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Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra and the Adamantine Life-span Scriptures

Mónika Kiss

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Abstract

Not long ago, during my PhD research, I came across some texts which have a special connection to Fugen Enmei bosatsu 普賢延命菩薩, a unique deity of Japanese esoteric Buddhism. These texts and their core notion of longevity are intriguing, especially because they are only extant in the tradition of two great Indian esoteric masters, Vajrabodhi (671–741) and Amoghavajra (705–774), and, not to mention, they have never been studied or translated. In this paper, I am examining the origins of three of the texts by trying to give a timeline to their transmission to East Asia, while especially focusing on how they are connected to the two Indian masters.

Keywords: adamantine life-span – Amoghavajra – Vajrabodhi – longevity – Fugen Enmei bosatsu – esoteric Buddhism – Tendai – Shingon

THE ADAMANTINE LIFE-SPAN TEXTS

There are four texts that are directly linked to the notion of the adamantine life-span which—according to their own accounts—were translated to Chinese in the middle of the 8th century. We can divide these four texts into two groups, by giving the place of the Buddha’s sermons:

I. The river Ganges (殞伽河):

- a) *Fo shuo yiqie rulai jingang shouming tuoluoni jing* 佛說一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經 (T1135.20, *Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of the Adamantine Life-Span of All the Tathāgatas, Preached by the Buddha*, in Japanese: *Bussetsu issai nyorai kongō jumyō darani*)

darani kyō, cited as *Issai kyō*)

II. The top of Mt. Sumeru (須弥山):

- a) *Jingang shouming tuoluoni jing* 金剛壽命陀羅尼經 (T1134B.20, *Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of the Adamantine Life-Span*, in Japanese: *Kongō jumyō darani kyō*, cited as *Darani kyō*)
- b) *Jingang shouming tuoluoni jing fa* 金剛壽命陀羅尼經法 (T1134A.20, *Ritual Instructions of the Sūtra of the Dhāraṇī of the Adamantine Life-Span*, in Japanese: *Kongō jumyō darani kyō hō*, cited as *Darani kyō hō*)
- c) *Jingang shouming tuoluoni niansong fa* 金剛壽命陀羅尼念誦法 (T1133.20, *Ritual Procedure of the Dhāraṇī Spell of the Adamantine Life-Span*, in Japanese: *Kongō jumyō darani nenju hō*, cited as *Nenju hō*)

These four texts are all possible translations of two of the great Indian esoteric masters of the 8th century, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra. The text in the first group is quite different from the other three in the second, which are very close in their contents and their protagonists; also, the sermon, described in them, is the same. By labeling these texts as translations, however, we suggest that they were probably imported from India, and had had original versions in Sanskrit or other languages, but we know of no surviving Indian texts.¹ The early catalogues of newly translated texts in

¹ I do have to slightly correct this statement, for I found another entry in the Shōren'in temple archives, which seem to contradict my theory. According to a record, there is a Sanskrit *Darani kyō* text, which was copied in the late Heian period. See the *Shōren'in monzeki kissui zō shōgyō mokuroku* 1999: 131. Box nr. 23, text nr. 14. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼經梵本／平安時代後期寫」.

This allusion to a Sanskrit version makes it evident that the *Darani kyō* must have existed as a separate text, and was probably of Indian origins. Unfortunately, I am yet to go to the temple and examine this text, however, we can think of two ways of how this text is extant in Japan. Firstly, it could have been transmitted by a Tendai monk who went to China, but his catalogue did not survive, since the extant lists of

China in the 8th century, the several biographies of the two masters, however unreliable they may be, and the later texts and lists of imported treasures of Japanese monks are our only sources to put together the line of transmission of these texts.

The texts—and the rituals, images tied to them—had an exceptional career in Japan, they still exist, but they seem to be absent today in other Buddhist traditions.² They survive in various Chinese, Korean and Japanese canons that are still in existence.³ The *Nenju hō* and the *Issai kyō* are included in most of the canons. It is striking, however, that the remaining two adamantine life-span texts are only found in the Japanese *Reduced Print Canon* 縮刷藏 (1880–1885, Nos. 1374–1375), *Manji Continued Canon* 卍字續藏經 (Nos. 150 and 151), the *Taishōzō* (Nos. 1133 and 1135), and the *Buddhist tripiṭaka* 佛教大藏經 (1983, Nos. 1447 and 1448).⁴

In the following I am introducing those three texts, which belong to the

the imported scriptures do not mention it. Secondly, however unlikely, it could have been written in Japan, since we know how important it was for the monks in the esoteric traditions to learn Sanskrit.

² Determining the degree of their presence or absence in other Buddhist traditions would involve a thorough research of the Chinese, Tibetan, and Sanskrit extant scriptures, text collections of temples and museums, which is left to a future study.

³ The list of these canons: *Fangshan shijing* 房山石經, *Chongming dazangjing* 崇寧大藏經, *Pilu dazangjing* 毘盧大藏經, *Yuanjie dazangjing* 圓覺大藏經, *Zhaocheng jinzang* 趙城金藏, *Zifu zang* 資福藏, *Qishaban dazangjing* 磧砂版大藏經, *Tripitaka Koreana* 高麗大藏經, *Zhiyuan lu* 至元錄, *Hongwu nanzang* 洪武南藏, *Yongle nanzang* 永樂南藏, *Yongle beizang* 永樂北藏, *Jiaying dazangjing* 嘉興大藏經, *Qianlong zang* 乾隆藏.

For a detailed description of the canons see Wu–Chia 2014: 311–320.

⁴ The *Taishōzō* was mainly based upon the printed *Tripitaka Koreana*, the *Kōrai daizōkyō* 高麗大藏經. The *Buddhist tripiṭaka* text is identical to the previous text. The *Buddhist tripiṭaka* follows the *Pinjia da zangjing* 頻伽大藏經, and was compiled in the 1970–1980s, so this text was probably included as it was preserved in the *Taishōzō*.

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second group, and follow the same subject.

GENERAL OUTLINE OF THE THREE TEXTS (T 1133, 1134A, 1134B), AND THEIR PLACE IN THE ESOTERIC TEACHINGS

The adamantine life-span is usually given as *vajrāyus* in Sanskrit. This expression—other than the four abovementioned scriptures, which have this notion in their title—is only extant in two texts: the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* (cited as *STTS*) and the Fugen Enmei scripture, and appears on one talisman from Dunhuang.⁵

In the beginning of the three texts the *Adamantine Pinnacle Yoga sūtra* (金剛頂瑜伽經) is added as the source of the sermon, modifying the usual *sūtra* opening. The texts start with giving the location of the sermon, which is one of the fourth *dhyāna* heavens (第四禪) on the top of the form realm (色界頂). The sermon is preached by *sambhogakāya* Vairocana Buddha (毘盧遮那報身佛). *Sambhogakāya* (*hōjin* 報身) is usually referred to as the ‘enjoyment body’ (報身) from the three bodies of the buddhas (*trikāya*, *sanjin* 三身). The problem here is that Mahāvairocana, as he is called in the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, is referred to as the ‘dharma body’ (*dharmakāya*, *hosshin* 法身), which is without beginning and end, and is the core teaching of the esoteric teachings, while the *sambhogakāya* (along with the

⁵ See in Hidas 2014. The principal mantra (*Oṃ vajrāyūṣe svāhā*) appears on one of the *dhāraṇī* amulets found in the Library Cave (or Cave 17) in the Mogao Grottoes at Dunhuang, now stored in the British Museum (Ch. 00152, Fig. 37). It is dated to the 10th century. It means that the adamantine life-span *dhāraṇī* was used outside the *STTS* context of the subjugation of Maheśvara. It was acquired by Sir Aurel Stein in 1907, and is dedicated to the Buddha of the Infinite Life, Amitāyus, with magical formulas written in *siddham* letters in square fashion around the central image of the sitting image of the deity. Editions, translations and identifications of the texts are presented along with a study of the Chinese inscriptions on the side of the xylographs. Among the Sanskrit inscriptions we find the *dhāraṇī*, spelled as *oṃ vajrayose svāhā*.

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nirmāṇakāya, the ‘emanation body’ [*ōjin* 応身]) is represented throughout the Mahāyāna scriptures. Before the Sino-Japanese approach of the *Mahāvairocana sūtra*, there was no representation of the *dharmakāya* since it “is not realized by form or sound”.⁶ According to Alex Wayman, Buddhaguhya’s commentary to this scripture describes Vairocana of the 2nd chapter *maṇḍala as sambhogakāya*, in contrast of the Japanese Shingon (Kūkai’s) tradition, which explains the buddha as the *dharmakāya*.⁷

The semon and the Turning of the Four Wheels

The Buddha descends to the peak of Mt. Sumeru and he is joined by all the Tathāgatas of the complete voidness and universal *dharmadhātu* in the ‘adamantine treasure tower’ (金寶 [峯] 樓閣). They then address the Buddha with a request to turn the four *dharma* wheels of ‘utmost profound secret of the wonderful law’ (微妙法甚深祕密四種 [法] 輪), which are the ‘wheel of the adamantine realm’ (金剛界輪); the ‘wheel of the instructions of subduing the three periods’ (降三世教令輪); the ‘wheel of the all pervading rite of subjugation’ (遍調伏法輪); and the ‘wheel of all wishes realized’ (一切義利成就輪). These four wheels pour out of Vairocana’s mind and there is thirty-seven worthies on each wheel. The concept of the four kinds of wheels is not entirely unique in its content. We find a similar notion with the worthies in the *Shijiawenni fo jingang yicheng xiuxing yigui fa pin* 釋迦文尼佛金剛一乘修行儀軌法品 (T 0938.19, d. u.) where all the Tathāgatas ask Śākyamuni Buddha to turn these wheels.⁸ We find the same four wheels in one of the most important texts of Amoghavajra’s translations, the *Dale jingang bukong zhenshi sanmeiye jing boreboluomiduo liqushi* 大樂金剛不空真實三昧耶經般若波羅蜜多理趣釋⁹ and in the commentaries

⁶ Wayman–Tajima 1992: 2.

⁷ *Ibid.* 359n1.

⁸ T 0938, vol. 19: 87a17–18. 「一切如來請我轉法四種輪。一一輪中各有三十七聖者。」

⁹ T 1003, vol. 19: 608a10–13. 「表一切如來四種輪。金剛界輪·降三世輪·遍調伏

written to this text.¹⁰ It is also cited in various Taimitsu treatises, written by famous Taimitsu monks, such as Annen 安然 (841–915).¹¹ The only Japanese reference I could find for the wheels in the adamantine life-span texts is in Ennin's previously cited commentary on the *STTS* (Amoghavajra's version), in which he surmises that these are the four great chapters of the first assembly in the eighteen assemblies of the *Adamantine pinnacle yogas*.¹² The eighteen assemblies are presented in the *Jingangding jing yujia shiba hui zhihui* 金剛頂經瑜伽十八会指歸 (cited as *Jingangding jing*).¹³ The scripture lists the same four parts, but with the short explanation of these four representing the four knowledge seals.¹⁴ Rolf Giebel associates these four parts with the four parts of the *STTS*.¹⁵ Through these associations we can conclude that this allusion is one of the many, which ties this, and the other adamantine life-span texts to the *STTS* lineage. It was Kūkai in his *Shingon shū sho gaku kyō ritsu ron mokuroku* 真言宗諸学

輪・一切義成就輪。得入如是等輪依四種智印」。

¹⁰ For example in the *Liqushi zhongshi ji* 理趣釋重釋記 (T 2240.61, d. u.). T 2240, vol. 61: 642c07–08. 「表一切如來四種輪。金剛界輪・降三世輪・遍調伏輪・一切義成就輪」 This text is included in the Taishōzō as the old copy (古寫本) of Shimada Kanzaburō 島田乾三郎 (d. u.).

¹¹ For example in Annen's *Shingon shū kyō jigū* 真言宗教時義 (T 2396.75). T 2396, vol. 75: 446b04–12. 「金剛界有四輪二輪六曼荼羅五祕密曼荼羅。言四輪者。十八會一切如來真實攝教王會有四大品。一名金剛界。二名降三世。三名遍調伏。四名一切義成就。即壽命經名為金剛界輪。降三世教令輪。遍調伏法輪。一切義成就輪。言二輪者。理趣釋云。於須彌頂面像轉四種輪。金剛界輪。降三世輪。遍調伏輪。一切義成就輪。」

¹² T 2223, vol. 61: 71c05–10. 「言成金剛界大曼荼羅等者。金剛頂瑜伽有十八會。初會名一切如來真實攝教王。有四大品。一名金剛界。二名降三世。三名遍調伏。四名一切義成就。於此四中示初金剛界曼荼羅相。」

¹³ T 0869, vol. 18. For the explanations I am using the annotated translation of Rolf W. Giebel. For more details see Giebel 1995.

¹⁴ T 0869, vol. 18: 284c19–21. 「初會名一切如來真實攝教王。有四大品。一名金剛界。二名降三世。三名遍調伏。四名一切義成就。表四智印。」

¹⁵ Giebel 1995: 127.

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経律論目録 who first realised this and included the two texts known to him
(*Nenju hō* and *Darani kyō*) in his *STTS* lineage.¹⁶

The Subjugation of Maheśvara

After Vairocana turned these wheels and liberated the sentient beings comes the scene where Vairocana sees that among the deities, Maheśvara is reluctant to have the teachings of Buddhism. Therefore after the Buddha resides in the *samādhi* of Compassion and Anger, his wrathful form, Trailokyavijaya Bodhisattva appears from the five pronged vajra coming forth from Vairocana Buddha's chest, and is asked to make the disobeying deity surrender and take refuge in the three jewels of Buddhism. Their name gives an interesting meaning to the scene, which clearly reveals the outcome as well, for Trailokyavijaya is also called the Vanquisher of the Three Realms (降三世), and Maheśvara is the manifestation of Śiva, who is the Lord of the Three Realms (三界主). Trailokyavijaya conquers, but also kills the renegade Maheśvara, by stepping on him. Seeing this, Vairocana Buddha enters the *samādhi* of the Great Compassion, and utters the *dhāraṇī* of the Adamantine life span. He furthermore enters the *samādhi* of the Adamantine life span and forms the secret mudra, and with his power he revives Maheśvara deity, and also doubles his life-span. The revived deity then takes refuge in all the buddhas, and arouses the bodhicitta, and by obtaining *abhiṣeka* he also realizes the eighth stage of—probably—the bodhisattva path.

This part is the brief summary of what happens in the second part of the *STTS* scripture. The description of this subjugation scene is much longer and more detailed in that scripture, and it is Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva, who vanquishes the deity. However, we also get to know that Trailokyavijaya is the wrathful form of Vajrapāṇi, so basically the scene is

¹⁶ *Kōbō Daishi zenshū*, vol. 1: 106-107.

the same, but with different manifestations of Vairocana Buddha.¹⁷ It is a crucial passage in the *STTS*, which was first translated in the 8th century, but intriguingly enough, this scene appears only two hundred years later, in a translation by Dānapāla 施護¹⁸ at the end of the 10th century.¹⁹ This scene is not present in the first two translations of the *STTS* of Vajrabodhi (T 0867, vol. 18) and Amoghavajra (T 0869, vol. 18), but it is briefly described in the aforementioned *Jingangding jing* of Amoghavajra.²⁰ Although this description is closer to Dānapāla's translation than that of the adamantine life-span texts, the adamantine life-span mantra is cited in both texts to revive the stubborn deity after his subjugation and death.²¹ In Amogha-

¹⁷ Linrothe 1999: 156–157. The association of the two bodhisattvas is also shown in the fact that the scene where Vajrapāni steps on Maheśvara and his consort became a common iconography for Trailokyavijaya in Japan. There are mostly statues and some ink drawings surviving which represent this kind of image. We find examples in the *Zuzōshō* 図像抄, the oldest surviving collection of iconographies in Japan. The images show Trailokyavijaya with four faces (only three visible) and eight arms, and tramping on Maheśvara and his consort, just like in the description of the adamantine life-span and the *STTS* texts. The pose, in which Trailokyavijaya is depicted, is the same as that of Vajrapāni's common images.

¹⁸ Dānapāla arrived to China in the second half of the 10th century. His translations of esoteric texts survive from 980.

¹⁹ T 0882, vol. 18. The full title is *Fo shuo yiqie rulai zhenshi she sasheng xian zheng sanmei da jiao wang jing* 佛說一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經. The subjugation scene is much more detailed, and a long dialogue is presented between the bodhisattva and the deity, see T 0882, vol. 18: 370c14–372c29.

²⁰ T 0869, vol. 18: 285a15–28. 「次說降三世大品。有六曼荼羅如來成等正覺已。於須彌盧頂。轉金剛界輪已。與諸菩薩。名號受職已。摩醯首羅等剛強難化。不可以寂靜法而受化。盡虛空遍法界一切如來。異口同音。請以一百八名讚。禮金剛薩埵。如是諸天。不可以寂靜法而受化。時金剛手菩薩受一切如來請已。即入悲怒金剛三摩地。現大威德身。以種種方便調伏。乃至命終。摩醯首羅死已。自見於下方。過六十二恒河沙世界。名灰莊嚴。彼世界中成等正覺。名為怖畏自在王如來。執金剛菩薩以脚按之。誦金剛壽命真言。復得蘇。既受化已。金剛薩埵則說大曼荼羅。引入諸天。受金剛名號。諸天有五類」。

²¹ This spell does not simply revives him, he is brought back to life, though still

Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra and the Adamantine Life-span Scriptures (Kiss) 117 vajra's *Jingangding jing* it is called the *adamantine life-span mantra* (金剛壽命真言),²² while in Dānapāla's *STTS* translation it is mentioned as the *life protecting ḥṛdaya* (護命大明曰).²³ The *Jingangding jing* and the adamantine life-span scriptures clearly attest to Vajrabodhi's and Amoghavajra's knowledge of the longer *STTS*, and this also means that the all the adamantine life-span scriptures are part of the *STTS* lineage.

The Benefits

There are various benefits listed throughout the texts for those who uphold the above preached adamantine life-span mantra. But to achieve them we have to recite the *dhāraṇī* three thousand times every day divided into three times a day. If we do so, our reward will be plenty.

Some of the benefits are related to the prolongation of the life-span either by the increasment of it (增壽命), or by ecading short lives and untimely deaths, by purifying the evil karma causing it (過去所有惡業因果短命夭壽), which can be considered as a this worldly benefit (*genze riyaku* 現世利益). There are, however, benefits of more spiritual aspects such as the obtainment of the five transcendental faculties (獲五神通) and the the power to ascend to the air (陵 [or 凌] 空自在), or not to be reborn in a physical body via parents (現生不轉父母生身).

In the *Darani kyō hō* text we find that it is also good to avoid calamities

hesitates to be obedient, Vajrapāṇi triumphs over him and his consort, treads on them, but Vairocana Buddha feels compassion for them, pronounces a spell and their suffering ends. Then Maheśvara goes through an initiation (Sk. *abhiṣeka*), he receives consecrations, powers of meditation, salvation, mnemonics, faculties of knowledge and magical powers, all of the highest perfection by the contact with the sole of Vajrapāṇi's foot, and he becomes Tathāgata Bhasmeśvaranirghoṣa (Jp. Bashamisarajirikusha nyorai 跋娑彌莎囉儂哩瞿沙如來) or in other words, Krodhavajra (Jp. Funnū kongō 忿怒金剛). (T 0882, vol. 18: 372b19-26.)

²² T 0869, vol. 18: 285a26.

²³ T 0882, vol. 18: 371c27-28.

and also the difficulties of diseases or storms (除災難). There are more this worldly benefits listed in this particular scripture, such as peace of the people (人民安樂), the obtainment of great fortune, wisdom, excellent aspiration and completeness (具大福智勝願圓滿), or high positions in offices (官位高遷), alongside riches, abundant wealth and treasure (富饒財寶).

Also, instead of the usual *sūtra* ending with the Buddha telling the audience to uphold the teachings, here we are given more instructions, such as when to do the ritual, and all the benefits it will bring us, such as that the country will be safe and peaceful (國土安泰), there will be no kinds of misfortunes or sickness (無諸災疫), the winds and rains will be in a proper time (風雨以 [or 已] 時).

Of all these various benefits, however, one of the most interesting set is described at the end of the *Nenju hō* scripture. It is stated there that by performing the long life *homa* ritual the country will be protected and that the weather will be in proper time, which probably meant that there will be plenty rain when the crops need it, therefore there will be sufficient amount of food. These features fit perfectly the activities of Amoghavajra in 8th century China, when he became exceedingly popular among three emperors of the Tang Dynasty (Xuanzong, Suzong, Daizong), serving their purposes just right with the esoteric practices. Something quite similar took place in Japan at the beginnings.

Contemplation and Ritual in the Texts

Two of the three texts, the *Nenju hō* and the *Darani kyō hō*, expound a visualisation practice (三昧) and what it entails, its benefits, the different steps of the contemplation, first on Trailokyavijaya Bodhisattva, then on Vajrasattva, ending with the armour mantra. The practitioners would gain the five transcendental faculties 五神通, which are common in the Mahāyāna literatures. And another important benefit is that they will not

be born via parents again, meaning they would achieve a higher level of rebirth, and not as humans. The contemplation has a set of instructions which are almost the same in the two texts, although the Darani kyō hō explains it in more details.

The armour mantra that we have to recite is *om dhām vajrāyuh*. Although most mantras usually cannot be translated, this mantra roughly says that “*om* granting the adamantine life-span.” The adamantine fist 金剛拳 *mudrā* and this armour spell are the links with Fugen Enmei bodhisattva, for the *mudrā* and the armour are usually described as the bodhisattva’s seal and symbol (*sa[n] mayagyō* 三昧耶形, or shortly *sangyō* 三形).

We also find the description of a the ritual sphere (the Chinese term is *tan* [dan] 壇 instead of *daochang* [dōjō] 道場) of the *homa* (*humo* [goma] 護摩) fire ritual for long life, with all the instructions, including what needs to be thrown into the fire.

The last part of the *Darani kyō* text also gives some instructions for contemplation, but is otherwise lacking the long descriptions of contemplation and ritual. This contemplation starts with the syllable 欲 (*yuh*), which transforms into the great Adamantine Life-span Bodhisattva. This character was considered the seed syllable of Fugen Enmei, therefore, by these two texts we know that they regarded him to be the equivalent to the Adamantine Life-span Bodhisattva.

THE SCRIPTURES IN CHINA AND JAPAN

We can trace the texts back to China, but no further so far. One of the three texts, *Nenju hō*, appeared very early as a newly translated text, listed as Amoghavajra’s new translation with a slightly different name in the *Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 開元釋教錄, compiled by Zhisheng 智昇 in 730.²⁴ This

²⁴ T 2154, vol. 55: 699c16-700a15. 「大唐不空三藏新譯衆經論及念誦儀軌法等目錄

inclines us to believe that it is rather possible that the masters brought the text when they arrived to the Tang capital some ten years before. This text, with the usual title, is cited again in Amoghavajra's list of translated works, the *Daizong zhao zeng sikong da bianzheng guangzhi sanzang heshang biaozi ji*, 代宗朝贈司空大辯正廣智三藏和上表制集, presented to Emperor Daizong's 代宗 (727-779, r. 762-779) birthday in 771, alongside with, seemingly, the *Darani kyō*.²⁵ Next, they are listed in the two catalogues by Yuanzhao 円照 (d. u.), who was one of Amoghavajra's many direct disciples. In the *Da Tang Zhenyuan xu Kaiyuan shijiao lu* 大唐貞元續開元釋教錄 they are listed twice, and we are given some more, we can say crucial information about one of the texts in the second listing: next to the title it is written that the *Darani kyō* text actually contains the *Issai kyō* text.²⁶ And again, they are listed twice in the *Zhenyuan xinding shijiao mulu* 貞元新定釋教目錄 of the same compiler, with the same comments in the second time.²⁷ The third mention of the two texts additionally clarifies that both texts entered the canon in the Zhenyuan era (785-805).²⁸

So what do all these indicate so far? On the one hand, this could mean that by the end of the century both the *Darani kyō* and *Issai kyō* texts

(…) 金剛壽命念誦經一卷三紙」。

²⁵ T 2120, vol. 52: 839b18-c26. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷」。

²⁶ T 2156, vol. 55: 748c21-767c01. 「代宗朝大曆中特進試鴻臚卿大廣智不空三藏奏。(…) 金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷二紙 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷三紙 (…) 金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷經內題云一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經二紙 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷經內云陀羅尼念誦法三紙」。

²⁷ T 2157, vol. 55: 0772b09-880a03. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷 (…) 金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷經內題云一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷經內題云陀羅尼念誦法」。

²⁸ *Ibid.* 931b08-13. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷 經內題云一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經 (…) 不空奉詔譯貞元新入目錄 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷 經內題云陀羅尼念誦法 (…) 不空奉詔譯貞元新入目錄」。

existed. It is more likely, however, that in both of Yuanzhao's lists the two texts are mentioned twice, with some more information the second time. On the other hand, according to the same Yuanzhao, both texts were Amoghavajra's translations and entered the canon in the between 785 and 805. This contradicts, however, some Japanese monks, whose lists of imported scriptures also mention the *Issai kyō* text, but is frequently referred to as Vajrabodhi's translation, or that it was translated with the cooperation of the two masters. One of the possible conclusions is that what is listed as the *Darani kyō* in the 8th century catalogues of Amoghavajra's translations was indeed the completely different *Issai kyō* text.

A millenium later, Nanjō Bun'yū's 南条文雄 (1849–1927) first English catalogue of the Chinese canon, published in 1883, seems to support this suspicion. Apart from the *Nenju hō* text (No. 1391), which is found among the *miscellaneous Indian scriptures*,²⁹ the only other adamantine life-span text mentioned in the list is the *Issai kyō* (No. 960), although it is designated as a *Mahāyāna or Hinayāna scripture added to the canon during the 10th to 14th centuries*.³⁰ After confirming the 8th and 9th century catalogues of China, we can easily contradict this placement. At the discription of the *Nenju hō* text Nanjō quotes the work of a 17th century Chinese monk, Zhixu 智旭 (1599–1655), who classifies it as the abbreviated version of another text related to longevity, the *Zhufo jihui tuoluoni jing* 諸佛集會陀羅尼經 (cited as *Zhufo jing*).³¹ This scripture was translated by Devaprajñā (d. u.) at the end of the 7th century, and although it is undeniable that there are similarities between the two texts, however, the difference in the style of translation and terminology is also apparent.³²

²⁹ Nanjio 1883: 293.

³⁰ *Ibid.* 181.

³¹ *Ibid.* 310.

³² The description of the *Issai kyō* text, with the comparison of the *Zhufo jing* will be the topic of a consecutive paper.

As for their Japanese transmission, we know that at least one of them appears during the Nara period. In the surviving documents of the sūtra copying quarters (*Shōsōin monjo* 正倉院文書) of the Tōdaiji temple 東大寺 in Nara, we find a *Kongō jumyō darani kyō* listed as one of the scriptures copied in the middle of the 8th century.³³ This particular document, signed by a Japanese monk, Byōei (or Heiei) 平榮 (d. u.), dates the copying to 747.³⁴ Not being called the *Nenju hō*, there is the possibility that this refers to one of the other texts, the *Darani kyō* or, most probably, the *Issai kyō*. The mention of a scripture (經) and not as a kind of recitational or invocational scripture (念誦經), as the *Nenju hō* text was designated in Zhisheng's catalogue, could therefore mean that it was the *Issai kyō* transmitted first to Japan in the Nara period. In this case this text must have been translated sometime between 730 and 735. As mentioned before, in Zhisheng's 730 catalogue, we find only the *Nenju hō* text, and the last envoys returning to Japan before 747 arrived in 735 and 736.³⁵ More

³³ *Nara jidai komonjo furu tekisuto dētābēsu* 奈良時代古文書フルテキストデータベース (cited as *Nara Database*). 「金網 (剛) 壽命經一卷」.
URL: <https://clioimg.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/viewer/view/idata/850/8500/05/0009/0342?m=all&s=0342>.

³⁴ We do not know much about the life of this monk, but it seems that this document puts him in the temple in 747, which is earlier than what Maki Nobuyuki 牧伸行 suggests in his study about him. (Maki 1994: 22-47.).

³⁵ If the sutra was brought to Japan by one of the envoys, then it is more than possible that one of the two famous Japanese monks of those envoys imported it. One of them was Genbō 玄防 (?-746), who arrived back to Japan in 735, and was famous for bringing countless Buddhist scriptures, after spending more than 16 years on the continent. For this he was also mentioned in the *Shoku Nihongi* 続日本紀, where in the report of his death in 746 it is made known that he imported *more than 5000 fascicles of scriptures and many Buddhist images* 齋經論五千余卷及諸佛像來 (*Kokushi taikei* 国史大系 2, 266, URL: <http://dl.ndl.go.jp/info:ndljp/pid/991092>). The other monk, who may have transmitted the text, was Fushō 普照 (d. u.), taking up residence in the Tōdaiji temple after returning to Japan in 736.

importantly, this would also mean that both the *Nenju hō* and the *Issai kyō* were probably brought to China by the masters. Another possible, although less likely explanation is that the *Nenju hō* text was transmitted but in Japan they left out the '*nenju*' part from the title.

There are other references from the Nara period: in 757 the scripture was copied one thousand times;³⁶ and in 780 this scripture is on the list of the Saidaiji temple 西大寺, among the miscellaneous Buddhist texts.³⁷ Being listed as a 'miscellaneous scripture' it demonstrates that in the Nara period, though the text was apparently copied quite often in large numbers, it was not yet considered as it would be applied from the next century onward. In addition to the lack of evidence about any kind of involvement in practices, the monks may not yet have known how to use it properly, therefore not being applied at all during the 8th century.³⁸

It was only in the 9th century, however, that Kūkai *officially* (i. e. as the legacy of Amoghavajra) brought to Japan in 806 the *Nenju hō* scripture and another text, which is designated as a *Kongō jumyō darani kyō*, according to his catalogue of imported Buddhist treasures, the *Goshōrai mokuroku* 御請来目録.³⁹ After the analysis above, however, it is a fairly good guess that this text is also possibly the *Issai kyō*.

³⁶ *Nara database*. 「奉寫金剛壽命陀羅尼經千卷」.

URL: <https://clioimg.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/viewer/view/idata/850/8500/05/0003/0612?m=all&s=0594&n=20>

³⁷ *Saidaiji monjo* 西大寺文書, Box no. 101, text no. 5. 「雜經四百九十八卷 (….) 金剛壽命陀羅尼經九十卷」. (*Nihon komonjo yunion katarogu dētābēsu* 日本古文書ユニオンカタログデータベース)

URL: <http://www.hi.u-tokyo.ac.jp/index-j.html>

³⁸ Some esoteric *sūtras* were read and *dhāraṇīs* recited during the Nara period, but no evidence has surfaced so far about the adamantine life-span scripture or its mantra, *dhāraṇī* having been involved in any specific rites.

³⁹ T 2161, vol. 55: 1061a26–b25. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷三紙 (….) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷三紙」.

These two adamantine life-span texts are also listed later in the Tendai monk Ennin's 円仁 (794–864) catalogue, the *Nittō shingu shōkyō mokuroku* 入唐新求聖教目錄 (T 2167, vol. 55).⁴⁰ As for the explanation of what he possibly listed as *Kongō jumyō darani kyō*, we have to cite one of his other writings, the *Kongōchō dai kyō ō gyō sho* 金剛頂大教王經疏 (T 2223, vol. 61), a commentary on Amoghavajra's translation of the *STTS*, called the *Jingangding yiqie rulai zhenshishe dacheng xianzheng dajiaowang jing* 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經 (T 0865, vol. 18). In this commentary, written in 851, some three years after his return from Tang China, Ennin mentions the text by name, but the main clue as to which text he is referring to, is the content of the text: he writes of Maheśvara's subjugation, which is only part of the *Darani kyō* text, and is not present in the *Issai kyō*.⁴¹ This entry clearly supports the theory that Ennin knew about a *Darani kyō*, and it is further attested by his catalogue entries. The only problem is that a separate *Darani kyō* text is not listed in either of Ennin's catalogues, therefore it is possible that he used the *Nenju hō* text for the explanation of this subjugation scene.

Another important Tendai monk, Enchin 円珍 (814–891) returned to Japan in 858 after spending six years in the Tang capital, and it seems that he brought with himself not just the *Nenju hō* and *Issai kyō*, but the *Darani kyō* as well, as it is recorded in his three catalogues, the *Shōryūji guhō mokuroku* 青龍寺求法目錄;⁴² the *Nihon biku Enchin nittō guhō mokuroku*

⁴⁰ T 2167, vol. 55: 1078c22–1079c27. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼念誦法一卷不空 (…) 佛說一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷 金剛智譯」。

⁴¹ T 2223, vol. 61: 84c13–15. 「金剛壽命經云。即入三摩地觀見。摩醯首羅大自在天。剛強難化。執持邪見。」 Ennin completed this commentary in 851. It consists of seven fascicles, and is explaining the three roll long translation of the *STTS* by Amoghavajra. The Tendai master wrote this for two student monks, appointed in 850.

⁴² T 2171, vol. 55: 1096a05–b06. 「一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷金剛不空共譯 (…) 金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷」。

日本比丘圓珍入唐求法目錄；⁴³ and the *Chishō daishi shōrai mokuroku* 智証大師請來目錄。⁴⁴ This is the first time that the *Issai kyō* and the *Darani kyō* are clearly distinguished.

In the surviving documents of the Taimitsu associated Shōren'in temple 青蓮院 we find one of the earliest mentions of the *Darani kyō hō*, according to which this text of 1140 was made as a copy of the departed Tendai monk, Ryōyū 良祐's (d. u., in the text he is called Sanmai *ācārya* [以故三昧阿闍梨]) text.⁴⁵ The most intriguing part, however, is the record of the original postscript (本奥書) which mentions that there was a 'correction' or 'proofreading' (校正) in 1077 at a place called Nansenbō 南泉房。⁴⁶

The postscript of the *Darani kyō hō* text states that it was imported by Kūkai, Ennin and Enchin, which fact cannot be ascertained by any of the masters' *mokurokus*.⁴⁷ In light of the above examined texts and catalogues, this declaration raises some questions. Firstly, it is rather suspicious that

⁴³ T 2172, vol. 55: 1097b29-1098a01. 「一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷 (…) 金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷」。

⁴⁴ T 2173, vol. 55: 1103a21-b23. 「一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷金剛智 (…) 金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷不空 (…) 金剛壽命念誦法一卷不空」。

⁴⁵ *Shōren'in monzeki mokuroku* 1999: 130. Box nr. 23, text nr. 11. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼經法，平安時代保延六年寫，(奥書)〈保延六一九月十五日以故三昧阿闍梨本寫了〉」。

⁴⁶ *Ibid.* 「(本奥書)〈本云／承保四年六月十六日於南泉房奉校正了〉」。 There was a Nansenbō temple in Uji, south of the Byōdō'in temple 平等院. By the name Nansenbō they also referred to Minamoto no Takakuni 源隆国 (1004-1077), who was the nephew of the famous Tendai monk, Jōjin 成尋 (1011-1081). According to the introductory section of the *Ujishū monogatari* 宇治拾遺物語 of the 13th century, Takakuni was residing in this temple between the 5th and 8th month of 1077, when he became a monk upon realizing that he is seriously ill. The *Darani kyō hō* mentioned in the Shōren'in temple record may very likely refer to a copy that was made by Takakuni at the end of his life in hopes of recovering from his illness. (*Ujishū monogatari*. In: *Shinpen Nihon koten bungaku zenshū* 新編日本古典文学全集 50, Tokyo: Shōgakukan, 1996, p. 23.)

⁴⁷ T 1134A, vol. 20: 577a29-b11.

only the *Darani kyō hō* and the *Darani kyō* texts have postscripts, which are both—according to my not unsubstantiated suspicion—later Chinese or Japanese developments of the *Nenju hō* text. Secondly, both postscripts were written in 1801 and inform us of the many occasions when these texts had been copied. Lastly, the postscript also questions, whether this text is the same as the *Nenju hō*. The author of the postscript is a monk called Jijun 慈順 (1735–1816), who adds it to a copy made by the *tripitaka* master Kaidō 快道 (1751–1810) of the Sōjiin temple 総持院 (Buzan branch 豊山流 of the Tōmitsu tradition). He highlights that this is like the *Nenju hō* text, translated by Amoghavajra and Vajrabodhi together, but many parts are omitted.

All of these circumstances point to the fact that the *Darani kyō* and *Darani kyō hō* are not at all mentioned outside of Japan. The omission of these texts from the official Chinese canons, and the fact that they are listed in Japanese Buddhist temple catalogues would point to the possibility that they are Japanese apocryphons.⁴⁸

One of the earliest reference to how the texts were utilized in Japan is found in the miscellaneous documents of Enchin. According to his report, the *Kongō jumyō kyō* was read at the imperial palace in 852, for a whole year every day five times.⁴⁹ We notice that this mention was in the year

⁴⁸ Sørensen listed five criteria to prove that a certain Japanese text is not canonical but was written in Japan. From these factors we see that almost all of them can be applied with the two dubious adamantine life-span texts: 1) not found or mentioned in any of the standard Chinese Buddhist catalogues, 2) not included in the Korean *tripitaka*, 3) the text is unique and does not exist in any other version, 4) not mentioned in the catalogues brought back to Japan by the various pilgrim monks. (Sørensen 2011: 195.) It is certainly reasonable to suspect that they are not authentic Indian or Chinese texts, but altered versions of the other two that were actually transmitted and translated by Indian monks.

⁴⁹ *Chishō daishi zenshū* 智証大師全集 1917–18: 1297–1298. 「奉讀 金剛壽命經一千九百二十卷 毎日五卷」.

when Enchin left to study in China, so we can assume that the text must have been the one brought to Japan by Ennin, Enchin's master at the time. And, since in Ennin's catalogue only the *Issai kyō* is listed, then we can surmise with a fair degree of certainty, that it was this scripture that they read, and that it was most probably abbreviated when referred to.

In Japanese esoteric Buddhist context the texts became more and more eminent during the Heian period when it became part of the texts recited at the Fugen Enmei ritual (Fugen Enmei hō 普賢延命法), a prominent rite for aristocrats and the imperial family, which is still performed today in the Mt. Hiei.⁵⁰ The first such ritual was performed in 1075, by the Tendai monk Kakuji 覺尋 (1012-1081) for Emperor Shirakawa.⁵¹ From the numerous ritual manuals and accounts, we see that during the ritual a *Kongō jumyō darani kyō* was recited, among other scriptures. Furthermore, the Shingon monk Kakuzen 覺禪 (1143-?) points out in his 12th century compilation of

⁵⁰ The Fugen Enmei ritual was only implemented in the 11th century, but in sources, especially the diaries of Heian aristocrats, officials, there had been an Enmei ritual performed from the early Heian period. The *Mochizuki bukkyō dai jiten* distinguishes between the Enmei and the Fugen Enmei rituals by categorizing the former as a common (*futsūhō* 普通法) or lesser rite (*shōhō* 小法), and the latter as a major rite (*daihō* 大法). This grouping is based on the number of altars and monks present at the ritual space, and is substantiated, again, by the sources and the various ritual manuals surviving since the 12th century. One of the earliest detailed description of the Enmei ritual in 950 is found in the *Kyūreki* 九曆, the diary of Fujiwara no Morosuke 藤原師輔 (909-960), where it is stated that there were ten assistant monks (*bansō* 伴僧) involved (*Dai nihon kokiroku* 大日本古記録 vol. 1: 206.). In the case of most of the Fugen Enmei rituals, however, there were twenty monks present during the seven days of the rite.

⁵¹ TZ vol. 9: 864a07-09. 「承保二年十月九日。法性寺座主(覺尋)蒙_レ綸旨_ニ。於_レ賀陽院內裏_ニ。二十口伴僧_ニ。被_レ始_メ修普賢延命法_ニ矣」。 It is also interesting that the first ever Fugen Enmei ritual, performed in 1099 by the Tōmitsu (Shingon) tradition was also for Emperor Shirakawa, after he abdicated the throne and became a cloistered retired emperor (*hōō* 法皇).

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esoteric rituals, the *Kakuzenshō* 覺禪鈔, that the Fugen Enmei ritual is referred to as the Jumyō kyō ritual (Jumyō kyō hō 壽命經法) by the Shingon monk Genkaku 賢覺 (1080–1156).⁵² Genkaku is also the source of one of the commentaries written to the adamantine life-span texts.⁵³

THE QUESTION OF THE TRANSLATOR(S)

It is proved by the countless *sūtra* translations surviving from the Tang period and the renowned rituals of Amoghavajra⁵⁴ that esoteric Buddhism was strongly influential in China in the 8th century, nevertheless, we do not know much about the notion, the texts, or the image of the adamantine life-span in what we should call here ‘Chinese Buddhism’. We only have one piece of information linking them to the translators in Vajrabodhi’s biography. This refers to the occasion when the Indian master urged Wu kuei-fei 武貴妃, one of the consorts of the Chinese emperor to have an image of the Adamantine Life-span Bodhisattva (金剛壽命菩薩) made, because she and the Prince of Ho-tung 河東郡王 were ill.⁵⁵ This report

⁵² TZ vol. 5: 0103a3. Kakuzen also points out that this ritual was occasionally referred to as the Nyohō Enmei ritual (Nyohō Enmei hō 如法延命法) in the Taimitsu tradition.

⁵³ *Ten himyō gyō shō* 轉非命業抄, T 2481, vol. 78: 222–223. There are not many commentaries about these texts. Ōtani Yoshihiro 大谷欣裕 of the Ryūkoku University 龍谷大学 has been researching the notion of longevity of these group of adamantine life-span texts. For the list of the commentaries and their examinations, see Otani 2015 and Otani 2016.

⁵⁴ See his biographies analysed and translated to English in Chou 1945 and Orlando 1981.

⁵⁵ T 2061, vol. 50: 711c18–22. 「自爾帝方加歸仰焉武貴妃寵異六宮薦施寶玩智勸貴妃急造金剛壽命菩薩像又勸河東郡王於毘盧遮那塔中繪像謂門人曰此二人者壽非久矣經數月皆如其言凡先覺多此類也」。 See the translation in Chou 1945: 279–280. In the footnotes Chou mentions that there is no description of its image in the *Nenju hō* text, but there is a similarly called bodhisattva (Enjumyō 延壽命) who frequently appears on paintings recovered from Dunhuang. But he also writes that they are not

brings to light many crucial details. First of all, it links Vajrabodhi directly to the texts, which also means that it is possible that he was involved in the translations. Secondly, this is the only proof so far that the texts were somehow utilised in China in the 8th century.⁵⁶ Finally, we know that there was an image for the Adamantine life-span bodhisattva in China, although we cannot be sure if it was Fugen Enmei, as they are associated later, in one of the historically ambiguous adamantine life-span texts, the *Darani kyō hō*, although this would become generally accepted as a fact by the Japanese monks.

The question of the translators of the texts is important from the point of view of origins. In the *Nenju hō* and the *Issai kyō* texts the translator is named (Amoghavajra), whereas in the other two, only official titles are listed, which are consistent with that of Amoghavajra's titles. The catalogues, writings of Japanese monks and the Buddhist canons have consensus over the translator's identity in the case of the *Nenju hō*. Most of them also agree that the translator of the *Issai kyō* is Vajrabodhi. There are slight differences in Amoghavajra's titles in these two texts.⁵⁷ The listing of all his titles—even the posthumous ones—is exactly what first made me query the credibility of these supposed translations.⁵⁸ Only two are

the same deity.

⁵⁶ The determination of further usage of these texts in China involves the thorough research of Chinese sources which overreaches the limits of this paper. It would be important, however, to see how and when the texts or images were applied.

⁵⁷ T 1133, vol. 21: 575a16–19. 「開府儀同三司特進試鴻臚卿肅國公食邑三千戶賜紫贈司空諡大鑿正號大廣智大興善寺 (唐南天竺國) 三藏 (金剛智與) 沙門不空奉詔譯」. T 1135, vol. 21: 578a15–18. 「開府儀同三司特進試鴻臚卿肅國公食邑三千戶賜紫贈司空諡大鑑正號大廣智大興善寺三藏沙門不空奉詔譯」.

⁵⁸ If we are to believe the biographies of Amoghavajra, which were examined and compared by Orlando Raffaello in his doctoral dissertation presented to the Princeton University in 1981, the imperial edict of his title as *kaifu* 開府, and his

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included in his aforementioned list of the already translated scriptures as a present to Emperor Daizong.⁵⁹

So most canons and Japanese monk name Vajrabodhi as the translator of the *Issai kyō* text, or in some cases, his involvement is mentioned with Amoghavajra during the translation. In Ennin's list, it is attributed to this Indian master alone,⁶⁰ in two of Enchin's lists (*Shōryūji mokuroku* and *Chishō daishi mokuroku*) it is either Vajrabodhi⁶¹, or him along with his disciple.⁶² In the Tendai monk, Annen's 安然 (841–915) comprehensive list of all newly imported doctrines, the *Sho ajari shingon mikkyō burui sōroku* 諸阿闍梨真言密教部類總錄,⁶³ not just the attribution of the *Issai kyō*, but a brief note added to it, is highly exciting, because it says that it is Vajrabodhi's rare Sanskrit short explanatory version.⁶⁴ This and Vajrabodhi's aforementioned link to the Adamantine Life-span Bodhisattva reassures our idea that the *Nenju hō* and the *Issai kyō* are Indian imports of that Indian master. Annen then goes on to mention that there are two versions to this, one by Vajrabodhi and one by Amoghavajra.⁶⁵ After all

peerage of *Duke of Su* 肅國公 is dated to the 11th day of the 6th month in the 9th year of Dali 大曆, a mere four or five days before his death. His posthumous titles as Minister of Works 司空 and the honorific title of Tripitaka master and *upādhyāya* of Great Discrimination 大辨正三藏和尚 are also included. For more about Amoghavajra see Chou 1945 and Orlando 1981.

⁵⁹ Amoghavajra's authorship has been already doubted by scholars. He was an expert in the Chinese language as well, so it is not hard to believe when scholars suggest that some of the translations could have been written by Amoghavajra himself in Chinese. For more about this matter see Osabe 1990, Iyanaga 1985, Giebel 1995.

⁶⁰ T 2167, vol. 55: 1079c27. 「佛說一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷金剛智譯」.

⁶¹ T 2173, vol. 55: 1103a21. 「一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷金剛智」.

⁶² T 2171, vol. 55: 1096a05. 「一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷金剛不空共譯」.

⁶³ T 2176, vol. 55: 1113–1132.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.* 1121b11. 「一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷金剛智珍梵釋闕本」.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.* 1121b14–15. 「金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷內云一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經不空

these evidence, we are inclined to believe that the *Issai kyō* was translated by Vajrabodhi, or at least he helped Amoghavajra.

It becomes clear from later commentaries that this notion was passed down among the esoteric Buddhist monks of both traditions. In the *Gyōrinshō* 行林抄 (Taimitsu, T 2409, vol. 76) of Jōnen 靜然 (c. 1154) we are told at the *Zhufo jing* text explanation that the gist of the disclosure of the Shitennō is in Vajrabodhi's translation, which must be the *Issai kyō* which is almost identical to the former text.⁶⁶ A century later, Raiyu 頼瑜 (Tōmitsu) repeats the Vajrabodhi attribution in both of his major writings, the *Usuzōshi kuketsu* 薄草子口決 (T 2535, vol. 79), and the *Hishō mondō* 祕鈔問答 (T 2536, vol. 79). At the Fugen Enmei section of both, Raiyu writes that the *Issai kyō* was translated by Vajrabodhi.⁶⁷

The remaining two texts only list some of the titles we have seen above.⁶⁸ The titles undoubtedly suggest Amoghavajra as the translator here as well, nonetheless, we can only guess why the name is omitted. It may not be too farfetched to assume, again, that these texts were not translations but later 'redacted' editions of the *Nenju hō* text, in which case the editor did not dare to use the translator's name directly.

CONCLUSION

The adamantine life-span texts are unique features of the Japanese esoteric Buddhism. Although they are short in volume, but the benefits

譯貞元新入目錄私云前伴（件）金剛智及不空智兩本今見行世而此錄中以爲一本者非也」。

⁶⁶ T 2409, vol. 76: 141b03-04. 「恒伽河邊之說。以四天王爲對告。大旨開於金剛智譯。」。

⁶⁷ T 2536, vol. 79: 439a28-29. 「佛說一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經金剛智譯 (T 2535, vol. 79: 211c04) 一切如來金剛壽命陀羅尼經一卷金剛智證」。

⁶⁸ T 1134A, vol. 21: 576a09-10. 「特進試鴻臚卿大辨正廣智三藏奉詔譯」。 T 1134B, vol. 21: 577b17-18. 「特進試鴻臚卿大辨正大廣智三藏奉詔譯」。

they offer have been in favour of the Japanese monks from the very beginning of the Taimitsu and Tōmitsu esoteric traditions. All the Japanese monks, mentioned above, who came in contact with the adamantine life-span texts, are in the group of the eight famous monks of the 9th century who went to Tang China to seek teachings (*nittō hakke* 入唐八家). In addition, all of these monks have one important thing in common: their visit to the Qinglongsi 青龍寺 in the Tang capital Chang'an 長安, a temple which was operated by Amoghavajra's disciples at the time, so it is possible that the texts survived there after the two Indian masters were gone.

The theme of longevity and the protection of the state were more common themes in Chinese thought, many Daoist texts also offer various means to obtain long or everlasting life, but the adamantine life-span texts offer a glance at the Indian thought of longevity. Therefore, these texts are reminders of how local cults and faiths shaped the Buddhist thought. Furthermore, what became known as Japanese esoteric Buddhism has always been a combination of Indian, Chinese and Japanese thought, which manifests in the origins and transmissions of the adamantine life-span texts.

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*Lecturer,
Eötvös Loránd University
Research Fellow of 2019,
International College
for Postgraduate Buddhist Studies*