On the Besson-yōki, a work of Buddhist iconography

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_Shinkaku and the “Besson-zakki,”_ Shinkaku, a priest of Jōkiin (1117-1180 A.D.) is well known as a compiler of the “Besson-zakki” (Miscellaneous notes on particular divinities of Buddhism) in 57 scrolls (kept in Nin-na-ji monastery), a representative collection of Buddhist iconography belonging to the Esoteric Buddhism of Tōji sect. Each scroll of the work includes iconographical drawings without colour. It is appreciated for its value as materials for the research-work in the history of Buddhist art, specially in the Heian and Kamakura periods. Most of the text was the record of the tradition transmitted by his four predecessors, i.e. Ken-i, Kanjo, Ejū and Jitsu-un. It is, therefore, very important to know the traditions of the four teachers in order to examine the situation in which the Zakki came into existence, The traditions of his teachers can be confirmed by the colophons recorded in the notes and commentaries on the scriptures described by them. But presumably there were many oral traditions and current works of which the relations of teachers and disciples were unknown. The “Besson-yōki” (Essential note on the particular divinities) is the sole source by which one can know the contents of the opinions of Ken-i and other teachers.

We have many copies of the work: Copies are kept in Kanazawa-Bunko, Kongō-Sammai-in, Nin-na-ji, Kyōgō-gokoku-ji, Hōju-in and many other monasteries. They were partially studied by the present writer. So far their comparative studies have not been made. This work consists of four fascicules (The copy in Kanazawa Bunko consists of the 1st fascicule in 27 sheets, the second in 25 sheets, the third in 33 sheets, the fourth in 33 sheets). It is very important because it keeps oral traditions of the cult of particular divinities in the sect of Tōji monastery. The first fascicule supplies the oral traditions of Ken-i, Jōren-bō; the second of Kaku-in, Jishōbō; the third of Hōshin, Rishōbō; the fourth of Kanjo, Jōju-
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bo; Ejū, Shōjōbō; and Jitsu-un in Shōkutei-in. It is said on one hand, that these are the oral traditions of the four teachers quoted in the "Besson-zakki." But all the text is not the same. The comparative study is necessary.

The copy kept in Kanazawa-Bunko was once owned and used by Ken-a. The colophon at the end of the fourth fascicule says, "the former copy says: On the 10th of September, the 1st year of Gen-kyū (1204 A. D.), the text was copied in Kongōbuji from the copy kept by Rihōbō in the monastery of Ōjōin, by Zem-pen, a disciple aspiring to study the Buddhist doctrine." Thus it is known that a copy was made by Zem-pen, the master of discipline in Murōju-in (Yukino-shita, Kamakura) from the copy of Kenkaku at Ōjōin monastery in Kōyasan. Zem-pen received the teaching from Kenkaku. So he was a disciple of the disciple of Shinkaku. Why did he copy it? It is said in the "Kechimyaku-ruijūki" (Collection of the doctrinal lineage of teachers and disciples) that Zempen received the doctrine of Hojuin school from Kenkaku on the 14th September, the 1st year of Genkyū (1204) at Ōjōin of Kongōbuji (Kōyasan). Presumably he climbed up Mt. Kōyasan to prepare for receiving Doctrinal Abhiseka, and dwelled there for some time to copy the "Essentials." Probably he stayed at Kōyasan for some years before and after the 1st year of Genkyū. I presume the copy was made in connection with the Doctrinal Abhiseka, because he received the abhiseka offices once more from Saikan in the sub-monastery Jison-in, Nin-na-ji on the 27th May, the 2nd year of Ken-ei (1207). The Besson-Yōki was very important to know the fundamentals of the Nishi-no-in school. Kenkaku was an eminent disciple of Shinkaku.

Note (1) my article "On Shinkaku and the Besson-zakki" (Ars Buddhica, no. 70, p. 72).

The "Saho-shū," (Collection of manners) It is known by the colophon that it is a work of Ken-i, in Jōren-in, Kōyasan. Shinkaku, a disciple of Ken-i also compiled several collections of manners. But the works of the two priests have some points that agree with each other. Some parts denote remarkable influence of Amidaism (items 40 and 41). After being copied in the 1st year of Heiji (1159), the 3rd year of Nin-an (1168), it was copied by Chōshu in the 3rd year of Kareki (1328).
The "Shim-moku-shō" (Note of the heart and the eyes) is a collection of the cults of many divinities attributed to Shinkaku in the monastery Jōkiin. The original text was of three scrolls according to the copy kept in the Ōtani University and dated in the 3rd year of Shōtoku (1713). If this work is compared with the compilation of the divinities of the three departments found in the "Heart Note" that was used by the Jōkiin school, one can notice that the cults of divinities were very important in the course of the development of the school of Jōkiin in later days. A set of three notes attributed to priest Shukaku, the ex-Prince (1150-1202), i.e. the "Shin-shō" in 7 bundles, the "Shim-mitsu-shō" in 16 scrolls, and the Shimmitsu-ryaku-shō" in 7 fascicles exerted influence on each other concerning the details of Injin (certificate of a teacher that his disciple received the instruction of the doctrine in the Esoteric Buddhism). Ex-prince Shukaku contributed to the prosperity of the school of Ninna-ji monastery. He received the doctrine of the Hirosawa school from ex-Prince Kakushō and Kakujo of Hojuin. The doctrine of Hirosawa school seems to have some thing to do with the rites of particular divinities that were handed down in fragments in the monastery of Jōjuin. The Kanazawa-Bunko keeps many plans of Abhiṣeka offices and the altar of Gumonji rite pertaining to the Hojuin-school. They enable us to understand the original form of the "Shimmoku-shō." Kōkyō is said to have copied the Besson-yōki. The relation between him and Shinkaku is known by the lineage of teachers and disciples in the Hojuin school. It denotes the lineage of "Shinkaku, Kenkaku, Rihōbō (in Ōjōin, Kōyasan) and Kōkyō in due order" (Shingon-shū-Zensho, vol. 29, p. 436b).

The "Shimmoku-shō" in the Kanazawa-Bunko was of 3 scrolls as the copy in the Ōtani University, but now it has only the upper and middle scrolls, lacking the lower scroll. It is known that it was copied in the 4th year of Genkyō (1324) by the colophon which reads: "Ryōjun requested another man to make a copy from the copy of Hōbodai-in, in the last ten days of August, the 4th year of Genkyō." Here "the copy of Hōbodai-in" means the copy in possession of the priest in Tōji monastery who was supplied by the Government and who had some relation with Yukino-shita, Kamakura. In oher word it is a version kept by Ryōzen (–1341), the founder of Hōbodai-in, Tōji monaste-
ry. Ryōjun probably copied the text for receiving the doctrine of the Nishi-no-in school.

According to the colophon of the Devas (sheet no. 15) “The former copy says: this was copied in the Daihishin-in monastery on the 3rd day of February, the 2nd year of Einin (1294). It was copied at Henjōshin-in, Nishi-Hachijō, on the 28th September, the fourth year of Genkyō (1324) by Ryōjun. Ten scrolls in all have been collated.”. It was copied soon after the death of Nōzen, the abbot (–1289) in his residence Daihishin-in in the 2nd year of Einin (1294). The “Hizōki-kikigaki” (Note on the Hizōki) in two leaflets that was used by Ryōjun is said to have been copied by him on the 6th, June, the third year of Gentoku (1331) at Shōmyōji, Kanazawa. As compared with the present copy, however, the strokes of the brush are rather weak. So it might be a transcript of the copy of Ryōjun. It can be ascertained by comparing it with another copy by Ryōjun “The Kongōkai-gyōbō-shidai-shōki” (The process of the rite of Vajradhātu). This copy is important as an oral tradition on Vajradhātu like “the Kubi-shidai” and “the Mikki.” It is remarkable that the Kanazawa-Bunko has other copies possessed by Genken, Jūson, Kiin, Ken-a, and Ei. It must be taken into consideration that the places where Ryōjun read these copies were situated in the vicinity of Nishi-Hachijō, Kyōto. He read them (1) at Henjōshin-in at Nishi-Hachijō in the fourth year of Genkyō (1324), (2) at Kaizenji in the western suburbs in the 2nd year of Shōan (1300), (3) in the Nishi-Hachijō-ji in the 2nd year of Shōchū (1324). These monasteries were the places where many masters of the Ninna school, Nishino-in school were engaged in the studies. Ryōzen and his disciples accomplished the practice of the rite of the Nishinoin school with the basis at Nishi-Hachijō. They compiled the famous “Byaku-Hokku-Shō” in 100 scrolls with the collaboration of Ryōson at the monastery of Hōrenge-ji. The Nishinoin school was influential in propagating their doctrine as well as the iconography and the rite in Eastern districts.

“The Kongōkai-denju-kikigaki” (Note on the instruction of the cult of Vajradhātu)

This is the fundamental way of instruction of Vajradhātu in the Jōkiin school. It has a colophon by which we can know the activity of Shinkaku at Köyasen:

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"the former copy of the text says: "Beginning from the 16th March, the fourth year of Nimbyō (1154), the explanation of the Mudrā was completed on the 18th April. For more than 30 days I was instructed the rite of the Ex-Emperor at Kōyasan. Lest I should forget it, I noted down the mudrās. I Shinkaku wrote this remarks."

"I, Ryōgen collated the copy with another copy. The title of this text is the note on the teacher's instruction on the rite of Vajradhātu."

It is not known when Shinkaku climbed up Mt. Kōyasan and what his activity was. In the 1st year of Hōgen (1156) he in his old age, was in service of his teacher Ken-i, Jōremon. He was then conferred the Abhiṣeka. Chapter 12 of the "Honchō-Kōsōden" (Lives of the eminent priests in this country) and chapter 35 of the "Kōya-ōjō-den" (The lives of those who lived in Kōyasan and went to the Western Paradise) describe briefly of his ordination of Abhiṣeka. The colophon of this text is a precious record for us to know how Shinkaku prepared to enter Mt. Kōyasan. He was engaged in the question of the completion of Mudrās for more than one month from 16th March, the fourth year of Nimbyō (1154), two years before the 1st year of Hōgen. The completion of mudrās means the note that manifests the essentials of the mudrās. It is closely connected with the 79 mudrās described in the "Kongōkai-shidai-shōki" mentioned above in connection with the "Myōmoku-shō." The present text gives the reason for each of the 79 mudrās in the "Kongōkai-daihō-kuyō-shiki" according to the interpretation described by priest Saien on the 28th December, the 3rd year of Kambyō (891). The "Kongōkai-shidai-shōki" is explained by the text of the "Kongōkai-daihō-kuyō-shiki". The "Kongōkai-shidai" was the object of interest since Shinkaku was in the Jōkiin school. Kōkyō (1184-1255) at Yukinoshita, Kamakura compiled the "Kongōkai-Shidai" in one scroll on the basis of "the Kongōchō-rengebu-shin-nenju-shidai" in two scrolls by Ex-emperor Kambyō, because it was hard to perform. Kongōsammari-in monastery, Kōyasan, owns the "Kongōkai-shishō" in one scroll attributed to Kōkyō. These texts are important to know of the opinion of Jōremon, the teacher of the author of the Besson-yōki.

It is noteworthy that Kakuban (1095-1143) already described the interpreta-
tion through the five categories of "Cause, practice, realization, Nirvāṇa and expedient." According to the "Kongōchōgyō-rengebu-shidai-sata" in one scroll, the manners of the cult are allocated to the five categories as follows: "From entering the room to sitting down corresponds to the Cause, the practice of the preliminary manners beginning with applying fragrant powder is the Practice, the meditation of the four boundless merits to uttering the Samaya is the Realization, the meditation of the Sacred hall is Nirvāṇa, and Mahā-Ākāśagarbha to the end of the rite is the Expedient."

The school of Shinkaku in including Kōkyō made account of the process of the rite, while Kakuban and his followers looked for the recitation and its theoretical basis. It means that there were two main currents in comprehending the practice of the fourfold rites including 18 ways, Vajradhātu and Garbha maṇḍalas. It is a question how Ryōzen, who was on the stand-point of the Nishino-in school, understood the two currents.

as to the whereabouts of the original copies of these iconographical texts I must mention that "various iconographical texts existent now" in pp 639-689 of "Bukkyō no Bijutsu to Rekishi" by the late Prof. Gemmyō Ono. I came to know of it by the good offices of Prof. Chikyō Yamamoto, in the Kōyasan University.

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