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Abstract Tantrism (*Mijiao* 密教) is regarded by some as the alien element of magic, ritual, and worship that corrupted Buddhism in India. It is regarded by others as a highly sophisticated vehicle named Vajrayāna. Both views would come into play as Tantrism became the focus of Chinese scholars during the Republican period (1912–1949). Such famous figures as Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947) took a special interest in the tantric traditions of contemporary Tibet and Japan. However, the forms of Tantrism that once flourished in ancient India and China, and to which those of Tibet and Japan could be traced, also came under scrutiny. Prior to the First World War, Chinese scholars had not been drawn into the binary that viewed Tantrism in China, Japan, and Tibet as either an aberration of original Buddhism, or as a separate and supreme vehicle that is its culmination. Between the world wars, however, and in the wake of what Holmes Welch has called the revival of Tantrism in China, the problem of Tibet's Buddhism as a form of Tantrism, and of its historical relation to the Tantrism of China and Japan, presented a dilemma to Chinese scholars. To understand what was at stake in this dilemma, this essay will offer a genealogy of the term *Xizang fojiao* 西藏佛教, a term translated as "Tibetan Buddhism" in English. In so doing, it will explore two elements that proved central to the study of Buddhism in China between the 1840s and the 1940s: (1) the changing names of Tibetan Buddhism, and (2) the changing meaning of Tantrism in relation to Tibetan Buddhism.

Keywords Tantrism, Tibetan Buddhism, *Xizang fojiao* 西藏佛教, Lü Cheng 吕澄

Martino Dibeltulo Concu ©
hello@martinodibeltuloconcu.com

Tantrism, Modernity, History. On Lü Cheng's Philological Method*

Martino Dibeltulo Concu

> Mais comment un phénomène aussi considérable que le bouddhisme tantrique chinois aurat-il pu disparaître du continent sans laisser aucune trace?
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> —Michel Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins* (1996).[1]

Tantrism (*Mijiao* 密教 in modern Chinese) is regarded by some as the alien element of magic, ritual, and worship that corrupted Buddhism in India.[2] It is regarded by others as a highly sophisticated vehicle named Vajrayāna. Both views would come into play as Tantrism became the focus of Chinese scholars during the Republican period (1912–1949). Such famous figures as Taixu 太虛 (1890–1947) took a special interest in the tantric traditions of contemporary Tibet and Japan. However, the forms of Tantrism that once flourished in ancient India and China, and to which those of Tibet and Japan could be traced, also came under scrutiny. Prior to the First World War, Chinese scholars had not been drawn into the binary that viewed Tantrism in China, Japan, and Tibet as either an aberration of original Buddhism, or as a separate and supreme vehicle that is its culmination. Between the world wars, however, and in the wake of what Holmes Welch has called the revival of Tantrism in China, the problem of Tibet's Buddhism as a form of Tantrism, and of its historical relation to the Tantrism of China and Japan, presented a dilemma to Chinese scholars. To understand what was at stake in this dilemma, this essay will offer a genealogy of the term *Xizang fojiao* 西藏佛教, a term translated as "Tibetan Buddhism" in English. In so doing, it will explore two elements that proved central to the study of Buddhism in China between the 1840s and the 1940s: (1) the changing names of Tibetan Buddhism, and (2) the changing meaning of Tantrism in relation to Tibetan Buddhism.[3]

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* Portions of this essay are drawn from my doctoral research at the University of Michigan.

[1] Strickmann, *Mantras et mandarins*, 44; "But how could a phenomenon as considerable as Chinese Tantric Buddhism disappear from the continent without leaving a single trace?" All translations from Chinese and from French are my own unless otherwise specified. A word of thanks goes to Micah Auerback for his assistance with translations from Japanese.

[2] In the present volume, in its premodern sense, the term *Mijiao* is otherwise rendered in English as "esoteric teaching," "esoteric Buddhism," "Chinese Tantric Buddhism," etc.

[3] This essay considers the history of *Mijiao* as the term became intertwined (1) with the European notion of Tantrism, and (2) as both *Mijiao* and Tantrism became related with the concept of *Xizang Fojiao*. The modern meaning of *Mijiao* emerged at the intersection of the philological method of European Buddhology with the birth of the study of Tibetan Buddhism in modern China. Therefore, this essay only covers interpretations of *Mijiao* and *Xizang Fojiao* between the Opium and the World Wars (1845–1945). It considers the sense of *Mijiao* neither as it developed in premodern China, nor as

By the 1940s, scholars of Buddhism worldwide had reached a general consensus on the history of Tantrism. In its Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan forms Tantrism had arisen from the final and degenerate phase of Buddhism in India. The view was also widely held that, in the few centuries that had elapsed since the Buddha's death, his simple moral teaching had been progressively corrupted by the alterations of mantras and dhāraṇīs, the Sanskrit formulae that characterize Tantrism and its evolutions in doctrine and practice. It may be said that what marks the watershed for this view in China is the work of Lü Cheng 呂澂 (1896–1989), arguably one of the foremost scholars of Buddhism of the Republican period. In his pioneering studies, grounded in the modern methods of Oriental philology, Lü Cheng translated and adapted the modern concept of Tantrism in the Chinese language. In such a way, he has contributed to shaping our sense of *Mijiao* for the rest of the twentieth century and beyond. We will consider Lü Cheng and his work more rigorously in the latter half of this essay. In order to examine his role as the key figure in the formulation of the modern sense of *Mijiao*, and as a means of entry into the major themes in the study of Tantrism, this prologue will offer a concise portrait of Tantrism in China as painted for the first time in English by another scholar in Lü Cheng's generation.

In March 1945, Zhou Yiliang 周一良 (1913–2001), a historian of early imperial China and recent Harvard graduate, introduced the academic community to the ancient teachers of Tantrism, who had come to China during the Tang dynasty 唐朝 (618–907). In an essay entitled "Tantrism in China," Zhou revisits an old theory that

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it was formulated after the Communist revolution. For the most part, scholars of the People's Republic (PRC) writing immediately after the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976) have tended to rehearse theories of *Mijiao* that were put forth in earlier decades during the Republican Period. Notably, between the 1910s and the 1930s, when the major theories of *Mijiao* were elaborated in modern China and the meaning of *Mijiao* was shaped through historiographies of Buddhism compiled in Japanese and in various European languages. While theories of *Mijiao* by Japanese scholars were known in China during the late Qing dynasty, it was only toward the end of the Republican period that the methods of European Oriental philology began to dominate the study of *Mijiao* and its place in Chinese Buddhist history. Before the end of the Second World War, the study of *Mijiao* in China came to be closely related with the study of Tibetan Buddhism, but this trend was sustained even after the Chinese Civil War of 1946–1949. After the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976), Li Jicheng 李冀誠 was the first PRC scholar to offer a concise study of *Mijiao* in the modern sense of Tantrism, respectively in his *Fojiao Mizong baiwen* 佛教密宗百問 and his *Xizang Fojiao – Mizong* 西藏佛教—密宗, both published in 1989. In 1995, however, it was Lü Jianfu 呂建福 who provided in his *Zhongguo Mijiao shi* 中國密教史 a lengthy study of *Mijiao* and its history in ancient India and China. Still, despite his acknowledgement of the problem of *Mijiao* in relation to the concept of Tantrism, Lü Jianfu does not take his reasoning to its extreme consequence. Hence, his study retains many of the assumptions concerning the Vajrayāna that trace back to the nineteenth-century European study of Buddhism. Due to space limitations, this essay will not consider the term *Zangchuan Fojiao* 藏傳佛教 currently in use in the PRC, but less often in publications in Taiwan. For a discussion of this term see Xu Mingyin 許明银, *Xizang Fojiao shi* 西藏佛教史, i–iii; see also Dibeltulo Concu, *The Revival of Tantrism*, 10-65.

began to circulate worldwide in the last decades of the nineteenth century. It was the theory, well known in Japan from at least the fourteenth century, though unheard of in China until the late nineteenth century, which explained the transmission of Tantrism from India to East Asia.[4] According to this theory, the tradition of Tantrism, commonly named *Mizong* 密宗 in Chinese, had been formally established in China by three eminent Indian monks: Śubhākarasiṃha (Shanwuwei 善無畏, 637–735), Vajrabodhi (Jingangzhi 金剛智, 671–741), and Amoghavajra (Bukong 不空, 705–774). However, the tradition vanished on Chinese soil soon after the passing of these three Indian masters. *Mizong* continued in an uninterrupted lineage of masters in Japan, but in China, the destiny of *Mizong* was tied to the three Indian monks. In summary, according to this theory, prior to the establishment of *Mizong* in China during the eighth century, there was no tradition of Tantrism there. Therefore, with the demise of the Tang dynasty, while Tantrism reached and flourished in Japan, it had completely vanished in China.[5]

[4] A narrative of this historical theory appeared in the fourteenth century in the section on the Shingon 真言 tradition of the *Hasshūkōyo*̄ 八宗綱要 ("The Essentials of the Eight Traditions") by the Japanese historian Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1324). For an English translation, see Gyōnen, *The Essentials of the Eight Traditions*.

[5] The present essay centres on the history and the historiography of Tantrism in modern China. Recent scholarship on the premodern period has discussed how China's *Mijiao* was imagined in works compiled in Japan to have existed as a distinct "sect" or "school" of Chinese Buddhism. At the same time, recent studies have shown a very different picture emerging from Chinese materials, one in which the scriptures, rituals, and practices commonly associated with Tantrism were not understood as belonging to a distinct tradition. See, for example, Charles Orzech, "The 'Great Teaching of Yoga,' the Chinese Appropriation of the Tantras, and the Question of Esoteric Buddhism," and "The Trouble with Tantra in China;" Orzech et al., *Esoteric Buddhism and the tantras in East Asia*; Richard McBride, "Is There Really 'Esoteric' Buddhism?" and "Dhāraṇī and Spells in Medieval Sinitic Buddhism;" and Sharf's essay, "On Esoteric Buddhism in China," included in his *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*, 263–78; see also Koichi Shinohara, *Spells, Images, and Mandalas*. The first part of this essay builds on Sharf's "On Esoteric Buddhism in China." According to Sharf, Japanese historiography played a significant role in the formation of contemporary discourses of Tantric history in East Asia. Sharf's argument, however, does not cover the incorporation of Chinese sources on Buddhism in Tibet into modern discourse. Thus, while drawing on Sharf's insight, the first part of the essay offers evidence of how, like Japanese historiography, Tibetan historiography, especially the narratives of Gelug authors, was incorporated into academic discourse on *Mijiao* in modern China, culminating with Lü Cheng's groundbreaking essays. For the history of the Vajrayāna between India and Tibet, see David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*; Ronald Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, and *Tibetan Renaissance*; Christian Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism*; Jacob Dalton, *The Taming of the Demons*; see also Gimello, "Manifest Mysteries: The Nature of the Exoteric/Esoteric (Xian 顯/Mi 密) Distinction in Later Chinese Buddhism." Like other recent studies on Buddhist Tantra, or Tantrism, the present essay does not aim to offer a definition of Tantrism in India and of its nature in China, Japan, and Tibet, for it regards Tantrism as an object of academic discourse, not a historical reality. Furthermore, it does not seek to understand the scriptures, rituals, and practices commonly associated to Tantrism by means of a particular definition of the term (including the synonyms: "Tantric Buddhism," "Esoteric Buddhism," etc.) in academic discourse on tantra. Rather, in looking at the problem of Tantrism from a genealogical perspective, this essay analyzes the

Clearly, this is not the story that Zhou tells in his "Tantrism in China." This old theory required an innovation, for Oriental philology—which, during the nineteenth century styled herself as a "science"—had recently introduced a new position that explained the nature of Tantrism in India during the eighth century, corresponding to the Tang dynasty in China.[6] "Nevertheless, even before this time there existed latent tantric elements in China, although it was not until the eighth century that the sect was officially introduced there."[7] The earliest vestiges of

discursive practices that structured Tantrism's *relation* to Buddhism and their history as the discourse of Buddhism arose in modernity. On this account, while it purposely refrains from adopting a particular definition of Tantrism, this essay presupposes that a certain persistence in seeking to define the exact contours of Tantrism exposes a, perhaps unwitting, denial to trace the origins of the concept to the discourse of world religions, where the taxonomical category of Tantra emerged between the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century as the national idolatry of India. This reconfiguration of the idea of Tantra has largely been deployed since the early nineteenth century as that which defines, by its absence, an "original Buddhism." The notion of an "original Buddhism," coined during the nineteenth century in the work of European scholars, is treated here as the object of discourse that forms a binary with Tantrism. The idea of an "original Buddhism" defines the very mode through which Oriental philology has conceived of the general history of Buddhism. On this issue, see also Urs App's contribution in the present volume (Chapter Five).

[6] On the ways in which Oriental philology styled herself as a "science," see Lopez, *Buddhism and Science*.

[7] See Zhou Yiliang, "Tantrism in China;" also reprinted in Payne, *Tantric Buddhism in East Asia*, 33–60; for a recent Chinese translation see Zhou Yiliang, *Tangdai mizong* 唐代密宗. In his understanding of the origins and early history of Tantrism in India, Zhou draws largely on the position maintained by Benoytosh Bhattacaryya in his *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism*, published in London in 1932. Bhattacaryya's main sources for the history of Tantrism in India include, in chronological order: Brian Houghton Hodgson's 1828 "Sketch of Buddhism, derived from the Bauddha writings of Nepál;" Anton Schiefner's 1869 German translation of Tāranātha's *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, titled *Târanâtha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien, aus dem tibetischen Uebersetzt*; Laurence Austine Waddell's 1895 *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism*; Hendrik Kern's 1896 *Manual of Indian Buddhism*; and Sir John Woodroffe's 1919 *Shrīcakrasambhāra Tantra*, edited in collaboration with Lama Kazi Dawa Samdup. In turn, Bhattacaryya's characterization of Tantrism is largely indebted to European theories of primitive magic. His interpretation of Sanskrit and Tibetan materials draws on the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European debates on magic, science, and religion, which culminated in Bronislav Malinowski's 1925 essay *Magic, Science and Religion*. Bhattacaryya begins his essay with a definition of the origins of Tantrism, motivated by what, in his opinion, were the basic psychological needs of the ancient inhabitants of the Indian subcontinent: "Tāntrism originated from primitive magic. The primitive people of India, like all other primitive and nomadic races throughout the world, must have had the primitive magical practices prevalent among them. They had many natural and unnatural enemies to overcome and many unforeseen difficulties to tide over, especially because they had to live like wild animals, in jungles and forests. They could overcome only a small fraction of their distress by using their physical force and their primitive intelligence; but the rest they were powerless to overcome, and these inspired them with superstitious awe and fear. In the physical sphere they were greatly afraid of wild animals, snakes, calamities of nature, diseases, and so forth, which it was not in their power to overcome at all. The common people, afflicted by these dangers, docked around their sorcerer, who had gifts superior to the ordinary folk. But the sorcerer also being an ordinary mortal was not found always equal to the occasion; and thus the primitive people were inspired with greater awe and fear. In the intellectual sphere, on the other hand, fear of death and of

Tantrism, says Zhou, had become rooted in China well before the three Indian masters set foot in the Tang capital, establishing Mizong as a vehicle there. Notably, in 230 C.E. the Indian monk Zhu Lüyan 竺律炎 (d.u.) and the Central Asian monk Zhiqian 支謙 (d. 253) began a collaborative project. It was a Chinese translation of the famous legend of *Śārdūlakarṇa*. In fact, the *Modengjia jing* 摩登伽經, which resulted from their translation work, featured numerous magical formulas, including such Sanskrit mantras and dhāraṇīs as the six-fold spell named *ṣaḍakṣarī vidyā*, known in Chinese as the *liuju shenzhou* 六句神咒. Furthermore, claims Zhou, even the celebrated pilgrim Yijing 義淨 (635–713), as he visited the Nālandā monastery during his travels in northern India, became interested in the "tantric form of Buddhism." To the extent that, upon his return to China, he translated the *Kongquewang zhoujing* 孔雀王咒經, a "well-developed text of the tantric school," which provided instructions for building maṇḍalas and painting images of deities.[8]

In conclusion, having offered a long list of translators who, he believed, had passed the earliest vestiges of Tantrism on to China, Zhou writes:

> There, then, were the earliest teachers of tantric Buddhism in China. Their work, though it achieved some degree of popularity, cannot be said to have established the cult as such. Besides these there were other monks who, we know, went to India to study the esoteric doctrine; but they all died in India before they could return to China to promulgate it. Thus, it was not until the arrival of the three famous monks of the eighth century that this doctrine began to form a distinct and even dominant sect of Chinese Buddhism.[9]

In Zhou's opinion, Tantrism had existed in India since Buddhism's conquest of China in the early centuries of the Common Era, when the Indian and Central Asian translators had transported it there in its earlier form as mantras and dhāraṇīs, along with the Buddha's discourses and rules of discipline. What is more, by the seventh century, as if mantras and dhāraṇīs were alien to Buddhism in its earlier forms in India, maṇḍalas and deities proper to the "cult" of Tantrism had reached Chinese soil, joining the Tantrism of the earlier form. It was thus only in the eighth century that the "cult" of Tantrism, or more properly the Vajrayāna, had begun to take shape as an independent tradition, "a distinct and even dominant sect." Hence,

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spirits and ghosts exercised the minds of the primitive people to a far greater extent than at present;" see Bhattacaryya, *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism*, 1. Despite his interpretation of Tantrism as primitive magic, Bhattacaryya's intent was to show that Tantrism was indeed the greatest accomplishment of Indian civilization and its greatest contribution to the world. In the second edition of the book, published in Varanasi in 1964, the Indian scholar would claim that Tantrism is compatible with modern science.

[8] Ibid., 245.

[9] Ibid., 245.

the "cult" of Tantrism, now intended as the Vajrayāna, would have taken root in China in much the same form that emerged during the previous centuries in India.[10]

Still, as Zhou introduces previously unknown details to the history of Chinese Buddhism, what sense should we make of his statement that those Chinese monks, "we know, went to India to study the esoteric doctrine"? If by the subject of the statement "we," Zhou invites his readers to share, for a moment, the scientific imagination of the modern historian-philologist, the foregoing question could then be reformulated as follows: How did the object of the statement, that those Chinese monks went to India to study the "esoteric doctrine," emerge as historical truth? That is, can "we" share Zhou's belief and knowledge that the Chinese monks who went to India prior to the rise of the Vajrayāna went there to study *Mijiao*, the "esoteric doctrine"? Or is there something that "we," perhaps, together with Zhou, are unable to know about the motives of those Chinese monks when it comes to Tantrism? Did they, perhaps, have something else in mind other than *Mijiao*, on their voyage to India? Was the thing they sought to recover, as they crossed the Silk Road

[10] Zhou Yiliang's idea of "latent tantric elements" would be popularized two decades after the publication of his "Tantrism in China" by Kenneth Ch'en in his work entitled *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*, published in 1964. In turn, although Holmes Welch's understanding of Tantrism does not trace directly to Zhou Yiliang's study, his main source on Tantrism for his 1968 *The Buddhist Revival in China* is Ch'en's *Buddhism in China*. As he rehearses the history of Tantrism between India, China, and Tibet recounted by Zhou Yiliang, Ch'en refers to the idea of traces of mantras and dhāraṇīs in the legend of *Śārdūlakarṇa* to assess, in much the same fashion as Michel Strickmann's question in the epigraph above, the disappearance of Tantrism in China after the eighth century: "Such in the briefest outline are the tenets of the Tantrayāna as they were worked out in India. In their introduction into China three names stand out, Subhakarasimha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra, all of whom arrived in T'ang China during the eighth century. With their arrival the long and continuous process of introducing different aspects of Indian Buddhism to the Chinese was finally brought to completion. However, before their time vestiges of certain practices which were later incorporated into Tantrism had already been introduced into China. As early as 230 a translation of the Matanga-sūtra which contained mantras beginning with 'om' and ending with 'svaha' was made by a central Indian monk named Chu Lü-yen. The practice of magic by Buddhist monks in China was already recorded in the fourth century. Among the most accomplished of these magicians was Fo-tu-teng, who by applying oil to his hands was said to be able to see the shape of events a thousand miles away. Another accomplishment of such monks was their ability to produce rain by uttering the proper incantations. In a text translated by T'an-yao in 462 there were instructions concerned with the making of a circle for receiving the offerings of votaries. This appears to have been a rudimentary mandala. During the early years of the T'ang Dynasty an Indian monk Punyodaya, who arrived in China in 655, tried to introduce some esoteric texts then popular in India, but was not able to elicit much response among the Chinese because of the popularity and influence of Hsüan-tsang at the time. I-tsing also evinced some interest in Tantric Buddhism, but did not pursue this interest further because of other more compelling activities. These, then, were some of the scattered traces of esoteric Buddhism in China before the eighth century. Though this aspect of Buddhism won some backing among the Chinese, it was not established as a cult until the coming of the three Tantric masters during the eighth century. Even after Tantrism was established, it is not clear whether the secret initiation ceremonies consisting of sexo-yogic practices in which virgins were used as part of the rites, were ever carried out to any extent" (Ch'en, *Buddhism in China*, 332–33.)

and sailed the Indian Ocean, perhaps, *Fojiao* 佛教, the Buddha's teaching? For, if the sinograph *Mijiao* may be correctly rendered as "secret teaching," or "esoteric doctrine" in English, the term conveys things in Buddhist Chinese that the term Tantrism, a creation of modernity, hardly conveys in English. Thus, can the problem of Tantrism in China be reformulated as the problem of whether "we" should also understand the term *Mijiao* as *both the alien element* of magic, ritual, and worship that altered Buddhism in India *and the highly sophisticated vehicle* that reached China, Japan, and Tibet in various forms?

This essay suggests that the problem of Tantrism in China is closely related with the ways in which European notions of Buddhist history became embedded in the early developments of the science of philology during the Republican period. Prior to this moment, the sinograph *mi* 密 in *Mijiao* referred to many things in Buddhist Chinese except the qualities of "alteration" or "degeneration"—conveying (1) a teleological perspective, marked by a linear progression from an earlier to a later historical period, *and* (2) a theological position, assuming mantras and dhāraṇīs as elements of idol worship—that distinguish the notion of Tantrism in academic discourse on tantra.[11] This emerges clearly in a range of exegetical works compiled across the history of Buddhism in China. In his *Tiantai sijiaoyi* 天台四教義 ("Outline of the Tiantai Fourfold Teachings"),[12] the scholar and monk Zhiyi 智顗 (538–597) claims that the Buddha had preached his discourses in four modes of teachings through five periods. The fourth period was that of the "secret teaching" (*Mimi jiao* 秘密教), when the Buddha revealed the sudden teaching to certain disciples and the gradual teaching to others. Moreover, during the early Qing dynasty 清朝 (1664–1911), in the work entitled *Yuezang zhijin* 閱藏知津 ("Guide for the Examination of the Canon"), having adopted Zhiyi's chronology of the Buddha's preaching, the exegete Zhixu 智旭 introduced a dyad of terms in his guide to the Buddhist Tripiṭaka: *Xianshuo* 顯說, "manifest discourses;" and *Mizhou* 密咒, "secret mantra." Whereas Zhiyi's *Mimi jiao* denotes the secrecy of the Buddha's intention, an intention that is profound and thus inaccessible to his audience, in Zhixu the term *mi* conveys not only Zhiyi's fourth period of *Mijiao*, but more simply the term dhāraṇī. Certainly, Chinese exegetical traditions have elaborated notions of historical progression and

[11] The concept of "Tantrism" (derived from the Sanskrit term *tantra*, to which the suffix *ism* is added) emerged in English and began to circulate among the European languages during the 1890s. One of the early definitions of the term was provided in French by Louis de la Vallée Poussin in his 1896 *Bouddhisme, études et matériaux*, but more concertedly in 1922 in the entry "Tāntrism (Buddhist)" he wrote for the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*. Here, the Belgian scholar claims that Tantrism is the underlying foundation of elements of idolatry, which, present from the beginning in and around the Buddhism of the origins, assimilated all forms of Buddhism, from Śākyamuni's early sūtras to the later teachings of the tantras. In de la Vallée Poussin's opinion, this underlying foundation centred on worship, a core element that not only was inseparable from Buddhism, but which—and this claim went against the opinions of most scholars of his day—had defined the Buddha's religion since its very origins.

[12] See Zhiyi, *Tiantai sijiaoyi*.

degeneration of Buddhism in India. And yet, prior to the emergence of the concept of Tantrism at the turn of the twentieth century, no Chinese exegete maintained a position that explained the relation of mantras and dhāraṇīs to the Buddha's teaching by associating such formulae to idol worship.

The qualities of "alteration" or "degeneration" that color the European notion of Tantrism as idol worship remained alien to the sense of *Mijiao* in China as late as the final decades of the Qing dynasty. During the 1890s, the Nanjing scholar and publisher Yang Wenhui 楊文會 (1837–1911), regarded by many as the father of the revival of Buddhism in China, discovered *Mijiao* through his collaboration with Nanjō Bunyu 南條文雄 (1849–1927), the foremost Japanese scholar of Sanskrit of his time.[13] Yang's discovery first occurred in a volume that Nanjō dispatched to him from Japan. It was the *Hasshū-kōyō* 八宗綱要 ("The Essentials of the Eight Traditions") by the Japanese historian Gyōnen 凝然 (1240–1321).[14] In his *Hasshū-kōyō*, Gyōnen writes that the Buddhist teachings that came from India to China, and then from China to Japan (omitting Korea), had been preserved in eight traditions, including the *Shingon* 真言 tradition, or *Zhenyan* in Chinese. In his adaptation of Gyōnen's work, entitled *Shizong lüeshuo* 十宗略說 ("A Concise Explanation of the Ten Traditions"), Yang introduces the Japanese historian's eighth tradition of *Shingon* to the Qing public as *Mizong*. Yang writes:

> *Mizong*—also named Tradition of the True Word [*Zhenyan zong* 真言宗]. Seven hundred years had elapsed since the Tathāgata's *parinirvāṇa*, when the bodhisattva Nāgārjuna opened an iron stupa in southern India. There he saw Vajrasattva who conferred on him the mind *abhiṣeka*. The Secret Doctrine [*Mimi famen* 秘密法門] then greatly spread in the world. Vajrasattva then manifested the Mahāvairocana Tathāgata, that is Buddha Vairocana. Nāgārjuna then transmitted it to Nāgabodhi. In the early Tang dynasty, the Tripiṭaka Śubhākarasiṃha came to the East. This is the reason why he is regarded as the first patriarch. Then came Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra, along with Yixing and Huiguo. They were all vajrācāryas who greatly clarified the *Mijiao*. This tradition takes the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*, the *Susiddhikara sūtra* etc., as its foundation … If this method is not conferred by a *vajrācārya*, one cannot enter the maṇḍala and move on the path. This is

[13] On Yang Wenhui, see Welch, *The Buddhist Revival*; Yu Lingbo 于凌波, *Yang Renshan jushi pingzhuan* 楊仁山居士評傳; Gabriele Goldfuss, *Vers un bouddhisme du XXe siècle, Yang Wenhui (1837–1911), Réformateur laïque et imprimeur*; and Chin, Keitō (Chen, Jidong) 陳継東, *Shinmatsu Bukkyō no kenkyū: Yō Bunkai o chūshin to shite* 清末仏教の研究: 楊文会を中心として. For the posthumous collection of his works, see Yang Wenhui, *Yang Renshan jushi yizhu* 楊仁山居士遺著. For Nanjō Bunyu, see Zumoto, "Nanjio Bunyu: His Life and Work;" see also Martino Dibeltulo Concu, "The Revival of Tantrism," 100–48. For the major trends in the study of Buddhism in modern China, see John Makeham, *Transforming Consciousness*; and Erik Hammerstrom, *The Science of Chinese Buddhism*.

[14] For an English translation, see Gyōnen, *The Essentials of the Eight Traditions*.

> the reason why it has long vanished. Huiguo's teaching was taken to Japan, where it has continued to exist until our day. The lamas of Tibet also adhere to this Secret Vehicle [*Misheng* 密乘]. Contemporary practitioners only retain and recite mantras such as the Caṇḍī and Mahākaruṇa mantras. By applying one's mind in earnest, one obtains the secret reward.[15]

In this passage, Yang quite accurately condenses the historical details that Gyōnen provided about the origin of *Mizong* in India and its transmission to China. Still, because he wished to explain this tradition in a simple language, he omitted many of Gyōnen's points of discussion, including the maṇḍalas of the three Mahāyāna sūtras that are the foundational scriptures of Japan's tradition of *Mikkyō*: the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*, the *Susiddhikara sūtra*, and the *Sarvatathāgata tattvasaṃgraha*. Yang also excluded Gyōnen's explanation of the distinction between Śākyamuni and Mahāvairocana. This was expressed by the Japanese historian as the nature of the "manifest teaching" (*Xianjiao* 顯教) spoken by Śākyamuni as the Buddha's *nirmāṇakāya*, and of the "secret teaching" (*Mijiao* 密教) spoken by Mahāvairocana as the Buddha's *dharmakāya*. Moreover, Yang simplified Gyōnen's extensive discussion of the transmission of the lineage of *Mikkyō* from China to Japan: the account of how Śubhākarasiṃha conferred the *abhiṣeka*s to Yixing 一行 (683–727), and of how Kūkai 空海 (779–835), the founder of the Shingon tradition in Japan, was said to have received the *abhiṣekas* from Huiguo 惠果 (746–805), Amoghavajra's close disciple. Having thus retained in his historical sketch the three Indian masters and their immediate disciples in China, but having omitted the account of Kūkai's transmission of *Mijiao* to Japan, Yang thus delivered to his public a compelling historical account of *Mijiao* in its movement from India to China. In so doing, by the omission of Gyōnen's reconstruction of the *Mikkyō* lineage from China to Japan, Yang crafted a compelling historical account of *Mijiao* between India and China.

Still, the truth about Tantrism in its European sense remains foreign to Yang Wenhui's endeavor. It should be noticed, however, that in closing this prologue, Yang regards *Mijiao* as the same tradition that had also been known in Tibet—an important detail that Yang added to his *Shizong lüeshuo* that was lacking in his original Japanese text. For, in his *Hasshū-kōyō*, Gyōnen makes no mention of *Mikkyō* in Tibet, or the religion of the Tibetan lamas. Therefore, unlike Yang, Gyōnen does not ascribe to Tibetan lamas any adherence to *Mijiao* or to its synonyms *Misheng* and *Zhenyan*. By his statement, "The lamas of Tibet also adhere to this Secret Vehicle," Yang may be regarded as the first scholar in China to hold the idea that the Japanese and the Tibetan traditions of Tantrism shared a common history, texts, and doctrines that were similar to the long vanished Chinese Tantrism. As will become clear, this was an idea that, while unknown in China, had circulated in Japan for at least two decades. Thus, in 1896, Yang Wenhui could claim that the only surviving trace of

[15] See Yang Wenhui, "Shizong lüeshuo," in *Yang Renshan jushi yizhu*, 342.

China's Tantrism was the chanting of certain mantras and dhāraṇīs, such as those of Caṇḍī Avalokiteśvara featured in Vajrabodhi's translation of the *Caṇḍīdhārāṇīsūtra.* Still, no trace of the modern notion of Tantrism had reached China by the time Yang Wenhui adapted Gyōnen's work from the Japanese language.

This would change in the Republican Period, when Lü Cheng published the first study of Tibetan Buddhism in the Chinese language that was grounded in the modern methods of Oriental philology, marking a watershed in the study of *Mijiao-as-Tantrism* and its relationship with Buddhist lineages in the countries of China, Japan, and Tibet.[16] An eminent scholar of Republican China trained in the United States in the same method, Zhou Yiliang would then formulate in English the notion that latent elements of Tantrism—mantras and dhāraṇīs—had existed in China prior to the birth of the "cult" named *Mizong*. Because in his "Tantrism in China" Zhou did not acknowledge Lü Cheng's study of *Mijiao*, or perhaps because Lü Cheng's essays were inaccessible to him—for they may have not yet reached archives and libraries across China and the Unites States—the genealogy of *Mijiao* in earlier Republican period studies, together with the crucial role that Tibetan Buddhism played in its fashioning, has remained, for the most part, a secret genealogy.[17]

This essay will trace a genealogy of the modern idea of *Mijiao-as-Tantrism* in its origin and movement between China and Japan from the 1870s to the 1940s. It will explore the discovery of *Mikkyō* by the first Japanese Buddhist missionary to China and its identification with Tibet's Lamaism. It will then consider how a historical work compiled in the Qing Empire at the time of the First Opium War was germane to this missionary's understanding of Tibetan religion. The essay will next provide a close reading of two works on Tibetan Buddhism published in China in the Republican Period. In 1912, lacking knowledge of the Tibetan language, and based on his familiarity with the teachings of Japan's *Mikkyō*, an early scholar of Tantrism interpreted Tibetan Buddhism as a form of *Mijiao*. This publication would be the most widely read book on Tibetan Buddhism in the early years of Republican China, when, as Holmes Welch first pointed out, the revival of Tantrism (*Mijiao chongxing* 密教重興) unfolded among Chinese Buddhists.[18] To end, the essay will

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[16] Here, by *Mijiao-as-Tantrism* I refer to the specific sense provided to the term *Mijiao* by the modern notion of Tantrism, as opposed to the meanings of the term found in the Chinese Buddhist canon.

[17] To this day, the history of the circulation of works on Buddhism and Tantrism in East Asian libraries and collections in North America remains largely unexplored. For a preliminary study of the general history of the East Asian collection in North America, and especially at the Harvard-Yenching Library, which served as Zhou Yiliang's main archive, see Peter Zhou, *Collecting Asia: East Asian Libraries in North America, 1868–2008*. I would like to thank Runxiao Zhu of Oberlin College for kindly providing this reference.

[18] Notably, the Republican Buddhist reformer Taixu would incorporate many of Lü Cheng's findings concerning Tibetan Buddhism in his work. He did so to better understand the history of *Mijiao* in India and its relation to *Mijiao* in China, Japan, and Tibet, and to analyse the trends of the revival of Tantrism during his era. Setting aside the dedicated sections in Holmes Welch's *The Buddhist Revival in China*, for the revival of Tantrism see also Dongchu 東初, *Zhongguo fojiao jinxiandai shi* 中國佛教近

consider the ways in which the meaning of *Mijiao* changed in the wake of the 1937 Japanese occupation of China. In 1933, not only would Lü Cheng understand *Mijiao* as the final and declining phase of Buddhism in India, but also as the origin of Tibetan Buddhism. Lü Cheng's study of Tibetan Buddhism would thus convey to his readers in Republican China the idea that China's *Mijiao*, Japan's *Mikkyō*, and Tibet's Vajrayāna, were one and the same tradition that had spread across Asia after the rise of *Mijiao-as-Tantrism* in India.

The authors of the early works considered in this essay never visited Tibet. For the most part, before this time, Chinese and Japanese scholars gained knowledge of Tibet's Buddhism from Chinese and European works or from lamas residing at Beijing's Yonghegong 雍和宮 who served as their informants.

1. The Early Identification of Mikkyō with Tibet's Lamajiao

In September 1871, the Qing government of China and the Meiji 明治 government of Japan signed the Treaty of Friendship and Trade. The treaty, ratified in 1873, would regulate trade tariffs and maritime travel between the two countries until the end of First Sino-Japanese war in 1895. On July 19, 1873, the first Japanese Buddhist missionary set foot in the port city of Shanghai. He was a monk and scholar of the Higashi Honganji 東本願寺, his name was Ogurusu Kōchō 小栗栖香頂 (1831–1905). One month later, Ogurusu reached the Longquan Si 龍泉寺, a Buddhist temple in the northern suburbs of the Qing capital of Beijing. Here, he asked the old abbot Benran 本然 (d.u.) to be accepted as a student of Mandarin.[19] Later the same year, on a visit to the Yonghegong, Orugusu met a Tibetan lama, Thub bstan 'jigs med rgya mtsho (1828–1883), the nineteenth Dung dkar sprul sku.[20] On his next visits to the Tibetan temple, Ogurusu would learn from Thub bstan 'jigs med rgya mtsho the basics of the Buddhism of Tibet and Mongolia, as well as elements of the Tibetan language. It was not until 1876, upon his second mission to China to

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現代史; Ester Bianchi, "The Movement of 'Tantric Rebirth' in Modern China, Esoteric Buddhism Revivified by the Japanese and Tibetan Traditions;" Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*; the various contributions in Monica Esposito, *Images of Tibet in the 19th and 20th Centuries*; and Martino Dibeltulo Concu, "The Revival of Tantrism."

[19] For a study of the journals that Ogurusu wrote in Beijing between 1873 and 1874, see Ogurusu Kōchō, *Beijing jishi, Beijing youlü* 北京記事，北京纪游.

[20] Born in A mdo, Thub bstan 'jigs med rgya mtsho had lived in Beijing since the age of four. In 1851, he was appointed by the Qing government to lead the chanting of scriptures to pacify the Taiping rebellion in south China. Having received the Mongolian title of *jasagh dalama* (great lama authority), a title that Tibetan officials conferred on Tibetan or Mongolian lamas, he became the tutor to the imperial family. During the 1870s he then worked as the director of the Yonghegong's printing bureau. For Thub bstan 'jigs med rgya mtsho see Shi Miaozhou 釋妙舟, *Mengzang fojiao shi* 蒙藏佛教史, 2, 141. For Ogurusu's discussion of the elements of Tibetan language that he learned in Beijing, see the preface of his *Ramakyo¯engaku*, 5–10. Ogurusu provides details about Thub bstan 'jigs med rgya mtsho, and on their relationship, in the first chapter of the *Ramakyō engaku*.

establish the Shanghai branch of the Jōdo Shinshū 浄土真宗 temple, that Ogurusu's interest in the Buddhism of Tibet would take the form of a book.[21] In 1877, when Ogurusu returned to Tōkyō, he published his *Ramakyō engaku* 喇嘛教沿革 ("A History of Lamaism") there. In the preface, he writes:

> The flourishing of *Seizō Bukkyō* 西藏佛教 is described in detail in the *Yochi shiryaku* 輿地誌略. My present draft was written to record what I have personally heard from Tibetan and Mongolian lamas in Beijing, and to demonstrate that *Ramakyō* 喇嘛教 is the ancient *Mikkyō*.[22]

While in China, Ogurusu identified the Buddhism of Tibet with the *Mikkyō* of Japan. In his opinion, Tibet's flourishing *Lamajiao* 喇嘛教, that is, *Ramakyō* in Japanese, was the same tradition of *Mikkyō* that also thrived in Japan. Hence, Lamaism, the Tibetan tradition of Tantrism, was to the Japanese missionary the same as *Mikkyō*, the Japanese tradition of Tantrism. Ogurusu's main innovation in East Asian works on Tibet was that he employed both *Lamajiao* and *Xizang fojiao* as terms. Not only is Ogurusu's *Ramakyō engaku* the first book in Japan to bear the sinograph *Lamajiao* in its title, but the *Ramakyō engaku* is also the first monograph in East Asia entirely devoted to Tibetan Buddhism. The *Ramakyō engaku* describes the object of study that later Japanese and Chinese authors would call "Tibetan Buddhism." Ogurusu's *Seizō Bukkyō* is the term that later Japanese and Chinese scholars would employ to refer to the Buddhism of Tibet.[23]

In the preface of his *Ramakyō engaku*, Ogurusu sketches for the first time in East Asia the history of Lamaism and Tibetan Buddhism drawing on Chinese and Japanese materials. Like his Chinese sources, all written during the ruling Qing

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[21] Unlike Yang Wenhui, whose concern was to revive Buddhism in China after the destruction of the Taiping Rebellion, Ogurusu's interest in *Ramakyō* was germane to his larger plan to bring the Buddhism of Japan back not only to China, but also to India. As he explains in his 1903 essay *Pekin gohōron* 北京護法輪 ("Treatise for Protecting the Dharma in Beijing"), the teaching of the Buddha had reached Japan when this religion was still flourishing in India and in China. But it had long disappeared in India, and it was also on the verge of decline in China. Buddhism had been under attack from within and without since the first Protestant missionaries had set foot in Asia. Ogurusu thus believed that in order to revive Buddhism in India, the three nations should join forces, forming a league of Buddhist nations. Japan, where Buddhism was flourishing, would lead China and India in this task, but it was first necessary to persuade Buddhists in China; hence, his survey of the religions of the Qing Empire.

[22] See Kōchō Ogurusu, *Ramakyo¯engaku*, 5. For a contemporary annotated edition and photographic reproduction of the text, see Kōchō Ogurusu, *Ramakyo¯engaku: shinchū* ラマ教沿革: 新注. Hereafter, I will refer to the pages of this edition.

[23] For the understanding of the term "lama" in Japan during the early nineteenth century, see Shinjō Kawasaki 川崎信定, "'A Study of the Lama' (喇嘛考) by Seisai Morishige Kondō Jūzō (1771–1829)." For the reception of the term "Lamajiao" in contemporary Tibet, including a Tibetan perspective on the Chinese names for the Buddhist traditions of Tibet, see Tseten Zhabdrung, "Research on the Nomenclature of the Buddhist Schools in Tibet," 43–44.

dynasty, Ogurusu determines the chronology of Tibetan rulers and masters according to the dates of the Chinese empires.[24] Ogurusu's source for this history was a book by a famous Qing scholar. It was Wei Yuan's 魏源 (1794–1857) *Shengwu ji* 聖武記 ("Military Records of the Glorious Dynasty"), in the third revised edition that reached Japan in 1847.[25] By contrast, Ogurusu's Japanese source for his *Ramakyō engaku* was the *Yochi shiryaku* ("Records of World Geography"), a work based on the recent translation of a Dutch book. The *Allgemeine Geographie aller vier Welt-Theile* ("Universal Geography of the Four Quarters of the World") was compiled in German in the 1720s by the Prussian historian and geographer Johann Hübner (1688–1731), professor of theology in Leipzig and Hamburg. Around 1730, his son Johann Hübner (1703–1758) then published the book in Dresden in three volumes. The *Allgemeine Geographie aller vier Welt-Theile* was then translated in French in 1757 as *La Géographie Universelle* ("Universal Geography"). In 1769, the cartographer Willem Albert Bachiene (1712–1783) translated the work into Dutch as *Algemeene Geographie*. In the various European editions, the Buddhism of Tibet was described in a long section entitled "On the Religion of the Tartars." The Buddhism of Tibet was portrayed in terms of the idolatry of the Tartar nations, where the kingdom of Tibet was included as one of the kingdoms of Great Tartary. Within the threefold division of Tartary (Russian Tartary, Chinese Tartary, and Independent Tartary) known to Europeans during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the kingdom of Tibet thus belonged to the independent kingdoms of Central Asia. For, together with Turkestan and Kalmikya, Tibet was not under the rule of the Russian or Chinese empires at the time. This mountain kingdom of Tibet, says Hübner, was ruled by the Dalai Lama, "the pope of Tartars," who received tributes from the Mongol princes, who, in turn worshipped him like a living god.[26]

In Japan, an abridged translation of the *Algemeene Geographie* entitled *Yochi shiryaku* was first made by Aochi Rinsō 青地林宗 (1775–1853), a scholar who wrote works on modern science and translated a series of treatises from Dutch. While Aochi's edition covered much of the nations of Western Europe, Russia, and China, it did not include Hübner's section on the regions of Great Tartary, with the account of Tibet and its national customs. But in 1873, an expanded edition of the *Yochi shiryaku* in eight volumes appeared in Tōkyō. This time, Uchida Masao 内田正雄 (1838–1876) and Nishimura Shigeki 西村茂樹 (1828–1902), the two renowned

[24] See Kōchō Ogurusu, *Ramakyo ̄engaku*, 6.

[25] For the influence of Wei Yuan's *Shengwu ji* in Japan between the two Opium Wars, see Wataru Masuda, trans. Joshua Fogel, *Japan and China: Mutual Representations in the Modern Era*.

[26] See Hübner, Johann, *Allgemeine Geographie aller vier Welt-Theile*, 755–56. Hübner presents the religion of the Tartar nations consistently with his general introduction on the religions of Asia. His work reflects the classification of the nations of the world as belonging to four religions: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, and Idolatry, or Paganism. In Hübner's work, the Tartars belong to the fourth type of nations of the world, the pagan nations of the idolaters. For the many ways in which the nation was conceived in the European discourse of "world religions," see Tomoko Masuzawa, *The Invention of World Religions*.

Japanese scholars and educators who edited the volume, included a chapter on Tibet, its religion, economy, and its institutions, in which the European and Qing knowledge of the Dalai Lama took shape in a compelling account of the "pope of the Tartars." Here, Uchida and Nishimura observe that the Dalai Lama was the *hōō* 法王, or "Dharma King" of Tibet, being the head of government affairs, but also a *katsubutsu* 活佛, a "living buddha," for he was regarded as the living incarnation of Amitābha.[27]

Together with the *Yochi shiryaku*, Ogurusu's primary source for his *Ramakyō engaku* was then the fifth fascicle of Wei Yuan's *Shengwu ji*, when, upon his return to Japan, Ogurusu turned to Qing works on world geography. Wei Yuan's *Shengwu ji* was in fact the most detailed account of Tibet to have appeared in print in the recent decades, with three sections on Tibet. Wei Yuan's sources about Tibet were in turn of three kinds. First, he consulted the *Menggu yuanliu* 蒙古源流 ("Origins of the Mongols"), originally compiled in Mongolian in the seventeenth century and translated into Chinese under the Qianlong Emperor (1711–1799). Second, he read the *Fozu lidai tongzai* 佛祖歷代統記 ("Complete Records of the Buddha and Generations of Patriarchs"), a Ming dynasty history of Buddhism that contained a detailed biography of 'Phags pa Blo gros rgyal mtshan (1235–1280), an eminent Tibetan scholar known for his political ties to Qubilai Khan (1260–1294), the Mongol Emperor of China's Yuan 元 dynasty. Third, Wei Yuan employed the accounts by Manchu *ambans* and Confucian officials of their voyages through Tibet and the neighboring Chinese provinces.

2. Qing Historiography on Buddhism in Tibet

Among the works by Confucian officials, Wei Yuan resorted to the *Kang you ji xing* 康輶紀行 ("Records of Voyages in Khams by Carriage"), an anthology of travel accounts published in Beijing in 1845 by Yao Ying 姚瑩 (1785–1853), a Qing scholar stationed at the frontiers of the empire, in the bordering regions of Tibet. Here, between Khams and Sichuan 四川, his task was to survey the access roads through which the British and the Russians may have entered China from Tibet and India. His *Kang you ji xing* would be Wei Yuan's main source for the genealogies of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and for the history of the Dge lugs tradition. In three essays, which relied upon Yao Ying's work, Wei Yuan would thus provide notions of Tibet's geography, economy, history, and religion to a large audience of Qing officials.

In the opening paragraph of the first essay, *Guochao fusui Xizang ji shang* 國朝附隨西藏記上 ("Records of the Great Dynasty's Pacification of Tibet – Part One"), Wei Yuan defines "Xizang" 西藏, China's term for Tibet, which had been adopted

[27] See Uchida Masao and Nishimura Shigeki, *Yochi shiryaku*, f. 2, 29. I would like to express again my gratitude to Micah Auerback for his help with the translation of the *Yochi shiryaku*'s Tibet chapter.

throughout East Asia since the beginning of the Qing dynasty. He explains the different names of Tibet in China during the Tang, Yuan, and Ming dynasties. In Tang China, at the time of the Tibetan Empire, Tibet was known by the name of Tufan 吐蕃. During the Yuan and Ming dynasties, Xizang's name was a Chinese transliteration of the name that Tibetans gave to their country (or to one of its regions): the term Wusizang 烏斯藏, which stood for Dbus gtsang. According to Wei Yuan, Tibetans referred to their country also as "Tubote" 土伯特, a synonym of Tufan, denoting the territories of the Tibetan Empire, or "Tanggute" 唐古特, being the Mongolian name of the Tangut Empire (1038–1227), which was referred to in Chinese sources as the Xixia 西夏. The Qing scholar then identifies the four great regions of Xizang: (1) Anterior Tibet corresponded with the Tibetan eastern region of Khams; (2) Central Tibet included the region of Dbus; (3) Posterior Tibet, namely Gtsang; and finally, (4) the additional region of Mnga' ris, the region of Tibet located farther to the west. Additionally, in order to enter Tibet, three main roads passed through the provinces of Sichuan, Shaanxi 陝西, and Yunnan 雲南, crossing three of the great Tibetan regions. As for its position among the countries of Asia, Tibet lay to the east of India.

Wei Yuan then moves on to discuss the religion of Tibet.[28] Despite neighboring India, remarks Wei Yuan, Tibet was not the ancient kingdom of the Buddha. Central India was located about two thousand Chinese leagues south of the Mnga' ris border. Therefore, Wei Yuan observes, in Tibet were preserved different kinds of Buddhist scriptures and teachings, especially the teachings that included the recitation of dhāraṇīs, known in Chinese as *tuoluoni* 陀羅尼. The Qing scholar then provides a date for the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet, describing the story of the marriage of the Tang Princess Wencheng 文成 (d. 680) with the Tibetan Emperor Srong btsan sgam po (d. 650). It was at this time, when the Tibetan Emperor began to support Buddhism and to build Buddhist temples, that Tibet began to be well known in China. Only later, during the Yuan Dynasty, would Qubilai Khan confer upon 'Phags pa the title of *dishi dabao fawang* 帝師大寶法王, in English "Imperial Preceptor, Great Precious Dharma King." It was around this time, Wei Yuan observes, that 'Phags pa's heirs inherited what would be the classical model of subsequent relations between Tibetan religious leaders and the leaders of the Chinese Empire.

Moving to discuss Tibet's Buddhism, Wei Yuan would popularize many terms that later scholars would use to talk about this religion. As he offers several details about the nature of Buddhism in Tibet, he explains the term *lama* 喇嘛. The early Ming emperors, says Wei Yuan, inherited the Mongol tradition of conferring

[28] See "Guochao fusui Xizang ji shang," in *Wei Yuan quanji* 魏源全集, 3, 202–3. For a study on the term "Tufan" (often still mistakenly rendered as "Tubo" in phonetic transcription), see the study by Paul Pelliot, "Quelques transcriptions chinoises de noms tibétains," 18–20. I am indebted to Elliot Sperling for this reference.

titles upon eminent lamas. Like the Mongol emperors, early Ming emperors such as Hongwu 洪武 and Yongle 永樂 had bestowed titles upon Tibetan lamas, inviting them to their court in Nanjing 南京. These lamas, Wei Yuan clarifies, "were all of the Red Religion, not of the Yellow Religion."[29] The dominance of 'Phags pa's Hongjiao 紅教, or "Red Religion," waned with the founding of the Huangjiao 黃教, or "Yellow Religion," by Tsong kha pa (1357–1419). During the early Ming dynasty, the Tibetan lamas who were given the title of *fawang* dressed in red robes, according to an ancient style inherited from India. Still later, the Hongjiao centred especially on the recitation of *mizhou* 密咒, or "secret mantras," together with practices such as sorcery. Tibetan lamas would thus loosen the monastic practices as well as those on the cultivation of meditation and wisdom.[30] Despite his initial adherence to the Hongjiao, Tsong kha pa then absorbed into long periods of deep contemplation. He then reformed this religion, gathered a large order, and adopted yellow robes and hats. Finally, he instructed two great disciples to disseminate the Mahāyāna teaching: the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama. In Chinese, Wei Yuan explains, *lama* meant *wushang* 無上, "unsurpassed."[31]

The Qing historian then explains the genealogies of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas and their significance in Tibet's religious and political history. The two lamas die, but do not lose their knowledge. They possess knowledge of future lives, and their disciples seek their incarnations, oftentimes within saṃsāra. Because of their unobstructed knowledge, the Dalai and Panchen Lamas mutually recognized each other as master and disciple in future lifetimes. Their religion emphasized the contemplation of the nature of things and the welfare of beings, while it denounced the Hīnayāna of the śrāvakas, together, says Wei Yuan, with the lower methods of sorcery. By the middle of the Ming dynasty, he continues, their religion "had not yet come to China, and in China no one knew about it."[32] It would only be after the first Dalai Lama Dge 'dun grub (1391–1474), with the second and third Dalai Lamas Dge 'dun rgya mtsho (1475–1542) and Bsod nams rgya mtsho (1543–1588), that China began to know about Tibet's incarnated masters. "During the reign of Zhengde 正德 of the Ming, China learned about the *huofo*."[33] After Zhengde (1491–1521), the fourth Dalai Lama Yong tan rgya mtsho (1589–1617) would, like all of the Huangjiao—including the founder Tsong kha pa—before him, turn down invitations of the Ming emperors to visit China. This changed, Wei Yuan writes, with the fifth Dalai Lama Blo bzang rgya mtsho (1617–1682). In 1643, the seventh year of the Chongde 崇德 Emperor (1592–1643), one year before the Ming dynasty was overthrown by the Manchu and the Shunzhi 順治 Emperor (1638–1661) was

[29] Ibid., 203.
[30] Ibid., 203.
[31] Ibid., 203.
[32] Ibid., 204.
[33] Ibid., 204.

enthroned in Beijing, the Fifth Dalai lama traveled to the court of Mukden accompanied by the Fourth Panchen Lama Blo bzang chos kyi rgyal mtshan (1570–1662). "The following year, the Dalai and Panchen were greeted with the title of Great Vajra Masters, and this is the beginning of our Dynasty's knowledge of Tibet [Xizang]."[34] Wei Yuan concludes his first essay with the events that led Lha bzang Khan (d. 1717) to usurp the sixth Dalai Lama's throne and to become Tibet's king during the early eighteenth century. Indeed, despite the limited sources available to him, Wei Yuan's genealogy of Tibetan dharma proved to be quite accurate in many details.

In the second essay entitled *Guochao fusui Xizang ji xia* 國朝附隨西藏記下 ("Records of the Great Dynasty's Pacification of Tibet – Part Two"), Wei Yuan summarizes the accounts of Tibet by the Manchu *ambans* who had resided in Lhasa. He describes the relations of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas with subsequent Qing emperors, but also the geography and customs of Tibet, including the routes through which Buddhism had come from India to China and from India to Tibet. These same routes may have exposed the Qing Empire to invasions by the Russians and the British. Here, Wei Yuan raises a question about Tibet that was widespread among Qing officials and scholars of his time. This was whether Tibet had been part of India in ancient times, and thus whether Tibet was the ancient country where Buddhism had begun. In the tenth fascicle of his *Kang you ji xing*, Yao Ying employs Xuanzang's 玄奘 (602–664) *Xiyu ji* 西域記 and Faxian's 法顯 (337–422) *Foguo ji* 佛國記 to clarify the borders of the regions of the Qing Empire known in Chinese as Zhongguo 中國 (China), Xizang 西藏 (Tibet), Xiyu 西域 (East Turkestan), with those of Tianzhu 天竺 (India). "Now, from Dar rtse mdo to Anterior and Posterior Tibet, they all have a writing system. They use fine wood as pens. The lines of ink are horizontal."[35] In Tibetan books, the paper sheets were very fine, and, unlike the Chinese writing system, the order of writing moved from left to right. "The alphabet is called the Tanggute alphabet. In sum, they are like the books of the barbarians of the West. I do not know when and by whom it was created. I reckon during the Song 宋 or Yuan. But the Sanskrit books had already entered China during the Han 漢. Śākyamuni spoke the dharma and Ānanda collected the sūtras. Since the old times of the king Kuang 匡 (d. 607 B.C.E.) of Zhou, India already had an alphabet."[36] Based on his knowledge that India had had a writing system since the seventh century B.C.E., Yao Ying thus proves that Tibet was not the Buddha's ancient kingdom, for, during the Tang, the Tibetan Empire still lacked a writing system.

Wei Yuan agrees with his source, but he carries his argument further, to include the nature of the kinship between the ancient Buddhism of India and that of Tibet. Even before the Tang, translators such as Kumārajīva, and later Xuanzang,

[34] Ibid., 205.
[35] See Yao Ying, *Kang you ji xing*, 267.
[36] Ibid., 267–68.

had come from the West through the Yangguan 陽關 pass near Dunhuang 敦煌. Moreover, Bodhidharma and other eminent Indian monks had come to China from the Southern Sea, without crossing the Tibetan lands. "Therefore, Tibet is truly not the ancient kingdom of the Buddha, for only since the Yuan and Ming has *Fojiao* 佛教 [Buddhism] flourished in Dbus gtsang."[37] In the beginning, the Hongjiao lamas accepted Chinese imperial titles. With the rise of Tsong kha pa's Huangjiao, however, they no longer accepted such titles, dismissing all the great lamas who were previously given the title of *fawang*. At the same time, through their knowledge of future lives, says Wei Yuan, the Huangjiao lamas began to perform the *shenqi* 神奇, or "miracle," of sprul sku incarnation, in his Chinese rendering *huashen zhuanshi* 化身轉世. Subsequently, all of the northwestern kingdoms, including China, came to hold either a favorable or an oppositional opinion regarding this practice. "As for Mahāvīra's nirvāṇa," Wei Yuan claims, referring to the Buddha as the "Great Hero," an epithet used through the *Saddharmapuṇḍarikā*, or *Lotus Sūtra,* "no one has heard of further incarnations, therefore Tsong kha pa had instructed the Dalai and Panchen to interrupt their manifestation at the sixth or seventh generation, and then pass into nirvāṇa. Today's Huangjiao is not the original Huangjiao. Therefore, it is not the ancient teaching of Śākyamuni."[38] Although Wei Yuan says that Tibetans had the *mi zhou*, that is, the secret mantras, he never refers to the Hongjiao or the Huangjiao as *Mijiao* or *Mizong*. The Buddhism of India and the Buddhism of Tibet had once been the same *Fojiao*. Yet, because the practice of recognizing sprul skus was unheard of in India, the ancient Buddhism of India and the Buddhism of Tibet had been the same religion only until the time of Tsong kha pa and the early generations of the Dalai and Panchen Lamas.[39]

In the *Shengwu ji*'s last essay entitled *Xizang houji* 西藏後記 ("Sequel on Tibet"), Wei Yuan offers details about Tibetan cities and famous pilgrimage places such as Lhasa, the Potala Palace, the Jo khang temple, and the three great monasteries of Dga' ldan, Se ra, and 'Bras spungs, as well as a brief description of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, the Bka' 'gyur and Bstan 'gyur, which were stored in Tibet's great monasteries. Finally, the Qing historian adds, "Tibet is not the Buddha's kingdom. Still, it cannot be said that it is not an extraordinary realm. As a whole, Tibet administers sixty-eight cities: thirty in the Dbus region; eighteen in the Gtsang region; nine in Khams; and twelve in Mnga' ris."[40] Some decades later in the nineteenth century, Wei Yuan's Xizang would become the referent for the Seizō of Ogurusu's *Seizō Bukkyō*. Here, too, Wei Yuan's *Fojiao* would become Ogurusu's *Mijiao*.

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[37] See "Guochao fusui Xizang ji xia," in *Wei Yuan quanji*, 3, 223.
[38] Ibid., p. 225.
[39] At the time of writing, I have not been able to trace Wei Yuan's source for the story about Tsong kha pa having instructed his early disciples to interrupt the recognition of sprul skus in the Dge lugs tradition.
[40] See "Xizang houji," in *Wei Yuan quanji* 3, 230.

And so, as we return to Japan in 1877, Ogurusu introduced his readers to the history of *Ramakyō*, the new object of study he discovered in Beijing, largely based on Wei Yuan's three essays. In the preface of his *Ramakyō engaku*, he also presents the general results of his survey of the religions of the Chinese Empire.[41] In Beijing, in fact, Benran had informed Ogurusu that in China and in the neighboring regions of the Qing Empire there existed two main traditions of Buddhist saṃgha, distinguished by the color of their robes. The *qingyi seng* 青衣僧, or "Green-Robed saṃgha," were the Buddhists that belonged to the Chinese traditions of Buddhism. Instead, the *huangyi seng* 黃衣僧, namely the "Yellow-Robed saṃgha," belonged to the Tibetan traditions, including Tibetan and Mongolian Buddhists. As for the distribution of Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists in the regions of the empire, the *qingyi seng* composed the majority of the Buddhists in the "eighteen provinces" of China. Chinese and Tibetan Buddhists, Ogurusu observes, resided together only in six of China's eighteen provinces, including Zhili 直隸 (Beijing's province), Shanxi 山西, Shaanxi 陝西, Gansu 甘孜, Yunnan, and Sichuan. But, unlike the three great regions outside of China (Tibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria), in these Chinese provinces the influence of Tibet's Buddhists was limited. In the three eastern provinces of Manchuria, in the four regions of Mongolia, and in the four regions of Anterior Tibet, Central Tibet, Posterior Tibet, and Mnga 'ris, Tibetan Buddhists were unchallenged by China's Buddhists.

In sum, concludes Ogurusu, in the regions of the Qing Empire *Ramakyō* was the same religion as the ancient *Mikkyō* of Japan. In China's eighteen provinces, those who adhered to *Ramakyō* were mostly the *huangyi seng* who lived in Beijing, on Mount Wutai, and in the regions of China that bordered with Tibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria. By contrast, *Ramakyō* flourished in the regions of Manchuria, Mongolia, and Tibet. And this Tibet was *Seizō* in Japanese, Ogurusu's referent for his newly coined term *Seizō Bukkyō*. But *Seizō* was also the Xizang of Wei Yuan's *Shengwu ji*. Later in the twentieth century, Wei Yuan's Xizang would become the Xizang of China's *Xizang Fojiao*. Still, during the late Qing dynasty, prior to Ogurusu's identification, the nature of Tibet's Buddhism was understood neither as Ogurusu's *Mikkyō* nor as Yang Wenhui's *Mijiao*.

3. Tibetan Buddhism as a Form of Mijiao in Republican China

Over the course of the 1910s and 1920s, many among the leading scholars of Buddhism in the newly born Republic of China (1912–1949), beginning with Yang Wenhui, would write books on the history of Buddhism in China and Tibet that relied on Japanese studies for their source texts. Essays on Buddhism in India, China, and Japan would be published in the *Foxue congbao* 佛學叢報 ("Journal of Buddhist Studies"), the short-lived journal of the Buddhist Association of the Republic of

[41] See Kōchō Ogurusu, *Ramakyō engaku*, 5–6. My translation.

China that was established in 1911 in Shanghai, which, from its first issues, encouraged the study of Buddhism among the *wu da minzu* 五大民族, the "five great nations" that the Republican leaders had identified in the regions of the former Qing Empire: China, Manchuria, Mongolia, East Turkestan, and Tibet.[42] The first essays on Tibet's Buddhism were edited and published by one of Yang Wenhui's early students in Nanjing: Li Yizhuo 李翊灼 (1881–1952), one of the first scholars of Dunhuang in the world and a leading scholar of Buddhism in the early years of the Republic of China.[43] Li Yizhuo would also become the author of the first Chinese book to engage Tibetan Buddhism, that is, *Xizang Fojiao*, as an object of academic study.

Published in *Foxue congbao* in three instalments from December 1912 to March 1913, Li's *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi* 西藏佛教略史 ("A Brief History of Tibetan Buddhism") was an adaptation of Ogurusu's *Ramakyō engaku*. The *Ramakyō engaku* provided him with a historical source, yet, in his *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi*, Li put forth a previously unknown theory of the origin of Tibetan Buddhism. This compelling theory, unknown to both Wei Yuan and Yang Wenhui, established Tibetan Buddhism as one of the central topics of contention during the 1915–1935 revival of Tantrism.

To begin, although Li's *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi* retained the general structure of Ogurusu's work, it introduced several innovations. The first innovation was the name of Li's object of study. Notably, Ogurusu's *Ramakyō* disappeared from Li's *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi*. The Chinese scholar removed the sinograph *Lamajiao* from both the title and the text of his source book. He did not, however, remove Ogurusu's new term *Seizō Bukkyō*. Instead, he centered *Seizō Bukkyō* as the main subject of his study. In place of China's old *Lamajiao*, Li's object of study thus became *Xizang Fojiao*. Hence, Ogurusu's *Ramakyō*, that is, Japan's imagined *Mikkyō* of Tibet, was now China's *Xizang Fojiao*. In the process, as will become clear in the following pages, the Buddhism of the *Xizang minzu* 西藏民族, in English the "Tibetan nation," became the same form of Buddhism that China had inherited from India: the long vanished *Mizong*.

In the first essay of his *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi*, in the section entitled "Xizang Fojiao yu Xizang minzu zhi guanxi" 西藏佛教與民族之關係 ("Tibetan Buddhism and its Relationship with the Tibetan Nation"), Li writes in a nostalgic mode: "The Tibetan nation has the kindest and noblest character, it is the most inconceivable nation in the world. Its nature is gentle, its words and actions are sincere, its thinking is high and vast, its body is strong and brave, and such is also its power."[44] Having been under the influence of Buddhism for a long time, observes Li, the Tibetan nation had developed a kind and compassionate nature. It had removed its violent

[42] For the ethnic rhetoric of the Republican leaders in relation to Buddhism, see Gray Tuttle, *Tibetan Buddhists in the Making of Modern China*, 128–55.

[43] For a biography of Li Yizhuo, see Yu Lingbo 於凌波, *Zhongguo jinxiandai fojiaorenwu zhi* 中國近現代佛教人物誌, 499–500; see also Chen Bing 陳兵, *Ershi shiji zhongguo fojiao* 二十世紀中國佛教, 446.

[44] See Li Yizhuo, "Xizang fojiao shilüe," in *Minguo fojiao qikan* 民國佛教期刊, 1, 447.

and perverse instincts, replacing them with a noble character, a resolute and honest conduct, and a lofty way of thinking. Hence, the Tibetan nation had brought its wisdom to perfection, and had completely embraced Buddhism, creating a majestic and unexcelled religious community. "Since it has obtained its happiness, it disregards competition in the world."[45]

Furthermore, Li echoes the strange fascination with Tibet's Buddhism that marked global portraits of the Himalayan nation into the early twentieth century. The cold climate of the Tibetan lands, writes Li, had shaped the Tibetan people's skills of clarity and resistance. "If not Buddhism, who could have made it peaceful, and unwilling to harm the world?"[46] Therefore, concludes Li, the relationship that the Tibetan nation had developed with Buddhism was so profound that it was, to use a Buddhist term, *bukesiyi* 不可思議, that is to say, "inconceivable." Tibet's Buddhism, however, was not simply *Fojiao*, as Wei Yuan had portrayed it at the time of the Opium War. Now, in the wake of the First World War, it was a distinct form of Buddhism, for its nature was the nature of China's *Mijiao*.

In the next section, entitled "Xizang Fojiao zhi jiujingguan" 西藏佛教之究竟觀 ("The Outlook of Tibetan Buddhism"), Li writes, "The Buddhism of Tibet is the so-called Mahāyāna Buddhism of the *Mimi zong* 秘密宗."[47] In their lofty nature and conduct, Tibetans had far surpassed any other nation in the world. Therefore, they were not satisfied with the "selfish" traditions of the Hīnayāna. Tibetans had not been happy either, says Li, with the mere assimilation of the general teachings of the Mahāyāna. Thus, using Ogurusu's *Ramakyō engaku* as a foundation, Li provides a historical timeline for what he believed was the Tibetans' uncommon interest in the *Mimi zong*. Indeed, the *Mimi zong* was so suitable to the Tibetan nation, or so Li believed, that the Tibetans had received it long before China. And here, for the first time, Li distances himself from his Qing and Japanese sources. For, he claims, the teachings of the Buddha had begun to be introduced from India to Tibet from the time of the king Nan 赧 of Zhou (d. 256 B.C.E.).[48] These teachings, he continues, were

[45] Ibid., 447.
[46] Ibid., 447.
[47] Ibid., 448–49.
[48] See Kōchō Ogurusu, *Ramakyo¯engaku*, 34. At the end of the third chapter ("Explanation of the Origins of Tibet's Lamaism"), Ogurusu provides a chronological chart of the salient events of Tibetan history. The chart is organized into two sections. In the upper section, Ogurusu lists the events of Tibetan history in terms of the Tibetan chronology. The Tibetan chronology consists of the measurement of years since the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*. Thus, according to the Tibetan chronology that he utilized, the introduction of Buddhism to Tibet is dated to the year 1821 after the *parinirvāṇa*. In the lower section of the chart, Ogurusu also provides the chronology of the same events using the timeline of the Chinese dynasties and the timeline of the Old Testament. Thus, in the lower section, he assigns the early introduction of Buddhism to Tibet to the second year of the reign of king Nan of the Zhou dynasty (1046–256). He then notes the same year as expressed in Biblical chronology: 303 BC. Wei Yuan does not discuss this chronology, and Li Yizhuo mentions the dates of king Nan of Zhou only briefly. In chapter three of the *Ramakyo¯engaku*, in his discussion of the early kings of Tibet

Mahāyāna teachings that already included the methods of the *mimi jing* 秘密經, or "secret scriptures." It was only later, when Padmasambhava came to Tibet, that he would formally introduce the *Mimi zong*. But this *Mimi zong* that Padmasambhava introduced to Tibet was a *Mimi zong* of a particular kind. Indeed, through his knowledge of the inclinations of the Tibetan nation, which was rooted in the old customs of the Bon religion, Li had wrongly come to believe that Padmasambhava had established the methods of a distinct *Mimi zong* in Tibet. He referred to these as the methods of the *lianhua bu* 蓮華部: *Mimi zong*'s "lotus family."

In his new theory on Tibet's *Mijiao*, Li identifies the source of Tibetan Buddhism in the teachings of a Mahāyāna sūtra that is among the foundational scriptures of Japan's *Mikkyō*. And so, Li imagines that, when he came to Tibet, Padmasambhava disseminated the methods of the lotus family, one of the three *tathāgata* families taught in the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*, together with the *fobu* 佛部, or "buddha family," and the *jingang bu* 金剛部, the "vajra family." Lacking a rigorous philological training, however, Li was misled by the risky connection he made between Padmasambhava's Chinese name Lianhua sheng 蓮華生, meaning "Lotus Born," and the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*'s "lotus family." According to Li, and he was clearly wrong in his interpretation, the methods of the *Mimi zong* had become the basis of the entire religion of the Tibetan people. Nevertheless, Li did correctly infer that the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* was one of the scriptures that had been translated into Tibetan. However, at this time, Li still had no knowledge of the content of the Tibetan canon.

Thanks to Padmasambhava, Li thought, the methods of the lotus family featured several practices, including the recitation of the *ṣaḍakṣarī vidyā*, Avalokiteśvara's great mantra in six letters. As a result, Tibetans adopted the images of the deities of the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi*'s lotus family, which, again, Li wrongly claims, then became the exclusive pantheon of *Mimi zong* deities in Tibet. Thus, during this early period, Li continues, Tibetans had completely discarded their old habits of worshiping the local gods. Instead, they wholeheartedly dedicated their religious practice to the teachings of the *Mizong*'s lotus family. Hence, in this first Chinese imagining of Tibetan Buddhism by Li, Tibet's *Mijiao* is a distinct kind of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

But Li's theory of Tibet's *Mijiao* also provided an account of the later developments of Tibetan Buddhism. As Li observes, Tsong kha pa established the sect of the Huangjiao on the basis of the teachings of the Hongjiao. Moreover, in his claim that Tsong kha pa's innovation was not simply to have changed the color and style of the monastic robes and hats from red to yellow, Li was correct. Tsong kha pa had in fact also reformed the monastic code of discipline. Nevertheless, Li wrongly came to believe that Tsong kha pa had restored the correct understanding

prior to Srong btsan sgam po, Ogurusu identifies this date for the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet as being prior to Padmasambhava in the *Menggu yuanliu* and in the *Fozu lidai tongzai*.

of Padmasambhava's teachings, which had been lost long after the departure of the Indian sage from Tibet. "Yet in truth, he never altered the fundamental methods of the lotus family. It was only after Tsong kha pa's sixth *xubilgan* that Tibetan Buddhism began its gradual decline."[49] Once again, Li's further allusion to Tsong kha pa's sixth sprul sku incarnation, referred to in Mongolian as a *xubilgan*, signals his frequent departures from both his Chinese and Japanese sources. For, although there is a sprul sku lineage for Tsong kha pa's father, Tsong kha pa himself does not have a lineage. More precisely, Tsong kha pa had a sprul sku. It was Shanti pa blo gros rgyal mtshan (1487–1567), a Dge lugs master of the kingdom of Gu ge.[50] Even so, the lineage never reached the sixth incarnation, but Li needed a timeline to accommodate in his theory of Tibetan *Mijiao* a second period of decline. Consequently, having retained and revived Padmasambhava's *Mimi zong*, he put forth the strange claim that Tsong kha pa's Huangjiao had begun its course of decline only after Tsong kha pa's alleged sixth *xubilgan*.

Something clearly went wrong in Li's adaptation of Ogururu's Japanese.[51] Something was lost from Wei Yuan's discussion of the source of the decline of Huangjiao. In the *Shengwu ji*, this decline was expressed through Wei Yuan's claim that the Dalai and Panchen Lamas had disregarded Tsong kha pa's original advice to not incarnate again after the sixth or seventh incarnation. The two great lamas had nonetheless continued to recognize each other's *xubilgan*s in defiance of the founder of their tradition. By contrast, Li, lacking knowledge of the sprul sku institution, explains the degeneration of what he understood as the original *Mimi zong* of Tibetan Buddhism in terms of China's *Mijiao*. The degeneration of Tibetan Buddhism, in his view, was the degeneration of Padmasambhava's teachings of the lotus family, but this occurred only after Tsong kha pa's alleged sixth incarnation. Wei Yuan, on the other hand, discusses the decline of Tsong kha pa's Huangjiao in terms of what he calls the miracle of sprul sku incarnation. This miracle, according to the Qing historian, was the miracle that the Dalai and Panchen Lamas had begun to display in order to rule and obtain protection for Tibet from foreign powers. Unlike Li, Wei Yuan claims that the degeneration of Huangjiao had not begun with Tsong kha pa's alleged miracle of sprul sku incarnation, but with the miracles performed by the Dalai and Panchen Lamas' sixth generation of *xubilgan*s.

In his second essay, published in February 1913, Li moves on to discuss the position of the Bon religion in relation to the origins of Tibetan Buddhism. In the first section entitled *Fojiao shuru shidai* 佛教輸入時代 ("The Age of the Introduction of Buddhism"), Li describes the nature of the religion of Tibet prior to the introduction of Buddhism. It was impossible, says Li, to know the history of the Bon

[49] See Li Yizhuo, "Xizang fojiao shilüe," in *Minguo fojiao qikan*, 1, 449.
[50] For this figure, see Roberto Vitali, *The Dge lugs pa in Gu ge*, 159–64.
[51] See Ogurusu, *Ramakyo¯engaku*, 128–29. Ogurusu develops Wei Yuan's account in the fifth chapter, where he discusses Tsong kha pa, the phenomenon of the *xubilgan*, and the establishment of the *Huangjiao* in terms of *Mikkyō*.

religion.[52] According to the old ways of the Bon religion, Tibetans took the heavens, the earth, the sun, the moon, the constellations, lightning, snow, rivers, valleys, stones, grass, and animals—including all beings—as objects of worship. In order to control nature, and to protect themselves from various kinds of calamities, they resorted to magic, spells, and invocations (Ch. *moshu* 魔術, *zhouzu* 咒詛, *qiudao* 逑禱). The Tibetans, continues Li, genuinely observed these old ways, yet they did not do so according to a system or to a corpus of scriptures. Therefore, when Buddhism entered Tibet, it immediately recognized the errors of these old customs. As for the acceptance of Buddhism in Tibet, its reasons amounted to two. "First," says Li, "everyone can equally possess bodhicitta. The Tibetan people, too, can equally possess bodhicitta. Buddhism is founded on bodhicitta; therefore, it was introduced because it is compatible with the Tibetan people. Second, Tibetans adore the gods, delve into mystery, and possess a lofty mind. Therefore, they are compatible with *yoga* and the *Mimi* methods. Thus, could the Buddhism of the lotus family be introduced."[53] And here Li describes what he understands as the main method of the lotus family: the recitation of Avalokiteśvara's six-letter mantra. He thus offers a comparative chart of *oṃ maṇi padme hūṃ* in the Sanskrit, Tibetan, and English script, and in Chinese characters.

In the next section entitled *Fojiao shaolong shidai* 佛教紹隆時代 ("Buddhism's Age of Thriving"), Li describes the rise of Hongjiao, naming it the tradition of the Hongyi 紅衣, or the "Red-Robed," together with its lineage. He writes:

> At the very beginning, Tibetan Buddhism was established and flourished with the sect of the Red-Robed. The first patriarch of this sect was the great master Padmasambhava. By means of the secret instructions of a local *dharmakāya* of Śākyamuni buddha, that is, the Mahāvairocana *tathāgata*, he instituted all dharmas, with the Amitābha *tathāgata* as the family lord, the holy Avalokiteśvara as the *devatā*, with Pāṇḍaravāsinī as the family mother, Tārā as its *vidyārajñī*, and Amoghapāśa as the family protector. If one inquires into their origins, these all came from Vajrasattva Padmapāṇi, who received them from Mahāvairocana and then transmitted them to Nāgārjuna, then Nāgārjuna transmitted them to Nāgabodhi, who then passed them on to Padmasambhava, who in turn introduced them to Tibet.[54]

Certainly, this original lineage of Tantrism was a lineage that Tibet's *Mijiao* had in common with China's *Mijiao*. Thus, in Li's view, not only did Tibetan Buddhism originate in the *Mijiao* of India's *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*, but Tibetan Buddhism had also arisen at the same time of *Mijiao*'s introduction to China.

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[52] See Li Yizhuo, "Xizang fojiao shilüe," in *Minguo fojiao qikan*, 2, 65.
[53] Ibid., 65–66.
[54] Ibid., 70.

"That Tibet's *Mijiao* was established simultaneously with the birth of China's *Mijiao* has the inscrutability of a predestined meeting."[55] Indeed, the meeting of a single *Mijiao* in the three countries of China, Japan, and Tibet may have been predestined. Yet it is no longer inscrutable, for, indeed, the identification occurred in 1876 in Beijing's Yonghegong. Based on the details that Ogurusu provides in his *Ramakyō engaku*, Li next discusses how the king Khri srong lde btsan, whom he calls the Tibetan Khan, dispatched a messenger to India in order to study Buddhist scriptures in Sanskrit. The king then summoned the central Indian monk Śāntarakṣita to enter Tibet in order to spread the teachings. Together with other Indian and Chinese masters, Śāntarakṣita then began to translate Buddhist scriptures. "Then, several hailstorms began to harm living beings. The Khan then realized the impossibility of pacifying them without resorting to a massive dissemination of the *Mijiao*. He earnestly dispatched another messenger to northern India, who requested Padmasambhava to enter Tibet, reveal the *Mijiao*, dispel the calamities, and benefit living beings. Hence, the Khan provided the conditions for the durable establishment of Tibet's *Mimi fojiao* 秘密佛教."[56] Buddhism was then established as the national religion of Tibet. However, Li notes, after Khri srong lde btsan died, the king Glang dar ma conducted a great persecution of Buddhism. After Glang dar ma's assassination, however, there began a revival. Later, another Tibetan Khan who had retreated to the borders with India invited Atiśa to restore Padmasambhava's *Mimi* methods. Having committed to revive Buddhism, Atiśa dispelled the harm made by Glang dar ma. "Yet, he thought, Tibetans were ignorant of the meaning of the *Mimi zong* previously spread by Padmasambhava."[57] Atiśa then began the translation of new scriptures and urged his Tibetan disciples to keep a pure morality in order to gain realization. Therefrom, Tibetan Buddhism flourished anew. Certainly, in Li's mind, Atiśa's celebrated Tibetan heir Tsong kha pa would also become a great practitioner of Tibet's *Mijiao*.

In the third and final essay of his *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi*, published in March 1913, Li discusses the nature of *Mijiao* in the Huangjiao, in what he calls the Huangyi 黃衣, or tradition of the "Yellow-Robed." In recent centuries, says Li, departing once again from his sources, the tradition of the Yellow-Robed had become the leading force of Tibetan Buddhism. During the Ming dynasty, its patriarch Tsong kha pa had inherited all the teachings from the sect of the Red-Robed. "He took the methods of Amitābha *tathāgata*'s lotus family that were transmitted by Nāgārjuna, including the same lord, the *iṣṭadevatā*, the family mother, the *vidyārajñī*, and the family protector, all identical with those of the Red-Robed, but only rectified their practices, in order to build his own sect based on the importance that Atiśa placed on the monastic code."[58] Li then correctly reports that Tsong kha pa was born on the

[55] Ibid., 72.
[56] Ibid., 72–73.
[57] Ibid., 76.
[58] Ibid., 287.

northeastern border of Tibet in the fifteenth year of the Ming Yongle Emperor (1357). Here, Tsong kha pa began to study at the Sa skya monastery of Bkra shis lhun po. Later, Li claims, the Tibetan master would also be trained in the methods of the lotus family. Having studied with the Bka' gdams pa masters, who held Atiśa in high esteem, Tsong kha pa then expressed the wish to reform the Hongjiao.

As for Atiśa, Li goes on, his teachings on bodhicitta had been inherited directly from Padmasambhava's methods. Unlike Padmasambhava's later disciples of the Hongjiao, however, Atiśa promoted the correct observance of the "two hundred and fifty vows" of the Mūlasarvāstivāda vinaya. "To lead the practitioner in the generation of *samādhi* through *śīla*, and of *prajñā* through *samādhi*, to establish him in the realization of the bodhicitta of the true aspect … and with time, to obtain the power of *Mimi*, was Padmasamhava's undertaking." [59] Based on Padmasambhava's and Atiśa's instructions, the Tibetan sage Tsong kha pa would have then realized that the Hongjiao no longer observed them.

Inspired by his wish to reform the Hongjiao, Tsong kha pa then founded his own tradition, changing the color of the robes, gathering several disciples, and building the Dga' ldan monastery near Lhasa. Li correctly reports that his disciple Byams chen chos rje shakya ye shes (1355–1435) then built Se ra monastery and 'Jam dbyangs chos rje bkra shis dpal ldan (1397–1449) built 'Bras spungs. Afterward, he continues, his main disciples would incarnate as *xubilgan*s, thanks to whom the Huangjiao began to flourish. "Tsong kha pa thus succeeded in his original intent. In the fourth year of the Ming Chenghua Emperor, he passed into nirvāṇa, returning to the radiant light of Ghanavyūha."[60] For Li, Tsong kha pa's nirvāṇa was his return to the finely adorned buddha land of Ghanavyūha. Ghanavyūha was in fact the buddha land located in Akaniṣṭha, the highest heaven of the Buddhist world, and presided over by Mahāvairocana, the central Buddha of China's *Mijiao*.

Having described the Dalai and Panchen *xubilgan*s by drawing from Ogurusu's *Ramakyō engaku*, Li finally provides his interpretation of the age of further degeneration of Huangjiao. Once again, his explanation differed from that provided by Wei Yuan. For, says Li, at the time of the Tenth Dalai Lama, Tibet still had all the *xubilgan*s who had helped to spread the teachings. Yet with the Eleventh Dalai Lama, the *xubilgan*s began to decrease in number. Such a decrease, in Li's mind, was the degeneration of Huangjiao. "Therefore, the authentic practitioners among the Tibetan people gradually began to disappear. So, did the lotus teachings of the *Mimi* finally fall entirely into decay? Will there be another hero who will inherit the struggles of Padmasambava and Tsong kha pa, in order to revive it?"[61]

Lacking knowledge of Tibetan sources, Li Yizhuo thus creates a compelling image of Tibetan Buddhism as the Buddhism of the Tibetan nation in his *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi* based on the discovery that Ogurusu had made in Beijing's Yonghegong.

[59] Ibid., 289.
[60] Ibid., 290.
[61] Ibid., 297.

Still, Tibet's Buddhism was a religion based entirely on the teachings of such Mahāyāna sūtras as the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* in Li's *Xizang Fojiao*. Indeed, later scholars would show that the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra* and other foundational scriptures of Japan's *Mikkyō* had also been translated into Tibetan with the tantras. Nevertheless, however important they may have been, in Tibet such scriptures did not rank among the scriptures of the highest class of tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja*, the *Yamāntaka*, the *Heruka*, and the *Kālacakra* tantras.

Regardless of this, until the methods of European philology came to China, Li Yizhuo's *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi* remained the most influential book about Tibetan Buddhism in the country. In 1929, Li collected the three essays and published them into a single volume entitled *Xizang Fojiao lüeshi* ("A Concise History of Tibetan Buddhism"). In 1933, the book was republished as *Xizang Fojiao shi* ("A History of Tibetan Buddhism"). His new interpretation of Ogurusu's *Ramakyō engaku* was the most widely read book about Tibet's *Mijiao* during the Republican era. Li Yizhuo's simple and familiar language appealed to the Chinese Buddhists who had followed the developments of what, during the 1920s, came to be known as the revival of Tantrism. This revival was first led by a group of Cantonese converts to Japanese *Mikkyō* who sought to revive China's lost *Mizong* through the Japanese Shingon tradition, and they were soon followed by those who sought to revive it through the Tibetan Tradition. During the Japanese occupation of China, when Chinese scholars and monks began to read sources in the Tibetan language, Li's account of the history of the Vajrayāna in Tibet, an account that incorrectly traced the entire history of Tibetan Buddhism to the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi sūtra*, thus came to convey the sense of the new Chinese term *Xizang Fojiao*.

4. Mijiao-as-Tantrism in the Early Academic Study of Tibetan Buddhism in China

Thus far, this essay has discussed the understanding of *Mizong* and *Mijiao* in works tracing back from the late Qing to the early Republican period. Wei Yuan's famous description of Tibet's Buddhism, compiled at the time of the First Opium War, became the main source for Ogurusu's history of *Ramakyō*. In turn, Ogurusu's identification of Tibet's *Ramakyō* with Japan's *Mikkyō,* provided Li Yizhuo with a source for building his remarkable theory of Tibet's "lotus family" *Mijiao*. During the translation process, Ogurusu's *Ramakyō* changed its name, becoming China's *Xizang Fojiao*. Nevertheless, Ogurusu's identification of Tantrism in the three "national" traditions of Japan, China, and Tibet, would survive the First World War unchallenged.

The focus of this essay now shifts from the meaning of *Mijiao* during the early Republican Period to its role in the early academic study of Tibetan Buddhism in China. Over the course of the late 1920s, as scholars began to read sources in Buddhist languages other than Chinese and Japanese, including Sanskrit, Pāli, and

Tibetan, they also began to interpret these sources through the methods of European Oriental philology. Buddhist sources in Tibetan showed that Li Yizhuo's theory of Tibet's "lotus family" *Mijiao* was groundless. Although Tibet's *Mijiao* was still regarded as the same tradition that Ogurusu had identified half a century earlier, *Mijiao* came to be understood, for the most part, as based on Indian scriptures that never reached China or Japan. The meaning of *Mijiao* had therefore changed again, and so did China's understanding of Tibetan Buddhism.

The first book in China to discuss Tibetan Buddhism from the perspective of European Oriental philology was published in 1933. Its author was Lü Cheng, arguably the foremost scholar of Buddhism in twentieth-century China.[62] In 1925, during his training in Nanjing at the Zhina Neixue Yuan 支那内学院 ("China Institute of Inner Studies"), Lü published his first work, entitled *Yindu Fojiao shilüe* 印度佛教史略 ("A Concise History of Indian Buddhism"). In it, Lü offers his readers a brief sketch of the history of Buddhism in ancient India and its phases: (1) *yuanshi fojiao* 原始佛教, the "Primitive Buddhism" that he imagined Śākyamuni to have taught during his lifetime; (2) the early division of the religion into the eighteen mainstream schools after the Buddha's passing; (3) the rise of the Mahāyāna in the first centuries C.E.; and (4) the birth of the scholastic traditions of the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra. His historical sketch of Indian Buddhism ceases around the eighth century with the renowned master Dharmakīrti and his work on logic. Indeed, Lü's readers would have been left the impression that there is no history of Buddhism in India after the eighth century. To be precise, in his *Yindu Fojiao shilüe*, Lü devotes a few lines to Buddhism after the eighth century in a brief portrait of *Mijiao*. In the second section of the prologue entitled *Fo miehou fojiao fazhan zhi gaiguan* 佛滅後佛教發展之概觀 ("General Views on the Development of Buddhism after the Buddha's Parinirvāṇa"), Lü portrays *Mijiao* as *Mikkyō*, but also as a degeneration of Buddhism. He notes how, after the fourth century C.E., as the Mahāyāna evolved under the influence of Brahmanism, the previously unknown distinction of *Xianjiao* and *Mijiao* arose in Buddhism. The former, says Lü, emerged at this time from the division of the Mahāyāna into the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra traditions. The latter began its course in the sixth century C.E., when Buddhists began to propound the doctrines of *Mijiao*, proclaimed by the Buddha in his manifestation as Mahāvairocana and associated with mantras, mudrās, and maṇḍalas. In turn, as elements of *mixin* 迷信, "superstition," and *wuxi* 巫覡, "sorcery," increased in *Mijiao*, it lost vitality as a *zongjiao* 宗教, "religion."[63] It should then be noted that in 1925, Lü Cheng did not yet

[62] For a biography of Lü Cheng, see Yu Lingbo, *Zhongguo jinxiandai fojiaorenwu zhi*, 589–600. For the context of Lü Cheng's study of Buddhism, specifically his contribution to the reinterpretation of Yogācāra, see the work of Dan Lusthaus in "Lü Cheng's Chinese Translation of the Tibetan Version of Dignāga's *Ālambana-parīkṣa-vṛtti*: An English Translation," and "Lü Cheng, Epistemology, and Genuine Buddhism."

[63] Lü Cheng, *Yindu fojiao shilüe*, 6.

hold the view of *Mijiao-as-Tantrism*. This would only change in the ensuing decade as European works on Buddhist history became available to him.

In 1926, Lü's second book, entitled *Fojiao yanjiu fa* 佛教研究法 ("Guide to the Study of Buddhism"), was published in Shanghai. Beginning with Brian Houghton Hodgson's (1800–1894) discovery of the Sanskrit collection of Nepal, then covering Eugène Burnouf's (1801–1852) *Introduction à l'histoire du Buddhisme indien* and *Le lotus de la bonne loi*, and the work of Alexander Csoma de Kőrös (1784–1842) on the *Lalitavistara*, Lü Cheng introduced the Chinese public to the intricacies of the philological study of Buddhist scriptures, from its origins in Europe in the early decades of the nineteenth century to its recent developments in Japan. It was in his *Fojiao yanjiu fa*, then, that Lü Cheng first offered his own interpretation of *Mizong* and *Mijiao*. However, he also introduced the debates about Tantrism that, since the publication of Burnouf's *Introduction*, had capitivated early twentieth-century European scholars of Sanskrit and Pāli. Through Lü Cheng's new understanding of *Mizong* and *Mijiao* as Tantrism, Chinese scholars, during the Republican Period and after the Cultural Revolution, would rehearse the claims about tantra made by the nineteenth-century founders of European Buddhist studies in many ways.

In the late 1920s, as he learned the Tibetan language at Nanjing's Zhina Neixue Yuan, Lü Cheng compiled a similar study on the history of Buddhism in Tibet. Building on his *Fojiao yanjiu fa*, *Mijiao* in this new study became in Chinese what a century earlier, in his analysis of the Snar thang edition of the Tibetan canon, Alexander Csoma de Kőrös had called "'*Rgyud-sdé*,' or simply '*Rgyud*.' Sans. '*Tāntra*,' or the *Tantra* class, in twenty-one volumes."[64] China's lost *Mizong*, or *Misheng*, with its ancient teachings called *Mijiao*, now took on a new meaning as it became intertwined with the European discourse on tantra. Since the early nineteenth century, scholars in India and in Europe had employed the Sanskrit term "tantra" to denote: (1) the idolatry of Indian religion, featuring elements of magic, ritual, and worship, and (2) the final decline of the religion in India. With Lü Cheng's work, *Mijiao* would finally become the Chinese referent for "Tantrism," a term that European and American scholars had only begun to employ in academic discourse on tantra since around 1900.

Lü Cheng's *Xizang foxue yuanlun* 西藏佛學原論 ("Principles of Tibetan Buddhism") was published in Shanghai in February 1933.[65] Unlike Li Yizhuo, who

[64] See Alexander Csoma de Kőrös, "Analysis of the Sher-chin—P'hal-chen—Dkon-séks—Do-de—Nyáng-das—and Gyut; being the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th divisions of the Tibetan Work, entitled the *Kah-gyur*." *Asiatic Researches*, 20, 2: 487.

[65] Throughout his work, Lü Cheng adopts specific terms to refer to Buddhism. The main distinction he employs is that between the sinographs *Fojiao* 佛教 and *Foxue* 佛學. As compounds, the two sinographs may convey in English the meanings of "Buddha-Teaching" and "Buddha-Learning," respectively. In modern Chinese the two terms have taken on the meaning of "Buddhism" and "Buddhology." However, because a similar distinction was never made for the English term "Buddhism," it might appear as if, on many occasions, Lü employs the two sinographs interchangeably, while the meaning of Buddhology in English remains often foreign to his discussion

during the same period wrote about Tibetan Buddhism based on Chinese and Japanese sources exclusively, Lü's sources included Tibetan and European publications that had become available in China and Japan in the previous decades. Among the sources in Tibetan, he acquired copies of texts of the Snar thang and Beijing editions of the Tibetan canon, including a copy of the *Snar thang bka' 'gyur gyi dkar chag* ("Catalogue of the Snar thang Bka' 'gyur"). As for the doctrines of Tibetan Buddhism, Lü Cheng's selection of works included Atiśa's *Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma* ("Lamp on the Path to Awakening") and Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo* ("Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path"). Clearly, his presentation of Tibetan Buddhism was confined to the history of the Dge lugs tradition, for his main interest was to understand how Atiśa and Tsong kha pa harmonized sūtra and tantra, the two Sanskrit terms he translated as *Xian* 顯 and *Mi* 密. For his presentation of the history of Tibetan Buddhism, however, Lü Cheng resorted to two classical works on Tibetan history: Bu ston rin chen grub's (1290–1364) *Chos 'byung* ("A History of Buddhism"), and Thu'u bkwan Blo bzang chos kyi nyi ma's (1737–1802) *Grub mtha' shel gyi me long* ("Crystal Mirror of Doctrinal Systems").

Among his sources published in Europe, Lü's main reference was *Târanâtha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien, aus dem tibetischen Uebersetzt* ("A History of Buddhism in India, Translated from the Tibetan"), published in 1869 by the Estonian Orientalist Franz Anton Schiefner (1817–1879), a folklorist and scholar of Tibetan and Mongolian who taught Classics at St. Petersburg. The work was a German translation of the Tibetan historian Tāranātha's (1575–1634) *Rgya gar chos 'byung* ("A History of Buddhism in India"), which Schiefner had received in a collection of Tibetan texts that Vasily Pavlovich Vasil'ev (1818–1900), the foremost Russian

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of the history of Buddhism. In fact, the only English term that renders the meaning of both sinographs is "Buddhism." Notably, Lü Cheng adopted the distinction early on in his works during the Republican period, but he offered a precise explanation of the way to distinguish the two meanings only after the Cultural Revolution in his *Zhongguo foxue yuanliu lüejiang* 中國佛學源流略講 ("A Concise Discussion of the Origin and Evolution of Chinese Buddhism"), published in 1979 at the age of eighty-three. In the prologue of this work, Lü defines *Zhongguo foxue* 中國佛學 as "the religious philosophy that arose from the transmission of Buddhism [*Fojiao*] from India." In this line of reasoning, as it spread to China, the Buddhism of India, intended specifically as *Fojiao*, came into contact with China's native ways of thinking. Following its gradual development in China, the Buddhism of India then fashioned itself into a new doctrine. Thanks to its uninterrupted transmission eastward as it continued to develop in India, *Fojiao* also gave new vitality to Chinese Buddhism, here rendered as *Zhongguo Foxue*. At the same time, Zhongguo Foxue gradually reached maturity, which resulted in the formation of various traditions such as Tiantai 天台, Huayan 華嚴, and Chan 禪. In this sense, according to Lü, one cannot regard the philosophy of Chinese Buddhism to be entirely the same as the philosophy of Indian Buddhism, for the former is a new doctrine fashioned out of the Chinese assimilation of the latter. Clearly, Lü Cheng's reasoning is empowered by the assumption of academic discourse on tantra that national thought and the flow of Buddhist texts, images, institutions, and landscapes of group identity are products of Asian national cultures. Here, in Lü's discussion of Tibet's Buddhism, I take *Foxue* in his expression *Xizang Foxue* to mean "Buddhism," in the sense of a Buddhism that, in its transmission from India, has taken on characteristics peculiar to Tibet. Thus, I translate the term *Xizang Foxue* as "Tibetan Buddhism."

scholar of Buddhism of his day, had acquired in Beijing during his sojourn at the Russian Orthodox Mission over the 1840s, and which he had brought back to St. Petersburg in 1850. Other works that Lü relied on included the *Madhyamakāvatāra par Candrakīrti* ("The Madhyamakāvatāra by Candrakīrti"), published in St. Petersburg in 1912 by the eminent Belgian scholar Louis de la Vallée Poussin (1869–1938), and the *Catalogue du Fonds Tibétain de la Bibliothèque Nationale: Index du bsTan-ḥgyur* ("Catalogue of the Tibetan Collection of the Bibliothèque Nationale: Index of the *Bstan 'gyur*"), published in Paris in two volumes between 1909 and 1915 by the French Indologist Palmyr Uldéric Alexis Cordier (1871–1914). Cordier's *Catalogue* was a translation of the catalogue of the Bstan 'gyur that had reached Paris in the late 1830s together with the complete edition of the Snar thang edition of the Tibetan canon that Hodgson acquired in Nepal in 1838, which the Asiatic Society of Bengal had shipped, as a gift to Burnouf, to the Société Asiatique in Paris.

In *Xizang foxue yuanlun*, Lü Cheng locates the origins of Tibetan Buddhism in the later developments of Indian Buddhism. "In Tibet, the dissemination of Buddhism occurred at a late time, therefore it bears a profound connection with the doctrines of the late period of this teaching in India."[66] This "late period," Lü clarifies, was Buddhism's period of decay, a period that had begun after the time of the eminent monk Vasubandhu (fourth or fifth centuries C.E.). Therefore, the period in which Buddhism had begun its decline in India ranged from the fifth century until its complete disappearance in the late twelfth century. Indian Buddhism was thus in decline for about eight hundred years. These eight hundred years, continues Lü, could be further divided in two periods: (1) the period of division, lasting over two hundred years, marked the divisions of the Mahāyāna in several competing traditions, but also a division in *Xiansheng* and *Misheng*; and (2) the period of decline, lasting over five hundred years, when the number of Buddhist masters began to decrease, and when they became scattered. At this time, says Lü, Buddhism lost the splendor of the old days, falling into stagnation.

The Chinese savant then goes on to describe the period of division of Indian Buddhism into the Mādhyamika and the Yogācāra scholastic traditions. He discusses the debates of these two traditions and the role that eminent masters such as Sthiramati, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, Guṇaprabha, Sangharakṣita, and then Vimuktisena, Bhāvaviveka, Buddhapālita, Candrakīrti, Jayadeva, and Śāntideva, played in these debates. "In the beginning, the Indian Buddhism of the Mahāyāna organized the division into Yogācāra and Mādhyamika. But later it also displayed old and new, left and right, distinctions, which, day after day, diverged one from the other, to finally become irreconcilable."[67] These later distinctions, says Lü, were distinctions that had never reached China in the works of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, Asaṅga, and Vasubandhu due to the fact that the great translators Kumārajīva and

[66] See Lü Cheng, *Xizang Foxue yuanlun*, 1.
[67] Ibid., 11.

Xuanzang only brought to East Asia the works of the Mādhyamika and Yogācara traditions, which had begun to circulate there prior to the eighth century.

After the fifth century, continues Lü, these innovations of Indian Buddhism thus concerned the further development of the doctrines of the Mādhyamika and Yogācāra, and their competing interpretations of Nāgārjuna's thought in terms of lack of *svabhāva* or *vijñaptimātra*.[68] Yet another innovation had appeared at this time in the distinction that Buddhist traditions made of *Xiansheng* and *Misheng*—sūtra and tantra. It was a distinction whose elements had been there, from the beginning, in the Mahāyāna scriptures. Lü Cheng writes:

> In this regard, the doctrine of the two vehicles of *Xian* and *Mi* also gradually showed different inclinations, creating a further division. Since about the time of Nāgārjuna, and long after him, even though the scriptures of the Mahāyāna that were then in circulation had become admixed with elements of *Misheng*, these alone composed the so-called *Tanteluo sheng* 坦特羅乘. Scholars of later ages wished to promote the origins of the *Misheng*, believing that it had come along with the Mahāyāna, therefore, if the Mahāyāna had developed with Nāgārjuna, then *Misheng* had also expanded with Nāgārjuna. Further, if the Mahāyāna sūtras had already come into circulation before Nāgārjuna, then *Misheng* scriptures could also be said to have existed in the past. And even further, when the Mahāyāna that was traced to Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva was passed down from Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, and Dharmakīrti, there was no ācārya who did not belong to *Misheng*; but the legends are chaotic, and nothing can be assigned a date. If one discusses this with some degree of accuracy, it was then only after Vasubandhu that *Misheng* began to become organized, to separate from the *Xiansheng*, and to exalt its lineage; thus we begin to have evidence since the time of Sangharakṣita.[69]

Resting on Schiefner's German translation of Tāranātha's *Rgya gar chos 'byung*, Lü Cheng identifies Sangharakṣita—the teacher of Bhāvaviveka and Buddhapālita in southern India between the late fifth and the early sixth century—as the historical figure during whose lifetime the new distinction of *Xian* and *Mi* had begun to rise.[70] For Lü, the methods of the *Mimi zhenyan* 秘密真言, his Chinese rendering of Schiefner's "Mantra-Tantra" in German, had existed in India even before the time of Sangharakṣita, notably with the *vidyādhara*s of the northeastern region of Oḍḍiyāna. Yet these "elements of *Misheng*" had existed even prior to the *vidyadhāra*s, that is to say, at the time of Nāgārjuna, having become interspersed very early with the Mahāyāna sūtras. In fact, Lü observes, even prior to the rise of *Misheng* as the

[68] Ibid., 11.
[69] Ibid., 11–12.
[70] Ibid. See also the same section in Tāranātha, *Târanâtha's Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien*, 105–7.

Vajrayāna, the Mahāyāna sūtras alone contained elements of the *suowei tanteluo sheng zhe* 所謂坦特羅乘者, the "so-called *Tanteluo sheng*." This changed however when the new *Misheng* scriptures began to be committed to writing. "At the time of Sangharakṣita, the works of two types of *Tanteluo sheng* were clearly in circulation. But these two types of Yoga and Mahānuttarayoga were still practiced with secrecy, until later with the Pāla dynasty they began to circulate openly."[71] And so here, with the sinograph *Tanteluo sheng* (a neologism consisting of the root term *tanteluo* 坦特羅, a Chinese transliteration of the Sanskrit term "tantra," and the suffix *sheng* 乘, meaning *yāna* in Sanskrit and conveying the sense of *ism* in English), Lü Cheng coins a new term. It is the term that translates the modern concept of Tantrism into Chinese in a way that conveys the sense that the foremost European expert of the Buddhist tantras, at least since the time of Burnouf, had used to define the term in several studies published during the early 1900s.

5. Weaving China's Lost Mijiao, Japan's Mikkyō, and Tibet's Rgyud

The term Tantrism began to circulate among the European languages around the turn of the twentieth century. In 1896, the Dutch Orientalist Hendrik Kern (1833–1917) offered a brief definition of the term in his *Manual of Indian Buddhism*: "The decline of Buddhism in India from the eighth century downwards nearly coincides with the growing influence of Tantrism and sorcery, which stand to each other in the relation of theory to practice."[72] Two years later in 1898, inspired by Burnouf's unfinished study of the Buddhist tantras in his 1844 *Introduction*, Louis de la Vallée Poussin then elaborated, in his *Bouddhisme, études et matériaux*, an innovative study of "Tantrisme," the French equivalent of Kern's Tantrism. Unlike Kern, for whom Tantrism was a doctrinal system that evolved around the eighth century C.E. from the increasing presence of magical practices in Buddhism, de la Vallée Poussin offers a very different date for the emergence of idolatrous practices in Buddhism. Introducing an innovation into academic discourse on tantra, the Belgian scholar assigns Tantrism rather different dates. In his view, the origins of Tantrism no longer belonged to the time when, according to Kern, the Vajrayāna had also begun. Instead, the origins of Tantrism had to trace back of about twelve centuries, to the very origins of Buddhism in the sixth century B.C.E.

In *Bouddhisme, études et matériaux*, de la Vallée Poussin begins to sketch the theory that would become dominant in the study of Tantrism during the twentieth century, writing: "We habitually regard the idolatrous and superstitious Tantrism as 'no longer being Buddhism;' we forget that Buddhism is not separable from Buddhists, and that Indian Buddhists were comfortably idolaters, superstitious, or metaphysicians."[73] The idol worship of Buddhism, which Kern saw emerge in a

[71] See Lü Cheng, *Xizang Foxue yuanlun*, 13–14.
[72] Kern, *Manual of Indian Buddhism*, 193.
[73] de la Valée Poussin, *Bouddhisme, études et matériaux*, 6.

consistent way with the rise of Tantrism in the eighth century, was now understood by de la Vallée Poussin as the very element that had always been there, from the beginning, at the very origins of Buddhism. In this way, according to the scientific imagination of the modern historian-philologist, Tantrism could be regarded as having always been a part of Buddhism for the simple reason that Buddhism was inseparable from idol worship. Still, (1) to have always been a part of Buddhism, and (2) to have evolved into a distinct vehicle, Tantrism had to have had, in de la Vallée Poussin's scientific imagination, a twofold character. Tantrism had to be endowed—it was, in effect, endowed—with an earlier and a later form. These two forms could be clearly separated from one another in the history of Indian Buddhism during the eighth century.

And so, two decades later, in 1922, Louis de la Vallée Poussin offered a precise definition of Tantrism. In his entry entitled "Tāntrism (Buddhist)," published in the *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, a massive, multivolume project edited by the Scottish Presbyterian minister and biblical scholar James Hastings (1852–1922), he writes: "Tantrism, properly so-called, bears a twofold character; on the one hand, it is a systematization of the vulgar magical rites, and it has existed under this form for many centuries in India and in Buddhism itself together with its formulas and its pantheon; on the other hand, it is a 'theurgy,' a highly developed mysticism styled Vajrayāna; under this form Tantrism is an innovation in Buddhism."[74]

Similar to de la Vallée Poussin's distinction, Lü Cheng's *Tanteluo sheng* conveyed to Republican China the sense of a twofold form of *Misheng*. In the earlier form, *Misheng* had existed in Buddhism as the practice of sorcery and magical formulas at least since the Mahāyāna sūtras had been compiled, for the use of mantras and dhāraṇīs, along with different forms of worship, was attested in the early history of the religion in India. By contrast, the later form of *Misheng* had arisen in Buddhism with the *Zhenyan sheng* after the time of Sangharakṣita in the eighth century, when the scriptures of the Vajrayāna also began to be committed to writing. As a result, Lü could claim that the Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva's earlier, still somewhat unsystematic, form of *Misheng* was later transmitted to Asaṅga, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, and Dharmakīrti at a time when all of the Indian *ācārya*s engaged *Misheng*; in other words, when these Indian masters engaged the later form of *Tanteluo sheng*, Tantrism's vehicle of the Vajrayāna. It was, in de la Vallée Poussin's words, the "theurgy," and, in Zhou Yiliang's idiom, the "cult," of the Buddhist tantras.

Finally, having engaged the mode of the modern historian-philologist, in his *Xizang foxue yuanlun* Lü Cheng explains the rise of *Tanteluo sheng* and its consequences for the teachings and methods of Buddhism when the separation occurred between the earlier and the later form. With the foundation of the Pāla

[74] de la Valée Poussin, "Tāntrism (Buddhist)," 195.

Empire in the eighth century, the first king Gopāla (660–705) and his successors had given support to old institutions such as the Nālānda monastery and had established new ones like Odantapurī and Vikramaśīla. Lü writes, "then the teachings and methods transformed, with *Misheng* as the primary development, and *Xianzong* as the supplementary."[75] Thus, at this time, the sūtra teachings had become mere supplements of the methods of tantra.[76] At the beginning, observes Lü, the rise of *Misheng* in Buddhism was a means of engaging recent developments in Hinduism. Therefore, Buddhism sought to return to a worldly belief. Later, however, *Misheng* developed independently, becoming complex and chaotic. At first, only two classes of tantra existed—hence the distinction included Yoga tantra and Anuttarayoga tantra. Eventually, says Lü, the Anuttarayoga tantra divided into different classes, which multiplied into countless forms. "Ultimately, by devoting all efforts to Yoga and Anuttarayoga tantra, practice and meditation gradually became weak and died out. Therefore, the *Zhenyan sheng ācāryas* became the accomplished *siddhas* who appeared during seven generations of the Pāla period."[77] Some among the eighty-four Mahāsiddhas, says Lü, focused on the Anuttarayoga form, which they kept secret from the common folk but in whose different subclasses they excelled. "For example, there is Saraha with the *Buddhakapāla*, Luipa with the *Yoginī*, and Virūpa with the *Hevajra*."[78]

As knowledge of the eighty-four Mahāsiddhas first came to China, Lü Cheng called the attention of his public to the most important point in his discussion. During this period, the *Misheng* was closely associated with the traditions of the Mādhyamika. Hence, the legend about Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva's root tantras became widespread and was followed by similar claims about Candrakīrti's commentary on the *Guhyasamāja*. "From then on, several commentaries began to appear by Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and Candrakīrti, etc., and the relation between *Misheng* and Mādhyamika became impossible to unravel."[79] As the *Misheng* flourished, the masters of the *Xianjiao*, that is to say, the "public" or "manifest teaching" of the sūtras, along with the study of the vinaya and the Yogācāra, migrated to the northwest. At the same time, the *Misheng* flourished in the northeast. During the twelfth century, in the very last days of Buddhism in India, writes Lü, with the *Kālacakra tantra*, "*Misheng* had become perfected."[80] Buddhism was introduced from India to Tibet in this later period of development, after *Misheng* had completed its transformation into the vehicle of the Vajrayāna. Hence, the origins of Tibetan Buddhism had to be sought in this time of division and decline.

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[75] See Lü Cheng, *Xizang Foxue yuanlun*, 17.
[76] On the logic of the supplement and its rhetoric in academic discourse on tantra in Buddhist India and modern Europe and America, see Lopez, *Elaborations on Emptiness*, 78–104.
[77] Lü Cheng, *Xizang Foxue yuanlun*, 17.
[78] Ibid., 18.
[79] Ibid., 19.
[80] Ibid., 22.

Setting aside his discussion of the history of *Misheng* and *Tanteluo sheng* in India, Lü Cheng also makes an important contribution to the study of China's long vanished *Mijiao* in *Xizang foxue yuanlun*. After providing a short chapter on the history of Buddhism in Tibet, explaining how India's *Misheng* was first established by Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava, and how it was later revived by Atiśa and Tsong kha pa, Lü brings the novel language of China's *Mijiao-as-Tantrism* into the structure of the Tibetan Tripiṭaka. In the third chapter entitled "Xizang Foxue zhi wenxian" 西藏佛學之文獻 ("The Literary Sources of Tibetan Buddhism"), Lü offers an analysis of *Snar thang bka' 'gyur gyi dkar chag*, the catalogue of the Snar thang edition of the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur. In so doing, he resorts to two divisions of scriptures that Bu ston discusses in his *Chos 'byung*: *Mdo* (S. Sūtra) and *Rgyud* (S. Tantra). He writes, "In Bu ston's catalogue, he separates the Tripiṭaka into the two great divisions of the 'Translation of the Discourses' and 'Translation of the Treatises,' which, taking their phonetic transcription are the so-called Ganzhu 甘珠 and Danzhu 丹珠 ('Gan' 甘 means 'Discourse,' 'Dan' 丹 means 'Treatise,' and 'Zhu' 珠 means 'Translation'). In regard to Doctrine, he further divides the Tripiṭaka into two vehicles of *Jing* 經 and *Zhou* 咒 (*Jing* is the *Xiansheng*, and *Zhou* is the *Misheng*)."[81] Thus, as Lü Cheng translates Bu ston's exegesis of Buddhist doctrine, he explains the two vehicles of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna in the Chinese language by resorting to the notions of *Jing*, or *Xiansheng*, and *Zhou*, or *Misheng*.

Accordingly, in the section titled "Xizang dazangjing" 西藏大藏經 ("The Tibetan Tripiṭaka"), Lü Cheng explains the divisions of the Snar thang Bka' 'gyur and its classes of scriptures. "The Bka' 'gyur has the two great divisions of *Sūtra* and *Mantra*, which contain the seven classes of *Vinaya*, etc. The Bka' 'gyur has one hundred volumes, comprising about eight hundred works."[82] Having learned the categories of *Mdo* and *Rgyud* from Schiefner's and Csoma's translations, and having translated them in Chinese as *Xiansheng* and *Misheng*, Lü then provides a chart of the seven divisions of the Snar thang Bka' 'gyur, originally arranged as: (1) *'Dul ba* (Sk. *Vinaya*), (2) *Sher phyin* (Sk. *Prajñāpāramitā*), (3) *Phal chen* (Sk. *Avataṃsaka*), (4) *Dkon brtsegs* (Sk. *Ratnakūṭa*), (5) *Mdo* (Sk. *Sūtra*), (6) *Myang 'das* (Sk. *Nirvāṇa*), and (7) *Rgyud* (Sk. *Tantra*). In the language of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, Lü Cheng thus renders (1) *'Dul ba* as *Jielü* 戒律, (2) *Sher phyin* as *Bore* 般若, (3) *Phal chen* as *Huayan* 華嚴, (4) *Dkon brtsegs* as *Baoji* 寶集, (5) *Mdo* as *Jingji* 經集, (6) *Myang 'das* as *Niepan* 涅槃, and (7) *Rgyud* as *Misheng* 密乘. However, in addition to the divisions of the Tibetan canon, Lü Cheng intentionally, and arbitrarily, includes the first six divisions under a larger category that is entirely foreign to the Snar thang canon. This was the category of *Jing*. He also places the *Rgyud*, that is, his *Mizong* division of the Tibetan canon, under the heading of *Zhou*, thus separating it and its contents from his *Jing* category. Through Bu ston's exegesis of the two vehicles of Sūtrayāna and Mantrayāna, Lü

[81] Ibid., 48.
[82] Ibid., 55.

Cheng's equivalence of the Chinese term (1) *jing* with the Sanskrit term *Sūtra* and the Tibetan *Mdo*, together with his equivalence of (2) *zhou* with the Sanskrit term *Tantra* and the Tibetan *Rgyud*, would provide later scholars with a justification for understanding the divisions of the Tibetan canon through the Chinese categories of *Xian* and *Mi*. Nevertheless, neither the Sanskrit, nor the Tibetan or Chinese dyads of terms reflect the names of the divisions of the Tibetan canon, for the *Mdo* and the *Rgyud* were only two of the seven great canonical divisions. In fact, not only are the Tibetan translations of the tantras listed outside the *Rgyud* in the Tibetan Tripiṭaka, the sūtras are also included in the five other classes of *'Dul ba*, *Sher phyin*, *Phal chen*, *Dkon brtsegs*, and *Myang 'das*.

As with the modern editions of the Chinese Tripiṭaka published in Japan, the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur thus seemed to accommodate, in Lü Cheng's scientific imagination, a class of scriptures compatible with the scriptures of Japan's *Mikkyō*—and with China's lost *Mijiao*. Strangely, despite this fact, Lü Cheng made a point of warning his readers about another fact that made the classes of the editions of the Tripiṭaka compiled in China, Japan, and Tibet incompatible. "As for the *Mi bu*, there is almost no trace of it in Chinese translation."[83] Certainly, in the Tibetan canon the *Susiddhikara* and the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi* were listed the *Rgyud* division, namely in Lü's *Mi bu*. Yet, these two scriptures, he clarifies, were listed as tantras of the lower classes. Moreover, here the *Susiddhikara* was in the *kriyā* subclass, while the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi* was in the *caryā* subclass. And so, clearly, the great majority of the tantras listed in the *Rgyud* division were lacking in the premodern, and in the modern, Chinese and Japanese editions of the Tripiṭaka. This was especially true for the tantras of the Yoga and Anuttarayoga classes. Father tantras such as the *Yamari* and *Vajrabhairava* and mother tantras such as *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Kālacakra* had never reached China. Only the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Hevajra* tantras had been translated into Chinese during the Song dynasty by the Indian monk Dharmapāla (963–1058). "In total, only one out of three were translated into Chinese."[84] Therefore, although Lü Cheng sketches a convincing portrait of a *Mi bu* as the equivalent of the *Rgyud sde*, or "Tantra division," that was common to the Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese editions of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka, he strangely provides evidence against it: the two divisions differed greatly not only in content, but also in the number of translations from Sanskrit. As a consequence, lacking knowledge of canon formation, the names of the containers created the illusion that what they contained were the scriptures of a practice that was one and the same with the *Mijiao* of ancient India.

Toward the end of his historical account, Lü thus reports that when Atiśa completed his *Byang chub lam gyi sgron ma* in the eleventh century, Buddhism in India was already in decline, and in less than two hundred years it would die out

[83] Ibid., 65.
[84] Ibid., 66.

there. About two hundred years later, Tsong kha pa would then inherit Atiśa's task of synthesizing *Xiansheng* and *Misheng*, integrating the practices of these two vehicles with the correct observance of the monastic precepts. With Tsong kha pa's *Lam rim chen mo*, the final development of Indian Buddhism would then flourish only in Tibet. Thus, unlike the Tripiṭaka of any other Buddhist country in Asia, in Lü's opinion, the Tibetan Bka' 'gyur was the repository of all phases of development of Buddhism in India. Even so, in his influential analysis of Tibetan Buddhism and of the Tibetan Canon, Lü Cheng overlooked one fact about the history of *Mizong* in Asia, for he, like Yang Wenhui, was bound by the spell of academic discourse on tantra.

6. Questioning the Academic Origins of Tantrism's Historical Narrative

In the section of his 1926 *Fojiao yanjiu fa*, entitled "Zangjing mulu" ("Catalogues of the Tripiṭaka"), Lü Cheng analyses Zhixu's study of the *Yongle Dazangjing* 永樂大藏經, saying, "In recent years, the *Yuezang zhijin* has often been used by Japanese scholars in Buddhist Studies, and among the studies of scholars trained in Europe and in America, many place value in Nanjō's catalogue. This work, written in English by Nanjō Bunyū, is entitled *Zhongguo fojiao sanzang mulu* 中國佛教三藏目錄, *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka*, and was compiled in 1883 in England, in Oxford, as the English translation of the reprint catalogue of the Tripiṭaka of the Great Ming."[85] Like Li Yizhuo and other Republican era scholars in Yang Wenhui's lineage, Lü Cheng had thus come to interpret *Mijiao* through Gyōnen's traditional history of Buddhism in Japan, tracing its lineage back to India through China. But, more importantly, Lü Cheng had also come to interpret *Mijiao* through the "scientific" arrangement of scriptures as portrayed in Nanjō Bunyū's catalogue of Buddhist scriptures that came to China in the 1890s, offered by the Japanese scholar as a gift to Yang Wenhui. Drawing on the *Dainihon kōtei shukusatsu daizōkyō* 大日本校訂縮刷大藏經, that is, the first modern edition of the Chinese Tripiṭaka, published in Tōkyo by the Kōkyō Shoin 弘教書院 in 1881–1885, Nanjō's catalogue reflected, in turn, the classification that Zhixu had offered during the Ming dynasty in his *Yuezang Zhijin*. Here, Zhixu employed an ancient dyad of terms as exegetical categories through which to interpret the entire range of scriptures in the Chinese Tripiṭaka: *xianshuo* 顯說, "manifest discourses," and *mizhou* 密咒, that is, "secret mantra." Drawing on Nanjō's reformulation of Zhixu's categories of *xianshuo* and *mizhou*, Lü Cheng would then establish the new comparative language of the Chinese, Japanese, and Tibetan editions of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka. In the wake of the Japanese occupation of China in 1937, the new concept

[85] See Lü Cheng, *Fojiao yanjiufa*, 19.

of Tibetan Buddhism would thus come to be understood, in doctrine and in practice, through the language of the modern editions of the Chinese Buddhist Tripiṭaka.[86]

This is not to say that when Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra resided in China during the seventh and eight centuries, they did not translate Buddhist scriptures, confer *abhiṣekas*, and perform rituals for state protection, which later, in Japan, would be exalted in Kūkai's lineage as the scriptures of *Mikkyō*. These scriptures, however, were regarded as Mahāyāna sūtras, and as such Śubhākarasiṃha, Vajrabodhi, and Amoghavajra translated their titles into Chinese accordingly: *jing*. The vast majority of the new scriptures of the Vajrayāna, the vehicle taught in the tantras that reached Tibet from the eighth to the twelfth century, had little or no influence among Japanese and Chinese Buddhists. Between the World Wars, however, Lü Cheng began to explain the term *Misheng* as the same vehicle that, tracing to its origins in India, became Tibetan and Japanese *Mijiao* and China's long lost *Mizong*. His explanation of Tibetan *Mijiao* can be traced through a genealogy of studies whose forebears are Wei Yuan, Ogurusu Kōchō, and Li Yizhuo. Regardless, reformulated through the methods of Oriental philology though it was, the same explanation of Tibetan *Mijiao* came to exercise tremendous influence not only during the Republican Period in China and abroad, but also, after the Cultural Revolution, in the People's Republic as well.

Despite Zhou Yiliang's celebrated "Tantrism in China," the history of Tantrism in India and its transmission to China, Japan, and Tibet, remained a mystery into the 1970s, when, as the Cultural Revolution unfolded in the People's Republic, Michel Strickmann (1942–1994) began to collect sources for his monumental *Mantras and Mandarins*, published posthumously in Paris in 1996. Unaware of Lü Cheng's study of *Mijiao*, Strickmann asks in his prologue: "But how could a phenomenon so considerable as Chinese Tantric Buddhism disappear from the continent without even leaving a single trace?" To engage Strickmann's question, we thus end where he began, namely, with two eminent European scholars of the academic discourse on tantra: (1) Eugène Burnouf, in his nineteenth-century assessment of the Buddhist tantras, and (2) Louis de la Vallée Poussin, in his twentieth-century definition of Tantrism. It should be clear by now that within academic discourse on tantra, Tantrism refers to idol worship at various stages of development in India and beyond.

As early as 1898, as Strickmann reminds his readers in the prologue of *Mantras and Mandarins*, de la Vallée Poussin was the first to convey, in his *Bouddhisme, études et matériaux*, a word of caution concerning the idea of Tantrism. A full century has since elapsed, and yet we tend to forget that Tantrism, in the Belgian scholar's early formulation, is none other than Buddhism: inseparable, in the way he conceived it, from elements of idol worship. Likewise, we often tend to forget that

[86] For the historical context of Nanjō's compilation of *A Catalogue of the Chinese Translation of the Buddhist Tripiṭaka*, including his claims concerning Zhixu's "scientific" arrangement of scriptures in his *Yuezang Zhijin*, see Dibeltulo Concu, "The Revival of Tantrism," 100–48.

in academic discourse on tantra the Buddha is no longer the Chinese idol Fo; Śākyamuni is no longer the false god of Buddhism's long encounter with Europe and America, but instead the human philosopher of Burnouf's Simple Sūtras.[87] We must then recall that no systematic narrative of the development of Buddhism in India existed before the publication of Burnouf's *Introduction* in 1844. With no histories available to him and an extremely limited epigraphy, Burnouf sought to build a history from the Sanskrit texts that he had received from Hodgson. Indeed, Burnouf's idea of what must constitute the most antique elements in the Buddha's teaching, takes shape in his analysis of the Sūtra class of scriptures—more precisely, in the distinction he makes between the "Simple Sūtras" and what he calls the "Developed" Sūtras, his rendering of the Sanskrit term *vaipulya* to designate the Mahāyāna Sūtras. In his analysis, Burnouf formulated a chronological narrative of Buddhism by assessing the relation among the three categories of his analysis: Simple Sūtras, Developed Sūtras, and Tantras. His method was based on the idea of the trace.[88]

Specifically, in Burnouf's philological method, the epoch of a Buddhist scripture could be determined by the presence, or absence of "traces of tantra." In Burnouf's classical formulation, traces of tantra are the renowned formulas known in Sanskrit as mantras and dhāraṇīs. To Burnouf, traces of tantra indicated elements of idolatry in Buddhist scriptures. The fewer the traces, the earlier the period. The more traces, the later the period. Hence, in his opinion, such traces indicated the age of a given scripture over three, or four distinct periods of Indian Buddhism. The first was the moral philosophy of the Simple Sūtras; the second, the doctrine of the plurality of buddhas and bodhisattvas in the Mahāyāna sūtras; the third, the introduction of elements from the cult of Śaivism in the tantras; and the fourth, the Ādi Buddha doctrine of the *Kālacakra*. These four forms, mapping the course of Buddhism throughout history, were all contained in the last phase of the Tantras, for they "contain, first of all, Buddhism, and I would dare to say all Buddhisms, each represented by their most respected symbols."[89]

To end, the most renowned trace of tantra in Burnouf's *Introduction* is the six-fold spell named *ṣaḍakṣarī vidyā*, which the Buddha speaks in the legend of *Śārdūlakarṇa*.[90] This single trace of tantra, envisioned by Burnouf in the 1840s, and evoked by Zhou Yiliang in the 1940s, came from India to China in 230 C.E. as *liuju shenzhou*, when Zhu Lüyan and Zhiqian translated the *Modengjia jing* into Chinese. As we engage the idea that no distinct tradition of China's Tantrism existed from the eighth to the twelfth century, like Japan's *Mikkyō* or Tibet's Vajrayāna, we begin to ponder a set of questions concerning Tantrism in relation to the history of

[87] For a discussion of Burnouf's Simple Sūtras and the philosophical dimension of his reading of Hodgson's Sanskrit Collection of Nepal, see Dibeltulo Concu, "Buddhism, Philosophy, History."
[88] See Dibeltulo Concu, "Traces of Tantra: Buddhism and the World of Nations."
[89] See Burnouf, *Introduction to the History of Indian Buddhism*, 498.
[90] Ibid., 155–56.

Buddhism.[91] Thus, we might conclude that a crucial element of the modern historian-philologist's question—"how could a phenomenon as considerable as Chinese Tantric Buddhism disappear from the continent?"—is this very *ṣaḍakṣarī vidyā*. For a long time, the six-fold spell has been that trace of mantras and dhāraṇīs, whose perceived absence, in certain scriptures of the historian's choice, has persisted in fashioning our imagination of the early history of the Buddha's teaching.

[91] I am referring specifically to the studies of *Mijiao* in premodern China by Orzech, Sharf, and Gimello.

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