The Relations between Esoterism and the Tathāgatagarbha Theory as seen in the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching

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The Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching in ten books found in the 19th volume (Section of Esoterism) of the Taishō Edition of the Tripitaka is the only Chinese translation made jointly by Prajñā (A. D. 733-?), a Buddhist scholar from Kapiśa, North India, and Muniśrī (A. D. ?-811), also a Buddhist scholar from North India.¹⁾ Its original Sanskrit text is lost, nor is there any Tibetan translation of it extant.

In A. D. 806, Kōbō Daishi or Kūkai (A. D. 774-835) of Japan, who was then studying under Hui-kuo (A. D. 746-805), an Esoteric scholar under the dynasty of T'ang in China, was entrusted with this sūtra by the above-said joint-translators at the Li-ch'üan-ssü,²⁾ Ch'ang-an, and brought it over to Japan for the first time.

Kūkai classified all the Esoteric sūtras into three sections: (1) the Mahāvairocana-bhīṣambodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulyasūtrendrarāja nāma dharmaparyāya, and other sūtras of the same system with it; (2) the Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha nāma mahāyāna-sūtra, and other sūtras of the same system with it; (3) the Mixed Section consisting of sūtras in which are expounded the above two systems of Esoterism in combination with the teachings of Buddhism in general. Kūkai has placed the present sūtra

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- 1) The Sung Biography of Famous Priests (Taishō, Vol. 50, p. 716).
The Chên-yüan List of Buddhist Scriptures (Taishō, Vol. 55, p. 891).
The Hsü-K'ai-yüan List of Buddhist Scriptures (Taishō, Vol. 55, p. 755).
 - 2) Collected Works of Kōbō Daishi, Vol. I, p. 9.

at the head of the third section.³⁾

This sūtra occupies 53 pages of the Taishō Tripitaka (Vol. XIX, p. 525–577). About two-thirds of it is almost identical with the whole of the Āryadhāraṇīśvara-rājasūtra.⁴⁾ [Attached diagram No. 1]. Of the rest, one part belongs to itself [Diagram No. 1], and another part finds its approximate equivalents in (1) part of the Mahāvairocana-bhīṣaṃbodhivikurvītādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulya-sūtrendrarāja nāma dharmaparyāya;⁵⁾ (2) part of the Chu-fu-ching-chieh-shê-chen-shih-ching,⁶⁾ etc.; and (3) the whole of the Āryapariṇatacakra nāma mahāyānasūtra.⁷⁾ [Diagram No. 2]. The present sūtra differs slightly from its equivalents, for instance in the names of bodhisattvas, and it retains its unity as an independent sūtra.

The fact that this esoteric sūtra has adopted so much from the Āryadhāraṇīśvararāja-sūtra is a manifest proof of the relation that exists between Esoterism and the Tathāgatagarbha Theory, but this point is made more minutely clear when we refer to the Ratnagotravibhāga mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra,⁸⁾ a treatise that covers the Āryadhāraṇīśvararāja-sūtra and explains its Tathāgatagarbha Theory in a systematic way.⁹⁾ This treatise, in its fourth of the seven items of exposition, namely, in the Caturthaṃ vajrapadaṃ where it speaks of the “dhātu”, explains the “sixteen great compassions” and the “thirty-two actions” of the bodhisattva stated in the Āryadhāraṇīśvararāja-sūtra. Now, the “sixteen great compassions” and the “thirty-two actions” of the bodhisattva are also found in the Shou-hu-kuo-chien-chu-dhāraṇī-ching.

3) Collected Works of Kōbō Daishi, Vol. I, p. 117.

4) According to the Ratnagotravibhāga mahāyānottaratantraśāstra edited by E. H. Johnston, D. LITT., p. 6, this sūtra is named “Āryadhāraṇīśvararājasūtra”, but according to the Derge version (Tōhoku No. 147), is named “Āryatathāgata-mahākaraṇīrdeśa nāma mahāyānasūtra”.

5) Tōhoku, No. 494; Taishō, No. 848.

6) Taishō, No. 868.

7) Tōhoku, No. 242; Taishō, No. 998.

8) Tōhoku, No. 4025; Taishō, No. 1611.

9) The Ratnagotravibhāga mahāyānottaratantraśāstra, p. 6.

Nor is that all. In the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching, the sixteen great compassions are the 'root' of the bodhisattva and the thirty-two actions are the expedient method which is regarded as final. There is the phrase in this sūtra: "Of the bodhisattva, the bodhi-mind is the cause, the great compassions are the root, and the expedient method is final." This phrase exactly corresponds to that phrase which appears in the Mahāvairocanābhi-saṃbodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulya-sūtrendrarāja nāma dharmaparyāya and which declares the central idea of this important sūtra of Esoterism:

"Tad etat sarvajñāñānaṃ karuṇāmūlaṃ¹⁰⁾
bodhicittahetukam upāyaparyavasānaṃ."

We have seen how one of the main aspects of Esoterism, the garbhadhātu aspect presented in the Shou-hu-kuo-chien-chu-dhāraṇī-ching and in the Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi-vikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulyasūtrendrarāja nāma dharmaparyāya has developed itself on the basis of the Tathāgatagarbha Theory stated in the Āryadhāraṇīśvararāja-sūtra and explained in the Ratnagotra-vibhāga mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra. Another main aspect of Esoterism, the vajradhātu aspect, can also be proved to have developed on the Tathāgatagarbha Theory. In this case, too, the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching is to be observed in the following connections.

The Ratnagotravibhāga mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra, in explaining¹¹⁾ the Tathāgatagarbha Theory on the basis of the Tathāgatagarbha-sūtra, says that the delusive thoughts harboured by bodhisattvas at the eighth, ninth, or tenth stage of the bodhisattvaship are got rid of by the Wisdom of the Diamond-samādhi¹²⁾ (vajropamasamādhi). Then in the esoteric Sarvarahasyo nāma tantrarāja¹³⁾ it is written that this Dharmakāya Wisdom which has arisen from Diamond-samādhi or the mind whose nature is indestructible like a diamond is no other than the Vajradhātu of Esoterism. The Chu-fu-ching-

10) The First Bhāvanākrama of Kamalaśīla, edited by G. Tucci, p. 196.

11) Taishō, Vol. 16, p. 457-466; Tōhoku, No. 258, p. 245b-259b.

12) "ye niṣṭhāgatabodhisattvasāntānikā aṣṭamyādi-bhūmitraya bhāvanājñānavipakṣā vajropamasamādhijñānavadhyāsta ucyante śuddhabhūmigatā iti".

13) Tōhoku, No. 481; Taishō, No. 888.

chien-shê-chen-shih-ching, which, with its chapters “Vajradhātu-Great-Practice-Place” etc., belongs doubtless to the Vajradhātu system, has parts in common with the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching.

It will be added here that some other sūtras such as Śrīmālā-sūtra and Abhisamayālaṃkāra-mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra find their expositions in the Ratnagotravibhāga mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra and therefore are more or less connected with the esoteric sūtras mentioned above.

It is thus clear that the theories expounded in the important esoteric sūtras are in close relations with the Tathāgatarbha Theory. Where, then, lies the characteristic of Esoterism? According to the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching¹⁴⁾, Esoterism is expounded for the sake of those who are yet unable to achieve any enlightenment after following the Tathāgatarbha Theory; Esoterism teaches them a unique expedient method by which they are led to know the nature of their own minds and attain the most genuine Unsurpassed Bodhi (Anuttarasamyaksambodhi). The ‘expedient method’ found in the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching is of two kinds: one belonging to the system of the Garbhadhātu, and the other belonging to that of the Vajradhātu. The equivalent of the former is found in the Āryapariṇatacakra nāma mahāyānasūtra, and that of the latter in the Chu-fu-ching-chieh-shê-chen-shih-ching. The method of the former precedes that of the latter in actual practice of the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching. The method of the latter contains the meditation of the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī, namely, the dhāraṇī Oṃ in an image of a full moon, and this is regarded as the consummation of the teaching of the whole Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇī-ching.

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14) Taishō, Vol. 19, p. 528b¹⁰⁻¹⁵; p. 530a⁷.

[No.1]

DIAGRAM showing equivalents among the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇi-ching and the three translations of the Āryadhāraṇiśvararājāsūtra, together with the coverage by the Ratnagotravibhāga mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra.

Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇi-ching 守護國界主陀羅尼經 Taishō Vol. 19			Āryadhāraṇiśvararājāsūtra				Ratnagotravibhāga mahāyānottaratantra-śāstra 究竟一乘寶性論
Chap.	Title	p.	大方等大集經 Taishō Vol. 13	大哀經 Taishō Vol. 13	Tib Tshoku No. 147		Sapta-Vajrapāda
Chap.	Title	p.	Chap.	Title	p.	Derge p.	
1	序	526b	1	瓔珞品	1a	142a, ¹	Buddha Dharma Samgha
2-1	陀羅尼	526b	"	"	3c, ²⁴	409a	
-2	"	530a	"	"	4c, ²⁴	412c	
-2	"	532a, ⁷				414b	151b, ²
-3	"	534c					155a, ⁴
			2-1	陀羅尼自在王菩薩	5b	415b	159a, ³
			"	"	7a, ²⁵	"	418a, ⁴
			-2	"	9a	419b	167b, ¹
3	大悲胎藏出生	536c		()		()	
"	"	537a, ¹⁸	"	"	10a, ²	420c	171a, ¹
"	"	537c, ¹⁶	"	"	10c, ³	421b	172b, ⁴
"	"	538c ¹	"	"	11b, ³	422a	174b, ⁵
4	入如來大悲不思議	539a	"	"	11b, ¹⁴	"	422a, ⁷³
"	"	542b, ¹⁰	"	"	14a, ³	425a	183b, ¹
5-1	入如來不思議甚深事業	543a	-3	"	14b	425c	185a, ⁶
"	"	544b, ⁶	"	"	15a, ⁶	426c	187b, ⁴
"	"	544c, ¹⁷	"	"	15b, ¹⁰	427a	188b, ⁵
"	"	545a, ²⁶	"	"	15b, ²⁸	427c	189b, ⁵
"	"	545c, ³	"	"	15c, ²⁶	428b	191a, ⁵
"	"	546b, ¹⁵	"	"	16a, ¹⁹	429a	193b, ²
"	"	547a, ¹⁵	"	"	16c, ⁶	430a	195a, ⁷
"	"	547c, ¹⁷	"	"	17b, ³	431a	197a, ¹
"	"	548a, ²⁹	"	"	17b, ²⁵	431c	198a, ⁷
"	"	548c, ¹⁵	"	"	17c, ²⁶	432b	199b, ⁵
5-2	"	549b,	"	"	18a, ²⁰	432c	200b, ⁵
"	"	551a, ⁹	"	"	19a, ²¹	434c	205a, ⁶
"	"	551c, ¹⁹	"	"	19c, ⁸	435c	207a, ⁵
-3	"	554a	"	"	21a, ¹⁰	"	438a, ¹⁹
"	"	555a, ⁹	"	"	21c, ²	439b	215a, ²
"	"	556a, ¹⁹	-4	"	22b	"	440b, ⁴
6-1	菩薩瓔珞莊嚴	556c					
-2	"	559a	"	"	22c, ⁴	440c	218b, ⁵
7	大光普照莊嚴	560c	"	"	23c, ¹⁷	"	443a, ¹³
			"	"	25b, ¹¹	445c	230a, ³
	()		"	"	26b, ¹⁷	447a	233b, ²
8	般若根本事業莊嚴	562a	"	"	27a, ²⁰	449c	236a, ⁵
"	"	564c, ¹⁵		()		()	()
9	陀羅尼功德軌儀	565b		()		()	()
10	阿闍世王受記	571c		()		()	()
11	如來囑累	574c	"	"	27c, ⁷	450a	239a, ³
"	"	576c, ²⁴	"	"	28b, ¹⁴	452a	242b, ¹

* Of the above three translations of the Āryadhāraṇiśvararājāsūtra, the Tibetan version is the closest to the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhāraṇi-ching.

[No. 2] DIAGRAM showing equivalents among the Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhārāṇi-ching and the Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhivikurvītādhiṣṭhānavaiṣṭvāntrendrarāja nāma dharmaparyāya, the Āryaparinātacakra nāma mahāyānasūtra and the Chu-fu-ching-chieh-shē-chen-shih-ching.

Shou-hu-kuo-chieh-chu-dhārāṇi-ching 守護國界主陀羅尼經 Taishō Vol. 19	Mahāvairocanaḥisambodhivikurvītādhiṣṭhānavaiṣṭvāntrendrarāja nāma dharmaparyāya 大毘盧遮那成佛神變加持經 Taishō Vol. 18	Āryaparinātacakra nāma mahāyānasūtra 佛說廻向 Taishō Vol. 19	Chu-fu-ching-chieh-shē-chen-shih-ching 諸佛境界攝眞實經 Taishō Vol. 18
Chap. Title p.	Chap. Title p.	p.	Chap. Title p.
2-1 陀羅尼 526c, ¹¹ -526c, ¹⁷	1 入眞言門住心 1b, ¹⁶ -1b, ²⁵		
" " 527b, ²⁸ -527c, ¹⁴	" " 1b, ²⁵ -1c, ⁵		
" " 527c, ¹⁵ -528a, ⁶	" " 1c, ⁵ -1c ²⁰		
" " 528a, ⁶ -528a, ²⁴	" " 1c, ²⁰ -2a, ⁶		
" " 528b, ¹⁶ -529c		577a-578a	
2-2 " 530a, ¹¹ -530b, ¹		3-餘 金剛界大道場 275c, ² -275c, ¹⁸	
" " 530b, ² -531a, ⁹		" " 275c, ¹⁹ -276b, ⁵	
9 陀羅尼劫 德軌儀 567b, ⁶ -567b, ¹⁶		8 持念 281c, ¹¹ -281c, ²⁶	
" " 570c, ⁸ -570c, ¹⁵		3-餘 金剛界大道場 273b, ²¹ -273b, ²⁹	