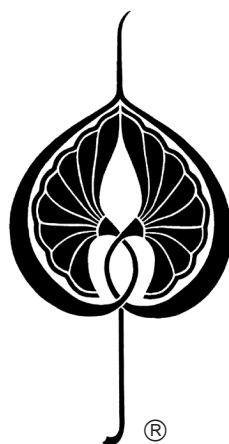


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On the Subject of *Abhiṣeka*¹

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Two years after the beleaguered Emperor Suzong retook the capital from An Lushan's rebel forces in the waning days of 757, Amoghavajra wrote to him requesting permission to establish altars for *abhiṣeka* (consecration) at the Xingshan temple where he was based.² The request, coming from a man who had remained in the rebel-held capital and had mobilized occult forces on behalf of the emperor and his generals, states that "*Abhiṣeka* is the supreme gateway to the Great Vehicle." Thus, Amoghavajra sought permission to build an altar "for *abhiṣeka* to benefit the State. This altar possesses the teaching of pacification and prosperity and the ability to subjugate and bring joy. I offer its merits to extinguish the hosts of evil" (T. 2120:52.829b27-28). The request was utilitarian. Consecration is presented not as another worldly end, but with the express aim of producing adepts who could wield the ritual technology of the three types of *homa* (votive fire offerings). These Amoghavajra pointedly names—pacification, prosperity, and subjugation. In the following years and at Amoghavajra's request permanent altars for such rites were established at other temples in the capital, in the inner palace, and at the great pilgrimage center at Mt. Wutai.³ After Amoghavajra's death in 774 and throughout the ninth century temporary altars for *abhiṣeka* were also erected on an annual basis "for protection of the State."⁴

The caricature of Buddhism that it is "Hinduism for export" is perhaps more profound than one might at first allow.⁵ Beyond the obvious and superficial facts of Mahāyāna and esoteric Buddhist incorporation of the gods Indra, Maheśvara, Agni, or Vinayaka, the core ritual technology for manipulating the religious subject in esoteric Buddhism is a further articulation of Brahmanic procedures, and is directly related to those found in the *gṛhya* sutras and their various extensions

(Brahmanic rites for householders) and those used for the consecration of images and kings.⁶

Another often repeated bit of wisdom is that Buddhism, as a “heretical” system, rejected the teachings of the Vedas. Buddhism certainly criticized some Vedic practices—notably animal sacrifice—but in a wide variety of early Buddhist scriptures, including the *Kūṭadanta Sutta* of the *Dīgha-nikāya*, the *Suttanipāta*, and elsewhere, the Buddha is depicted as endorsing or reinterpreting Vedic practice for householders and even claiming to be the original teacher of the Vedas in past existences.⁷ These claims should come as no surprise given Buddhism’s need to make inroads in a population where Brahmanic religious practices held sway. Mahāyāna texts emerging after the first century of our era further deploy metaphors of fire and yogic heat in a variety of stunning and widely influential scenarios, including that of Sarvasattvapriyadarśana’s self-immolation as a beacon of the dharma in the *Lotus Sutra*.⁸ By the time of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* (sixth–seventh centuries CE), as if to deflect the opprobrium of those who would charge Buddhism with being a pale version of the Veda, we find an elaborate rationalization for the use of *homa*, including the recitation of the genealogy of Agni through forty-four “fires,” the claim that the Buddha was the teacher of these rites in the past, and a new set of fires taught by the Buddha after his enlightenment.⁹

Despite these connections, core Brahmanic rites—the fire sacrifice or *homa* and consecration or *abhiṣeka*, etc.—remained peripheral to Buddhist practice for nearly a millennium. Beginning in the sixth century, however, numerous *vidhis* (*yigui*, *cidi*, 儀軌, 次第, etc.)—ritual manuals detailing the use of spells or *dhāraṇīs*, mantras, and elaborate procedures for the construction and worship of images—were translated into Chinese. Although most of the Indic originals of these texts disappeared long ago, the manuals preserved in Chinese are witness to the movement of Brahmanic ritual technology—*abhiṣeka* and *homa*—from the margins of Buddhist practice to a preeminent role.¹⁰ I will focus here on *abhiṣeka* and return later to the practice of *homa*.

One of the Chinese terms for Buddhism was “the teaching of images” (*xiangjiao*, *xianghua*, 像教, 像化), and at the heart of the ritual technology preserved in these Chinese manuals are images (broadly construed) and the process through which they are created. Three terms are important for understanding the creation and use of images and the growing importance of *abhiṣeka* in esoteric Buddhist texts from

the sixth century onward. The first is *adhiṣṭhāna* (adhi√sthā, Ch. *jiachi*, Jpn. *kaji* 加持, Tib. *byin rlabs*), which has a sense of “to occupy” or “inhabit.” This term has been widely discussed in treatments of esoteric Buddhism and translated as “empowerment” or “grace.”¹¹ It is related to the term *pratiṣṭhā* (*zhu, zhuchi, zhuchu*, 住, 住持, 住處)¹² designating the establishment of a deity in a material object such as an image, a vase of water, or a rosary.¹³ The third term, *āveśa* (ā√viś, Ch. *aweishe, bianru, zhaoru, fa*, 阿尾奢, 阿尾舍, 阿尾捨, 扁入, 召入, 發), and its related terms (pra√viś), have received much less yet more idiosyncratic treatment, notably by Michel Strickmann.¹⁴ *Āveśa* is defined as a friendly “entry” or possession.¹⁵ The term *āveśa* appears in early Vedic texts to describe, for instance, the entry of processed soma into the deities or sages.¹⁶ It is the common term used for possession throughout South Asian literature and practice. Fredrick Smith, in his recent book *The Self Possessed*, traces *āveśa, pratiṣṭhā*, and other related terms across South Asian literature and practice, describing their relationships with particular techniques used to produce “entry,” including *mudrā, nyāsa*, and mantra.¹⁷ I think of these ritual techniques as a kind of tattooing of the image or body to make it a fit vehicle for the divine.¹⁸ Smith focuses on understandings of the self as multiple, permeable, and malleable and as the foundation for understanding Brahmanic ritual.

Just as the ritualization of the self or body is produced through the imposition of mantra, *mudrā*, and *nyāsa*, so too there are typical indications of “entry” or the establishment of a deity in the consecration of images. Images and humans alike are described as “shaking,” “trembling,” or even “dancing.”¹⁹ In light of these similarities, and in light of the evidence below, I argue that in many of the texts from the sixth century onward the ritual production of images, rites of *abhiṣeka*, and *homa* should be treated as closely related, or even as aspects of a single ritual technology for producing and deploying divine subjects.²⁰ I further argue that rather than approaching these rites in terms of interior states we can fruitfully see them as ritually produced forms of publicly shared subjectivity.

INDICATIONS OF SUCCESSFUL INSTALLATION OF A DEITY

The earliest unambiguous record of a Buddhist votive *homa* (as opposed to the use of fire for simple exorcism) is found in the sixth-century *Avalokiteśvaraikādaśamukha-dhāraṇī-sūtra* of Yaśogupta (耶舍崛多) (*Shiyimian guanshiyin shenzhou jing*, 十一面觀世音神呪經, T. 1070)

dating from 561–578.²¹ In this scripture a detailed image of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara is fashioned from wood as follows:

You should use white sandalwood to fashion an image of Avalokiteśvara. The wood must be fine and solid and without defect. The body is one *chi* and three *cun* long²² and should be made with eleven heads. The three front faces should have the appearance of bodhisattvas, the three faces on the left should have an angry appearance, the faces on the right have bodhisattva visages with protruding fangs. The one face in back is laughing heartily. The topmost face should have the appearance of a buddha. All the faces, front and back, should be radiant. The eleven faces should have flower crowns and in each of these flower crowns is Amitābha Buddha. Avalokiteśvara's left hand grasps a *kuṇḍika* [vase] with a lotus flower. His right hand holds a necklace and displays the *mudrā* of fearlessness [*abhaya mudrā*]. The image should be carved such that it is adorned with jeweled necklaces.

Having constructed the image, the practitioner is to spend the first fourteen days of the month making various offerings to the image while chanting a *dhāraṇī* (T. 1070, 20.150c22–151a19). Beginning on the fourteenth day of the month the practitioner is instructed to set up a sandalwood fire before the image and to take 1008 pieces of incense, dip them in soma oil (*suma you*, 蘇摩油), and offer them into the fire. If properly done, on the evening of the fifteenth day Avalokiteśvara enters the altar, the image shakes, and a voice praises the practitioner and offers to grant four supernormal boons (151a20–151b2). The text describes other rites, including the installation of a relic in the image, setting up the image near a relic, and throwing flowers onto the images, and in each case the response of the deity's "great thunderous voice" indicates success of the rite.²³

One can find a number of such texts throughout the sixth and seventh centuries with similar prescriptions and results. The presence of the deity is announced by earthquake, the shaking or the moving of the image. It is notable that these texts say nothing about rites for opening the eyes of an image (*kai mu*, *kai guangming*, 開目, 開光明). While both canonical texts and epigraphy as early as the sixth century mention eye-opening rituals, the earliest extant ritual description of an image consecration involving an eye-opening occurs in a text dedicated to Ucchuṣma (T. 1277, 大威力烏樞瑟摩明王經) rendered by Ajitasena (阿質達霰) in Turfan in 732.²⁴ The eye-opening procedure is not accompanied by shaking or other image miracles such as a booming

voice.²⁵ Sixth- through eighth-century texts give details of construction, offerings, *dhāraṇī* and *homa* practice, and the miraculous shaking and speaking of the image announcing the successful installation. The role of the eyes, however, figures prominently in the consecration of disciples.

ABHIṢEKA: INSTALLING A DEITY IN A PERSON

By the mid-seventh century *homa* and image rites such as those above were joined by *abhiṣeka* in Atikūṭa's (阿地瞿多, fl. 650s) imperially sponsored *Tuoluoni ji jing* (陀羅尼集經) or *Collection of Coded Instructions* (*Dhāraṇī-saṃgraha-sūtra*, T. 901).²⁶ Half a century later, in a group of texts translated by Bodhiruci (菩提流支, ?-727) under the auspices of Empress Wu's imperial patronage, *abhiṣeka* and *homa* are again key elements of ritual procedures.²⁷ During the early eighth century *abhiṣeka* and *homa* were the defining features of the ritual programs of the esoteric scriptures translated by Śubhākarasiṃha and by Vajrabodhi, and his disciple Amoghavajra.

The rite of *abhiṣeka* as used in esoteric Buddhism employs a technology not unlike that used to produce and then consecrate images. The aim of both rites is first to make the image or the person a fit abode for a deity by creating its attributes, properly “mantrifying” the recipient through *nyāsa* and *mudrā*, and then to induce the “entry” of the deity into the image or the person. Strickmann and others have discussed *āveśa* rituals for inducing possession of children by a deity for oracular purposes.²⁸ However, the role of *āveśa* in rites used to consecrate disciples, that is *abhiṣeka*, has been overlooked.²⁹

The ritual of *abhiṣeka* is detailed in the *Mahāvairocana Scripture*, in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, and elsewhere.³⁰ Based on the Brahmanic consecration of an overlord, in these texts *abhiṣeka* is presented as a ritual reenactment of the mythic event of Siddhārtha's enlightenment and consecration as Mahāvairocana in the Akaniṣṭha heaven.³¹ The process involves the confession of sins, the taking of bodhisattva vows, the summoning of the blindfolded disciple before a mandala, the throwing of a flower onto the mandala to establish a karmic bond with a tutelary deity, the first vision of the mandala and the deity, the imparting of the deity's mantra, and the use of *mudrā* and mantra to impress key attributes of the deity on the disciple's body. For this essay I will focus on the description found in Amoghavajra's epitome (summary/translation) of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*

(T. 865, *Jin'gang ding yiqie rulai zhenshi she da cheng xianzeng dajiao wang jing*, 金剛頂一切如來真實攝大乘現證大教王經).³²

Early in the scripture, Sarvārthasiddha (Siddhārtha) is seated in deep trance:

At that time all of the *tathāgatas* assembled in a cloud surrounding Sarvārthasiddha Mahāsattva's *bodhimaṇḍa* and manifested their *sambogakāyas* and said, "Good son, how can one ascend to unsurpassed *bodhi* using ascetic practices without the knowledge of the True Reality of all of the *tathāgatas*?" At that time, Sarvārthasiddha Mahāsattva, having been aroused by the *tathāgatas* forthwith exited the *āsphānaka samādhi*, and did obeisance to the *tathāgatas*, saying, "World-honored *tathāgatas*, instruct me, how should I practice, what is this True Reality?" (T. 865, 18.207c)

Later in the text, the ritual of *abhiṣeka* recapitulates for the disciple Sarvārthasiddha's initiation. Having been blindfolded, the disciple is sworn to secrecy:³³

The *vajra ācārya* should himself make the *sattva-vajrī mudrā*, which he places facing downward on the disciple's head, making the following pronouncement: "This is the *samaya-vajra*. It will split your head [if you reveal it to others], you must not discuss it."

The teacher then empowers the oath-water and the disciple drinks it, and the teacher tells the disciple that from then on he (the teacher) is to be regarded as Vajrapāṇi and warns that hell awaits him if he treats the teacher with contempt. Then the teacher has the disciple say the following:

I beseech all the *tathāgatas* to empower (*adhiṣṭhāna*, 加持) me and for Vajrasattva to enter (*bianru*, 扁入) me. Then the *vajra ācārya* should bind the *sattva-vajrī mudrā* and say: "Ayaṃ tat samayo vajraṃ vajrasattvam iti smṛtam; āveśayatu te 'dyaiva vajrajñānam anuttaram Vajrāveśa aḥ." [This is the pledge, the *vajra* known as *vajrasattva*; may it cause unsurpassed adamantine knowledge to enter you this very day! Adamantine entry! Ah!] Then [the teacher] makes the wrathful-fist (*kroḍa-muṣṭi*), breaking the *sattva-vajrī mudrā*, and [makes the disciple] recite at will the one-hundred-syllable mantra of the realization of the Mahāyāna with adamantine speech. Then *āveśa*.³⁴

The text then details the transformative results of the entry ("he comprehends the minds of others," "eliminates all suffering," etc.). The teacher makes the *mudrā* and releases it on the disciple's heart confirming the installation in the disciple's heart ("hṛydayaṃ me'dhitiṣṭha").

At this point the disciple throws a garland onto the mandala, establishing a connection with the deity on whom it lands. The garland is then placed by the teacher on the disciple's head as the teacher recites: "Om pratigrhṇa tvam imaṃ sattva[m] mahābala." (Om, accept this being, O you of great power!). The "entry" is completed as the teacher uncovers the disciple's face while pronouncing the following mantra:

Om vajrasattvaḥ svayaṃ te 'dya cakṣūdghāṇatanaparaḥ. Udghāṭayati sarvākṣo vajracakṣur anuttaram. [Om Vajrasattva himself is intent upon opening your eyes today. The all-eyed one opens the unsurpassed vajra-eye.] Then [the teacher] recites the vision mantra: He vajra paśya. [Hey, vajra, look!] Then he makes the disciple look at the Great Mandala in the regular order. As soon as he has seen [it the disciple] is empowered (*adhiṣṭhāna*) by all the *tathāgatas* and Vajrasattva dwells in the disciple's heart. . . . [The teacher] empowers a flask with scented water using a *vajra* and anoints the disciple's head with this heart mantra: Vajrābhiṣiṅca! (O *vajra*, consecrate!) Then with a particular *mudrā* and fastening a garland [to the disciple], he places his own insignia in the palms of the [disciple's] two hands, reciting the heart mantra: Adyābhiṣiktas tvam asi buddhair vajrābhiṣekataḥ. Imaṃ te sarvabuddhatvaṃ grhṇa vajra[m] susiddhaye. Om vajrādhipatitvam abhiṣiṅcāmi. Tiṣṭha vajra. Samayas tvam. [You have now been consecrated by the buddhas with the *vajra* consecration. Take for good success this *vajra* for your complete buddhahood! Om, I consecrate you *vajra* lord. Abide, *vajra*! You are the pledge.]

The centrality of entry and establishment of the deity in the disciple's heart is readily apparent.³⁵ We can also see that the blindfolding and subsequent uncovering of the disciple's eyes is paralleled in well-known rituals of "eye-opening" in the construction of images. Amoghavajra's version of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* does not mention the disciple shaking or trembling. However, his *Maheśvara's Discourse on the Swiftly Efficacious Technique of Āveśa* specifies that the indication of successful possession of a child medium is "trembling" (戰動).³⁶ Other accounts of *abhiṣeka*, however, note that successful initiation is accompanied by "shaking and tremors," as well as dancing, fainting, or leaping.³⁷ Michel Strickmann aptly observed that this is a process of "iconisation."³⁸

THE PRODUCTION OF THE SUBJECT IN ESOTERIC RITUAL

The core myth of Siddhārtha's conversion from asceticism to esoteric initiation in *abhiṣeka* holds an important lesson often overlooked:

Siddhārtha thinks he is alone—a Jamesian subject seeking an individual, interior, enlightened subjectivity. He is aroused from his breath-suppressing trance (which would issue in death) and reoriented to a path of ritual practice *in a social space*. Indeed, while esoteric ritual may be practiced alone, key rites such as consecration must take place with others. Enlightenment, in this model, is inextricably social: it is a spectacle produced through ritual practice, for oneself and others. Even when one performs a ritual “alone” one generates a mandala and populates it with deities—the ritual subject is socially conceived.

Amoghavajra’s repeated requests to establish altars for *abhiṣeka* and *homa* in the most prominent official temples in the capital and beyond underscore the social dimension of esoteric ritual. Although bounded by oaths of secrecy these rites are performances intended for an audience, sometimes an audience of a few disciples, sometimes an imperial audience, and sometimes even a wider audience. For instance, Zhaoqian’s biography of Amoghavajra claims that in 755 he gave *abhiṣeka* to the military commander Geshu Han and his subordinates and that “nobles and the like, an assembly of some one thousand persons, ascended the ritual arena.”³⁹ The rites are designed to interpellate (to use the Althusserian vocabulary) the initiate and those observing it into a social practice.

Although the social dimension of *abhiṣeka* is, on its face, quite obvious, traditional South Asian discourses concerning “entry” as well as contemporary scholarly treatments of “possession” assume an *interior* experience produced when an exterior entity inhabits or cohabits an image or a body. Esoteric texts are often structured around an opposition between “exterior” and “interior” performance.⁴⁰ As such, our attention is channeled by an ontology that separates the self into subject and object, the self (or self-possessed) and the self which is possessed. From such a perspective, our access to possession is secondary—we can only observe the outward signs of “possession” while the interior “experience” remains obscure. Indeed, the easy fit between this traditional taxonomy of possession and much contemporary discourse on religious “experience” can divert our gaze from the social production of subjectivity or self.⁴¹

Recent work on the creation of ritual subjects or selves—both in the present and in antiquity—affords us an alternative.⁴² In this view, “subjects” are socially produced ritual and discursive objects. Semiotically speaking, they are codes produced, propagated, and shared through

institutional means. On this reading the scriptures and ritual manuals for the performance of *abhiṣeka* and *homa* translated or composed in China detail the process for producing and displaying a subject constructed in ritual and liturgy. This subject then can be understood as an institutional construct, typical, rather than unique and autonomous—a subject produced socially for institutional ends.⁴³ Unlike the interior self, the subject of *abhiṣeka* or *homa* is a subject socially accessible, produced for religious manipulation, and available for study. Indeed, its utility is precisely the fact of its social accessibility. Thus, although traditional discourses privilege the interior self, a social approach to these rites allows us to invert the usual hierarchy of interior and exterior to view the socially produced subject of ritual as the primary fact.

This social production (and display) of the subject is demonstrably the case, for instance, when we examine manuals concerning the process of *homa*. Many of the same preparatory rites (bathing, fasting, purifying the ritual space, etc.) are found in descriptions of image construction, in *homa*, and in *abhiṣeka*. Just as rites for the construction of images and *abhiṣeka* prescribe certain facial features, accoutrements, *mudrās*, mantras, etc., so to do rites for *homa*.

For instance, Bodhiruci's translation of the *Scripture of the Cakravartin of the Single Syllable of the Buddha's Crown* (*Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin*, *Yizi fo ding lunwang jing*, 一字佛頂輪王經, T. 951, 709 CE) contains a long segment titled "Homa Altar" (*humo tan*, 護摩壇), which forms the final section of this extensive compendium.⁴⁴ It sets out the differently shaped altars suitable for each type of rite and it appears to be the earliest use of what becomes the canonical three-fold taxonomy of rites: *śāntika* for pacification (*anyin fa*, 安隱法, T. 951, 19:262a13), *pauṣṭika* for prosperity (求大豐饒諸眾善法, T. 951, 19:262b3), and *abhicāruka* for subjugation (調伏他法, T. 951, 19:262b21).⁴⁵ Here, and in the many scriptures translated in the following half century, we see the appearance of a fully formed semiotic system evident in types of ritual and details of performance. For instance, in describing *abhicāruka* rites for subjugation the text specifies what part of the month is best, that one wear black or red garments, that the fire altar be triangular in shape and what direction the corners should be oriented to, specifics about its size and construction, where to sit and in what posture, how one should look when chanting (furious), what sort of wood to use (jube wood, kudong wood—both sour/bitter), and so forth (262b6–13).

By the beginning of the eighth century such descriptions were frequently accompanied by instructions for “visualizing” deities including Agni, Acala, etc.⁴⁶ In Bodhiruci’s translation of the massive *Scripture of the Mantra of Amoghapāśa’s Miraculous Transformations* (不空罽索神變真言經, T. 1092) produced in 707 CE, details of performance are joined by step-by-step mental procedures. For instance, the practitioner is instructed to contemplate the golden-colored flames of the fire becoming a *ra* (囉) *bija* or seed-syllable which then changes into Agni, whose body, color, implements, faces, eyes, etc., are then described.⁴⁷ It is here that we should situate the elaborate description of the generation of the mandala found at the beginning of the *Sarvatathāgatātattvasaṃgraha*. Having undergone *abhiṣeka* the disciple is instructed to look at the mandala “in a regular order” (T. 865, 18.218c04, 則令弟子次第而視大曼荼羅). This order evokes the visionary process through which the mandala and its deities are generated and through which the disciple “visualizes” himself as the deity.⁴⁸

These textual descriptions of inner experience paralleled to outer action are a part of the ideology of esoteric Buddhism. The *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and other texts spend a great deal of time describing the inner, the outer, and the privileged ontological status of the former over the latter. *Abhiṣeka*, *homa*, and related practices appearing in eighth-century texts are ritual practices constituting a social self or subject, even as that subject engages in the ostensibly interior process of visualizing a divine self. By inverting the received taxonomic hierarchy of inner and outer we can see these textual instructions as an extension of a ritually created, iconographically conventional, and socially shared subject. In this light, then, the ritual process of *āveśa* is affirmed and extended through textual descriptions of inner experience, and these descriptions are a part of the ritual production of a socially constructed subject.

NOTES

1. My thanks to Dorothy Wong and Wei-Cheng Lin for comments on a presented version of this paper at the Workshop on East Asian Buddhism and Buddhist Art held at the National Humanities Center, April 20, 2012.

2. Amoghavajra’s request is dated May 30, 760. The Xingshan monastery was the premier official monastery in the capital and one officially charged with translation activities. Situated on Chang’an’s central artery, it occupied the entire Jingshan section of the city 靖善坊. For a discussion see CHEN Jinhua,

Crossfire: Shingon-Tendai Strife as Seen in Two Twelfth-Century Polemics, with Special References to Their Background in Tang China, Studia Philologica Buddhica Monograph Series 25 (Tokyo: The International Institute for Buddhist Studies in Tōkyō, 2010), 171–178. For a discussion of Amoghavajra and sources on him see Charles D. Orzech, *Politics and Transcendent Wisdom: The Scripture for Humane Kings in the Creation of Chinese Buddhism* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), esp. 135–150; and the recent dissertation by Geoffrey Goble, “Chinese Esoteric Buddhism: Amoghavajra and the Ruling Elite” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2012).

3. It is unclear where exactly on the temple grounds the altar was located, and Amoghavajra made a second request for such an altar in the same temple a mere three years later. Another *abhiṣeka* altar was being completed in the Mañjuśrī pavilion when Amoghavajra died in 774. Ennin reported a permanent altar in the Translation Hall some seventy years later. See Chen, *Crossfire*, 168n8. Amoghavajra made a series of requests to initiate a program of rebuilding and the initiation of monks to perform rituals at Mt. Wutai. For the Wutai complex see Chen, *Crossfire*, 181–183. Chen’s chapter on “Institutional Support,” 167–207, systematically documents all of the esoteric establishments of the time.

4. Haiyun (海雲, fl. 822–874) mentions the annual erection of *abhiṣeka* altars at temples around the capital during the ninth century in his *Liangbu dafa xiangcheng shizi fufa ji* (兩部大法相承師資付法記, T. 2081, 50.785b23–24). See Chen, *Crossfire*, 167–168.

5. The comment is attributed to T. R. V. Murti and has been widely repeated. See Frits Staal, “There Is No Religion There,” in *The Craft of Religious Studies*, ed. Jon R. Stone (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 63.

6. Fire sacrifice was the core technology of Vedic traditions, and *homa* is detailed in the *Taittirīya Āraṇyaka* of the *Black Yajus Veda*. There, and in later Vedic influenced traditions, we find *homa* employed for a wide variety of ends, including easy childbirth, production of wealth, averting disease or illness, etc. The *grhya* sutra material most relevant is found in the *-śeṣa*, *-pariśiṣṭa*, or *-vidhāna* texts. Ronald Davidson has proposed a tentative scenario for the movement of brahmanic rites down register into householder practice and thence into Buddhist practice. See “Some Observations on the Uṣṇīṣa Abhiṣeka Rites in Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*,” in *Transformations and Transfer of Tantra: Tantrism in Asia and Beyond*, ed. István Keul (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2011), 91–93. For an introduction and historical situation of this literature see Laurie Patton, *Bringing the Gods to Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). On the role and development of *abhiṣeka* see Ronald M. Davidson, “Abhiṣeka,” in *Esoteric Buddhism and the Tantras in East Asia*, eds. Charles D. Orzech, Henrik H. Sørensen, and Richard K. Payne (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2011), 71–75.

7. For a succinct treatment see Y. Krishnan, "To What Extent Buddhism Repudiated Vedic Religion?" *East and West* 43, no. 1/4 (December 1993): 237–240. In some scriptures the Buddha is also depicted as taking credit for teaching the Vedas in a past life, a theme found as late as Buddhaguhya's commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Scripture*. See Stephen Hodge, *The Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary* (London: Routledge, 2003), 386. Yixing explicitly makes this argument in his *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Scripture*. T. 1796, 39.779a19–26.
8. For this episode see Leon Hurvitz, *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma (the Lotus Sūtra)* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), chap. 23, 294–298.
9. The section on "Worldly and Transcendent Homa" is rendered as a *gāthā* in parallel lines of five characters each. For these "worldly" fires, see T. 848, 18:43a7–b12; the discussion in Michel Strickmann, "Homa in East Asia," in *Agni: The Vedic Ritual of the Fire Altar*, ed. Frits Staal (Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press, 1983), 2, pt. 1: 417–418; and the translation in Hodge, *The Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 381–390. According to Buddhaguhya's commentary the Buddha taught the Brahmanical fires when he was a bodhisattva as a way of reducing pain and suffering. He then supplemented them with twelve more fires. See Hodge, *The Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi Tantra*, 381, 386.
10. The question of the emergence of image worship in India and its relationship to early Brahmanic ritual practice has been explored by Phyllis Granoff, "Images and Their Ritual Use in Medieval India: Hesitations and Contradictions," in *Images in Asian Religions: Texts and Contexts*, eds. Phyllis Granoff and Koichi Shinohara (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004), 19–55. Granoff posits a tension between Brahmanic ritual and later Purāṇic image-based worship.
11. *Adhiṣṭhāna* has received considerable attention for its role in the work of Kūkai and other proponents of Japanese *mikkyō* or esoteric Buddhism. See *Bukkyōdaijiten* 436b–437a.
12. As well as several other translations: 依止 安住 安立 建立, 所住, 所住處, etc.
13. See Fredrick M. Smith, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 388–390. Michel Strickmann summarizes this process in *Mantras et mandarins: Le bouddhisme tantrique en Chine* (Paris: Gallimard, 1996), 184–189.
14. Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, esp. 214–220.
15. *Praveśa* traditionally designated a hostile state of possession or subjectivity. Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 14.
16. *Ibid.*, 179.

17. See *ibid.*, 374–390, on the relationship between *āveśa*, (*prāṇa*) *pratiṣṭhā*, and *nyāsa*.

18. Gavin Flood has called this process “entextualization.” On the relationship between body and text see Gavin Flood, *Body and Cosmology in Kashmiri Saivism* (San Francisco: Mellen Research University Press, 1993), 245; and more recently, Gavin Flood, *The Tantric Body: The Secret Tradition of Hindu Religion* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2006), 3–30.

19. Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 392–398. See especially Smith’s discussion on 391–393 of the *Guhyasamāja*, the Dalai Lama’s commentary, and the *Kālacakra-tantra* concerning the signs that the wisdom-being has entered the disciple, including shaking and dancing. The same shaking takes place when a child is used as a medium, as in Amoghavajra’s *Maheśvara’s Discourse on the Swiftly Efficacious Technique of Āveśa* (*Suji liyan Moxishoule tian shuo aweishe fa*, 速疾立驗魔醮首羅天說阿尾奢法, T. 1277, 21.330a23–24): 此真言應誦七遍。則彼童女戰動。當知聖者入身。“This mantra should be chanted seven times and then the girl will tremble and one will know that the sage has entered her body.”

20. *Āveśa* creates the divine subject, *homa* deploys it.

21. There is also a translation of the scripture by the famous monk-pilgrim Xuanzang, T. 1071, vol. 20 (*Shiyi mian shenzhouxin jing*, 十一面神咒心經), as well as one by Amoghavajra, T. 1069 (*Shiyi mian guanzizai pusa xin miyan niansong yigui jing*, 十一面觀自在菩薩心密言念誦儀軌經).

22. In Tang times this would have equaled roughly 9.5–10 inches.

23. See the version of Xuanzang, T. 1071, 20.154a27–b2; Amoghavajra’s version, T. 1069, 20.141b19–141c6; and the version in Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇī-saṃgraha-sūtra*, T. 901 18.824b13–825a9.

24. Steles in Shaanxi dating from the early sixth century mention donors in charge of opening [the eyes] of the image (*kaixiang guangming zhu*, 開像光明主). See Dorothy C. Wong, *Chinese Steles: Pre-Buddhist and Buddhist Use of a Symbolic Form* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2004), 81–82.

25. T. 1227, 21.148c25–26: 以檀香水浴之。以飲食香花供養。以彩色嚴之。像額間點赤或黃至來月一日開目立壇。Strickmann places this image making in the context of well-known examples of image consecration involving eye-opening in South and Southeast Asia. See *Mantras et mandarins*, 184–189. Although Chinese epigraphy indicates the rite as early as the sixth century, canonical translations do not include a description until 732. It may well be that the eye-opening rite replaced the image miracles. It is much easier to make a person shake than it is to make a statue shake.

26. The text was rendered in 654. For more on this text, see, Koichi Shinohara, “The All-Gathering Maṇḍala Initiation Ceremony in Atikūṭa’s Collected *Dhāraṇī* Scriptures: Reconstructing the Evolution of Esoteric Buddhist Ritual,”

Journal Asiatique 298, no. 2 (2010): 389–420; and Davidson, “Some Observations on the *Uṣṇīṣa Abhiṣeka* Rites in Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*,” 77–97.

27. Bodhiruci’s translation of the *Scripture of the Cakravartin of the Single Syllable of the Buddha’s Crown* (*Ekākṣara-uṣṇīṣa-cakravartin*; *Yizi fo ding lunwang jing*, 一字佛頂輪王經, T. 951, 709 CE).

28. See Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 213–229.

29. Like Strickmann, both *Bukkyōdajiten* and *Mikkyōdajiten* treat the induction of possession states for oracular purposes while overlooking its use in *abhiṣeka*.

30. Ryūichi Abé’s discussion of *abhiṣeka* as presented in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* is easily the best in English. See *The Weaving of Mantra: Kūkai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press), 133–149.

31. The Akaniṣṭha heaven is at the summit of the realm of form in Buddhist cosmology. *Abhiṣeka* is found earlier in the *Guanding jing* (T. 1331) and discussed at some length by Michel Strickmann, “The Consecration Sūtra: A Buddhist Book of Spells,” in *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha*, ed. Robert E. Buswell, Jr. (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 1990), 75–118. However, in this case it is not used to consecrate an overlord but rather to transmit a text. See Davidson, “*Abhiṣeka*,” 74.

32. For a basic introduction to this text see Rolf Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras: The Adamantine Pinnacle Sutra / The Susiddhikara Sutra* (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2001), 5–15. For an examination of the text and its corpus, see and also Steven Neal Weinberger, “Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (*Tattvasaṃgraha* tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet” (PhD diss., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, 2003).

33. I follow Rolf Giebel’s translation in *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 73–79, with minor modifications. The original is T. 865, 18.218b1–219b2.

34. The parallel passage in Dānapāla’s (Shihu, 施護) full translation of the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* (translated 1012–1015, during the Northern Song, *Fo shuo yiqie rulai zhenshi she dacheng xianzheng san mei dajiaowang jing*, 佛說一切如來真實攝大乘現證三昧大教王經, T. 882) uses 召入 as a translation for *āveśa*: T. 882, 18.354a5–6, 以金剛語隨其所樂應當持誦。然作召入法。當召入時。從微妙智生。以是智故。即能如應覺了他心。

35. It is also used elsewhere in the scripture involving the entry of the deities of the mandala. See Giebel, *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 70: “Then having bound the supreme samaya seal in accordance with the rules, The Adamantine Teacher enters [the mandala], after which he breaks the seal and [effects] the entry (*āveśa*) [of the deities into the mandala]. This is the heart-mantra for all en-

try.” The original (T. 865, 18.217a23–25) reads 即勝三昧耶結印如儀則金剛師入已摧印而遍入此諸遍入心。

36. See *Suji liyan Moxishoule tian shuo aweishe fa*, 速疾立驗魔醯首羅天說阿尾奢法, T. 1277, 21.330a23–24: 此真言應誦七遍。則彼童女戰動。當知聖者入身。

37. See Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 392, 395–396, and note 18 above.

38. Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 204.

39. T. 2056, 50.293b6–7: 士庶之類。數千人眾。咸登道場。

40. See, for example, the distinction between inner and outer *homa* in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, T. 848, 18:44a1: “Next is inner *homa*, which eradicates karma and rebirth” (*fuzi nei humo miequ yu yeh sheng*, 復次內護摩 滅除於業生). Or another example: T. 1796, 39:662b7–8. *The Scripture Outlining Recitations and Contemplations of the Yoga of the Peak of the Vajra* (*Jin’gang fenglouge yiqie yujia yuqi jing*, 金剛頂瑜伽中略出念誦經), attributed to Vajrabodhi, says that in the “adamantine inner *homa* . . . total enlightenment is the flame and my own mouth is the hearth” (T. 867, 18:266a20).

41. Robert Sharf has probed the notion of “Experience,” in *Critical Terms for Religious Studies*, ed. Mark C. Taylor (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 94–116. His essay “Thinking through Shingon Ritual,” *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* 26 (2003): 51–96, challenges both traditional and recent interpretations of inner visionary experience.

42. For an analysis of the role of liturgy in shaping subjectivity in the context of late antiquity see *Religion and the Self in Antiquity*, eds. David Brakke, Michael L. Satlow, and Steven Weitzman (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2005). See also Derek Krueger, “Romanos the Melodist and the Christian Self in Early Byzantium,” *Proceedings of the 21st International Congress of Byzantine Studies* (London: Ashgate, 2006), vol. 1, 255–274, and his “The *Great Kanon* of Andrew of Crete, the Penitential Bible, and the Liturgical Formation of the Self in the Byzantine Dark Age,” in *Between Personal and Institutional Religion: Self, Doctrine, and Practice in Late Antique Eastern Christianity*, eds. Brouria Bitton-Ashkelony and Lorenzo Perrone, *Cultural Encounters in Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages* 15 (Turnhout: Brepols, forthcoming).

43. Krueger, in speaking of the self produced through the performance of Andrew’s liturgy, observes that “This self was not unique to any individual. Rather, through the liturgy the clergy sought to reproduce this self in each participant. Byzantine liturgy thus provides access to the self as institutionally formed, not individual but typical. This self is not an autonomous religious self but rather a cultural product, the subject of liturgy” (Krueger, “*Great Kanon*”).

44. T. 951, 19:261c16–263b3. This is the first appearance of the term *humo*

(護摩), though the text also calls the rite *huotan fa* (火壇法). Related scriptures are T. 952, a variant of 951, and T. 1092, among others. On Bodhiruci, his biography, and his role in the court of Empress Wu see Antonino Forte, “The South Indian Monk Bodhiruci (D. 727), Biographical Evidence,” in *A Life Journey to the East: Sinological Studies in Memory of Giuliano Bertuccioli (1923–2001)*, eds. Antonino Forte and Federico Masini (Kyoto: Scuola Italiana di Studi sull’Asia Orientale, 2002), 77–116; and Timothy Hugh Barrett, “Stūpa, sūtra and śarīra in China, C. 656–706 CE,” *Buddhist Studies Review* 18 (2001): 1–64.

45. The terms are translated as above as well as rendered in transliteration 扇底迦, 布瑟置迦, 阿毘柁嚧迦 at T. 951, 19.237a7, and T. 1092, 20.260a9–12. Details of an *abhicāruka* rite (*apizhelujia fa*, 阿毘柁嚧迦法, T. 952, 19:272c6), including a triangular altar, the officiant facing south in a hostile crouch, etc., in what would become classical marks of the rite, are found in Bodhiruci’s *Wu foding san mei tuoluoni jing* (五佛頂三昧陀羅尼經, T. 952, 19:272c11–12), translated sometime between 693 and 706. The Buddhist streamlining of *homa* into a three-, four-, or five-fold taxonomy appears to be coeval with the Buddhist appropriation and domestication of *homa* that occurred in the seventh century.

46. See, for example, Atikūṭa’s *Dhāraṇīsaṃgraha*, T. 901, 18.851a23–851c04.

47. T. 1092, 20.260b4–5. “One should take the incense water and sprinkle it onto the flames, snapping the fingers three times, one should visualize the golden flames making a *ra* character and transforming to Agni” (當以香水灑淨火上彈指三遍 當觀火焰金為囉字變為火天).

48. This process, sometimes dubbed “deity yoga,” has been put forward by some as a defining characteristic of tantra. The process begins at T. 865, 18.207c and proceeds through 216b. The initial portion of this process begins with Samantabhadra visualizing a *vajra* on a lunar disk in his heart and results in his visualizing himself in the form of a buddha. Giebel’s translation appears in *Two Esoteric Sutras*, 23–24; and Abé has a clear discussion in *The Weaving of Mantra*, 142–146.