



## The Weaving of Mantra: Kukai and the Construction of Esoteric Buddhist Discourse (Paperback)

By Ryuichi Abe

Columbia University Press, United States, 2000. Paperback. Condition: New. Revised ed.. Language: English . Brand New Book. 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 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. 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...

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