the novice’s suitability for advancing to the rank of full monk or nun.¹⁹ The other seven acted as witnesses. However, the only full monks and nuns in eighth-century Japan either came from overseas or were numbered among the small group of Japanese monks or nuns who had undergone ordination in China or Korea and returned. According to this prevailing argument, it was unlikely that there were ten of these fully ordained monks or

¹⁷ Bowring, Richard. *The Religious Traditions of Japan, 500-1600* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005): 86.

¹⁸ The Three Masters and Seven Witnesses requirement for monastic ordinations is not actually in the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* itself, which is the version of the *vinaya* that Jianzhen promoted in Japan. Hirakawa Akira states that it only appears in a commentary on the *Sarvastivada Vinaya*, the *Sarvāstivāda-vinaya-vibhāṣā* (薩婆多毘尼毘婆沙 *Satsubata bini bibasha*), the Chinese version of which dates to the fourth century. Hirakawa Akira 平川彰, *Genshi bukkyō no kenkyū: kyōdan soshiki no genkei 原始仏教の研究: 教団組織の原型* (Tokyo: Shunjūsha, 1964): 465. Despite the fact that the requirement is not explicitly stated in the *vinaya* text, this was likely a known system at the time of the *risshi shōsei*, as evidenced in its mention in *The Edited Biography of Daoxuan wajō* (道璿和上伝纂 *Dōsen wajō densan*) in Appendix C. For a detailed list of which *vinaya* do and do not specify numbers of monks and nuns required for ordinations, see Ann Heirman, “Chinese Nuns and Their Ordination in Fifth Century China,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* Vol. 24, No. 2 (2001): 294-295 n.88-89. For more on the Three Masters and Seven Witnesses system in relation to ordination ceremonies, see Hirakawa, *Genshi bukkyō*, 465-478.

¹⁹ It should be noted that Japan’s nuns did not have a fully comparable ordination system, although there were attempts at conducting state ordinations for nuns using Jianzhen’s quorum of ten fully ordained monks. For more on Japanese nun ordinations, see Paul Groner, “Vicissitudes in the Ordination of Japanese ‘Nuns’ during the Eighth through the Tenth Centuries,” in *Engendering Faith: Women and Buddhism in Premodern Japan*, edited by Barbara Ruch (Ann Arbor, Mich: Center for Japanese Studies, University of Michigan, 2002): 65-108 and Deleanu, *Transmission and Creation*, 1-99.

nuns in Japan at one time and in the same location to oversee ordinations, thereby raising the question of whether any of Japan's monastic population had ever been properly ordained if they had never left the country.²⁰

In contrast to this viewpoint, when we look at the actual documents related to the precepts master solicitation, they neither mention needing more fully ordained monks, nor do they give any indication of anxiety over the status of Japan's monks. The prevailing scholarship on the *risshi shōsei* also fails to account for the multiple categories of precepts available in Japan at this time. Instead, there is a commonly held, though tacit, presumption that since Jianzhen was a specialist in *vinaya* precepts, that was the only form of precepts in which the Japanese court and monastic population were interested.

In the pages that follow, I will argue that although the *vinaya* precepts were certainly an important part of this campaign, the primary sources contain multiple references to wanting an individual capable of conveying precepts (伝戒人 *denkaijin*), indicating a different motivation. I will suggest that the intention behind the precepts master solicitation was to find a person in a position of authority who was credentialled to oversee ordination ceremonies, regardless of the type of precepts employed. Considering the difficulties created by unauthorized and self-ordained

²⁰ I have my doubts that there were not at least ten fully ordained monks in Japan at any one given time prior to Jianzhen's arrival. Of the overseas monks appearing elsewhere in this work, Daoxuan, Bodhisena (菩提僊那 *Bodaisenna*; 704-760), Phât Triệt (仏哲, alt. 仏徹 *Buttetsu*; fl. 736), and Simsang (審祥, alt. 審詳 *Shinjō*; d. ca. 751) would have received a *vinaya*-based ordination prior to arriving in Japan. So too would Bodhisena's Chinese disciple Xiurong (修榮 *Shūei*; fl. 770). In addition to these five, the Japanese monks who studied overseas also would have likely been ordained in China, including Dōji (道慈; d. 744) and Genbō (玄昉, d. 746). In looking at Marcus Bingenheimer's biography of Japanese scholar monks (留学僧 *ryūgakusō*) who went overseas to study, several could have returned from earlier missions in time to have comprised to remaining three needed members. Moreover, there were likely other overseas monks as well as returned scholar monks whose names were not preserved in written records. At the very least, among the Daijōji overseas monks and Xiurong alone, they met the exception for rural areas of only needing five fully ordained monks to conduct *vinaya*-based ordinations. For more on Japan's scholar monks, see Bingenheimer, *Biographical Dictionary*. See also Tōno Haruyuki 東野治之 *Kentōshi* 遣唐使 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2007): 1-18.

monks and the use of less stringent bodhisattva precepts in the ordination process, the Japanese court had a vested interest in formalizing the manner by which approved individuals took the tonsure. Additionally, in light of the 733 envoy's broader mission to transport overseas specialists, as discussed in chapter 1, we must look less at the type of precepts and more on the role of the individual being solicited.

3.1 Chapter Overview

In this chapter, my purpose is to view the precepts master solicitation within the context that it took place and not through the lens of Jianzhen's and Saichō's later actions. To do this, I focus on eighth-century documents depicting the event as well as texts predating the *risshi shōsei* that indicate how the eighth-century Japanese court used and understood the concept of "precepts." In doing so, two notable themes emerge: (1) the emphasis in the primary sources is on the actions of "transmitting precepts" (伝戒 *denkai*) and "receiving precepts" (受戒 *jukai*), rather than establishing a purely-*vinaya* based ordination, and (2) the form of precepts referenced is ambiguous. While *vinaya* precepts are certainly mentioned, so is a broader category that relates to ethical behavior, known as *sīla* (戒 *kai*). When placed in conversation with other eighth-century texts, these references provide insight into how precepts were understood in relation to monastic behavior and oversight.

In order to understand the precepts master solicitation, it is essential to know what types of precepts were available to Japanese monks and nuns at this time, and how they functioned in different settings, for different stages of renunciation, and for different purposes. While the categories are not mutually exclusive, they nonetheless have their own, distinct roles. As will be seen in the texts themselves, the terminology was not restricted to *vinaya* alone. To that end, I provide a breakdown of the three different types of precepts referenced here.

Once we examine when and where the logographic characters for the different types of precepts were used in these eighth-century documents, it becomes possible to show that there was a clear correlation between *vinaya* and monastic behavior that demonstrates how the Japanese government sought to regulate and control the monastic population. Considering that the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, or *Sōgō* (僧綱), was typically populated by overseas monks or Japanese monks who had lived overseas, this examination of precepts and behavior also provides deeper insight into how the Daianji overseas monks themselves were perceived.

3.2 Review of Sources

In reviewing the precepts master solicitation, the four relevant sources²¹ are: (1) the above quoted passage from the temple record *Tōdaiji yōroku* (東大寺要録), which, while compiled in 1106, the passage in question indicates evidence of an earlier origin;²² (2) the court record *Shoku nihongi* (続日本紀), which was fully compiled in 797;²³ (3) the collection of monk and notable

²¹ For a side-by-side comparison of these four texts, see Naobayashi Futai 直林不退, “Nihon kodai no kairitsu juyō” 日本古代の戒律受容 *Indogaku bukkyōgaku kenkyū* 37, no. 1 (December, 1988): 310-312.

²² The *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s composition took place in three parts: in 1106 by an unknown monk, in 1134 by the monk Kangen (観嚴; fl. 1134), and finally by the monk Kanjō (寛乗; 1219-1291) in 1241. The material related to the *risshi shōsei* is among the earliest documents included in the 1106 compilation. As discussed below, when viewed in comparison with the other *risshi shōsei* texts, it is clear that the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account either quotes or builds upon far earlier material. For more on the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s history and research on its formulation, see Sakaehara Towao 栄原永遠男, “‘Tōdaiji yōroku’ no gen kōzō” 『東大寺要録』の原構造, in *Kodai Tōdaiji no sekai: Tōdaiji yōroku o yominaosu* 古代東大寺の世界：『東大寺要録』を読み直す. The Great Buddha Symposium 14 (Nara: Tōdaiji Temple, 2017): 7-36.

²³ For more on the *Shoku nihongi* and its composition, see Sakamoto Tarō, *The Six National Histories of Japan*, translated by John S. Brownlee (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1991): 90-122. In this work, I am using *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 2, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 13, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1990) and *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 3, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikei* 新日本古典文学大系 14, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 1992).

Buddhist believers' biographies *Enryaku sōroku* (延暦僧録) from 788;²⁴ and (4) and the famous narrative tracing Jianzhen's travels to Japan, the *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden* (唐大和上東征伝), hereafter *Tōseiden*, which was completed in 779.²⁵ As discussed below, these works were all created within the same literary family, and therefore their corresponding details could be evidence of their shared source rather than indicative of a broader understanding of precepts during this time. Nonetheless, they provide valuable insight into what role precepts did and did not portray in these accounts of the *risshi shōsei*.

In addition to these four sources, I also look at three episodes where precepts were mentioned in Japan's first court history, the *Nihon shoki* (日本書紀).²⁶ This work's compilation date of 720 predates the *risshi shōsei* and provides insight into how different forms of precepts were understood at the beginning of the eighth century. Another source that predates the *risshi shōsei* and provides insight into the role of precepts at this time is "Rules for Monks and Nuns," *Sōniryō* (僧尼令).²⁷ This work also dates to the early eighth century and indicates influence from

²⁴ The *Enryaku sōroku* is largely lost, but some passages were preserved in the *Nihon kōsōden yōmonshō* (日本高僧伝要文抄). See Kuranaka Shinobu 藏中しのぶ, ed., *Enryaku sōroku chūshaku* 延暦僧録注釈. (Tokyo: Daitō Bunka Daigaku Tōyō Kenkyūjo, 2008).

²⁵ The version used here is "Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden" 唐大和上東征傳 in *Gunshō Ruijū* 群書類従 5, no. 69, (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kaiseikai, 1997): 527-543. For English translation, see Marcus Bingenheimer, "A Translation of the *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden* 唐大和尚東征傳 [T. 2089 (7)]," part 1, *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 4 (2003): 161-189 and Marcus Bingenheimer, "A Translation of the *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden* 唐大和尚東征傳 [T. 2089 (7)]," part 2, *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 5 (2004): 143-181. There is also a well known French version. J. Takakusu, trans. "Le Voyage de Kanshin en Orient (724-754)," *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 28, no. 1 (1928): 1-41.

²⁶ In this work, I use Sakamoto Tarō 坂本太郎, Ienaga Saburō 家永三郎, Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞, and Ōno Susumu 大野晋, ed., *Nihon shoki* 日本書紀 4 (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2011). For English version, see Aston, W. G., trans. *Nihongi: Chronicles of Japan From the Earliest Times to A.D. 697* 1 and 2 (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Company, 1972).

²⁷ It is not clear when the *Sōniryō* was written. However, it was part of the *Yōrō* Administrative Code (養老律令 *Yōrō ritsuryō*), which was released in 717. Additionally, the *Shoku nihongi* states that a code for monks and nuns (僧尼令 *sōniryō*) was read at Daianji in 701, which is widely suspected to be either this version of the *Sōniryō* or its predecessor. *Shoku nihongi* 続日本紀 1, ed. Aoki Kazuo 青木和夫, Inaoka Kōji 稲岡耕二, Sasayama Haruo 笹山晴生, Shirafuji Noriyuki 白藤禮幸, in *Shin Nihon koten bungaku taikai* 新日本古典文学大系 12, (Tokyo: Iwanami shoten,

vinaya precepts in its organization and list of stipulations for monastic behavior and corresponding punishments for violations.²⁸

3.3 Defining Precepts

In order to consider how *vinaya* precepts are portrayed in early eighth-century texts, it is important to establish what is meant by the expansive term “precepts.” The topic’s complexity is not aided by the fact that the same English term is used to refer to the two separate but overlapping categories of *śīla* (戒 *kai*) and *vinaya* (律 *ritsu*).²⁹ The Chinese and Japanese collective term for precepts, respectively pronounced *jielü* and *kairitsu* (戒律), is composed of characters referring to these two distinct categories. However, it is notable that this *śīla-vinaya* compound does not exist in Sanskrit,³⁰ meaning that this term reflects East Asian usage and is not a direct translation from an Indian text. According to precepts scholar Mori Shōji (森章司), the linguistic roots for *śīla* and *vinaya* respectively relate to doing positive, moral actions for the former and to discipline and rules

1989): 40-41, As such, the text was likely developed prior to 701 or at least by 717. For an overview on scholarly research on the *Sōniryō*, see Abé, 28-30. In this work, I use Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞 et al. “Sōniryō 僧尼令,” in *Ritsuryō 律令 Nihon shisō taikai 日本思想大系 3* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1976): 216-223. For English versions, see Bowring, 55-58 and George Sansom, “Early Japanese Law and Administration (Part II),” *Transactions of the Asiatic Society of Japan*, second series, 11 (1934): 127-134. Joan Piggott has also created English translation as part of the University of Southern California *Ritsuryō* Translation Project. <https://dornsife.usc.edu/ppjs/ritsuryo-translation-project/>. Piggott, Joan trans. “The Yōrō Ritsuryō Sōniryō: Laws on Monks and Nuns.” https://dornsife.usc.edu/assets/sites/63/docs/Ritsuryo_Soniryo-Piggott.pdf.

²⁸ See Mori Shōji 森章司, “‘Sōniryō’ to Bukkyō no kairitsu (ichi)” 『僧尼令』と仏教の戒律 (一). *Ōkurayama ronshū*, 19 (March, 1986): 165-186.

²⁹ For a succinct summary of different meanings behind “precepts” and how they apply to the Buddhist community, see Minowa, 126.

³⁰ Shayne Clarke, “Buddhist Monastic Law Codes (Vinaya) and Commentaries from India” (lecture, The Tianzhu Global Network for the Study of Buddhist Cultures, From the Ground Up: Buddhism and East Asian Religions (FROGBEAR) 2020 International and Intensive Program on Buddhism with McMaster University conference series, online, August 2, 2020).

for the latter. In sum, the distinction between these two categories is one between “ethics” and “law.”³¹

Precepts also vary depending upon the type of Buddhist practitioner and their purpose for taking precepts.³² For example, monastic codes from *vinaya* texts are restricted to fully ordained monks and nuns, whereas *śīla* generally apply to all Buddhist practitioners. However, there are different types of *śīla* depending on whether one is a novice initiate, a probationary nun, or a member of the lay community. A third precept category considered here is the previously mentioned bodhisattva precepts, which to some extent overlaps the previous two types of precepts. Bodhisattva precepts can either apply to all Mahāyāna Buddhist practitioners or are divided between lay and monastic communities depending upon the text. While they were not intended for the same purpose as the *vinaya*, they nonetheless ultimately supplanted *vinaya* precepts in Japan as the primary source for monastic ordinations. In order to provide a clear understanding of how these categories of precepts overlap or are distinguished from one another, below is a brief overview, with the caveat that these descriptions are intentionally simplistic and reflect neither all Buddhist communities nor all time periods.

3.3.1 Lay Precepts (*śīla*)

The first type of precepts considered here are those falling within the *śīla* category, respectively represented in Chinese and Japanese as *jie* and *kai* (戒). These are commonly referred to as the “lay precepts,” although this term insufficiently covers the full range and use of these

³¹ Mori Shōji 森章司, “Kairitsu gaisetsu” 戒律概説, in *Kairitsu no Sekai* 戒律の世界, edited by Mori Shōji (Tokyo: Keiuissha, 1993): 5-60. See also Abé, 48.

³² The seven ranks of Buddhist practitioner are: (1) monks (bhikṣu, 比丘), (2) nuns (bhikṣuṇī 比丘尼), (3) novice monks (śrāmaṇera 沙彌), (4) novice nuns (śrāmaṇerikā 沙彌尼), (5) probationary nuns (śikṣamāṇā 式叉摩那), (6) male lay practitioners (upāsaka 優婆塞), and (7) female lay practitioners (upāsikā 優婆夷). *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Śikṣamāṇā,” 819-820.

types of precepts, since certain sets within this category also apply to monk and nun initiates, probationary nuns,³³ and lay practitioners taking on temporary monastic orders. Nonetheless, it is useful to categorize these precepts together, due both to their similarity in rules and the use of the *jie/kai* character.

The most fundamental level of lay precepts is the Five Precepts (Sk. *pañcasīla*; Jp. 五戒 *gokai*), which prohibit the following five activities: (1) killing living beings (especially humans); (2) stealing; (3) sexual misconduct (or sex in general, for temporary monastics and novices); (4) lying (particularly with regard to advancement in Buddhist practice or developing supernatural powers); and (5) imbibing intoxicants.³⁴ These basic rules for moral actions are intended to help support and guide practitioners on their paths to spiritual enlightenment. Since these precepts require no advanced level of moral training or renunciation, they are equally applicable to all Buddhist practitioners, from the lay population to fully ordained monastics.

The Five Precepts function as a foundation upon which additional codes of conduct can be added, including those for novices, full monks or nuns, and Mahāyāna Buddhists aiming to become bodhisattvas. Lay practitioners have the opportunity to take a temporary renunciation during semi-monthly ceremonies of confession and repentance that coincide with new and full moon periods. In this case, they keep an additional three rules that eschew luxuries and worldly distractions, namely: (6) eating except when appropriate; (7) dancing, singing, attending performances, or applying ornamentation and perfumes to the body; and (8) sleeping in luxurious beds.³⁵

³³ For more on nun ordinations, see Ann Heirman, “Some Remarks on the Rise of the *bhikṣuṇīsamgha* and on the Ordination Ceremony for *bhikṣuṇīs* According to the Dharmaguptaka *Vinaya*,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 20, no. 2 (1997): 33-85.

³⁴ See chart at the end of this section comparing different stages of lay and bodhisattva precepts.

³⁵ *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Pañcaśīla,” 616-617.

These Eight Precepts (Sk. *aṣṭāṅgaśīla*; Jp. 八戒 *hakkai*) functionally transform the layperson into a monk or nun for the period of time during which they are being followed, and they greatly resemble the Ten Precepts (Sk. *daśaśīla*; Jp. 十戒 *jikkai*) that novice monks or nuns promise to keep. To transform the Eight Precepts for temporary renunciants into the Ten Precepts for monastic neophytes, the sixth precept is the same, the seventh is divided into two separate prohibitions against musical performances and self-ornamentation, the eighth precept moves into the ninth position, and a new rule against handling money is added at the end.³⁶ Between novice and full ordinations, there is also a two-year period for probationary nuns (Sk. *śikṣamānā*; Jp. 式叉摩那 *shikisamana*). In this case, they are obligated to follow the first six of the Ten Precepts.³⁷

These *śīla* also play a role in Buddhist practitioners' public declaration of their intention to follow the Buddhist path by taking refuge in the Three Treasures (三宝 *sanbō*), meaning the Buddha, Buddhist teachings (*dharma*), and the Buddhist community (*sangha*). After the declaration, a teacher recites each of the Five Precepts and asks if the ordinands are capable of observing them. For those joining monastic communities as novices, this initial ceremony of refuge is repeated after they shave their heads and don monastic robes. The ceremony then transitions to one of renunciation, where the teacher three times confirms the initiate's intention to follow the Ten Precepts and his or her ability to follow each of the regulations.³⁸ As such, while the *śīla* are

³⁶ *ibid*, 617.

³⁷ The two-year probationary period for nuns is one of eight conditions (Sk. *gurudharma*) the Buddha instituted in order for women to be accepted into the Buddhist order. The conditions, often called the "deferential rules" place the nuns in a position of subservience to monks. *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "Gurudharma," 339.

³⁸ Sylvie Hureau provides a detailed description of historical renunciation ceremonies in China. Sylvie Hureau, "Buddhist Rituals," in *Early Chinese Religion Part Two: The Period of Division (220-589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerway and Lü Pengzhi. Volume 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 1207-1244, especially pages 1209-1212.

connected to ethics and appropriate behavior for lay practitioners and initiates, they are also a featured part of initiation ceremonies in a manner that is similar to the *vinaya* precepts.

3.3.2 Monastic Precepts (*vinaya*)

Upon advancing to the rank of full monk or nun, novices promise to follow a much more involved and advanced set of guidelines that are specific to monastics. This second set of precepts, known respectively in Chinese and Japanese as *lǜ* and *ritsu* (律) are drawn from *vinaya* texts. As summarized by Gregory Schopen, these are, “the body of teachings and texts that tell the ordained follower of the Buddha how he or she should or must behave.”³⁹ The *vinaya*, or *Vinaya Piṭaka*, makes up one of the three sections of collected Buddhist teachings (Sk. *Tripitaka*; Jp. 三藏 *sanzō*). The core section of the *vinaya* texts that relate to monastic behavior is the *pratimokṣa* (波羅提木叉 *haradaimokusha*), with separate sets for monks and nuns.⁴⁰ In addition to accounting for forbidden actions — such as sexual intercourse, murder, or stealing — there are also rules for appropriate items and actions related to daily life, including clothing, furniture, interpersonal relationships, temple operations, and etiquette. The *vinaya* also has a legal function, as it contains the requisite consequence for breaking each precept. These penalties can vary from penitential actions to expulsion.⁴¹

³⁹ Gregory Schopen, “Vinaya,” in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (New York: MacMillan, 2004): 885.

⁴⁰ The other two are the *Sutra Piṭaka*, and the *Abhidharma Piṭaka*. The first is composed of the teachings and texts, generally just referenced as sutras, ascribed to the Buddha and his earliest followers. The *Abhidharma Piṭaka* is largely made up of the Buddha’s answers to questions and events from his community. Kevin Trainor notes that the *Abhidharma* is abstract and could be considered to be “an attempt to express what the world looks like from the perspective of one who has gained perfect enlightenment.” Kevin Trainor, “The Abhidhamma Piṭaka,” in *Buddhism: The Illustrated Guide* (London: Duncan Baird Publishers, 2004): 192.

⁴¹ For more on the layout, sections, and purpose of the *vinaya*, see Clarke. See also Susan Andrews, Jinhua Chen, and Cuilan Liu, eds., *Rules of Engagement: Medieval Traditions of Buddhist Monastic Regulations* (Bochum and Freiburg: projektverlag, 2017); Rebecca Redwood French and Mark A. Nathan, eds. *Buddhism and Law: An Introduction*

There were likely *vinaya* associated with each of the eighteen to twenty Buddhist groups that developed in India, but only six are extant today, with three still in regular use among Theravāda, Tibetan, and East Asian Buddhist congregations.⁴² Although there is notable variation regarding precepts among these texts involving the number of rules, sequential order, and terminology or translation choices, the *pratimokṣa* by and large coincide in terms of content.⁴³ In all extant *vinaya*, the number of codes for nuns far exceeds those for monks, which partially served to establish a hierarchical difference between the groups, with nuns subordinate to monks, regardless of rank.⁴⁴

The *vinaya* text at the heart of this study is the one that developed within the Dharmaguptaka Buddhist community.⁴⁵ Commonly referred to by its Chinese name of *Sifen lü* (四分律 *shibun ritsu*), or “Four Part Precepts,” the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*’s Chinese translation is attributed to the Kashmiri monk Buddhayaśas (佛陀耶舍 *Buddayasha*; ca. 5th century CE) in the year 405. The Chinese and English titles refer the text’s organization into four sections, with the first two parts dedicated to the monk and nun *pratimokṣa* and the latter two comprised of additional

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); and William A. Bodiford, ed., *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005).

⁴² The six remaining *vinaya* have been termed the Theravāda (alternatively known as the Pali), the Dharmaguptaka, the Mahīśāsaka, the Sarvāstivāda, the Mūlasarvāstivāda, and the Mahāsāṃghika after their associated schools. The Theravāda, Dharmaguptaka, and Mūlasarvāstivāda are still in use among Theravāda, East Asian, and Tibetan Buddhist communities (respectively). Clarke, 60. One notable exception is Japan, where the Dharmaguptaka was largely rejected in favor of bodhisattva precepts and did not become as established as in other East Asian countries.

⁴³ *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Prātimokṣa,” 667.

⁴⁴ For example, the *Theravāda Vinaya*, used among the Theravāda school predominantly in Southeast Asia, involves 227 rules for monks and 311 rules for nuns. The *Mūlasaravāstivāda Vinaya*, used in Tibetan Buddhism, has 258 rules for monks and 354 for nuns. Mahāyāna Buddhist Schools in East Asia, with the general exception of Japan, uses the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, which includes 250 for monks and 348 for nuns. For a breakdown of all categories of rules across extant versions of *vinaya* texts, see Clarke, 62.

⁴⁵ For more on this group, see Ann Heirman, “Can We Trace the Early Dharmaguptakas?” *T’oung Pao*, Vol. 88, 4/5 (2002): 396-429.

discussions on offenses and punishments, regulations on goods and behavior, conflict resolution, technical terminology, and more.⁴⁶ The *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* gained prominence over other present *vinaya* texts in seventh-century China, ultimately resulting in its becoming not only the standard, but also the required text for monastic ordinations in China by the beginning of the eighth century.⁴⁷

In addition to providing clear lists of prohibited behaviors and subsequent consequences, the *pratimokṣa* is also featured in two key ceremonial activities: ordinations and confessions. As noted above, the laity have the option to take a temporary renunciation twice a month during the full and new moon confessional *upoṣadha* (布薩 *fusatsu*) retreats. However, neither laypeople nor novices are permitted to attend the monastic confessional ceremonies. During these times, fully ordained monks and nuns assemble within a specially demarcated location referred to as a *sīmā* (結界 *kekai*), confess their transgressions, and recite their respective *pratimokṣas*. These ceremonies serve to purify and reconfirm the assembly's commitment to moral behavior and maintaining these codes of conduct.⁴⁸

The *sīmā* also features in ordination ceremonies (Sk. *upasampadā*; Jp. *jukai* 受戒), wherein novices ascend to the ranks of fully ordained monks and nuns.⁴⁹ In Central Asia, the *sīmā*

⁴⁶ For a general breakdown of the four sections, see *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Sifen lü,” 817.

⁴⁷ Ann Heirman, “Buddhist Nuns Through the Eyes of the Leading Early Tang Masters,” *The Chinese Historical Review* 22. no. 1 (May, 2015): 33 and Ann Heirman, “Can we Trace the Early Dharmaguptakas?” *T’oung Pao* 88 (2002): 419–423. See also Ann Heirman, “*Vinaya*: From India to China” in *The Spread of Buddhism*, edited by Ann Heirman and Stephan Peter Bumbaucher, 167–202. Leiden: Brill, 2007.

⁴⁸ *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Upoṣadha,” 943–944.

⁴⁹ For brief explanation of *sīmā*, see *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Sīmā,” 824. John McRae points out that this raised platform version of a *sīmā* essentially became a memorial to and embodiment of the Buddha (Sk. *caitya*), similar to a stupa or relic. John R. McRae, “Daoxuan’s Vision of Jetavana: The Ordination Platform Movement in Medieval Chinese Buddhism,” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, ed. William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2005): 617. McRae also provides an overview of Buddhist ordination

developed into a raised ordination platform, which was also transmitted to China by the fifth century.⁵⁰ This ordination platform came to have additional relevance through the writings of renowned *vinaya* proponent Daoxuan (道宣 *Dōsen*; 596–667), not to be confused with the precepts master Daoxuan who traveled to Japan in the mid-eighth century and lived at Daianji.⁵¹ Based upon his vision of the historical Buddha’s ordination setting at the Jetavana Monastery in India, the *vinaya* master Daoxuan promoted the concept of using a raised platform as a *sīmā*, which ultimately spread throughout much of East Asia.⁵² Daoxuan is also largely responsible for the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*’s increased prominence throughout the seventh century, and his various commentaries on the text likely contributed to the work’s eventual designation as the required *vinaya* to be used for monastic ordinations throughout China. As a member of his lineage, Jianzhen transmitted the *vinaya* master Daoxuan’s understanding of this text and his views on ordination ceremonies to Japan. As such, the ordination platforms established by Jianzhen can be seen as direct successors to the earlier Daoxuan’s reimagining of the *sīmā*.

In addition to establishing ordination platforms, Jianzhen also provided another crucial element necessary to hold a *vinaya*-based ordination ceremony: fully ordained monks. As was mentioned above, Gyōnen’s explanation for the *risshi shōsei* is that Japan had not met internal conditions for holding official ordination ceremonies due to a lack of fully ordained monks.⁵³ This

practices in this same section, pages 614-618. See also the forthcoming book, Jason A. Carbine and Erik W. David, ed., *Sīmās: Foundations of Buddhist Religion* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 2022).

⁵⁰ Hureau, “Buddhist Rituals,” 1212.

⁵¹ In cases where it is not clear by context to which Daoxuan I am referring, I identify them as either the *vinaya* master Daoxuan, meaning the one who contributed to popularizing the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, and precepts master Daoxuan, meaning the eighth-century monk who lived in Daianji.

⁵² See McRae, 68-100.

⁵³ Green and Mun, 146.

requirement revolves around the paradox that only fully ordained monks and nuns could preside over the ceremony to appoint additional fully ordained monks and nuns, with no explanation of how to initiate or restart an ordination lineage. For Jianzhen to implement a sustainable *vinaya*-based ordination lineage, he needed to have at least enough fully ordained monks with him to establish a viable generation of full monks to initiate and maintain this tradition. However, as will be seen, Jianzhen's first recorded ordination ceremony in Japan did not involve the *vinaya* at all, but rather used bodhisattva precepts.

3.3.3 Bodhisattva Precepts

In addition to the *śīla* and *vinaya*, there was another set of precepts known as the bodhisattva precepts, which were circulating throughout East Asia and which in some ways complemented and in other ways competed with the *vinaya pratimokṣa*.⁵⁴ As with lay precepts, these are represented by the *jie* or *kai* character (戒), and they similarly could apply to lay or monastic Buddhists. Unlike the *vinaya*, the bodhisattva precepts developed within Mahāyāna Buddhist communities, and they were intended for those practitioners striving to become bodhisattvas.⁵⁵ As such, they had a different goal from the *vinaya*, which listed codes of conduct and administrative guidelines for monastic populations. The comparative ease, accessibility, and suitability of the bodhisattva precepts to East Asian Buddhist communities resulted in these sets

⁵⁴ For more on the bodhisattva precepts, including additional sources and variations, see Paul Demiéville, ed., "Bosatsukai" *Hôbôgirin Dictionnaire Encyclopédique du Bouddhisme d'après les Sources Chinoises et Japonaises*, 2 (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1982): 142-147.

⁵⁵ While sometimes loosely translated as "Buddhist saints," bodhisattvas are individuals who have attained enlightenment and thereby have the ability to become buddhas in their own right; however, as a reflection of their great compassion, they choose not to advance to buddhahood in order to act as intercessors for those still struggling with their spiritual development as well as facing trials and tribulations in their daily lives. The exact method to becoming a bodhisattva can vary among Mahāyāna texts, but several include not only the precise stages but also the moral codes by which aspiring bodhisattvas should abide. For a brief overview of some of these texts, see *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "Bodhisattvabhūmi," 134-135.

spreading more broadly and earlier than *vinaya* texts. Moreover, regardless of their original intention, bodhisattva precepts may well have occupied a function similar to the *pratimokṣa* in terms of monastic ordinations in early Japan, as we particularly see with Emperor Shōmu's (聖武天皇 *Shōmu tennō*; 701-756; r. 724-749) renunciation, described below.

Bodhisattva precepts are composed of prohibitions in a manner similar to the *śīla* precepts and *vinaya pratimokṣa*. However, there is a notable focus on not just actions, but also thoughts, speech, and emotions. For example, the set of Ten Good Precepts (Sk. *daśakuśalakarmapatha*; Jp. 十善戒 *jū zenkai* or 十善業 *jū zengō*) shares the same first four prohibitions against killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and lying as the *śīla* precepts listed above. Starting with number 5, however, the prohibitions shift to banning: “(5) speaking divisively; (6) harsh speech; (7) engaging in frivolous prattle; (8) being covetous; (9) being angry; (10) having wrong views.”⁵⁶ While numbers 5-7 expand upon the fourth prohibition against improper speech, numbers 8-10 focus on the practitioner's mentality.⁵⁷

Compared with the *vinaya* texts' lengthy list of actions and consequences, this emphasis upon not only right action, but also right thinking sets the bodhisattva precepts apart from the other types of precepts. While physical transgressions can be observed by others and punished appropriately, emotions and thinking generally cannot, and as such they require an element of self-awareness and self-governance. This difference also reflects the varying purposes and settings for these types of precepts; *vinaya* are intended for a monastic community, whereas bodhisattva precepts are for individuals privately progressing into becoming a buddha or bodhisattva. As such,

⁵⁶ Paul Groner, “The Bodhisattva Precepts,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Buddhist Ethics*, edited by Daniel Cozort and James Mark Shields, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018): 31.

⁵⁷ Groner, “The Bodhisattva Precepts,” 32.

the bodhisattva precepts provide a means for spiritual advancement that is not reliant upon a religious community. Perhaps most importantly, they can apply to anyone on the bodhisattva path, whether monk, nun, or layperson.

While there are multiple versions of bodhisattva precepts, the two most influential sets come from the *Treatise on the Foundation for Yoga Practitioners* (Sk. *Yogācārabhūmi-Śāstra*; Jp. 瑜伽師地論 *Yugashijiron*),⁵⁸ hereafter referred to as the *Foundation Treatise*, and the *Brahma Net Sutra* (Sk. *Brahmajāla Sūtra*; Jp. 梵網經 *Bonmōkyō*).⁵⁹ In the case of the *Foundation Treatise*, this large collection of texts comprises the basis for the Yogācāra School of Buddhism, known in Japanese as Hossō (法相).⁶⁰ This is the Buddhist tradition to which the itinerant engineering monk Gyōki (行基; 668-749) belonged, and was likely the source for the independent ordinations he unlawfully conducted for his followers, as discussed in more detail below.⁶¹

In addition to providing a set of bodhisattva precepts, the Hossō tradition and the *Foundation Treatise* also connected Japan to China's famed pilgrim monk Xuanzang (玄奘 *Genjō*; 602-664), who departed for India in 629 in order to seek out original Sanskrit texts, among them

⁵⁸ T. 1579.30.279–88

⁵⁹ T. 1484.24.997a–1010a. This latter text is widely suspected to be an apocryphal text, meaning that it was created outside of India with a falsified origin story to increase its sense of legitimacy and suitability for use. As such, rather than an applied Sanskrit title *Brahmajāla*, many scholars refer to it by its Chinese title of *Fanwang Jing*. For the sake of consistency, I have elected to use the Sanskrit title.

⁶⁰ Compiled in the fourth century, the *Foundation Treatise* contains numerous Mahāyāna and non-Mahāyāna works, and is a major source for Mahāyāna thinking and ethics. Martin Delhey, "The Yogācārabhūmi Corpus: Sources, Editions, Translations, and Reference Works," in *The Foundation for Yoga Practitioners: The Buddhist Yogācārabhūmi Treatise and its Adaptation in India, East Asia, and Tibet*, edited by Ulrich T. Kragh (Cambridge, Mass, Harvard University Press, 2013): 528.

⁶¹ It is worth noting that Gyōki was not restricted to Hossō practice, as he was also influenced by the Three Stages School 三階教 (*Sangai kyō*). Moreover, Gyōki's role in building public works, such as bridges and roads, reflects his interest in social welfare Buddhism. For more on Gyōki and his connection to social welfare Buddhism, especially as a bodhisattva, see Yoshida Yasuo 吉田靖雄, *Nihon kodai no bosatsu to minshū* 日本古代の菩薩と民衆 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1988): 72-104.

the *Foundation Treatise*. This corpus was among the first texts that the Chinese pilgrim-monk Xuanzang and his translation team — including the previously mentioned *vinaya* master Daoxuan — set to translating into Chinese, completing it in 648. According to Gyōnen, the Japanese scholar monk Dōshō (道昭; 629-700) traveled to China in 653 and studied with Xuanzang.⁶² Dōshō is credited with transporting the *Foundation Treatise* as well as the foundations for the Yogācāra School back to Japan upon his return in 660. Gyōnen also states that he oversaw Gyōki’s ordination in 682, thus providing an ordination lineage connecting Gyōki and his contemporaries with Xuanzang himself.⁶³

Although the *Foundation Treatise* incorporates significant Mahāyāna themes, there are also parts reflecting non-Mahāyāna teachings. This includes the final section titled “Compendium of Topics” (Sk. *Vastusamgraha*; Jp. 攝事 *shōji*), which includes discussion of *vinaya* precepts. Influence from *vinaya* texts is also evident in the *Śīlapaṭala*, “Chapter on Right Conduct,” which is the tenth chapter within the twelfth book in the *Foundation Treatise*, the *Bodhisattva Stages Sutra* (Sk. *Bodhisattvabhūmi sūtra*; Jp. 菩薩地持經 *Bosatsujikyō*).⁶⁴

⁶² Green and Mun, 125-127. The 653 mission took twenty-six scholar monks to China, including Genbō and the courtier Kibi Makibi (吉備真備; 695-775). For more on this campaign, see Bingenheimer, *Japanese Student Monks*, 37-42. For more on Dōshō, see Yoshikawa Shinji 吉川真司 *Asuka no Miyako 飛鳥の都* (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2011): 136-137.

⁶³ Green and Mun, 127. *Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Gyōgi,” 340; “Dōshō,” 267; “Yogācārabhūmiśāstra,” 1034. There is also a lengthy eulogy to Dōshō in the *Nihon shoki* (700.3.10) that outlines his interactions with Xuanzang. Richard Bowring provides an English translation in Bowring, 59-60.

⁶⁴ Martin Delhey notes that this section also functions as one of the primary sources for Mahayana ethics not only in East Asian but also Indo-Tibetan Buddhism. Delhey, 528. For translations on this chapter, see Michael Zimmerman, “The Chapter on Right Conduct in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*” in *The Foundation for Yoga Practitioners: The Buddhist Yogācārabhūmi Treatise and its Adaptation in India, East Asia, and Tibet*, edited by Ulrich Timme Kragh (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013): 872. See also Florin Deleanu, “Meditative Practices in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*: Quest for and Liberation through the Thing-in-Itself,” in *The Foundation for Yoga Practitioners: The Buddhist Yogācārabhūmi Treatise and its Adaptation in India, East Asia, and Tibet*, edited by Ulrich Timme Kragh. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press 2013): 885-886, n3 and n4.

While a detailed evaluation of the entire text is beyond the scope of this work, it is worth looking at how precepts are treated within the “Chapter on Right Conduct.” Precepts are divided into three categories of proper conduct, the so-called “Threefold Pure Precepts” (Sk. *trividhāni śīlāni*; Jp. 三聚淨戒 *sanju jōkai*): (1) *saṃvara śīla*: self-discipline; (2) *kuśaladharmasaṃgrāhaka śīla*: accumulating beneficial actions; and (3) *sattvārthakriyā śīla*: caring for sentient beings.⁶⁵ The first of these refers to the *pratimokṣa* rules for monks and nuns from the *vinaya*, the second to actions leading to enlightenment, and the third to good deeds and salvific behaviors that help fellow humans.⁶⁶ Taking bodhisattva precepts through the Threefold Pure Precepts fulfills the “perfection of morality” (Sk. *śīlapāramitā*; Jp. 戒波羅蜜 *kaiharimitsu*) stage in the path to becoming a bodhisattva.⁶⁷

In addition to this threefold set of precepts, the *Foundation Treatise* divides the bodhisattva precepts into two categories: Four Grave Offenses (Skt. *pārājika*; Jp. 波羅夷 *harai*) and Forty-One Lesser Offenses (Skt. *duṣkṛta*; Jp. 突吉羅 *tokira*). The Four Grave Offenses vary significantly from the first four prohibitions in the other lay and bodhisattva precepts considered here. While the others are consistent in listing killing, stealing, sexual activity, and lying as the fundamental offenses, those from the Yogācāra precepts prohibit (1) praising the self and denigrating others,

⁶⁵ Zimmerman, 873. For how the Threefold Pure Precepts were used in later Japanese ordinations alongside bodhisattva precepts, see Minowa, 131-139.

⁶⁶ Groner, “The Bodhisattva Precepts,” 33-34. Michael Zimmerman notes that these categories are not mutually exclusive and can overlap. Zimmerman, 879.

⁶⁷ Depending upon the tradition, there are either six or ten stages to becoming a bodhisattva (the first six are the same in both sets). The full list of perfections (*pāramitā*) are: (1) charity (*dānapāramitā*); (2) morality (*śīlapāramitā*); (3) forbearance (*kṣāntipāramitā*); (4) effort (*vīryapāramitā*); (5) meditation (*dhyānapāramitā*); (6) wisdom (*prajñāpāramitā*); (7) expedient means (*upāyapāramitā*); (8) vow [to attain enlightenment] (*prañidhānapāramitā*); (9) power (*balapāramitā*); (10) knowledge/omniscience (*jñānapāramitā*). See *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. “Śīlapāramitā” 822. For more on these stages, see Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, second edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2009): 187-208.

(2) being miserly with wealth or Buddhist teachings, (3) rejecting another's repentance and/or responding with anger or violence, and (4) slandering or distorting Buddhist teachings.⁶⁸

Michael Zimmerman suggests that the reasoning behind the tripartite division of precepts was for Buddhist practitioners who wanted to maintain their status as laypeople but also have their own set of rules to follow in pursuit of becoming bodhisattvas.⁶⁹ This latter point relates to both how the Yogācāra precepts developed as well as how the bodhisattva precepts functioned in general, especially in bridging gaps between the *vinaya* texts that developed in India and the Mahāyāna texts that flourished throughout East Asia. The *Bodhisattva Stages Sutra* incorporated newly developed Mahāyāna ethics and provided a guideline for those intent on walking the bodhisattva path. With the increased circulation of Mahāyāna texts and their expanded options for Buddhist practitioners beyond escape from the cycle of rebirth, the compiler(s) addressed the need for a roadmap as to how to become a bodhisattva by pulling together various scriptural sources related to morality and spiritual development.⁷⁰ As such, while informed by the *vinaya*, the bodhisattva precepts in the Yogācāra tradition were constructed for a different audience with a different goal. By providing distinct bodhisattva precepts for both monastic and lay communities, the *Foundation Treatise's* creators anticipated the different needs of these practitioners and provided appropriately complementary sets of precepts.

The other major source for bodhisattva precepts throughout East Asia, the *Brahma Net Sutra*, was also created for those on the path to becoming bodhisattvas, and similarly structured its

⁶⁸ See chart at end of this section for a comparison of lay and bodhisattva precepts.

⁶⁹ Zimmerman, 880.

⁷⁰ Zimmerman, 873. See Ulrich Timme Kragh's breakdown of the various chapters in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi* that relate to bodhisattva training, namely chapters 3-7. Kragh, 153-168.

precepts into two categories: Ten Major Precepts (*jū jūkai* 十重戒), and Forty-Eight Minor Precepts (*yonjūhachi kyōkai* 四十八經戒).⁷¹ However, unlike the *Foundation Treatise*, the *Brahma Net Sutra* is widely held to be an apocryphal text, meaning that it was created outside of India and reflects Central Asian or Chinese cultures and values.⁷² Additionally, the Ten Major Precepts vary greatly from the Four Grave Offenses, consisting of prohibitions to not: (1) kill; (2) steal; (3) engage in lustful behavior; (4) lie; (5) sell alcohol; (6) engage in fault-finding; (7) praise self and disparage others; (8) be stingy; (9) bear grudges and feed hatred; (10) denigrate the Three Treasures (the Buddha, the *Dharma*, and the *Sangha*).⁷³ The first five of these bear a close resemblance to the Five Precepts that form the basis for all lay precepts, although scholars Charles Muller and Kenneth Tanaka note that the focus in this work is on the intentionality or the enjoyment behind the deed, rather than the act of committing deed itself.⁷⁴ As with the Ten Good Precepts listed above, this shift reflects the role that emotions and thinking play within Mahāyāna texts as compared with non-Mahāyāna works.

⁷¹ For full list of minor precepts, see A. Charles Muller and Kenneth K. Tanaka, trans., *The Brahmā's Net Sutra* (Moraga, California: BDK America, 2017): 44-73. The bodhisattva precepts appear in the second fascicle, which by the late fifth century was circulating throughout China independently. Paul Groner, "The *Fan-wang ching* and Monastic Discipline in Japanese Tendai: A Study of Annen's *Futsū jubosatsukai kōshaku*," in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, edited by Robert E. Buswell (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990): 253.

⁷² While sutras of non-Indian origin are not forbidden, sutras typically establish themselves as recorded accounts from one of the Buddha's disciples. As such, an Indian provenance is compulsory for a text to be "authentic." In the case of specially valued apocryphal texts such as the *Brahma Net Sutra* or the *Human Kings Sutra*, this led to concerted efforts to legitimize these texts through establishing transmission and translation lineages. See Robert E. Buswell, ed. *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1990) and Sylvie Hureau, "Translations, Apocrypha, and the Emergence of the Buddhist Canon" in *Early Chinese Religion, Part Two: The Period of Division (220-589 AD)*, ed. John Lagerway and Lü Pengzhi 1 (Leiden: Brill, 2010): 741-774.

⁷³ Paraphrased from Muller and Tanaka, 44-47.

⁷⁴ Muller and Tanaka, xx.

This emphasis on internal thinking can also be observed in the *Brahma Net Sutra*'s Minor Precepts, which are split into four sections: guarding one's thoughts, protecting one's virtue and the virtue of others, living in harmony, and gathering and teaching followers.⁷⁵ As with the Lesser Offenses in the *Foundation Treatise*, these Minor Precepts are predominantly focused on activities and behavior among monastic groups, thereby resembling the *vinaya* in function, if not in content.⁷⁶ The *Brahma Net Sutra* offers only a single set of precepts intended for all practitioners, compared with the separate types in the *Foundation Treatise*. Paul Groner suggests that this universal application was intended to join all Buddhist practitioners into a "common organization," hence the overlap between the first five of the Ten Major Precepts and the Five Precepts applying to laity and monastics alike.⁷⁷

Similar to the *vinaya* and *śīla*, the bodhisattva precepts also play a role in initiation ceremonies. While a presiding monk may still be required, the officiating body is made up of the entire assembly of bodhisattvas, instead of members of a monastic community. This emphasis upon buddhas and bodhisattvas themselves is an important factor within this ordination process and how bodhisattva precepts complemented, competed with, or, in some cases, supplanted *vinaya* precepts.

⁷⁵ Muller and Tanaka, 47-73.

⁷⁶ In their translation of the *Brahma Net Sutra*, Charles Muller and Kenneth Tanaka claim that the second half of the work is a "Mahāyāna *vinaya*" text. Muller and Tanaka, xvii-xxi. However, I disagree that the *Brahma Net Sutra* or any other source of bodhisattva precepts should be considered to be *vinaya*, Mahāyāna or otherwise. For one thing, the bodhisattva precepts are intended for those on the bodhisattva path, not specifically for monks or nuns, which is the fundamental audience of the *vinaya*. Even though the *Foundation Treatise* and *Brahma Net Sutra* contain precepts specific to monastics, the purpose is still distinct. As was noted previously, monk and nun precepts (or *pratimokṣa*) only occupy a portion of the *vinaya*, the rest of which looks at additional rules or guidelines relevant for monastic practice and temple operations. Moreover, referring to these as Mahāyāna *vinaya* ignores the context within which the *vinaya* developed as well as dismisses the obvious non-Mahāyāna influences within these works. In short, there are precepts within *vinaya* texts, but *vinaya* are not synonymous with precepts.

⁷⁷ Groner, "Fan-wang ching," 255-256.

The ordination process in the *Foundation Treatise's Bodhisattva Stages Sutra* states that the supplicant should reach out to an advanced monk who already is identified as a bodhisattva and request conferral of the bodhisattva precepts. The ordinand would then appeal to the bodhisattvas of the ten directions,⁷⁸ focus on their strengths and merits, and purify his or her mind. A variation on the *Bodhisattva Stages Sutra*, the *Manual of the [Ritual] Acts of Bodhisattva Discipline* (菩薩戒羯磨文 *Bosatsukai katsuma bun*),⁷⁹ adds that these various bodhisattvas would then teach the ordinand directly, including the rules all bodhisattvas must obey.⁸⁰ The bodhisattvas would then take over the process of confirming the adept's identity as a fellow bodhisattva, his desire to receive the Pure Precepts, and his willingness to receive all of the knowledge of the bodhisattvas of the past, present, and future. The presiding bodhisattva-monk would then testify on behalf of the supplicant in front of a statue of the Buddha, confirming his thrice repeated self-declaration of being a bodhisattva. Finally, the bodhisattva-monk would announce the initiate's bodhisattva name and call upon the buddhas and bodhisattvas of all time and place to witness the supplicant receiving the bodhisattva precepts.⁸¹

In identifying the presiding monk as someone who was already a bodhisattva himself, the Yogācāra bodhisattva precepts shifted authority away from the monastic community and onto the Buddhist pantheon itself. Moreover, it meant that in the absence of a suitable presiding monk, any

⁷⁸ In other words, all of the bodhisattvas.

⁷⁹ T. 1499. Commonly known by its Chinese title, *Pusajie jiemo wen*.

⁸⁰ Demiéville, 143 and Sylvie Hureau, "Buddhist Rituals," 1230. See also Yoshimura Makoto 吉村誠, "Genjō no bosatsukai: 'Bosatsukai katsuma bun' o chūshin ni" 玄奘の菩薩戒: 『菩薩戒羯磨文』を中心に. *Indogaku Bukkyōgaku Kenkyū* 54, no. 2 (2006): 610-616, 1296.

⁸¹ Demiéville, 143-144. For English translation of the presiding monk's addresses to the buddhas and bodhisattvas, see Hureau, "Rituals," 1230 n97-99.

bodhisattva was an acceptable substitute. A separate variation on the *Bodhisattva Stages Sutra* from the fifth century, the *Bodhisattva Virtuous Precepts Sutra* (菩薩善戒經 *Bosatsu zenkai kyō*, T.1582)⁸², encouraged the absence of a monastic intercessor, noting that bodhisattva precepts could not be referred to as such if they had been conveyed by a human master or teacher.⁸³ As such, while the *Foundation Treatise* preferred the presence of a presiding monk, it also had a built-in provision permitting self-ordinations.

In the case of the *Brahma Net Sutra*, self-ordinations were permitted with the provision that the ordinand experienced a vision of auspicious signs (好相 *kōsō*).⁸⁴ In this situation, the vision authenticated the experience in the same way that the teacher's lineage spoke to his qualifications. When receiving the precepts from a teacher, the supplicant had to only have "an attitude of deep sincerity."⁸⁵ If there was no suitable teacher within a distance of a thousand *li*,⁸⁶ the ordinand could instead take the vows in front of a statue of a buddha or bodhisattva, taking

⁸² T 1582. Also known by its Chinese title *Pusa shanjie jing*.

⁸³ Demiéville, 144.

⁸⁴ Auspicious signs generally refer to omens, the appearance of a buddha or bodhisattva, or the marks of a buddha. In his translation of this text into French, J.J.M de Groot simply refers to these as "favorable signs" (*les signes favorables*) without providing further clarification. In their English translation of the *Brahma Net Sutra*, A. Charles Muller and Kenneth T. Tanaka directly translate 好相 to mean "marks," indicating that practitioners are to visualize the thirty-two "marks of a great man" (Sk. *mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa*; Jp. 大人相 *dainisō*) possessed by buddhas and *cakravartin* kings. The *Brahma Net Sutra* gives specific examples of what entails an auspicious sign, namely a buddha touching the individual's head, seeing halos, and various other propitious indications. *The Princeton Dictionary of Buddhism*, s.v. "Mahāpuruṣalakṣaṇa," 506; Muller and Tanaka, 57, 69; J.J. M. de Groot *Le code du Mahāyāna en Chine: son influence sur la vie monacale et sur le monde laïque* (Amsterdam: J. Müller, 1893): 56, 76.

⁸⁵ Muller and Tanaka, 57.

⁸⁶ A *li* (里) is commonly referred to as a "Chinese mile," and currently equates to approximately 1/3 mile. However, this is likely not intended to be an exact measurement and rather indicates a great distance.

even up to a year to experience a vision of an auspicious sign. At this point, the ordinand would have received the bodhisattva precepts.⁸⁷

This type of vision could also serve a purifying role in the pre-ordination ceremony, when the presiding monk would ask if the initiate had committed one of the Seven Heinous Crimes (七逆罪 *shichigyakuzai*)⁸⁸ or broken any of the Ten Major Precepts. While the former permanently prevented ordination, the latter could be rectified through reciting the Ten Major and Forty-eight Minor Precepts before the image of a buddha or bodhisattva and then appealing to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas for a sign. The text clarifies that an acceptable auspicious sign would be “something like a buddha coming and touching their head, seeing halos, or other various types of marvelous signs.”⁸⁹ Once this sign had been witnessed, the wrongdoing was erased and the precepts could be bestowed. While the transgressor could repent for even up to a year, if the sign did not appear, then it would not be possible to receive the bodhisattva precepts in that lifetime.⁹⁰

The self-ordination provision combined with the bodhisattva precepts’ greater accessibility to lay practitioners, shorter and easier set of requirements, general absence of any significant penalties for breaking the regulations,⁹¹ and applicability to Mahāyāna Buddhist interests led to

⁸⁷ Muller and Tanaka, 57. For more on the role of visions in *The Brahma Net Sutra*, see Nobuyoshi Yamabe, “Visionary Repentance and Visionary Ordination in the *Brahmā Net Sūtra*,” in *Going Forth: Visions of Buddhist Vinaya*, ed. William M. Bodiford (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2005): 17-39.

⁸⁸ These are: 1. harming a Buddha’s blood, 2. killing one’s father, 3. killing one’s mother, 4. killing a monk, 5. Killing a teacher, 6. disrupting the *sangha*, and 7. killing an *arhat*. Muller and Tanaka, 68.

⁸⁹ Muller and Tanaka, 69.

⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁹¹ Unlike *vinaya* precepts, in which case committing certain forbidden actions could lead to expulsion from the community, there were no such consequences for those on the bodhisattva path. Rather, all transgressions other than the seven heinous crimes could be remedied through contrition and confession, albeit the number of people required to witness the confession grew with the level of the infraction. For the highest level, the perpetrator would have to take the precepts anew. Demiéville, 144.

their earlier and broader circulation throughout East Asia as compared to *vinaya* precepts. As such, *vinaya* proponents had to fight to establish ordination practices that technically served different purposes, but nonetheless competed with a system that was easier, more applicable, and appeared comparable. Technically, bodhisattva precepts were unrelated to monastic precepts and ordinations, hence their use as supplementary precepts among many monastic populations. In practice, though, there was an overlap in their use among lay practitioners who used bodhisattva precepts to self-ordain as monks and nuns without approval from Buddhist oversight organizations or, more importantly, the government.

We must also consider the role of bodhisattva precepts in relation to the two overseas monks directly connected to *vinaya* ordinations in Japan. Both Daoxuan and Jianzhen were proficient in the bodhisattva precepts from the *Brahma Net Sutra*. In Daoxuan's case, his biography attributed to courtier Kibi Makibi (吉備真備; 695-775), *The Edited Biography of Daoxuan wajō* (道璿和上傳纂 *Dōsen wajō densan*),⁹² notes that Daoxuan not only studied the *Brahma Net Sutra*, he also wrote a three-volume commentary on its bodhisattva precepts.⁹³ As discussed below, the *Tōseiden* credited Jianzhen with conducting a mass ordination ceremony involving bodhisattva precepts for over four hundred monks as well as the imperial family upon arriving at the capital in 754.⁹⁴ As such, when considering Daoxuan and Jianzhen's activities and roles in Japan, we cannot restrict them to the *vinaya* alone. Clearly, both were interested and

⁹² See Appendix C.

⁹³ See Appendix C and chapter 1.

⁹⁴ Bingenheimer, part 2, 170. There are additional references throughout this account of Jianzhen bestowing both *vinaya* and bodhisattva precepts.

Table 2: Comparison of Essential Prohibitions for Śīla and Bodhisattva Precepts

	<i>Śīla</i> Prohibitions			Bodhisattva Precepts Prohibitions		
	Five Precepts	Eight Precepts	Ten Precepts	Ten Good Precepts	Ten Major Precepts (<i>Brahma Net Sutra</i>)	Four Grave Offenses (<i>Foundation Treatise</i>)
1	Kill	Kill	Kill	Kill	Kill	Praise self and denigrate others
2	Steal	Steal	Steal	Steal	Steal	Be miserly with wealth or teachings
3	Sexual misconduct	Sexual misconduct	Sexual misconduct	Sexual misconduct	Sexual misconduct	Reject repentance; respond with anger
4	Lie	Lie	Lie	Lie	Lie	Vilify or distort teachings
5	Imbibe alcohol	Imbibe alcohol	Imbibe alcohol	Speak harshly	Sell alcohol	
6		Eat when inappropriate	Eat when inappropriate	Speak divisively	Find faults in others	
7		Engage in or attend performances; apply ornamentation and perfumes to body	Engage in or attend performances	Speak idly	Praise self and denigrate others	
8		Sleep in luxurious beds	Apply ornamentation to the body	Be greedy	Stinginess	
9			Sleep in luxurious beds	Be angry	Bear grudges; feed hatred	
10			Handle money	Have wrong views	Denigrate the Three Treasures	

knowledgeable in bodhisattva precepts, and their ordinations were not limited to those intended for monks. Moreover, these episodes indicate that there was evident interest in using the bodhisattva precepts for ordination practices among Japanese monastics and laypeople alike.

3.4 Precepts and Ordinations in Japan

According to Gyōnen, Emperor Tenmu (天武天皇 *Tenmu tennō*; d. 686) dispatched the Japanese scholar monk Dōkō (道光; fl. late 7th century) to Tang China for the express purpose of studying the *vinaya*.⁹⁵ Upon the monk's return in 678, he is said to have brought a copy of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* back to Japan as well as the *vinaya* master Daoxuan's *Commentary on the Four Part Vinaya* (四分律刪繁補闕行事鈔 *Shibunritsu sanpan hoketsu jigyo jishō*).⁹⁶ If correct, then Japan had copies of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* more than fifty years before the precepts master solicitation of 733, which corresponds with the passage at the beginning of this chapter wherein the monk Ryūson (隆尊; 706-760) complained that Japan had a copy of the *vinaya* but no one to transmit the precepts.

Ishida Mizumaro (石田瑞麿) notes that there were sixteen commentaries on two versions of the *vinaya* that predated Jianzhen's arrival, demonstrating that there was deep awareness of and interest in monastic precepts leading up to the *risshi shōsei*.⁹⁷ We also see a connection between

⁹⁵ For a summary of scholarly responses to Gyōnen's assertion about Dōkō transporting the *vinaya*, see Naobayashi Futai 直林不退, "Tenmu chō no kairitsu juyō no kisai ni tsuite" 天武朝の戒律受容の記載について, *Nihon Indogaku Bukkyō gakkai*, 39, no. 1 (December, 1990): 134. See also Bingenheimer, *Japanese Student Monks*, 94-96.

⁹⁶ T.40, no. 1804. Green and Mun, 144-145. Pruden, 122.

⁹⁷ One commentary was dedicated to the *Mahīśāsaka Vinaya*, or *Fivefold Vinaya*, and the rest focused on the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, or *Fourfold Vinaya*. Based upon the names of the commentaries' authors, Ishida states that more or less all of them predated Jianzhen's arrival. Ishida Mizumaro 石田瑞麿, *Nihon ni okeru kairitsu no kenkyū* 日本における戒律の研究 (Tokyo: Nakayama shobō busshorin, 2005): 27. For the full list of commentaries, see page 28. Mizumaro states that the list itself was compiled from materials in the *Dai Nihon Komonjo* (大日本古文書), a multivolume collection of historical documents. It was originally published in a section added to Ishida Mosaku 石田茂作, *Shakyō tori mitaru Nara chō bukyō no kenkyū* 写経より見たる奈良朝仏教の研究 (Tokyo: Tōyō bunko,

precepts and Daianji itself through the temple's head monk Dōji (道慈; d. 744). Dōji studied in China from 702-718, where he not only received a *vinaya*-based ordination, but also witnessed the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*'s primacy over all other versions of the *vinaya* in use throughout China.⁹⁸ As with the precepts master Daoxuan and Ryūson, Dōji also functioned as the preceptor in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs and wrote a book titled *Gushi* (愚志) that criticized the state of Japan's ordination process.⁹⁹ Sakuma Ryū (佐久間竜) suggests that it may even have been Dōji who appealed to Prince Toneri (舍人親王 *Toneri shinnō*; 676-735) to send the two monks Yōei (榮叡, alt. Eiei; d.749) and Fushō (普照; fl. 733-754) in search of a precepts master instead of Ryūson, as mentioned in the passage from the *Tōdaiji yōroku* at the beginning of this chapter. According to Sakuma, Ryūson would have only been in his mid-twenties at this time and therefore would have lacked the prestige and experience to approach Prince Toneri.¹⁰⁰

Despite having a copy of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* and clear evidence of interest, there was no apparent shift to adopting *vinaya* practices for either ordinations or monastic behavior until after Jianzhen's arrival. As discussed below, the absence of the *vinaya* is listed as a reason for the *Sōgō*'s formation, and part of the role of the initial two leaders, the superintendent (僧正 *sōjō*) and vice-superintendent (僧都 *sōzu*), was to govern and examine monks and nuns on their familiarity with the most fundamental texts of the period. In 734, ordination requirements for novices were to be able to chant either the *Golden Light Sutra* (Sk. *Suvarṇabhāsottama sūtra*; Jp. 金光明經

1966), titled "Nara chō genzai issaikyōso mokuroku" 奈良朝現在一切經疏目錄, with corrections made in Mizumaro's version. Ishida Mizumaro, 31 n7.

⁹⁸ Heirman, *Dharmaguptakas*, 422.

⁹⁹ While no longer extant, the *Gushi* and its contents were referenced in a biography of Dōji, *Shoku Nihongi* 2, 446.

¹⁰⁰ Sakuma Ryū 佐久間竜, *Nihon kodai sōden no kenkyū* 日本古代僧伝の研究 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1983): 242-262.

Konkōmyō kyō)¹⁰¹ or the *Lotus Sutra* (Sk. *Saddharmapuṇḍarīka sūtra*; Jp. 法華經 *Hokke kyō*),¹⁰² be capable of carrying out religious ceremonies, and have led a chaste life for three or more years.¹⁰³ As noted by Paul Groner, there was little emphasis on doctrinal awareness compared with their ability to conduct services that were of benefit to the country as a whole.¹⁰⁴ There is also no evidence of either *śīla* or *vinaya* precepts beyond the celibacy requirement. As such, if the *risshi shōsei* was motivated by a desire to reconcile Japan's monastic ordinations with the *vinaya* precepts, there is no indication of it just one year after the campaign to find a precepts master set out.

Although precepts did not figure into novice ordinations at this time, there was some concept of taking precepts (受戒 *jukai*) well before Jianzhen's arrival. As discussed below, the *Nihon shoki* contains several references to early Japanese converts wanting to take precepts even though there was no established tradition for official monastic ordinations even at the time of the text's composition. An additional story of a man taking the tonsure in hopes that the positive karma would heal the emperor provides added insight into how renunciations and precepts were viewed at this time in a manner unrelated to monastic behavior. Additionally, the narrative of the Ministry for Monastic Affairs' creation emphasizes the importance of *vinaya* and oversight in terms of controlling and regulating monastic behavior. While anachronistic for the time periods described, these records indicate interest and awareness of the various types of precepts in the early eighth

¹⁰¹ T 663.

¹⁰² T 262.9.1c1–62b. As was discussed in chapter 2, both of these texts were respectively paired with the state protection monasteries (国分寺 *kokubunji*) and convents (国分尼寺 *kokubunniji*) in all provinces in 741.

¹⁰³ 734.11.21 *Shoku nihongi* 2, 282–283.

¹⁰⁴ Groner, *Saichō*, 5.

century, at least in relation to initiation practices, building merit, and regulating the monastic population. However, there is no clear indication of the process by which monks and nuns were initiated into a Buddhist order.

As noted above, by the mid-seventh century, monks following the Hossō tradition used the Yogācāra bodhisattva precepts from the *Foundation Treatise*. However, the relative ease of a system allowing for self-ordinations ran counter to government interests in keeping monastic numbers small, contained, and bound to temples. The actions of the itinerant monk Gyōki exemplified exactly what the court feared. Gyōki refused to be bound to a temple, and not only went out to preach among the common people, but also engaged in public works like building roads and bridges that won him both fans and converts. He liberally ordained members of his following using the Yogācāra bodhisattva precepts, despite the lack of both government approval and ordination certificates.

We can read court disapproval about Gyōki's actions through particular references in the previously mentioned *Sōniryō*. While not promulgated until 757, this set of codes for monks and nuns was initially created during Gyōki's lifetime and perhaps even with his example in mind. In a record in the *Shoku nihongi* from 717, an imperial edict decried self-ordained monks as fraudulent and particularly identified Gyōki as a leader of a faction that lived on the streets and begged without approval.¹⁰⁵ The fifth rule in the *Sōniryō* specifically prohibited those who, “live outside temples, who build their own separate retreats, who gather people together to teach them... [and beg without official approval]¹⁰⁶” under threat of laicization. Similarly, the twenty-second

¹⁰⁵ Abé, 78-79. 717.4.23 *Shoku nihongi* 2, 26-27.

¹⁰⁶ Bowring, 55.

rule dictates immediate laicization and one hundred days of hard labor for unlawful, self-ordained monks and nuns (私度僧尼 *shidōsōni*) or those who knowingly condoned or provided harbor for such a person.¹⁰⁷ Despite these measures, Gyōki largely escaped punishment, perhaps because the code was not yet in practice or because neither the government nor the *Sōgō* had the power to carry out its own laws. Adopting a *vinaya*-based ordination system was functionally another attempt to regulate a monastic population and a lay population that resisted government control.

Despite the ease of self-ordinations using bodhisattva precepts working against court efforts to manage and control its monastic population, there was nonetheless clear interest in this form of precepts throughout the Daianji overseas monks' lifetimes in Japan, including at court. In the mid-late eighth century, the bodhisattva precepts from the *Brahma Net Sutra* grew in popularity, likely due in part to the precepts master Daoxuan. In addition to writing Japan's first commentary on this text, Daoxuan may have favored the *Brahma Net Sutra* itself because its cosmology, main teachings, and focus on the cosmic buddha Vairocana (盧舍那 *Rushana*) were highly compatible with the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Sk. *Avataṃsaka sūtra*; 華嚴經 *Kegon kyō*),¹⁰⁸ the other major text associated with the Daianji overseas monks. It is this set of precepts that we see Saichō later using for the Tendai monastic ordination ceremony.

One of the most notable uses of bodhisattva precepts for ordinations took place either in 749 or 754 and involved not only several hundred monks, but also the imperial family itself. According to the *Tōseiden*, Jianzhen's first major act upon arriving at the Heijō capital was to set up an ordination platform and bestow precepts (戒 *kai*) upon four hundred forty monks, the

¹⁰⁷ Bowring, 57.

¹⁰⁸ T 279.10.1b-444c.

empress, as well as the retired emperor and empress.¹⁰⁹ While the exact form of precepts is not stated, the general presumption is that they were from the *Brahma Net Sutra*, due in part to because this text was in common practice in China, Japan, and Korea at this time. Moreover, this version represented a newer trend compared with the Yogācāra bodhisattva precepts. The fact that Jianzhen was the one who bestowed them also demonstrates that they were not seen as contradicting the *vinaya*, especially for fully ordained monks.

However, the twelfth-century biography of Gyōki titled *Gyōki nenpu* (行基年譜) refers to a private ordination for the imperial family that was carried out by Gyōki. Despite his previous actions resulting in rules in the *Sōniryō* and possibly inspiring the *risshi shōsei* itself, Gyōki not only repaired relations with the court, but he was eventually placed in charge of fundraising efforts for construction of the Great Buddha and Tōdaiji Temple. In appreciation for his efforts, Shōmu named him the *daisōjō* (大僧正), or “great superintendent,” which placed him above all members of the *Sōgō* at least in name, if not in deed. Not long after his death, Gyōki was dubbed a bodhisattva in his own right, meaning that the imperial family were effectively situated in a bodhisattva’s ordination lineage.

According to the *Gyōki nenpu*, this imperial ordination took place in 749, soon after Shōmu abdicated in favor of his daughter, Empress Kōken (孝謙天皇 *Kōken tennō*; 713-770, r. 749-758; also reigned as Shōtoku 称徳 from 764-770).¹¹⁰ Father and daughter were joined in taking the precepts by Kōken’s mother and Shōmu’s chief consort, the former Empress Kōmyō (光明皇后

¹⁰⁹ Bingenheimer, part 2, 170-171.

¹¹⁰ Kōken become a nun at Hokkeji Temple (法華寺) following her initial abdication in 758. When she reascended the throne in 770, she became the only Japanese monarch to rule after having taken religious orders. While this record does not contradict that account, it suggests instead that she may have identified as a nun during her first reign as well as her second.

Kōmyō kōgō, alt. 光明子 *Kōmyōshi*; 701-760). This event marked the entrance of the entire imperial family into Buddhist orders as disciples of Gyōki.¹¹¹ Notably, the passage does not specify what type of precepts were used, as only the *kai* (戒) character is given. Nonetheless, considering Gyōki's history and reputation, this is probably referring to the Yogācāra precepts.

In his translation of the *Tōseiden*, Marcus Bingenheimer cites a theory of Fukuyama Toshio (福山敏男) stating that Jianzhen's disciple Situo (思託 *Shitaku*; 722–809) lifted the story of the imperial ordination from an earlier Gyōki biography and inserted it into that of his master. This argument is supported by the fact that surviving fragments from the *Kōden* do not mention the mass ordination at all.¹¹² However, this theory does not dismiss the possibility that Jianzhen also conducted ordinations utilizing bodhisattva precepts. Ryūichi Abé notes that a manual on conducting ordinations at Tōdaiji's precepts platform hall (戒壇院 *Kaidanin*) states that Jianzhen required his ordinands follow the repentance ceremony from the *Brahma Net Sutra*'s bodhisattva precepts alongside receiving *vinaya* precepts.¹¹³

In either case, what is notable about the imperial renunciation is the fact that both the *Tōseiden* and *Gyōgi nenpu* state that *śīla* or, more likely, bodhisattva precepts were used and that the ceremony was overseen by a renowned monk. These were not self-ordinations in front of a Buddhist statue but were rather overseen by either the newly arrived precepts master or the highest-ranking Buddhist monk in the country. When we look at the wording used in eighth-century texts

¹¹¹ *Gyōgi nenpu* 行基年譜 in *Zoku zoku Gunsho Ruiju* 3 続々群書類従 第三 (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kaiseikai, 1953): 436. The record also provides their Buddhist names of Shōman (勝満) for Shōmu, Tokuman (徳満) for Kōken, and Manpuku (萬福) for Kōmyō.

¹¹² Bingenheimer, part 2, 170-171 n99, citing Fukuyama Toshio 福山敏男, “Tōshōdaiji no konryū” 唐招提寺の建立, *Rekishi chiri* 60, no. 4 (Oct. 1932): 345-346.

¹¹³ Abé, 49. Abé goes on to discuss the overlapping usage of both bodhisattva and *vinaya* precepts from the early ninth century onward on pages 49-55.

in reference to ordinations and precepts below, it may well have been this supervisory position that the *risshi shōsei* campaign was really about.

3.5 Textual References of Precepts

Even though Japan only arguably had access to a *vinaya* text from the mid-seventh century onward, the official court history extends awareness of the *vinaya* all the way back to the country's first recorded converts a century before. As discussed below, the theme of precepts appears throughout the *Nihon shoki* and is largely referenced using the character for *śīla*. While the use of the character *kai* (戒) does not necessarily indicate that the text's authors meant to exclude references to *vinaya*, it does suggest a meaning broader than just *vinaya* was intended. Additionally, prevalence of the *kai* character makes passages where the character for *vinaya* was explicitly used all the more poignant. In looking through the textual accounts of the *risshi shōsei*, we similarly see an emphasis upon *śīla* and having someone to oversee the process of taking precepts (受戒 *jukai*) as opposed to a single-minded interest in the *vinaya* itself.

3.5.1 The *Nihon Shoki*

The *Nihon shoki* was compiled in 720, just thirteen years prior to Yōei and Fushō's departure in search of a precepts master. Due to the large gap of time between the text's creation and the events reflected therein, the historical accuracy of many of the text's events is questionable at best. Nonetheless, the *Nihon shoki* provides excellent insight into how the Japanese court understood precepts, renunciation, and the purpose of monastic communities at the time of its composition. In this section, I examine three episodes that reflect the court's interest in monastic precepts preceding the arrival of Jianzhen and the other overseas monks. The first and third episodes particularly emphasize the importance of precepts for monastic authority as well as for moral rectitude.

The first episode features Japan's first monastics, the nuns Zenshin (善信; fl. 584-590) and her companions Ezen (惠善; fl. 584-590) and Zenzō (禅蔵; fl. 584-590) in the mid-sixth century. The *Nihon shoki* contains four entries related to these nuns, covering their renunciation, forced laicization, return to monastic life, eventual ordination in Korea, and return to Japan. Zenshin's narrative is closely intertwined with the official story behind Buddhism's establishment in Japan, including the battle between the Soga (蘇我) and the Mononobe (物部氏) kinship groups, upon which Buddhism's fate in Japan hinged.

Zenshin's request to go to the Korean kingdom of Paekche in order to receive the precepts appears in the third entry and is dated one month before the Soga and Mononobe's decisive battle in 587. She appealed to her patron Soga Umako (蘇我馬子宿禰; d. 626), asking to accompany visiting envoys from Paekche when they returned in order to receive the "system of precepts" (受戒法 *jukaihō*) there, noting that renunciants took precepts (戒 *kai*) as the foundation for their practice.¹¹⁴ The editors state that the reference to "precepts" in this case means the *kairitsu* (戒律) compound,¹¹⁵ and in other literature this episode is interpreted as Zenshin and her companions seeking full ordination using *vinaya* precepts.¹¹⁶ However, it is questionable whether any of the Korean kingdoms had a systematized ordination tradition that the three nuns could use in the sixth

¹¹⁴ In his classic translation of the *Nihon shoki*, William Aston translates 戒法 as the "Law of Discipline." W. G. Aston 2, 113. In his version of the text, Sakamoto Tarō parses this phrase to read 戒むことの法 (*imukoto no nori*). Sakamoto et al., *Nihon shoki*, 64-65.

¹¹⁵ Sakamoto et al., *Nihon shoki*, 65.

¹¹⁶ For example, see Akira Hirakawa, "The History of Buddhist Nuns in Japan," translated by Karma Lekshe Tsomo with Junko Miura, *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 12 (1992): 150; Deleanu, *Transmission and Creation*, 9-27; Pruden, 122-123; Kazuhiko Yoshida, "Religion in the Classical Period," in *Nanzen Guide to Japanese Religions*, edited by Paul L. Swanson and Clark Chilson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2006): 154-155. Gyōnen indicates a more systematized ordination process for monks and nuns, which was not possible in Japan because Japanese nuns did not follow ordination rituals. That, then, was the reason for these first three nuns going to Paekche. Green and Mun, 143.

century, let alone that featured *vinaya* precepts and a complement of ten full nuns.¹¹⁷ Within the text we are told that Umako complied with Zenshin’s request the following year, when he asked the returning Korean delegates about the process of receiving the system of precepts (受戒之法 *jukai no hō*) and arranged for the nuns to go to Paekche.¹¹⁸

The second episode took place just before Zenshin’s request, and it involves her brother Kuratsukuri Tasuna’s (鞍部多須奈; fl. 587) desire become a monk in hopes of healing the ailing Yōmei (用明; 517-587; r. 585-587). As Yōmei lay dying, Tasuna announced his intention to take the tonsure as well as carve a Buddhist statue for the sake of the emperor.¹¹⁹ This is among the first Japanese records of an individual taking the tonsure and either personally creating or

¹¹⁷ Richard McBride identifies a tradition that the Paekche monk Kyōmik (謙益 Keneki; fl. 526) brought *vinaya* texts from India and translated them in 526. However, McBride points to inconsistencies and anachronisms with this narrative that lead him to dismiss it as a later creation intended to establish a Korean-Indian ordination lineage that bypassed China. Instead, he suggests that the earliest evidence for “an intellectual tradition” connected to the *vinaya* dates to the late seventh century, as demonstrated by commentaries on the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* and *Sarvāstivāda Vinaya* in Silla. The Silla monk Chajang (慈藏 Jizō; 590–658) is particularly credited with promoting *vinaya* texts and precepts following his return from Tang China in 643, where he had purportedly been ordained by the *vinaya* master Daoxuan. Chajang is also credited with establishing an ordination platform at T’ongdosa Temple (通度寺 Tsūdoji). Richard D. McBride II, “The Complex Origins of the Vinaya in Korean Buddhism,” *The Eastern Buddhist* 45, No 1 & 2 (2014): 151-164.

¹¹⁸ Sakamoto et al., *Nihon shoki*, 74-76; 451-452. The *Nihon shoki*’s account of Zenshin was likely the basis for the *Gangōji garan engi*’s version of this same event. In this case, the *Gangōji garan engi* preserved the statement that renunciants took precepts as the foundation for their practice, including using the character for *śīla* precepts. However, this later account then applied the need for oversight communities of fully ordained monks and nuns for the three nuns’ ordinations. Moreover, it stated that the emperor delayed their departure in favor of attempting to establish the needed community of fully ordained monks in Japan first. He did so by appealing to Paekche for monks to relocate to Japan, thereby suggesting an earlier *risshi shōsei* campaign. After that failed to bring the requisite number of twenty fully ordained monks and nuns, Zenshin and her companions were allowed to go to Paekche. Miwa Stevenson, “The Founding of the Monastery Gangōji and a List of its Treasures,” in *The Religions of Japan in Practices*, edited by George J. Tanabe, Jr. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999): 308-309; Sakurai Tokutarō 桜井徳太郎, Hagiwara Tatsuo 萩原龍夫, Miyata Noboru 宮田登, ed. *Jisha engi* 寺社縁起. In *Nihon shisō taikai* 日本思想大系 20 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1975): 12-13. In this case, I argue that the *Gangōji garan engi*’s compilers took the oversight community associated with the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*’s precepts and applied it to Zenshin and the other nun’s reference to wanting *śīla* precepts.

¹¹⁹ Aston 2, 111; Sakamoto et al., *Nihon shoki*, 62, 448. Although Tasuna was a saddle maker like his father, his son Kuratsukuri Tori (鞍作止利; fl. early 7th century) was a renowned Buddhist sculptor, whose works are still extant in Hōryūji Temple (法隆寺) and Asukadera Temple (飛鳥寺).

commissioning a Buddhist statue, image, temple, or sutra copy in hopes of healing a member of the imperial family.¹²⁰

The third episode involves the establishment of the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, or *Sōgō* during the seventh century. During the eighth century, three of the five overseas monks discussed in this dissertation were members of the *Sōgō*, including Bodhisena (菩提僊那 *Bodaisenna*; 704-760) as superintendent, Jianzhen as senior vice-superintendent (大僧都 *daisōzu*), and Daoxuan as preceptor (律師 *risshi*). In looking through the record of members of the Ministry for Monastic Affairs,¹²¹ it is clear that several members appointed to this bureau were overseas monks or had spent considerable time studying at Chinese or Korean temples, as was the case with the preceptor Dōji and superintendent Genbō (玄昉, d. 746). Additionally, the two Japanese monks responsible for the recruitment of all five of the Daianji overseas monks discussed here were also part of the *Sōgō* at this time. Ryūson was appointed to be co-preceptor with Daoxuan and Ryōben was vice-superintendent (小僧都 *shōsozu*) and later as co-senior vice-superintendent with Jianzhen. In short, the *Sōgō* during the time period considered here was populated by monks with significant overseas experience or with particular specialties related to precepts and temple governance.

The *Sōgō*'s foundational episode is set in 623 and begins with the statement that there was a monk who killed his grandfather with a hatchet. Empress Suiko (推古天皇 *Suiko tennō*; 554-

¹²⁰ We see a similar use of precepts in the *Enryaku sōroku* in the years leading up to Emperor Shōmu's death. A few months before the eye-opening ceremony in 752, for example, the *Shoku nihongi* states that nine hundred fifty monks and fifty nuns were appointed as a means for alleviating the recently retired emperor's illness. 752.1.11 *Shoku nihongi* 3, 116-117. Ross Bender, *Nara Japan, 749-757: A Study and Translation of Shoku Nihongi, Tenpyō shōhō 1–Tenpyō Hōji 1* (Self-published, CreateSpace, 2015): 114. Similarly, during a ceremony at Tōdaiji Temple for the dying emperor's sake in 756, Jianzhen called forth the present Chinese monks to bestow precepts upon them. Tōno, Ganjin, 89-93.

¹²¹ See Hirabayashi Moritoku 平林盛得 and Koike Kazuyuki 小池一行 ed., *Gojūonbiki Sōgō bunin sōreki sōran : Suiko sanjūnin: Genryaku ni-nen* 五十音引僧綱補任僧歴綜覧：推古卅二年：元曆二年 (Tokyo: Kasama Shoin, 1976).

628) claimed that that it was inconceivable for someone devoted to the Three Treasures and abiding by Buddhist precepts (戒法 *kaihō*) to commit such an act. She called for testing all of Japan's nuns and monks to see if any of them had committed offenses, for which she promised direct punishment. A monk from Paekche named Kwallūk (觀勒 *Kanroku*; fl. 602-623)¹²² defended the monks and nuns, pointing out that Buddhism was only officially introduced to Japan a mere one hundred years before. As such, Kwallūk contended that the monks and nuns were still relatively ignorant of the precepts (法律 *hōritsu*), making them liable to commit offenses. On account of their naïveté, Kwallūk pleaded for all but the perpetrator to be pardoned and released. Suiko agreed, with the provision that an oversight committee be made, with Kwallūk acting as *sōjō* and Kuratsukuri no Tokushaku (鞍作德積; fl. 623) acting as vice-superintendent.¹²³ This, we are told, was the beginning of the *Sōgō*.¹²⁴

Suiko and Kwallūk's exchange is particularly illuminating, in that they are recorded using different terminology for precepts, which provides perhaps the best insight into what was understood behind *śīla* and *vinaya* at the time of the *Nihon shoki*'s composition. Suiko uses *kaihō* (戒法), the same phrase that is seen in Zenshin's appeal to go to Korea. Kwallūk's petition for

¹²² Despite his role here with the development of the *Sōgō* and advocacy for the *vinaya*, Kwallūk is more associated with introducing *onmyōdō* (陰陽道) practices through transporting books related to calendar-making (曆本 *rekihon*), astronomy (天文 *tenmon*), and geography, (地理 *chiri*), which he presented along with texts on magic (方術 *hōshutsu*) and a form of astral divination called *tonkō* (遁甲) that, in addition to protecting against bad fortune, could also make a person disappear from view. Herman Ooms, *Imperial Politics and Symbolics in Ancient Japan: The Tenmu Dynasty, 650-800* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 70, 179.

¹²³ Aston 2, 152-153. Given their same last name and connection to Buddhism, Tokushaku was probably a relative of the above-mentioned Zenshin and Tasuna. Donald McCallum suggests that Tokushaku's presence indicates the Kuratsukuri's need to maintain control over the developing Buddhist community, and that they may have been acting as representatives for the Soga kinship group. Donald F. McCallum, *The Four Great Temples: Buddhist Archaeology, Architecture, and Icons of Seventh-Century Japan* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009): 28.

¹²⁴ Later on, a member of the Azumi kinship group (阿曇氏 *Azumi uji*) was appointed the third administrative role of *hōto* (法頭). Around the year 694 or 698, this third position had changed to *risshi* (律師), the preceptor. Ishida, *kairitsu*, 26.

leniency, however, uses the term *hōritsu* (法律),¹²⁵ meaning the combination of Buddhist law or teachings (法) and *vinaya* (律). As shown below, the term could also refer to civil law, but the context indicates that he was pointing to the monks and nuns' ignorance of the *vinaya*.

In essence, Kwallük responded to Suiko's outrage by stating that such an act of violence was easily done because Japan's monks and nuns were ignorant of Buddhist teachings and *vinaya* precepts. Good behavior did not arise from the precepts intended for all Buddhist practitioners, *śīla*, but rather from the strict sets of rules specifically made for the monastic communities, *vinaya*. Moreover, *vinaya* codes did not only focus on individual behaviors, but were in fact concerned with the monastic community as a whole. The problem, then, was a lack of institutionalization and bureaucracy, an interpretation that is supported by Suiko's immediate response to establish two of the three supervisory positions for the *Sōgō*.¹²⁶

These three episodes demonstrate different ways in which precepts and renunciation were understood and used at least by the time of the *Nihon shoki*'s compilation in the early eighth century. The first shows that precepts were an essential component to monastics' practice, and properly taking them required being within an established monastic community. Given Zenshin and her followers' positions as Japan's first monastics, there was no other recourse than to go abroad. In the second, Zenshin's brother Tasuna pledged himself to the Buddhist community in return that the positive karma resulting from this action would be used to support his sovereign and the overall state. The third marks the difference between *śīla* and *vinaya* with regard to the

¹²⁵ Sakamoto reads this as *nori*. Sakamoto et al., *Nihon shoki*, 142.

¹²⁶ This interpretation is supported by Gyōnen's portrayal of the *Sōgō* as well. In *Transmission of the Buddha Dharma*, Gyōnen indicates that the primary function for the top two officers of the *Sōgō* was to evaluate Japan's growing monastic community until the country's first copy of the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya* was brought over in the seventh century. Green and Mun, 144.

behavior and actions of the monastic community. Promising not to kill, the first of the lay precepts, was insufficient to prevent such a serious crime when not supported by *vinaya* precepts that dictated not only expected behavior, but also corresponding punishments for infractions. The *Sōgō*'s founding was therefore initiated to provide structure and oversight to Japan's still immature monastic community.

3.5.2 The *Sōniryō*

The other early eighth-century text referenced here is the *Sōniryō*, or Laws for Monks and Nuns. The *Sōniryō* was developed as part of the Yōrō Administrative Code (養老律令 *Yōrō ritsuryō*) of 717, although it was not promulgated until 757. At least part of the text likely dates back to an earlier set of civil and penal codes, the *Taihō Administrative Code* (大宝律令) of 702.¹²⁷ As with many of Japan's government policies of the period, the *Sōniryō* was probably based on a Chinese text, although there is no equivalent among extant Tang documents. According to the ninth-century commentaries *Ryō no shuge* (令集解) and *Ryō no gige* (令義解), though, the *Sōniryō* was inspired by the *Daosengge* (道僧格 *Dōsōkyaku*).¹²⁸

The *Sōniryō* is composed of twenty-seven codes that include statutes such as forbidden actions, punishments for transgressions, the laicization processes, appropriate behavior towards monastics of the other sex, and proper chains of command for registering deaths, crimes, or nominating leaders. The *Sōniryō*'s structure suggests some degree of influence from *vinaya* texts, in that they also enumerate prohibited activities and resulting consequences, including laicization, as well as appropriate administrative guidelines applicable to temple organization and conduct.

¹²⁷ This is presumed based upon a reference in the *Shoku nihongi* stating that a set of laws pertaining to monks and nuns was read at Daianji Temple in 701. Abé, 28.

¹²⁸ The *Daosengge* is completely lost, and the only evidence that it ever existed and inspired the *Sōniryō* comes from the ninth-century commentaries *Ryō no shuge* (令集解) and *Ryō no gige* (令義解). See Weinstein, 17-20.

That said, it was undeniably a civil code, with directions for how Buddhist bureaucracies and temple leaders were supposed to enforce these rules.¹²⁹

The first rule includes the *hōritsu* (法律) character compound seen above with Kwallūk and the development of *Sōgō*. While context indicates that Kwallūk was referring to the *vinaya*, in this case the *Sōniryō* states that monks committing crimes such as rape, robbery, or murder would be held accountable to *hōritsu*'s other meaning, civil law. Civil law is referenced again in the fifth rule, seen above when discussing Gyōki's influence on the code. In this case, provincial officials were threatened with punishment according to the law (律 *ritsu*) should they permit monks to break rules requiring they live and practice within temple grounds. These rules functionally removed any sense of exemption or temple jurisdiction within these cases, and also called upon local government representatives to help enforce these requirements.¹³⁰

In practice, the *Sōniryō* does not appear to have been overly effective, due in part to the fact that the government had little practical means of following through with these rules, and perhaps also because it was already outdated by the time it was promulgated in 757.¹³¹ For example, despite Gyōki's activities having inspired some of the laws, not only had he reversed his standing and become an especially valued member of Japan's monastic community and the court itself in the intervening years, but also he had died eight years before, in 749. In other words, the code was completely useless in reigning in one of the people it may have been created to control. However, as noted by Ryūichi Abé, the rules may not have been intended to be fully enforced, but

¹²⁹ For more on the intersection of civil and religious law in early Japan, see Brian Ruppert, "Buddhism and Law in Japan," in *Buddhism and Law: An Introduction*, ed. Rebecca Redwood French and Mark A. Nathan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014): 273-287, especially 273-276.

¹³⁰ Bowring, 55. Inoue, *Sōniryō*, 216,-217; 542 1b.

¹³¹ For examples of evidence that the *Sōniryō* was poorly enforced, see Abé, 29-30, 33.

rather used to support the emperor's efforts to rule by virtue (徳治 *tokuchi*) in accordance with the Confucian influence that pervaded many of the Chinese-inspired administrative codes and rules of the period.¹³²

Nonetheless, the *Sōniryō* points to the general difficulty that the Japanese government had controlling its population of monastics. Of particular note are the rules that address self-declared monks and nuns; monastics who registered as monks or nuns under others' names or allowed others to use their names for this purpose; monastics who directly taught the people; monastics who begged without official approval or begged outside of official hours; and monastics who lived outside temple grounds or as hermits without official approval.¹³³ These rules all demonstrate one fundamental predicament: how to determine who was and was not a legitimate, approved monk or nun.

Inoue Mitsusada (井上光貞) sorts the *Sōniryō* rules into two categories: those related to breaking government rules and those related to breaking monastic rules. Abé points out that applying secular rules for the latter functionally worked to maintain monastic purity for rituals and training, whereas the former constricted the use of this power except in service to the state.¹³⁴ As such, the *Sōniryō* was an early attempt to bureaucratize and incorporate monks and nuns into

¹³² Abé, 26.

¹³³ Rules 22, 16, 5, and 13, respectively.

¹³⁴ Inoue Mitsusada 井上光貞, "Bukkyo to ritsuryō: Sōniryō no keibatsu taikai" 仏教と律令：僧尼令の刑罰体系, in *Nihon kodai shisōshi no kenkyū* 日本古代思想史の研究. (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 1986): 291-354. Abé provides a brief summary of this system on pages 28-29, although he dates Inoue's work to 1982.

Japan's imperium as subjects of the emperor at a level of as "priest-officials" (官僧 *kansō*). According to Hayami Tasuku, that this was the fundamental purpose of the *Sōniryō*.¹³⁵

The Japanese government also implemented initiation and precept certificates that indicated court permission to be ordained. These ordination certificates directly addressed the problem of self-ordination, although in practice did little to curtail the trend of members of the laity shaving their heads, donning monastic robes, and calling themselves monks. Nonetheless, establishing ordination certificates and the *Sōniryō* both demonstrate evidence of the Japanese court looking for a process to gain control over monastic activities and looked to Tang China for inspiration on how to address these issues. Once they were established, they also provided a useful bureaucratic framework for Jianzhen to tap into with his ordination reforms. By restricting ordinations to only a few times throughout the year and only at specific ordination platforms with an overseeing body of ten fully ordained monks, government-approved ordination certificates would be harder to forge, at least in principle.

3.5.3 The *Risshi Shōsei* Texts

As noted above, there are four period texts that include material related to the precepts master solicitation: the *Tōseiden*, the *Enryaku sōroku*, the *Shoku nihongi*, and the *Tōdaiji yōroku*. All of these include material written by Jianzhen's disciple Situo. Situo not only authored the *Enryaku sōroku*, he also cowrote the foundational three-volume Jianzhen biography *Kōden* with his fellow Tang monk Fajin. Although the *Kōden* is now lost, the general narrative is largely preserved in the *Tōseiden*, written by Jianzhen's lay follower Ōmi Mifune (淡海三船; 722-785).¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Abé, 29. Citing Hayami Tasuku 速水侑, "Ritsuryō kokka to bukyō" 律令国家と仏教, in *Ronshū Nihon bukyōshi: Nara jidai* 論集日本仏教史：奈良時代, edited by Hayami Tasuku (Tokyo: Yūzankaku, 1986): 14.

¹³⁶ Marcus Bingenheimer notes that Omi Mifune had at one point been ordained by Daoxuan, although he was later laicized. After Jianzhen arrived, Mifune followed Jianzhen as a lay practitioner instead. Bingenheimer, part 1, 163.

Of these four works, the *Tōdaiji yōroku* passage quoted at the beginning of this chapter provides the greatest insight into the motivation and reasoning behind the precepts master solicitation. However, the record's later compilation date works against my efforts to focus on eighth-century accounts. Nonetheless, there are two references in the passage from *Tōdaiji yōroku* that correspond with the *Shoku nihongi* and the *Enryaku sōroku* sections and suggest a far earlier origin, possibly quoting from the *Kōden* itself. At the very least, this overlap indicates that they are all situated within the same literary family.

We see this similarity first in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s statement that the preceptor (律師 *risshi*) monk Ryūson realized that while Japan already had a copy of a *vinaya* text (律本 *rippon*), it lacked someone to transmit precepts (闕伝戒人 *denkaijin o kakeru*).¹³⁷ Naobayashi Futai (直林不退) identifies a nearly identical phrase in the *Shoku nihongi*, which states that while in Tang China, Yōei and Fushō¹³⁸ appealed to Jianzhen by stating that although Japan already had that teaching (其經 *sono kyō*), it did not have someone to transmit it (無人伝授 *denju hito ga nai*).¹³⁹ The second similarity appears in Situo's collection of Buddhist biographies, the *Enryaku sōroku*. In Ryūson's biography, he is described as “happily submitting to the profound method, lamenting not having moral fundamentals,”¹⁴⁰ which is nearly identical to a passage in the *Tōdaiji yōroku*.¹⁴¹ The

¹³⁷ 難有律本闕伝戒人. *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 7.

¹³⁸ Identified here by his posthumous name Gyōgyō (業行). This is a curious choice by the compiler, given that Yōei had died by this point, but Fushō had not.

¹³⁹ 雖有其教無人伝授. *Shoku nihongi* 3, 430-431. While the *Shoku nihongi* does mention the 733 embassy's departure in detail, this is the only reference related to the *risshi shōsei*.

¹⁴⁰ 幸造玄門、嘆無戒足. As quoted in Naobayashi, *kairitsu juyō*, 311.

¹⁴¹ 幸筵玄門、嘆無戒足. *Tōdaiji yōroku*, 7.

Enryaku sōroku's biography of Yōei's life also states that the monk went to Tang China at Prince Toneri's request, which provides another correlation to the *Tōdaiji yōroku* passage.¹⁴²

While Naobayashi notes that several scholars¹⁴³ have argued that these parallels indicate that the much later *Tōdaiji yōroku* was copying these earlier texts, he adopts Akatani Myōkai's (赤谷明海) argument that it was the other way around. At the crux of the argument is the single character difference in the two versions of Ryūson's lament. The *Enryaku sōroku* uses the character 造 (*zō*), meaning "to create," whereas the *Tōdaiji yōroku* has 簞 (*shū/shu*), meaning "to be subordinate." Since the passage describes how people in Japan had responded to the "profound approach" of Buddhism, the latter character makes more sense, and the former may indicate a scribal error. To Naobayashi and Akatani, had the creator of the *Tōdaiji yōroku* been copying the *Enryaku sōroku*, the duplicate surely would have included the same mistake. However, the wording is sufficiently similar to point to a common origin. Considering both the similarity in phrasing and Situo's role in writing the *Enryaku sōroku*, Naobayashi and Akatani posit that the material in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* incorporates lost content from Situo and Fajin's *Kōden*.¹⁴⁴ If that is the case, then not only is the *Tōdaiji yōroku*'s passage reflecting an earlier account than the other pieces, but the *Shoku nihongi*'s reference to Japan having a copy of the *vinaya* but no one to transmit precepts is also placed within Situo's literary transmission by virtue of the parallel phrasing with the *Tōdaiji yōroku*.

¹⁴² Naobayashi, *kairitsu juyō*, 310.

¹⁴³ Notably Funagasaki Masataka 舟ヶ崎正孝, Ueyama Shunpei 上山春平 and Kawasaki Tsuneyuki 川崎庸之. Kawasaki also connected the two Buddhist allegories in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* account to the *Enryaku sōroku*. Naobayashi, *kairitsu juyō*, 311. See Appendix B.

¹⁴⁴ Naobayashi, *kairitsu juyō*, 312.

Inasmuch as this overlapping wording helps to situate the four works in relation to one another chronologically and literarily, it also restricts all four portrayals of the *risshi shōsei* to a single common source. Nonetheless, by noting where and when the characters for *vinaya* or *śīla* are used, we can still gain deeper insight into the event in question. The fact that *vinaya* is specifically referenced very little in the *risshi shōsei* texts is particularly suggestive, given Jianzhen’s disciples’ interest in promoting their master’s activities.

Returning to the *Tōdaiji yōroku* passage, as seen above, the *vinaya* text is referenced in Ryūson’s observation about the state of Japan’s acceptance of the *vinaya* and is used to emphasize the disparity between having such a profound teaching but not the fundamental basics of Buddhist practice, i.e. the precepts. When Ryūson appealed to Prince Toneri, he argued that Japan had not received the precepts, in this case using the *śīla-vinaya* compound (戒律 *kairitsu*). He asked that Yōei be sent to Tang China to seek out a precepts transmitting monk (伝戒師 *denkaishi*), in order that this person could return to Japan and bestow precepts (受戒品 *jukaihon*). This language is also reflected in Yōei and Fushō’s biographies from the *Enryaku sōroku*, both of which state that they went to China to find a “precepts transmitting monk” (伝戒師 *denkaishi*) because Japan had not yet received the precepts (戒律 *kairitsu*).¹⁴⁵

Throughout this section, Ryūson notes the absence of someone to transmit precepts, putting the emphasis on this supervisory role as opposed to teaching the *vinaya* or changing the manner in which ordinations were being carried out. In fact, despite the fact that the episode is typically referred to as a “precepts master solicitation” in academic scholarship, the characters for precepts master (律師 *risshi*) are only used with Ryūson and Daoxuan. I suspect that they are reflecting the

¹⁴⁵ Naobayashi, *kairitsu juyō*, 310.

author's awareness of their later titles as preceptors in the *Sōgō*, rather than their roles in transmitting *vinaya* precepts.

In Ōmi Mifune's *Tōseiden*, the decision to seek out a precepts master was attributed to Yōei and Fushō alone. Upon arriving in China, the text states that they learned that all monks had to take the precepts (戒律 *kairitsu*) in order to properly enter the community of monks (入道 *nyūdō*); without this step, they were not followers of the precepts (持戒者 *jikaisha*). In this way, Yōei and Fushō came to the realization that there was no precepts transmitter (伝戒人 *denkaisha*) in Japan. For that purpose, they approached Daoxuan, here again identified as a *risshi* (律師), in order to go to Japan to be a precepts transmitter (伝戒者 *denkaisha*).¹⁴⁶

This portrayal suggests that Japan's monks in general were ignorant of precepts and their role in monastic ordinations. Ryūson's complaint that there was no one to oversee ordinations in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* indicates awareness of and interest in the *vinaya*. By comparison, the *Tōseiden* implies that there was no sort of ordination process in Japan whatsoever. As discussed previously, this was clearly not the case. Whether transported by Dōkō or not, Japan did already have at least one version of a *vinaya* text as well as numerous commentaries. Moreover, there was already an ordination tradition using Yogācāra bodhisattva precepts.

I suspect that Mifune crafted this section to support Jianzhen's ordination reforms. The presence of the *śīla-vinaya* compound in relation to not only ordinations but also the very act of joining a monastic community suggests that *śīla*, *vinaya*, and the bodhisattva precepts were all being inferred in this case. As discussed in chapter 1, Jianzhen did face pushback from some monks

¹⁴⁶ *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden*, 527.

who were resistant to being reordained using *vinaya* precepts.¹⁴⁷ In this passage, though, the monks responsible for Jianzhen’s relocation were stating that all types of precepts were an essential component to being a legitimate monk.

In Yōei and Fushō’s meeting with Jianzhen, we see a sentence structure similar to the parallel phrasing in the *Tōdaiji yōroku* and *Shoku nihongi*: there was already a copy of this teaching (其法 *sono hō*) in Japan, but there was no one to teach it (無伝法人 *denpōjin ga nai*).¹⁴⁸ The likely implication behind the word “teaching” (法 *hō*) is the *Dharmaguptaka Vinaya*, especially since this section states that the two monks went to see Jianzhen while he was speaking on the *vinaya* (律 *ritsu*) while at Damingsi Temple (大明寺 *Daimyōji*) in Yangzhou Province (揚州 *Yōshū*). The *Tōseiden* states that Yōei and Fushō went on to tell Jianzhen that the semi-legendary Buddhist regent Shōtoku Taishi (聖德太子 574-622) promised that Buddhism would flourish in Japan two hundred years after his time. Considering Jianzhen’s arrival almost exactly two hundred years after Buddhism’s traditional introduction to Japan in 552, this reference may have been intended to portray Jianzhen as fulfilling this promise. Nonetheless, there is no mention of a lack of a *vinaya* tradition in Japan in this section, which is notable considering the importance attached to this history and this work. Instead, the emphasis is on transmitting Buddhist teachings.

When comparing passages from these four texts, we see a consistent emphasis upon seeking out a person capable of transmitting either *sīla* precepts (戒 *kai*) or Buddhist teachings (法 *hō*). Considering that the *sīla* character could also apply to the act of transmitting or taking the precepts, and that the character for Buddhist teachings was invoked in a passage that began with

¹⁴⁷ Tōno, Ganjin, 89-93.

¹⁴⁸ *Tōdaiwajō Tōseiden*, 528

referencing the *vinaya* text, it is quite probable that *vinaya* precepts were implied in these appeals. Nonetheless, what the texts emphasize is the desire for someone to conduct the ceremony, as opposed to someone to teach or transform Japan's monastic ordinations. There are no references pertaining to platforms, ordinations involving both *vinaya* and bodhisattva precepts, or talk of needing ten full monks. In other words, the texts do not indicate that the Japanese monks were looking for any of the changes that Jianzhen implemented, other than having a person in a position of authority oversee ordinations. The fact that even Jianzhen's disciple does not incorporate his master's reforms into the original source material suggests that these common explanations for the precepts master solicitation developed later on.

3.6 Conclusion

After reviewing the earliest primary source accounts of the *risshi shōsei*, it is clear that the longstanding scholarly explanations for the eighth-century precepts master solicitation have no foundation in the sources most closely connected to the event itself. None of the four texts mentions needing a complement of ten monks or indicates any sense of anxiety over the orthodoxy of Japan's monastic community. Later scholarly interpretations are likely informed by such later developments as Jianzhen's significant ordination reforms and Saichō's subsequent dramatic break with the state's ordination process. The medieval monk Gyōnen also undoubtedly contributed to this long-standing misinterpretation through his statements that Daoxuan was incapable of conducting *vinaya*-based ordinations due to an insufficient number of fully ordained monks.

However, this single-minded focus on *vinaya* precepts is also not reflected in the four *risshi shōsei* texts. While there was undoubtedly a great deal of interest in *vinaya* and a desire among at least some Japanese monks to undergo a *vinaya* ordination, evidence of resistance among other monks indicates that this was not a universal sentiment. Moreover, by examining the texts with an

awareness of the different precepts categories in mind, we see *śīla*, *vinaya*, and bodhisattva precepts as well as the *śīla-vinaya* compound all depicted in distinct contexts and used for different purposes. While there was often significant overlap among these categories of precepts, how and when each was used nonetheless provides insight into what was intended by the texts' authors.

In the same vein, viewing how precepts were used in two texts that predated the *risshi shōsei* provides insight into how the Japanese court perceived precepts in the years leading up to the precepts master solicitation. Within the *Nihon shoki* accounts of the nun Zenshin and her brother Tasuna, the precepts intended for joining a monastic organization used the *śīla* character. With Suiko and Kwallūk, not having the *vinaya* was explicitly put forward as an explanation for a monk's egregious transgression. This absence was then used to justify creation of a governmental bureau to oversee and evaluate the monastic community. The fact that several of the overseas monks and Japanese monks who had trained and been ordained overseas were appointed to the Ministry for Monastic Affairs suggests a correlation among monastic behavior, *vinaya* precepts, and the *Sōgō* itself.¹⁴⁹ From this perspective, the precepts master solicitation was part of this same effort to institutionalize, control, and regulate the monastic population.

A closer examination of the language in the four precepts master solicitation texts also suggests that they most consistently focus on the actions of receiving or bestowing precepts, without providing a clear indication of which category of precepts was intended. Throughout these texts we find references pertaining to not simply the *vinaya* but rather to the transmission of all forms of precepts. The fact that both Daoxuan and Jianzhen are described as bestowing bodhisattva precepts indicates not only their interest and understanding of precepts beyond the *vinaya*, but also

¹⁴⁹ While this connection with the *Sōgō* and monks with overseas training or origin is not absolute, there does appear to be enough of a correlation to warrant further research.

that the Japanese court was not wholly focused on *vinaya* precepts. It is also notable that both precepts masters directly presided over the bodhisattva precepts ordination ceremonies, even though the two main forms of bodhisattva precepts were structured to allow for self-ordinations. However, that very provision is what was at stake; the country was already troubled by unapproved, self-ordained monks, as evidenced by rules against self-ordination in the *Sōniryō*. By having a precepts master who was capable of overseeing any kind of ordination — particularly *vinaya* and bodhisattva precepts — that complication was taken care of. To summarize: it may have been the precepts master himself who was wanted more than his fluency with the *vinaya*.

From this perspective, Daoxuan fulfilled the brief of the precepts master solicitation. As we saw when looking at his biographies in chapter 1, Daoxuan was both committed to *vinaya* and knowledgeable in the bodhisattva precepts from the *Brahma Net Sutra*. He is known to have conducted monastic ordinations throughout his time in Japan, and he left behind an impressive lineage of disciples.¹⁵⁰ Gyōnen confirms this latter point, stating that Daoxuan had many disciples capable of expounding upon the *vinaya*.¹⁵¹ As far as Gyōnen was concerned, all that Daoxuan needed to conduct *vinaya*-based ordinations was sufficient numbers of fully ordained monks. As such, the historical records do not indicate that Daoxuan lacked the energy or connections to establish a *vinaya* ordination tradition if he so wanted. When seen in the broader context of contemporaneous understandings of the precepts and the concerns of the court, therefore, it would appear that Daoxuan is best understood not as someone who failed to implement Jianzhen's project, but rather as a prominent monk who implemented an agenda of his own.

¹⁵⁰ The most notable example is Saichō's master Gyōhyō. Daoxuan presided over Gyōhyō's ordination from novice to full monk in 743. Paul Groner, *Saichō*, 23.

¹⁵¹ Pruden, *Vinaya Tradition*, 125.

Conclusion

At its most general level, this dissertation has grappled with a broad range of issues related to the dissemination of new modes of ritual practice, musical performance, and political legitimation in eighth-century Japan. I have done this by examining in detail the activities of a group of five Buddhist monks who arrived in Japan between the years of 736-754 and predominantly resided at Daianji Temple (大安寺). These monks, I have argued, played a central role in reshaping understandings of monastic governance, musical performance, language instruction, thaumaturge, and Buddhist doctrine at the Japanese court.

In examining this coterie of monks, I have particularly focused on their role in promulgating the *Flower Garland Sutra* (Sk. *Avatamsaka sūtra*; 華嚴經 *Kegon kyō*), the complex relationship between their overseas origins and their religio-cultural authority, and the broader overlap between the dissemination of Buddhist-inflected cultural motifs and technologies. Of particular note in this regard was the role of the Buddhist precepts in the contemporaneous reimagining of Japanese political and cultural identities, as well as ongoing biases in interpreting all of the above.

In chapter 1, I began this process through an examination of the biographical details of these monks that are left to us in eighth-century historical chronicles, temple records, epitaphs, and biographies. In certain cases, I supplemented these works with readings from later medieval histories and collections of tales known as *setsuwa* (説話). In so doing, I demonstrated how these monks' foreign origins contributed to their legacies both during their lives and long after. The overseas origins of these monks as well as their mastery of foreign languages and musical performances, I argued, provided them with a form of authority and cultural capital that contributed

to their prominence both during their lives and long after. Retrospective histories of the lineal affiliations of these monks, similarly, served to provide later sectarian exegetes with traceable connections between Japan and the Asian mainland.

I continued examining the connections that these overseas monks provided with mainland Asia in the second chapter. One particular focus was the central role awarded to both monks and performing art troupes of overseas origins, or at least specializing in continental forms of music and dance, during and after the eye-opening ceremony for the Great Buddha (大仏) at Tōdaiji Temple (東大寺) in 752. This event, I argued, demonstrates the degree to which the Japanese court highlighted its access to and mastery of overseas forms of culture as an indication of its civilization and cosmopolitanism. It further served to announce Japan's emergence as a Buddhist country, highlighting not only the country's ritual prowess, but also its technological skill in crafting a fifty-foot bronze and gold Buddhist statue. The event also allowed the Japanese court to demonstrate its cultural proficiency in providing a panoply of mainland Asian cultural entertainments.

In my final chapter, I then grappled with issues of monastic governance and authority within a setting of centuries old academic bias and retroactive interpretation. The main focus in this section began with a review and critique of standard explanations for how four of the five monks relocated to Japan in comparison with what was stated in eighth-century primary sources. According to prevailing scholarly understandings, the campaign that sought these monks out was motivated by insecurity over the state of Japan's monastic community. The root of this insecurity was the country's inability to use orthodox ordination practices for elevating novices to the rank of full monks or nuns. At the heart of this issue was a concern there were insufficient numbers of fully ordained monastics to oversee ordination ceremonies in compliance with the *vinaya*, a category of texts related to monastic behavior and temple administration.

In my analysis, I noted that this explanation failed to account for the multiple types of precepts available at this time, and that there were relatively few specific references invoking *vinaya* in the primary sources. I further argued that there was no indication within these texts of anxiety or the need for more fully ordained monks. Upon researching later historical portrayals of the precepts master solicitation, or *risshi shōsei* (律師招請), I pointed to Gyōnen (凝然; 1240-1321) as a possible source for these misinterpretations. Additionally, I suggested that historians' understanding of the Japanese court's active recruitment of overseas monks had been influenced by the historical importance of the *vinaya* master Jianzhen (鑑真 *Ganjin*; 688-763) and the ninth-century founder of the Tendai (天台) school, Saichō (最澄; 757-822).

This final chapter also demonstrated what I feel are some of this dissertation's greatest contributions to the field of early Japanese religious history. In this work I have challenged the prevailing premises about the *risshi shōsei* that have long pervaded historical impressions of not only the event itself, but also how and why these overseas monks relocated to Japan. In doing so, I have also raised a series of more fundamental questions about the *vinaya*'s primacy during this time. I have argued that the repeated references in these primary sources to the actions of bestowing precepts demonstrate that they were not focused simply on the subject matter of the precepts, but rather on the individuals supervising ordinations. When viewed in conjunction with the Japanese court's underlying concerns with the proliferation of unregulated self-ordinations during this time, I have therefore suggested that the primary purpose for the precepts master solicitation may not have been establishing an ordination process based upon a stricter set of monastic precepts, but rather on restricting the parameters for how ordinations were carried out in general.

In addition to challenging the role of *vinaya* in the *risshi shōsei*, I also have argued that these overseas monks' varied specialties and activities suggest that the precepts master solicitation

was only one part of the 733 diplomatic mission's broader campaign to find overseas specialists in a variety of cultural, doctrinal, and even political modes. This broader focus on the part of Japanese embassies and monks charged with recruiting overseas specialists in turn allows us to appreciate the campaign's greater historical significance. Heuristically, the Japanese court's relationship with Buddhism's establishment and growth throughout Japan can be broken down into three stages. The first stage is reflected in the earliest records of Buddhism's introduction to Japan. These references feature outside countries sending Buddhist texts, images, monks, and the artisans and craftsmen necessary to build temples and create Buddhist icons locally. In the second stage, we see the Japanese court's efforts to send out their own monks to study in overseas courts, with the expectation that these monks would return to Japan after years away and share their hard-won knowledge. With the *risshi shōsei*, however, we see an active campaign to locate and invite foreign specialists to immigrate to Japan.

The fact that this coterie of monks arrived on the eve of Japan's grand emergence as a Buddhist country demonstrates the degree to which the Japanese court was actively looking to the Asian mainland for Buddhist statehood models and foreign advisors. As noted above, there was nothing "incidental" about the fact that there was a population of overseas monks residing at Daianji Temple. In looking at the prominent roles given to the overseas monks and artistic troupes specializing in mainland Asian cultural performance in the eye-opening ceremony of the Great Buddha, we can see the degree to which these groups were intentionally included and even featured in this event. From the decorations to the music to the entertainment, the ceremony was a celebration of Japan's multinational population. When taken in consideration of the wealth of materials from the Shōsōin Repository (正倉院) that were brought to Japan through Silk Road

trade and transmission routes, all of this amply illustrates the degree to which the emperor and court more broadly were interested in overseas culture, technology, religion, and material goods.

It is my hope that this dissertation will lead to further questioning of the fundamental meanings of references to precepts and the role of *vinaya*, especially prior to Jianzhen's arrival in 754. In this regard, I aim to further explore sources from the Shōsōin Repository in my future work, with the hopes of uncovering greater insights into the activities and importance of these monks and other people of overseas origins. In doing so, I aim to provide a broader context of eighth-century Japan's fascination and interaction with the world beyond their borders. An additional area of interest is how the era's Buddhocentric policies were received outside of the capital region. Between the countrywide network of state protection temples and the ordination platforms established in borderlands, we see how the Japanese court used Buddhism to expand political presence and sovereignty throughout the realm under the auspices of the emperor's benevolence.

Through these future projects, I aim to look both microscopically and macroscopically at the role of Buddhism in relation to state and international politics. Perhaps even more importantly, I hope to highlight the degree to which Buddhist rites and doctrines served as a common thread linking the endeavors of rulers across East Asia seeking bulwarks that could be used for protection against natural disasters, uprisings, and invasions. In this way, Buddhism operated as a common language and practice that helped to connect disparate lands. At the same time, I also wish to highlight the degree to which there was an element of a veiled threat at play as well. Incorrectly performing Buddhist rituals or honoring Buddhist deities could lead to weaknesses or a loss of protection. It is only when we look at overseas interactions and the Japanese monastic community in this light that we can fully understand how vitally important it was for the Japanese court that

they could be certain that their own internal policies, procedures, and practices corresponded with those of their more powerful Buddhist neighbors.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Eye-opening Ceremony Passage from the *Tōdaiji yōroku*¹

供養章第三 此有二 一開眼供養会 二御願供養会
一開眼供養会

Kuyō Passage Number Three: 1) The Eye-Opening Ceremony; 2) the Honored Head Ceremony²
Part I: The Eye-Opening Ceremony

I. Preamble³

皇帝敬請
菩提僧正
以四月八日設齋東大寺供養盧舍那仏敬欲開元辺眼朕身疲弱不便起居其可代朕執筆者和上一人而已仍請開眼師乞勿辭扮受敬白

皇帝敬請
隆尊律師
以四月八日設齋東大寺欲講花嚴經其理甚深彼旨難究自非大德博聞多識誰能開示方広妙門乞勿辭扮受敬白
咒願大安寺道璿律師請書如右
都講景静禪師 請書如右使各差五位

天平勝宝四年三月廿一日勅書

¹ *Tōdaiji Yōroku*, 46-50. Translation is my own, with some influence from a partial summary in Sugiyama Jirō 杉山二郎 “Nazo ōki Tenpyōsō no jitsuzō” 謎多き天平僧の実像, *Daihōrin* 54, no. 1 (January, 1987): 46-47. Japanese text taken from “*Kuyō jō dai san*” 供養章第三, in *Zoku zoku Gunsho Ruiju* 続々群書類従 11, third edition (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kaiseikai, 1978): 41-43. JapanKnowledge <https://japanknowledge.com> (last accessed July 25, 2021).

² This latter section refers to a second eye-opening ceremony that took place in 861 and commemorated the repairs to the Great Buddha’s head, after it fell off due to an earthquake in 855. While not relevant for the purposes of this work, the inclusion of this second part provides some indication as to the work’s age, especially since later eye-opening ceremonies are not included.

³ Section headings are intended for ease with referencing specific sections within the chapter. They are not original to the text, nor are they intended to indicate divisions within the text.

The [retired] emperor [Shōmu]⁴ summoned Superintendent Bodai-sōjō [Bodhisena], [saying,] “prepare for Tōdaiji to be ready for the [enlivenment] ceremony of the Vairocana Buddha on the eighth day of the fourth month. I want the unlimited eyes to be opened. My body is sick and weak, and my movements unsuitable. [As such,] you shall be my stand-in as the painter. There is one great priest *wajō*. Therefore, [he is] called the eye-opening priest.” [Bodhisena] accepted this request without a word.

The emperor summoned Preceptor Ryūson-*risshi*, [saying], “prepare for Tōdaiji to be ready on the eighth day of the fourth month. I want you to lecture on the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Its reason is profound and its principle is difficult to master. Who would expound upon the correct and expansive marvelous teaching if not a virtuous priest with erudition and extensive knowledge?” [Ryūson] accepted this request without a word.

The invocation [was to be given by] Preceptor Dōsen-*risshi* [Daoxuan] of Daianji Temple.
(The written acknowledgement is as above)

The preacher [was to be] the meditation priest Keisei.
(The written acknowledgement is as above)

[The emperor] bestowed the fifth rank upon them all.

Tenpyō Shōhō year 4 third month day 21 [April 9, 752]

II: Procession

以四月四日太上天皇太皇太后幸行東大寺

六日鎮裏京使

左從四位下百濟王孝忠 從五位上中臣朝臣清麿

右正五位下大伴宿祢稻公 從五位下建部君豐足

兵士四百人各二百人

七日諸家獻種々造花

八日留守官

東宮大納言巨勢卿 中納言多治比広足

西宮中納言紀朝臣麿

九日太上天皇太后天皇座東大堂布板殿以開眼其儀式並同元日但無侍從上堂裏莊嚴種々造花弄妙繡幡守上散種々花東西懸繡灌頂八方懸五色灌頂

On the fourth day of the fourth month, the retired emperor [Shōmu] and the retired empress [Kōmyō] went to Tōdaiji.

On the sixth, the Capital Guard [advanced].

⁴ The ruler at this time would have been Empress Kōken (孝謙天皇 *Kōken tennō*; 713-770, r. 749-758; also reigned as Shōtoku 称徳 from 764-770), but the context makes clear that this is her father Emperor Shōmu (聖武天皇 *Shōmu tennō*; 701-756; r. 724-749), who stepped down three years before the eye-opening ceremony in 749.

[Leading] the left [squadron] were Kudara Konikishi Kōchū, ranked Junior Fourth Lower,⁵ and Nakatomi Ason Kiyomaro, ranked Junior Fifth Upper.

[Leading] the right [squadron] were Ōtomo Sukune Inakimi, Senior Fifth Upper, and Takebe Kimi Toyotari, Junior Fifth Lower.

There were four hundred soldiers, two hundred people [per side].

On the seventh day, various households offered several types of handmade flowers.

On the eighth day, the officials representing the empress while she was away [were]:

[Overseeing] the Eastern Palace⁶: Major Counselor Kōsei and Middle Counselor Tajihi no Hiroinari.

[Overseeing] the Western Palace: Middle Counselor Ki Ason Maro.

On the ninth day, the Retired Emperor, Retired Empress, and the Empress Regnant, went to Tōdaiji, where they sat upon a cloth-covered platform in the Eastern Great Hall. The Eye-Opening ceremony was comparable to New Year's Day, although there were no chamberlains. Additionally, the rear of the hall was adorned with various artificial flowers and elegant embroidered banners. Above the hall, several types of flowers scattered down. In the East and West, embroidered *kanjō* [banners] hung, and five colored *kanjō* banners hung in the four cardinal and four ordinal directions.

III. Ceremony

其先請復位已上僧自南門直參入引道

玄番頭外從五位下秦忌寸首磨

右中弁從五位上懸犬養宿禰古磨

次開眼師僧正菩提法師乘輿捧白蓋自東入迎

正五位下賀茂朝臣即足

從五位上安倍朝臣島磨

次講師隆尊律師乘輿差白蓋自西入迎

從四位上橘朝臣奈良磨

從四位上大伴宿禰古慈悲

次誦師延福法師乘輿差白蓋自東入迎

從四位下清原八束

從四位下石作磨

並着堂幄即開眼師進仏前取筆開眼口筆着繩令受集人等開眼了即講誦共登高座講說花嚴經
請衆僧沙彌等自南門左右頌以參入引道

左玄蕃助 正六位上

懸犬養宿禰吉男 右允

從六位上榎井朝臣馬養

着東面北幄即大安藥師元興々福寺四寺獻種々奇異物

⁵ Translation of ranks follows the format used in William H. McCullough & Helen Craig McCullough, *A Tale of Flowering Fortunes: Annals of Japanese Aristocratic Life in the Heian Period* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1980). See in particular volume II, Appendix A, 789-831.

⁶ Traditionally the living quarters of the Crown Prince. At this point, there was no heir yet designated to succeed Empress Regnant Kōken.

At the beginning [of the procession], monks of the *fukui* rank⁷ and above were asked to enter from the south gate and lead the way. [They were accompanied by:]

The head of the Agency for Buddhists and Foreigners, Hata Imiki Obitomaro, ranked Outer Junior Fifth Lower.

The Middle Controller of the Right, Agata-Inukai Komaro, ranked Junior Fifth Upper.

Next [came] the Eye-Opening Priest, the Superintendent Bodai-*hōshi* [Bodhisena]. He entered from the east, riding a palanquin and carrying a white canopy.

He was greeted by:

Kamo Ason Tsunotari, ranked Senior Fifth Lower.

Abe Ason Shimamaro, ranked Junior Fifth Upper.

Next [entered] the lecturer, the precepts master Ryūson-*risshi*. He entered from the west riding a palanquin and carrying a white canopy. He was greeted by:

Tachibana no Ason Naramaro, ranked Junior Fourth Upper.

Ōtomo no Sukune Koshihi, ranked Junior Fourth Upper.

Next the reader monk Enpuku-*hōshi* entered from the east riding a palanquin with a white canopy and was greeted by:

Fujiwara Ason Yatsuka, ranked Junior Fourth Lower.

Ishikawa Ason Maro, ranked Junior Fourth Lower.

They sat down by the curtain. Presently, the eye-opening priest advanced before the Buddha. Taking a brush, he opened the eyes. There was also a rope attached to the brush. [Bodhisena] commanded the assembled people to [take hold and assist with] finishing the eye-opening. Then, the lecturer and reader together advanced to the pulpit and expounded on the *Flower Garland Sutra*. Several monks and novices entered from the south gate, divided to the left and right, and were led forward.

The leader on the left was: The assistant head to the Agency for Buddhists and Foreigners, Agata Inukai Sukune no Yoshio, ranked Senior Sixth Upper.

The leader on the right was: Controller Enoi Ason Umakai, ranked Junior Sixth Upper.

[The monks] then sat at the eastern side by the northern curtain. Thereupon, [monks from] the four temples of Daianji, Yakushiji, Gangōji and Kōfukuji presented various marvelous gifts.

IV. Musical Celebration

繼自南門柱東過□種々樂參入

勅

大歌久米頭々

舞從五位下大伴宿祢伯曆

⁷ The *fukui* (複位) rank belonged to a monastic hierarchical system that predated the Monastic Rank System (僧位制 *sōisei*) and included other ranks such as *shii* (師位) and *hani* (半位). However, information on these rankings is fragmentary and unclear. Katsuura Noriko 勝浦令子, *Nihon kodai no sōni to shakai* 日本古代の僧尼と社会 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 2000): 19.

從五位佐伯宿祢文成
 猪伏舞頭
 外從五位上丈忌寸磨
 從五位下土師宿祢牛勝
 右大臣已下擊鼓十六人
 妓樂鼓擊六十人平群□中財人等也
 頭
 治部卿從四位上船守 内匠頭從四位上大市王
 雅樂助正六位上林連久方 少丞正六位上安倍々如悉
 唐散樂頭
 近江少掾正六位上食朝臣奠人
 治部少丞從六位上高田朝臣家主
 唐中樂頭
 治部少輔從五位下下毛野稻磨
 雅樂大允正六位上津史真磨
 唐古樂
 治部少録正七位上土師宿祢山磨
 正七位下葛井連犬養
 高麗樂頭
 治部少録正七位下船建虫磨
 雅樂允正六位下播摩広島

 度雅樂四寺行道二反廻畢左右頌立於堂前
 左大臣以下擊鼓著座
 以次第奏 大歌女 大御舞卅人 久米舞
 大伴卅人
 佐伯廿人

 猪伏舞卅人
 檜前忌寸廿人
 土師宿祢廿人
 女漢躍歌百二十人
 立天平大平
 跳子名百人 唐古樂一舞 唐散樂一舞 林邑樂三舞
 高麗樂一舞 唐中樂一舞 唐女舞一舞 施袴廿人 高麗樂三舞

 高麗女樂
 同日夕入座東宮

IV. Musical Celebration

Then, from the eastern side of the pillar by the South Gates, a variety of tumultuous types of music [played].

At the head of the *Ōuta* and *Kumemai* performers were:
 Ōtomo Sukune Ojimarō, ranked Junior Fifth Lower.
 Saeki Sukune Matanari, ranked Junior Fifth Upper.

At the head of the *Tatafushimai* dancers were:

Fumi Imiki Kaminomaro, ranked Outer Junior Fifth Upper.

Haji Sukune Ushikatsu, ranked Junior Fifth Lower.

Sixteen people, from the Minister of the Left and below, beat *tsuzumi* hand drums.⁸

There were sixty people hitting drums for *Gigaku*.

These were common people from the fields of Heguri Province.

At the head [of the next section] were:

The Minister of the Ministry of Civil Administration Lord Fune Ō, ranked Junior Fourth Upper, [and] the head of the Office for Artisans, Prince Ōchi, ranked Junior Fourth Upper.

The assistant to the Office for Court Music Hayashi Muraji Kuma, ranked Senior Sixth Upper, [and] undersecretary to the Ministry of Civil Administration Abe Ason Otokashi, ranked Senior Sixth Upper.

At the head of the *Tōsangaku* performers were:

The lesser third rank provincial administrator for Ōmi Province Hami Ason Okihito, ranked Senior Sixth Upper.

The undersecretary to the Ministry of Civil Administration Takamuko Ason Yakanushi, ranked Junior Sixth Upper.

At the head of the *Tōchūgaku* performers were:

Junior Assistant Minister for the Ministry of Civil Administration Shimonotsuke Ason Inarimaro, ranked Junior Fifth Lower.

Major Controller for Court Music Tsu Muraji Hitomaro, ranked Senior Sixth Upper.

At the head of the *Tōkogaku* performers were:

The lesser fourth ranked official for the Ministry of Civil Administration Haji Sukune Mushimaro, ranked Senior Seventh Upper.

Fujī Muraji Inukai, ranked Senior Seventh Lower.

At the head of the *Komagaku* performers were:

The lesser fourth ranked official for the Ministry of Civil Administration Fune Muraji Mushimaro, ranked Senior Seventh Lower.

Commissioner for Court Music Tachibanabe Hiroshima, ranked Senior Lower Sixth.

⁸ Towao Sakaehara argues that this section is connected to the below reference to the Minister of the Left and the *tsuzumi* hand drum players. Moreover, the following section, which mentions a head but not what was being led in, should really be these drummers. Sakaehara Towao, 栄原永遠男 “*Daibutsu kaigen kuyō no kōzō to sono seijiteki ishiki* 大仏開眼会の構造とその政治的意識,” *Toshi bunka kenkyū* 2 (2003): 20-21.

[Monks from the] four major temples proceeded [out of the temple] and circled [the space] twice [while accompanied by] *Toragaku* music. They divided into two [lines] and stood in front of the hall.⁹

Those below Minister of the Left sat and beat on *tsuzumi* hand drums.¹⁰

Immediately after [the procession], the *Ōuta* ladies performed. There were 30 people performing the Great [Seasonal] Dances. The *Kumemai* was also performed by:

Twenty people from the Ōtomo kinship group

Twenty people from the Saeki kinship group

Thirty people danced the *Tatafushimai*. [This group comprised of:]

Twenty people from the Hinokuma Imiki kinship group

Twenty people from the Haji Sukune kinship group

One hundred twenty women from the Aya kinship group performed the *Tōka*, [playing the pieces:]

“Establishing World Peace”

“Great Peace”¹¹

There were one hundred *Tobukona*[dancers]

There was one *Tōkogaku* dance

There was one *Tōsangaku* dance

There were three *Rinyūgaku* dances

There was one *Komagaku* dance

There was one *Tōchūgaku* dance

There was one *Tōnyomai*, [performed by] twenty women wearing *hakama* trousers

There were three *Komagaku* dances

There was *Komanyogaku*

⁹ The wording is unclear as to whether they were entering or departing the temple, at least in as far as there was a temple building at this time. Given the large number of individuals involved and the *Shoku Nihongi*'s reference to monks dividing and entering the garden, going outside seems more appropriate.

¹⁰ As noted above, Towao Sakaehara argues that the earlier reference to the Minister of the Left and the sixteen *tsuzumi* drum players actually belongs here and was improperly inserted into the earlier section. Sakaehara, 20-21.

¹¹ The meaning of 立天平 and 大平 is not clear from the passage's context. I am borrowing Tanaka Yoshihisa's categorization that these are the names of *Tōka* songs. Tanaka Yoshihisa 田中 義久 “Komyunikēshon kōi ron 2: bunka shakai gaku he no izanai” コミュニケーション行為論(2)文化社会学へのいざない, *Hōsei daigaku shakai gakubu gakkai* 60, no. 2 (September, 2013): 6. In her translation, Eta Harich-Schneider conflates this line with the following one to suggest that the *Tōka* incorporated 120 performers taking part in “chorus, dance, and song” as well as one hundred dancing children. Eta Harich-Schneider, *A History of Japanese Music* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973): 74.

In the evening of the same day, [Retired Emperor Shōmu and Retired Empress Kōmyō]¹² went to the Eastern palace.

V. Alms-giving

三宝施絁一千疋使大藏省

講師施絁三百疋 綿三百屯布 三百端

使治部少輔從五位上野朝臣柏麿
布十端

開眼師施絁十疋 綿十屯

使治部少丞正六位上高向朝臣家主

讀師并咒願師施物同開眼師

使治部少丞正六位上安倍朝臣乙加悉

法用 梵音二百人 維那一人

已上二百一人各絁
二疋綿二屯布二端

錫杖二百人有施梵音同

唄十人 散花十人 定者廿人 衲三百四十人 甲三百卅人 開眼師
供養師 讀師 咒願師 都講師 維那師六人

一請僧千廿六口 各布施絁 一疋使大藏省

一衆僧沙弥尼並九千七百九十九人 各絁綿一屯 使大藏省

一衆僧沙弥九千人 已上都合一万廿六人 万僧供

十日中宮御幸東大寺奏種々樂

One thousand bolts¹³ of silk were donated to the Three Treasures by the Ministry of Finance.

To the lecturer, 300 bolts of silk, 3 tons of cotton, and 300 lengths of linen were donated by the Lesser Assistant for the Department of Governance Affairs, Shimonotsuke Ason Inamaro, ranked Junior Fifth Lower.

To the eye-opening priest, 10 bolts of silk, 10 tons of cotton, 10 lengths of linen were donated by *Shōjō* Assistant for the *Jibushō*, Takamuko Ason Yakanushi, ranked Senior Sixth Upper.¹⁴

To the reader as well as the convocation priest, the alms were the same as for the eye-opening priest. They were donated by *Shōjō* Assistant for the *Jibushō*, Abe Ason Otokashi, ranked Senior Sixth Upper.

Those involved with the Buddhist ceremony:

¹² The subject of this sentence is not clear, and so I have adopted Sakaehara's suggestion that it was Shōmu and Kōmyō who went to the Eastern Palace, given that *Shoku Nihongi* states that Empress Regnant Kōken went to her kinsman Fujiwara Nakamaro's (藤原中麿; 706-764) Tamura residence. Sakaehara, 22

¹³ Units of measurement are approximate.

¹⁴ There is a discrepancy between this and the previous record for Takamuko Ason Yakanushi. Previously, he was ranked Junior Sixth Upper

Two hundred sutra chanters
The *ina* temple administrator
Not more than 201 people [who were given] ten lengths of linen.
Each received one bolt of silk and two tons of silk.

Two hundred staff [bearers]
The linen offerings are the same as the sutra chanters.

Ten singers
Ten flower scatters
Twenty incense bearers
Three hundred thirty monks in patchwork robes
Three hundred thirty monks in hexagonal patterned robes

Eye-opening priest
Priest in charge of the service
Reader
Invocation Priest
Preacher
Ina Temple Administrator
[In total] Six people [presided over the ceremony]

One thousand twenty-six invited monks were each given linen and one bolt of silk by the Ministry of Finance.

Nine thousand seven hundred ninety-nine assorted monks and novice nuns were each given one ton of cotton by the Ministry of Finance.

Alternate text (in red ink)
There was a group of nine thousand monk novices; all together, there were ten thousand twenty-six people, and ten thousand monk offerings.

On the tenth day, the [inhabitant of] the Central Palace [Fujiwara Miyako, Shōmu's mother]¹⁵ went to Tōdaiji Temple. Various kinds of music were offered.

¹⁵ According to Sakaehara, the *chūgū* (中宮) refers to Shōmu's mother, Fujiwara Miyako (藤原宮子; d.754). Sakaehara, 22.

Appendix B: The *Risshi Shōsei* passage from the *Tōdaiji yōroku*¹

五年癸酉。公家為良弁。創 | 立羅索院。号古金鐘寺是也。」又有元興寺沙門隆尊律師者。志存鵝珠。終求草繫。於我国中。雖有律本。闕伝戒人。幸筵玄門。嘆無戒足。即請舍人王子処曰。日本戒律未具。假王威力。発 | 遣僧栄叡。随使入唐。請伝戒師。還我聖朝。伝受戒品。舍人親王即為隆尊奏。勅召件栄叡入唐。於是興福寺栄叡。與普照俱奉勅。四月三日。随遣唐大使多治比真人広成。到唐国。留学問。方知本国無伝戒人。請大福先寺沙門道璿。附副使大中臣朝臣名代之舶先向日本。擬伝戒之法師。赴請天平八年七月庚午。自至海東。君臣下流及行基。道慈。晨夕至礼。勅任律師。朝參鳳闕。夕憩竜宮。出 | 入丹墀。徘徊金地。從鑑真和上領諸門人。為伝戒律。自是已來。共行壇法。後辞律師。入芳野現光寺。安禪孤棲。味道餐風。命終之前一日有化。俗人夢見道璿乘六牙白象著白衣向東而去。由此方知普賢。

The tenth day (of the sexagenary cycle), fifth year [Tempyō; 733]

The court had the monk Ryōben establish Kensakuin Hall.² This is what in old times was called Konshūji Temple.

There was also the *śramaṇa*³ Ryūson-*risshi* of Gangōji, [who was like] the [monk in the story of the] goose [that swallowed the] gem, and [his] yearning to the end [was like] the [monk who was] tied up in the grass.⁴ In this country [we] already have a book of precepts, [but we] lack someone

¹ *Tōdaiji Yōroku*, 7-8. Characters taken from *Zoku zoku Gunsho Ruiju* 続々群書類従 11, third edition (Tokyo: Zoku gunsho ruijū kaiseikai, 1978): 4. JapanKnowledge <http://japanknowledge.com> (last accessed July 27, 2021).

² This is the current Hokkedō (法華堂) at Tōdaiji, also known as Sangetsudō (三月堂). The hall was named after a snare (羅索 *kensaku/kenjaku*) used to capture birds, in this case demonstrating the Buddha's compassion for catching and saving the living. The title also relates to a form of Avalokitesvara known as Amoghapāśa (不空羅索觀音 *Fukū Kenjaku Kannon*), who bears a snare in one of his many hands. A statue of Amoghapāśa was the main figure of worship in the Kensakuin Hall, and is still available to be seen in the Tōdaiji Museum. See Dorothy Wong, *Buddhist Pilgrim-Monks as Agents of Cultural and Artistic Transmission: The International Buddhist Art Style in East Asia, ca. 645-770* (Singapore: NUS Press, 2018): 184-194.

³ A Sanskrit term for an ascetic or renunciant, in this case a Buddhist monk or nun.

⁴ These refer to two stories from the *Kalpanā maṇḍitikā* (大莊嚴經論 *Dai shōgon kyōron*; T 201.4.319a24 and T 201.04.268c10), a collection of stories, *jataka* tales, and allegories. Also known by its Chinese name, *Da zhuangyan jing lun*. In the first, a monk watched a goose swallow a jewel. Not wanting the goose to be killed to retrieve the gem, the monk remained silent and accepted the accusation and beating for stealing the gem. The goose returned to lap up the blood of the bleeding monk. It was thereafter killed, and the jewel was retrieved, thereby absolving the monk. The second story involved a monk who was set upon by a thief and tied down with grass. Due to his commitment to not kill, the monk would not rip up the grass. A king came upon the bound monk and was so moved, he converted to Buddhism. This appears to have been a known pairing, as they appear together in a letter by the monk Zhishi (智實 *Chishin*; 604-638) in 627, and in the Chinese traveling monk Yijing's (義淨 *Gijō*; 635-713) preface for the precepts platform at Shaolin Temple (少林寺). Jinhua Chen, "Manuscripts, printed canons, and extra-canonical sources: a case study based on a biography from the *Xu Gaoseng Zhuan* (Further Biographies of Eminent Monks) by Daoxuan 道宣 (596-667)." *Chinese Buddhist Canons in the Age of Printing*, ed. Darui Long, Jinhua Chen. New York: Routledge, 2020. p. 74, 79 n67, 79-89 n68. Charles Muller also notes that the stories appear together in a series of Confucian debates in Korea. Charles Muller, *Korea's Great Buddhist-Confucian Debate: The Treatises of Chong Tojon*

to transmit precepts. [We] happily have the profound approach [of Buddhism], [but] not the moral fundamentals! [Ryūson] promptly appealed to Prince Toneri, saying, “Japan has not yet been provided with the precepts. [By the] granting of the prince’s power, dispatch the monk Yōei and have him enter Tang [China, where he will] request a precepts scholar to send back to our holy court. [He will] teach [us] to receive the precepts.” Prince Toneri promptly [had] Ryūson report to the emperor. By imperial decree, the aforementioned Yōei was ordered to go to Tang [China]. Additionally, the monk Fushō was ordered to accompany Yōei of Kōfukuji.

Fourth month third day. Ambassador Tajihī Mabito Hironari accompanied [Yōei and Fushō] and arrived at the country of the Tang. [Yōei and Fushō were] scholar monks, who knew that there was no precepts scholar in their home country. [They] asked the *śramaṇa* Daoxuan of Dafuxiansi Temple [to go to Japan to serve as a precepts master]. [He] was attached to the vice-envoy Great Nakatomi Ason no Nashiro’s ship and went ahead to Japan. [He] acted as a precepts scholar priest and proceeded with [their] request.

[On] the seventh day (of the sexagenary cycle) of the seventh month in the year Tempyō 8 [736], these people arrived at the Eastern Sea. Master and servant and all below as well as Gyōki and Dōji presented gifts from morning to evening. By degree, [Daoxuan] was appointed *risshi* [in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs]. In the morning [he] reached the *Hōkaku* [Ministry of Central Affairs] and in the evening rested in the Dragon Palace. He entered the prince’s palace and wandered the gold [adorned] ground. [He] followed Jianzhen *wajō* and taught many students. He became a precepts instructor. From thereafter [he] carried out the platform duties. Later, he ceased being a *risshi*. He entered Genkōji Temple at Yoshino. [There he] lived alone and meditated. He tasted the way and ate the wind. One day before he died, he attained enlightenment. The common people [of the area] dreamt of Daoxuan riding a six-tusked white elephant. He appeared in a white gown and was headed towards the East. In this way, they knew that he was Fugen.

(*Sambong*) and *Hamho Tuktong* (*Kihwa*). Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2015, p. 91, 163 n42, n43. The second tale is also referenced in the *Brahma Net Sutra*. Charles Muller and Kenneth K. Tanaka, trans., *The Brahmā’s Net Sutra* (Moraga, California: BDK America, 2017): 62, 80 n31.

Appendix C: The Edited Biography of Daoxuan *wajō*

道璿和上傳纂¹

The edited biography of Daoxuan *wajō*.²

大唐道璿和上、天平八歲、至自大唐、戒行絕倫、教誘不怠、至天平勝寶三歲、聖朝請爲律師、俄而以疾退居比蘇山寺、常自言曰、遠尋聖人所以成聖者、必由持戒以次漸登、和上每誦梵網之文、其謹誦之聲、零零可聽、如玉如金、發人善心、吟味幽微、律藏細密、禪法玄深、遂集註菩薩戒經三卷、非我輩之所以逮、更何得以稱述、自餘行迹、具載碑文、其前序云、昔三藏菩提達磨、天竺東來至於漢地、傳禪法於慧可、可傳僧璨、璨傳道信、信傳弘忍、忍傳神秀、秀傳普寂寂即我律師所事和上也、本在嵩山流傳禪法、人衆多歸、故有勅請入東都、常在華嚴寺傳法、故曰華嚴尊者、璿和上四季追福文云春季三月內、奉爲達磨和上、乃至第七華嚴和上、及陽澤和上、並十方法界無邊三寶、滅除根本無明十地罪障、一切微細所知煩惱、夏季六月內、奉爲無始時來一切師僧、乃至禪河和上、及并府三師七證、并盡未來際、十方法界一切師僧善友、一日一夜、供禮盡法界、虛空界一切三寶、永斷身口支破戒、及三業毀破三聚淨戒之罪、秋季冬季二節、如願文說、天平寶字三年三月二十五日、峯林下發願也、大通禪師者、當則天之朝肩輿上殿、跌坐觀君、大聖皇后所奉之尊号、號曰大通、本號神秀、請爲兩京法主也、

Daoxuan *wajō* of the Great Tang, came to us in Tenpyō 8 (736) from Tang China. He was unparalleled in following the precepts, and was not negligent in leading in the teachings. In Tenpyō Shōhō 3 (751), Emperor Shōmu appointed him *risshi*.³ Suddenly he became ill and withdrew to Hisodera. He would always say, “when looking for a holy person in a faraway place, the reason that they have become holy is absolutely from following the precepts. Proceed and eventually you will climb to your destination [of being a holy person].”

The *wajō* always chanted the words of the *Brahma Net Sutra*. His voice while reciting sounded like falling rain; it was like jewels, like gold, [and it brought forth the inner] virtue from those [who heard it]. Through close and secluded reading, [he studied] the detailed and hidden [teachings]

¹ Japanese text from Takeuchi Rizō 竹内理三, ed., *Nara ibun* 寧樂遺文 3 (Tōkyōdō Shuppan, 1962): 889. English translation made using Miyata Toshihiko 宮田俊彦, *Kibi no Makibi* 吉備真備 (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kōbunkan, 1961): 111-113.

² *Wajō* (和上) has a number of meanings, including preceptor. However, considering its use later on in the lineage, it is likely intended to mean “great monk.”

³ *Risshi* (律師) refers to Daoxuan’s bureaucratic role as preceptor in the Ministry for Monastic Affairs, or *Sōgō* (僧綱).

of] the *vinaya*, and delved into the deep mysteries of meditation⁴ teachings. Finally, he [created] a three-volume commentary on the bodhisattva precepts sutra (*Brahma Net Sutra*). This is not something that we could ever achieve. There is nothing more that can be said.

As for his other behaviors, they are provided in his epitaph. The preface states, “Long ago, *Tripitaka*⁵ Bodhidharma⁶ went east from India and arrived in China, where he transmitted meditation teachings to [the monk] Huike. Huike transmitted it to Sengcan, who transmitted it to Daoxin, who transmitted it to Hongren, who transmitted it to Shenxiu, who transmitted it to Puji—that is to say, the *wajō* that our *risshi* [Daoxuan] served. Based at Mt. Songshan, [Puji] widely transmitted meditation teachings, and many people took refuge [in the Buddhist teachings]. Because of this, there came an imperial rescript inviting him to go to the Eastern Capital [Luoyang], where he regularly stayed at Huayansi Temple and transmitted [Buddhist] teachings. Because of this, he was called, “the Huayan venerable one.”

Daoxuan *wajō*’s Memorial Service for Four Seasons states, “within the third month of spring, for the sake of Bodhidharma *wajō* until the seventh Huayan *wajō* (Puji), and also Yangze *wajō* (Heze Shenhui),⁷ [we] offer the three treasures of the boundless buddha worlds of the ten directions, and eliminate original ignorance, hindrances of the ten grounds, and every tiny, knowable affliction. Within the sixth month of summer, for the sake of [all monastic teachers] from the beginninglessness of time onward, all eminent monks until to Chanhe *wajō*⁸ with the Three Masters and Seven Witnesses,⁹ the monks and virtuous friends from the eternal Dharma Realm of the ten directions, all day and night [we] praise all of the three treasures of the entire Dharma Realm and Void Realm, eternally severing transgressions of the body, mouth, and thoughts,¹⁰ refuting the three activities [of thought, word, and deed], and crimes of the three

⁴ The character used here is the same for the Buddhist school of Zen (禪). However, while these teachings became the foundation for the Zen school, it was not yet formulated into a systematized school at this time.

⁵ Refers to the “Three Baskets” (三藏 *sanzō*) of the Buddhist canon, that consisting of the Buddha’s sermons, or sutras; rules for monks and nuns, or *vinaya*, and the philosophical commentaries and treaties known as *abhidharma*.

⁶ Bodhidharma (菩提達磨 *Bodaidaruma*, commonly abbreviated to 達磨 *Daruma*; ca. 5th/6th century CE) was an Indian monk credited with introducing Chan Buddhism into China. This lineage links Daoxuan directly to the semi-legendary patriarch, with the possible implication that Daoxuan was his master Puji’s successor.

⁷ This identification with Heze Shenhui is not explicit, but it may have been an attempt to compromise relations with the competing Southern Chan school. Bernard Faure, private communication, May 4, 2021. Shenhui studied under Hongren’s pupil Huineng, who Shenhui claimed with Hongren’s true disciple. The split between the two schools occurred during Shenxiu and Huineng’s generation. See Bernard Faure, *The Will to Orthodoxy: A Critical Genealogy of Northern Chan Buddhism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997).

⁸ While likely intended to indicate a meditation master in the same way that Huayan *wajō* and Yangze *wajō* do above, it is not clear who this might be. Chanhe (禪河 *zenka*) refers to the *dhyana* river used as a metaphor in meditation, suggesting that this individual may have been a renowned meditator or associated with India, like Śākyamuni or Bodhidharma.

⁹ This is the required assembly of full monks necessary to oversee monastic ordinations.

¹⁰ The original reads 身口友 but is likely an error for 身口意. Bernard Faure, private communication.

categories of pure precepts. The two seasons of autumn and winter, explain prayers accordingly.”¹¹ Tenpyō Hōji year 3 (760) month 3, day 25, vowed under Minehayashi.¹²

The Great Penetrating Chan Master was summoned to Wu Zetian’s court to walk alongside her sedan chair. The holy empress gave him the honorary title and thereafter called him “Great Penetrating [Master].” Originally, he was called Shenxiu.¹³ At her request, he was the high priest at both capitals [of Chang’an and Luoyang].

¹¹ Presumably there were appropriate prayers (願文 *ganmon*) for winter and fall months that are not listed here. Bryan Lowe, private communication, August 2, 2021.

¹² I have taken Minehashi (峯林) to indicate a location, but Bryan Lowe suggests this could also indicate the name of a monk.

¹³ This is referencing the sixth patriarch in the Northern Chan School, who the lineage states was Daoxuan’s grandmaster.