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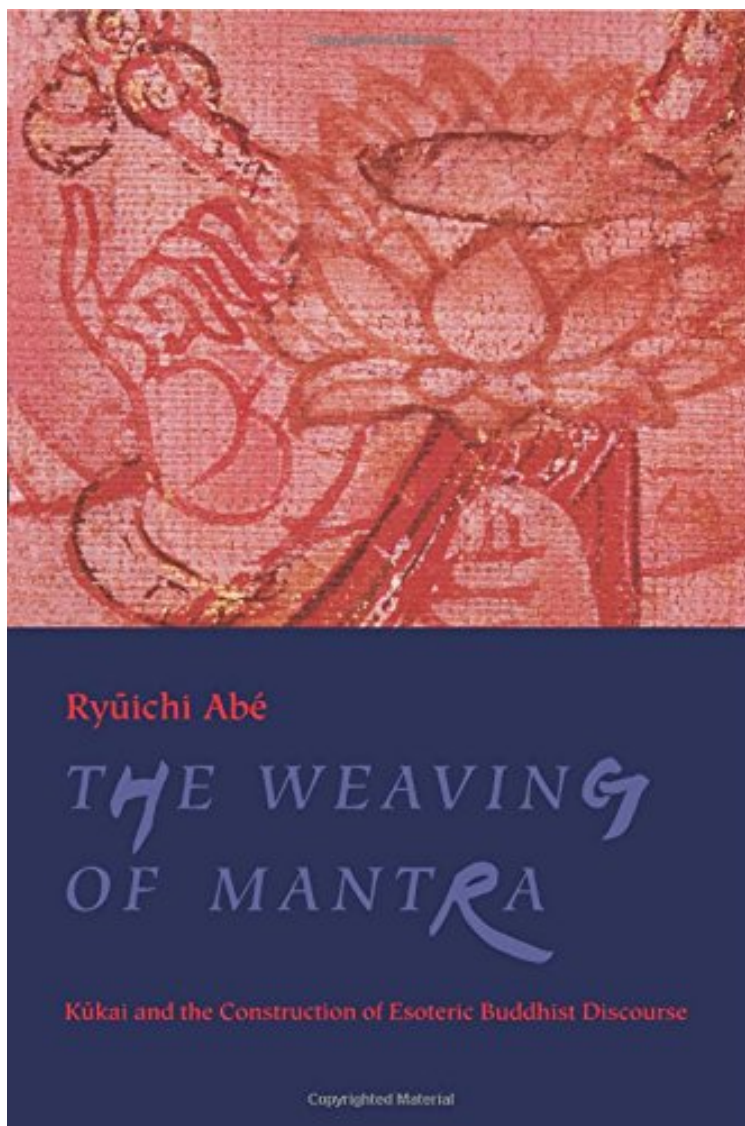
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(Read ebook) The Weaving of Mantra

## **The Weaving of Mantra**

**Ryichi Ab, Ry#251ichi Ab : The Weaving of Mantra** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Weaving of Mantra:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A definitive source for Early Japanese Buddhism, ShingonBy Doug MThis book is not intended as an introduction to Shingon Buddhism, but rather, provides an in-depth, scholarly look at Nara and Heian-era Buddhism and the rise of Shingon Buddhism. This book is intended for serious scholars of Japanese Buddhism and reads like a college thesis. Professor Abe's research is immense, and he regularly cites the research done by previous Japanese scholars through the book. What I like best about this book is that Professor Abe debunks a lot of long-held beliefs in the academic world regarding Shingon and early Buddhism, such as the myth that

Shingon appealed to the upper classes only. Abe's research on the Mahavairocana and Vajrasekhara sutras also is very valuable as very few books in the West even explain what the sutras are about. This work may not be your first source to learn about Shingon, but for Japanese historians, this book is a treasure of academic research. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Dense, but not unnecessarily so. By Lesovik About what I expected. Great explanation of mantra, putting it in its historical context. Would recommend to someone interested in exploring shingon. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Nathaniel Michon amazing scholarship, good writing, a classic

The great Buddhist priest Kukai (774-835) is credited with the introduction and establishment of tantric -or esoteric - Buddhism in early ninth-century Japan. In *The Weaving of Mantra*, Ryuichi Abe examines this important religious figure -neglected in modern academic literature -and his profound influence on Japanese culture. Offering a radically new approach to the study of early religious history -combining historical research, discourse analysis, literary criticism, and semiology -Abe contends that the importance of Kukai's transmission of esoteric Buddhism to Japan lay not in the foundation of a new sect but in his creation of a general theory of language grounded in the ritual speech of mantra. *The Weaving of Mantra* embeds Kukai within the fabric of political and social life in ninth-century Japan and explains how esoteric Buddhism played a crucial role in many societal changes in Japan -from the growth of monasteries into major feudal powers to the formation of the native phonetic alphabet, kana. As Abe illustrates, Kukai's writings and the new type of discourse they spawned also marked Japan's transition from the ancient order to the medieval world, replacing Confucianism as the ideology of the state. Abe begins by placing Kukai's life in the historical context of medieval Japan and the Ritsuryo state, then explores his interaction with the Nara Buddhist intelligentsia, which was seminal to the introduction of esoteric Buddhism. The author discusses Kukai's magnum opus, *Ten Abiding Stages on the Secret Mandalas* (*Himitsu mandara jujushinron*) and introduces a number of Japanese and Chinese primary-source texts previously unknown by Western-language scholars. Instead of tracing Kukai's thought through literal readings, *The Weaving of Mantra* explores the rhetorical strategies Kukai employed in his works, shedding valuable light on what his texts meant to his readers and what his goals were in creating a discourse that ultimately transformed Japanese culture.

This is a remarkable book about one of the most remarkable figures in the history of Japanese Buddhism...Abe's book will certainly emerge and remain the primary examination of Kukai's life and thought for many years to come. It is thus a crucial read for anyone interested in early Japanese religion and intellectual history...*The Weaving of Mantra* provides a very lengthy, detailed, and substantial intellectual historical analysis of Kukai...[T]his book is a monumental achievement that will fascinate students of Japanese religion and stimulate much discussion among historians. (Steven Heine *Journal of Asian Studies*) Abe has made a major contribution to our understanding of the figure of Kukai, of Esoteric Buddhism, of the political, intellectual and religious situation of the Nara and early Heian periods, and of our view of medieval Japanese Buddhism as a whole. He has command of an impressive range of sources, both classical and modern, and he has a sophisticated grasp of recent theoretical discussions.... Both in the new readings of early and medieval Japanese Buddhism that it advances and in the discussions that it will stimulate, this volume stands as a major addition to the field. (Paul B. Watt *Journal of Asian History*) "This is a groundbreaking book of tremendous significance for the study of Japanese Buddhism.... a resounding success. Not only will students of Kukai find ample riches to mine in this impressive magnum opus; it may serve also to stimulate important discussions in the fields of Japanese literary, religious, and political history." -- David L. Gardiner, Colorado College From the Back Cover The great Buddhist priest Kukai (774-835) introduced and established tantric -- or esoteric -- Buddhism in early ninth-century Japan. Ryuichi Abe examines this momentous religious figure and his profound influence on Japanese culture. Offering a radically new approach to the study of early religious history that combines historical research, discourse

analysis, literary criticism, and semiology, Abe contends that the importance of Kukai's transmission of esoteric Buddhism to Japan lay less in the foundation of a new sect than in his creation of a general theory of language grounded in the ritual speech of mantra. Exploring the rich rhetorical strategies Kukai employed in his works, *The Weaving of Mantra* illuminates both what his texts meant to his readers and what goals guided the creation of a powerful discourse that ultimately transformed Japanese culture.