On the Sixth Abode in Kūkai’s
The Ten Abodes of Mind of the Mysterious Maṇḍala
—— In relation to the “Mahāyāna mind concerned for others” ——
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Kūkai’s later work The Ten Abodes of Mind of the Mysterious Maṇḍala and its shorter version The Precious Key to the Secret Treasury may be interpreted as treatises on bodhicitta, from the perspective of Shingon Buddhism. Each of the abodes represents a certain level of insight into the true nature of mind that happens during the process of the spiritual path of the Shingon practitioner. Within this context will be considered the meaning and the function of the sixth abode called “Mahāyāna mind concerned for others” (他縁大乗住心), related to the Fa-hsiang teaching.

1. “The vehicle concerned for others” (他縁乘) and “the vehicle without object [of cognition]” (無縁乗) are two key terms that Kūkai uses when referring to the sixth abode. Between the two, he emphasizes the term “the vehicle concerned for others” in order to stress the importance of the compassionate mind that develops in this abode and whose object is the sentient beings of dharmadhatu. The first chapter of Mahāvairocanābhisambodhiṣṭhānāsūtra, which serves as the basis for Kūkai’s system of ten abodes, does not mention the term “the vehicle concerned for others” (他縁乗). Instead it uses the term “the mind of the vehicle without object” (無縁乗心) when describing the second eon of practice, related to the practice of Mahāyāna. Kūkai’s usage of the term “vehicle concerned for others” is actually based on Šubhakarasimha’s interpretation in the Commentary on Mahāvairocanasūtra. This commentary discusses two possible meanings of the Sanskrit word apara and its translation into Chinese. The first interpretation translates as ‘without the object [of cognition]’ (a-para, 無縁) and the second one translates as ‘others’ (apara, 他縁). According to these two translations, Commentary on Mahāvairocanasūtra differentiates between these two aspects of the Mahāyāna mind. The first aspect re-
fers to the practitioner's intentions and vows to benefit all beings through bodhisattva activities. This can clearly be related to the relative aspect of bodhicitta (śānyvrṭikabodhicitta, 世俗菩提心). The second aspect refers to the realization that there are no dharmas outside the mind to be obtained, which represents insight into the emptiness of dharmas on the level of the fifth fearlessness (法無我無畏). This may be related to the development of the absolute aspect of bodhicitta (pāramārthikabodhicitta, 勝義菩提心). In terms of these two aspects of bodhicitta, because the text of the sixth abode emphasizes the term “the vehicle concerned for others” and not “the vehicle without object”, the sixth abode is primarily concerned with the relative aspect of bodhicitta.

2. The text of the sixth abode concentrates mainly on the explanation of the stages of bodhisattva practices, based on Demonstration of the Theory of the Mind Only (成唯識論) and The Ten Stages (十地経). The Fa-hsiang teaching, as it relates to the sixth abode, is interpreted by Kūkai from the perspective of practice and not from the point of view of Fa-hsiang analysis of consciousness. For Kūkai, the importance of the sixth abode lies in the first appearance of a Mahāyānistic compassionate attitude. He might see Fa-hsiang as the representative teaching which develops such an attitude. As well as the Chinese Hua-yen (華嚴) masters Fa-tsang (法藏) and Cheng-kuan (澄觀), Kūkai also might see Fa-hsiang as a teaching more engaged in the explanation of phenomena and their relation to mind, rather than the principle behind phenomena, as characterized by San-lun (三論). Such reasoning implies that Kūkai approaches Fa-hsiang as a teaching which begins from the point of view of relative truth. The practitioner of this abode might still perceive the difference between a subject and object of compassion, which explains the usage of the term “the vehicle concerned for others” in relation to the Fa-hsiang teaching. At the same time, the sixth abode represents the beginning stage of unconditioned compassion which does not distinguish between an object and subject of compassion. Unconditioned compassion is indicated by term “vehicle without object”, which suggests that obstacles to knowledge are diminished to the point where discrimination between subject and object does not exist. Kūkai might have assigned the term “vehicle without object” to a wider meaning that does not refer specifically to the sixth abode but also

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to the following Mahāyāna abodes. However, he does not use this term in the text of the following abodes because, once established, he is no longer concerned with pointing out the importance of bodhisattva practice. Instead, in the following abodes, he emphasizes other topics such as realization of the principle of emptiness in the seventh abode, or the original purity of mind and the further deepening of insight into emptiness in the eighth abode.

3. Despite having an important role in relation to the previous abodes, Kūkai expresses a critical view towards the bodhisattva practice of the sixth abode which lasts three great eons until the attainment of supreme enlightenment. Kūkai supports this view on the basis of The Treatise on Bodhicitta (菩提心論), which declares possibility of ‘realization of Buddhahood in this very body’ (即身成仏) as characteristic of Shingon teaching. Therefore, he criticizes the gradual way of bodhisattva practice, as represented by the way of perfection of pāramitās and instead contra posits it to the way of mantra (mantranaya) practice. One of the primary texts in the development of Kūkai’s teaching, The Treatise on Bodhicitta, explains a third type of bodhicitta called “bodhicitta of esoteric samādhi” (三摩地の菩提心) which refers to esoteric meditation’s characteristic of the Shingon way of practice. This treatise states that, by means of the supreme method of yoga, one can enter the stage of Buddha even from the stage of an ordinary man. Holding the same view as The Treatise on Bodhicitta, Kūkai specifies, on the basis of Mahāvairocanaśūtra, the esoteric way for entering the stage of Buddha from the sixth abode. The esoteric aspect of the sixth abode, which the practitioner needs to enter, is related to the “samādhi of loving kindness” (大慈三昧, 普遍大慈發生三昧) of the bodhisattva Maitreya, who represents the virtue of “immeasurable [mind] of loving kindness” (大慈無量). This is the first of the four samādhīs that are revealed in The Ten Abodes, in relation to the Mahāyāna abodes. The four bodhisattvas associated with the four samādhīs reveal internally realized virtues of Vairocana and if any of these virtues is lacking then one can not realize supreme enlightenment.

For Kūkai, the whole teaching of Fa-hsiang is contained in the mantra of the bodhisattva Maitreya: “Ajitamjaya sarvasatvāśayānugata.” The mantra is given in the
vocative form and its superficial meaning refers to calling “the one who can not be conquered by anyone, and who understands all wishes of sentient beings.” More profoundly, it is interpreted on the basis of the first seed-syllable “a” meaning “non-origination” (本不生). The superficial meaning may be related to the attitude of loving kindness that is developed in the sixth abode in terms of providing sentient beings with the joy of their wishes being fulfilled. This is related to the term “the vehicle concerned with others”. The more profound meaning reveals that by knowing the non-origination of all things, one understands all minds and all people’s abilities as they are and then acts with loving kindness to them, giving them what they need without any limitation, in order to make them free from suffering. This is one of the virtues of Mahāvairocana, which is represented by the bodhisattva Maitreya. If practitioner enters Maitreya’s samādhi, he or she will quickly manifest one’s own latent abilities to act with perfect loving kindness and will realize buddhahood quickly, in one lifetime.

4. Conclusion The sixth abode, in Kūkai’s ten-fold system, has the function of emphasizing the significance of Mahāyānistic compassion in relation to previous Hinayāna abodes. The “vehicle concerned for others” is primarily emphasized in relation to the development of bodhicitta on the relative level. In relation to the development of insight into emptiness, the term the “vehicle without object [of cognition]” is used and it is a common denominator for the sixth abode and further Mahāyāna abodes. As it relates to the sixth abode, Kūkai employs the Fa-hsiang teaching to illustrate the traditional way of the three eons of bodhisattva practice. Epistemological and ontological aspects of Fa-hsiang are not emphasized. Kūkai might see the Fa-hsiang teaching as predominantly dealing with the world of phenomena, which is necessary to understand before proceeding to the principle of emptiness emphasized in the next abode. Kūkai presents his critical view towards the three eons of practicing of the way of pāramitā in favour of practicing the way of mantra, which enables realization of buddhahood in this very body. For the first time in the context of Mahāyāna abodes, on the basis of Maitreya’s samādhi, Kūkai reveals the profound meaning of The Ten Abodes, by identifying practitioners as manifestations of the enlightened mind, abiding in the state of the mysterious maṇḍala.
1) For different approaches to the interpretation of *The Ten Abodes of Mind of the Mysterious Mandala*, see for example, 小田慈舟: 「顕密二教判と十住心」, 『藤山教学大会要』 8, 1973, pp.1, 15-18.


3) Henceforth referred to as *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*.

4) *Taishō*, vol.18, p.3b.


6) *Taishō*, vol.32, p.572c.


8) *Taishō*, vol.32, p.574b.

9) *The Ten Abodes* mentions the following samādhis: Maitreya’s samādhi of great loving kindness (大慈三昧門), Mañjuśrī’s samādhi of great emptiness (大空三昧門), Avalokiteśvara’s samādhi (of great compassion) which perceives (suffering of sentient beings) universally (普観三昧門) and Samantabhadra’s samādhi of mysteriously adorned realm of Buddhas (仏境界莊嚴三昧). *Notes on the Secret Treasury* (秘藏記) relates the four bodhisattvas to four immeasurable minds, but this is not clear on the basis of *The Ten Abodes*.

10) *Taishō*, vol.39, pp.582b, 602a.

11) 『定本弘法大師全集 2, 秘密曼荼羅十住心論』, p. 238.

〈Key Words〉 他縁大乗心, 無縁乗, 大慈三昧, 十住心論
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