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On Supreme Bliss:

A Study of the History and Interpretation

Of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*

David Barton Gray

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree

of Doctor of Philosophy

in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences

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ABSTRACT

On Supreme Bliss: A Study of the History
and Interpretation of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*
David Barton Gray

This thesis explores the development of an important Indian Buddhist scripture, the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, and the tradition of exegesis and practice based upon it. It consists of an edition and translation of the first four chapters of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, as well as a translation of the corresponding portion of Tsongkhapa's *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning*, a Tibetan commentary on this scripture. These texts are contextualized via efforts to define "Tantric Buddhism" as it is understood by the tradition itself, and via explorations of both the intellectual and socio-historical contexts within which Tantric Buddhism developed, and the ways in which different subtraditions within it were elaborated and categorized.

It is argued that a common element of Tantric traditions is their resistance to the hegemonic ideology of caste. An exploration of this ideology and Buddhist resistance to it is undertaken. Tantric discourse was deployed as a form of resistance against caste ideology, but also constituted a counter ideology, which centered around the figure of the *guru* as a nexus of power and authority, and articulated in the model of the *maṇḍala*.

The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is notable for the strong presence of "non-Buddhist elements". The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is a composite text drawing from diverse sources, and while it probably reached its final form in a Buddhist monastic context, there is significant textual evidence suggesting that it was the product of a non-monastic, renunciant milieu in which sectarian identification was not particularly relevant. The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is, in Lévi-Strauss' terms, a *bricolage*. It provides a particularly striking example of the processes of adaptation and reinterpretation which have continually led to the

development of religious traditions. The Cakrasaṃvara's identification as a Buddhist tradition was the result of the efforts of commentators in India who constructed it as such, and by Tibetan commentators, who completed this process of adaptation.

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ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations are used for frequently cited texts in this work. For more information concerning these texts see the Bibliography of Primary Sources below. For convenience, this list is repeated there as well.

AD *Abhidhānottaratantra*

AM Abhayākaragupta. *Śrisampuṭatantrarājaṭikāmnāyamañjari-nāma.*

AN Vilāsavajra. *Ārya-Nāmasaṃgitiṭikā-mantrārthāvalokini-nāma*

AP *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*

AS Lakṣmiṃkarā's *Advayasiddhi*

AV Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna's *Abhisamayavibhaṅga*

BC Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

CST *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*

CP Bhavabhadra's *Śri Cakrasamvarapañjikā*

CS *Caturyoginisaṃpuṭatantra*

CV Āryadeva's *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa*

DM *Śriḍākārṇava-mahāyogini-tantrarāja*

DP *Āryaḍākinivajrapañjara Mahātantrarājakalpa*

DS Bu-ston's *bde mchog nyung ngu rgyud kyi spyi rnam don gsal*

EC *Ekavirākhyāśricaṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantrarāja*

GST *Sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittarahasya-guhyasamāja-nāma-mahākalparāja*

HA *Śriherukābhyudaya-nāma*

HB Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan's *dpal he ru ka'i byung tshul.*

HV *Śrihevajra Mahātantrarājā*

JS *Śrisarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasamvara-nāma-uttaratantra*

KS Tsongkhapa's *bde mchog bsdus pa'i rgyud kyi rgya cher bshad pa sbas pa'i don kun gsal ba*

KV *Khyāvajravārāhi-abhidhāna-tantrottara-vārāhi-abhibodhiya*

LA Sumatikīrti's *Laghusamvaratantrapaṭalābhisandhi*

LH Lhasa edition of Tsongkhapa's Collected Works.

LL Vajrapaṇi's *Lakṣābhidhānāduddhṛta Laghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa*

LS *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*

MMK Nāgārjuna's *Prajñā-nāma-mūlamadhyamakakārikā*

MNS *Mañjuśrijñānasattvasya paramārthanāmasaṃgiti*

MP Jayabhadra's *Śricakrasamvara-mūlatantra-pañjikā*

MT *Śrīmahāmudrātilakaṃ-nāma-mahāyogini-tantrarāja-adhipati.*

MV *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulyasūtrendrarāja-nāma-dharmaparyāya*

MVV Buddhaguhya's *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhitantravikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-mahātantravṛtti*

NGB rNying-ma rGyud-'bum (mTshem-brag edition, Thimphu, 1982.)

NL Ron-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po's *gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i tshul las snang ba lhar sgrub pa*

NRC Tsongkhapa's *rgyal ba khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang chen po'i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad rnam par phye ba* (aka *sngags rim chen mo*)

NS Bu-ston's *bde mchog rtsa rgyud kyi rnam bshad gsang ba'i de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa*

NT Tripiṭakamāla's *Nyayatrayapradipa*

PA *Śriparamādya-nāma-mahāyānakalparāja*

PD Viravajra's *dpal bde mchog gi rtsa rgyud kyi rgya chen bshad pa tshig don rab tu gsal ba shes bya ba*

PG Sachen Kun-dga' snying-po's *dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi ṭika mu tig phreng ba*

PN *Prajñāpāramitā-naya-śatapañcāśatikā*

PV Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttikakārikā*

RG Durjayacandra's *Ratnagaṇa-nāma-pañjika*

RP Bu-stons's *rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyud sde rin po che'i mdzes rgyan zhes bya ba*

SM Bhavyakīrti's *Śricakrasamvarapañjikā-śūramanojñā*

SN Kambalipa's *Sādhananidāna-śricakrasamvara-nāma-pañjikā*

SP *Sampuṭa-nāma-mahātantra*

SS Devagupta's *Śricakrasamvara-sarvasādhanaṃ-sanna-nāma-ṭikā*

ST Viravajra's *Samantaguṇaśālina-nāma-ṭika*

SV *Samvarodaya Tantra*

TL Tashilhunpo edition of Tsongkhapa's Collected Works, reproduced from the texts in the library of klu-'khyil monastery in Ladakh. Ngawang Gelek Demo, ed. New Delhi, 1975.

TP Kāṇhapa's *Guhyatattva-prakāśa-nāma*

TS *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra*

VD *Śri-Vajraḍāka-nāma-mahātantrarāja*

VP *Āryaḍākinivajrapañjara-mahātantrarājakalpa*

VS Nāgabodhi's *Samājasādhanavyavasthāna*

YS *Yoginisaṃcārya*

Chapter One

The Study of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra: Contextualizing the Tantric

Historically, this work began with a study of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* an Indian Buddhist scripture which was composed, as will be argued below, by the eighth century, as well as a commentary on it, *The Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning,* written by the Tibetan savant Tsongkhapa (1357-1419 CE). The resulting edition and translation of the first four chapters of the Tantra and a translation of the corresponding commentary are included as appendices to this work. This work as a whole centers upon issues that arose in the context of studying these works, and in particular with the issues of the production of the maṇḍala and the rites of initiation conducted therein, which are the subjects of the first four chapters of the Tantra.

An overriding goal of this work is to place the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* in the context of the tradition of study and practice that centers on it, and to shed light in particular on the history of its development in India, and, to a lesser extent, its transmission to Tibet, which began during the tenth century. This first chapter begins with an attempt to clear the ground, so to speak, by exploring some of the misrepresentations of Buddhist and Tantric traditions that have been propounded by past generations of Orientalist scholars. While these mistakes are unlikely to be repeated by present day scholars, as the views were once widely held and are perhaps still held by those who are not specialists it is worthwhile to briefly address them. This is followed by a definition of the Tantric, and an exploration of the "origins" of Tantric traditions, which are held here to be multiple.

This study seeks to contextualize the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* by exploring the way in which it was studied and practiced in India and Tibet. This means that it is not sufficient to study, for example, simply a Tantra, but that attention should also be paid to its interpretation. With the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* there is fortunately a very large amount of

commentaries, which reveal the variant ways in which a scripture is interpreted. There are also many ritual manuals, the study of which can reveal how specific elements of a scripture are selected and articulated to produce a tradition of practice dependent upon the scripture, but are in effect independent elements which characterize the distinct lineages of practice all of which arise and diverge from the root scripture.

It is also important to place Buddhist Tantric traditions in the context of the larger Mahāyāna Buddhist tradition in which they developed. Liu wrote that "though Tantrism was a general phenomenon among Indian religions of this period, Buddhist Tantrism had its own track of development and was based on Mahāyāna thought and practices." (1998:28) Chapter Two attempts to prove Liu's point by arguing that many of the transgressive aspects of Tantric discourse are only understandable when placed in the larger context of Mahāyāna Buddhist discourse, within which they are largely comprehensible.

There are two reasons why it is important to address the transgressive elements of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra. One is that these elements, which particularly attracted the interest of past scholars, were often misinterpreted precisely because these scholars did not take into account the larger intellectual context in which they were written and considered meaningful. Placing them in this context, however, will not only correct past misinterpretations, but also allow the formulation of a more sophisticated model of Tantric polities and politics. In short, it will be argued in this work that Tantric traditions should not be considered as "otherworldly" and "spiritual" traditions within which concern with "worldly" matters such as sexuality are aberrations. Rather, Tantric traditions were very much concerned with this world and its politics, and rather than transcend the world per se, Tantric practitioners sought a mastery within the world. Rather than bifurcating the cosmos into mundane and transcendent realms and seeking to escape from the former to the latter, the Buddhist Tantric cosmos was composed of interdependent, hierarchical levels throughout which the adept seeks to attain mastery. This *Weltanschauung* contributed to

the development of distinct Tantric political and social ideologies, which contributed to the dissemination of the traditions throughout Asia.

Chapter Three seeks to contextualize this Tantric discourse, by looking in particular at the social ideology found within it. In particular, it explores an important tendency found in Tantric texts such as the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* which is the presence of discourse which runs counter to the dominant hegemonic ideology of the caste system. In this chapter the nature of this ideology is explored as well as several of the Buddhist responses to it, including those occurring in Tantric texts. It will be argued that while Tantric discourse can be understood as resisting this dominant ideology, it also has its own, counter-ideology, which focuses on the establishment of the guru as an alternate figure of authority. This ideology was influential in India, where it succeeded in establishing itself as an alternative but probably never dominant viewpoint, but in Tibet it was particularly influential, and continues to this day to serve as a central paradigm of authority in Tibetan communities.

It will also be argued that elements of Tantric discourse, such as its mythology and rituals, since they lack any fixed or intrinsic meaning or function, could be and in fact were articulated in different ways and in different social contexts to fulfill different purposes. Hence the same rite, such as the rite of initiation, could be understood as an act of resistance to the dominant caste ideology in India, while also constructing an alternative hierarchy centering around the figure of the guru. Not only rites, but also myths and deities, are adapted to different contexts and appropriated by different traditions and are transformed in the process. From a broader perspective, it will be argued that religious traditions in general derive from diverse origins, and are the products of ever-changing demands of the societies in which they function.

Chapter Four seeks to clarify the place the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* in the field of Buddhist scholarship, and thus describes the place of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra in the schemes of Indian and Tibetan Buddhist doxography, and its relationship to the large body

of works which are traditionally associated with it. As some of these taxonomic schemes deliberately correlate the texts to social categories, an exploration of Tantric Buddhist doxography is relevant to the larger issue of the social history.

Chapter Five looks at the textual history of the Tantras in general, arguing that while the ultimate origin(s) of the Tantras are probably unknowable, available evidence points toward the entry of Tantric traditions into the monasteries during the seventh century, with their widespread adoption in the monastic context underway by the eighth century. This is, it will be argued, the most likely period of composition of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.*

Chapter Six deals directly with the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* itself, which hitherto remained a peripheral presence in this study. Both the form and content of its text is surveyed, and a genealogy of sorts is conducted, which explores the texts, both Buddhist and Hindu, which can be understood as influencing it, either directly or indirectly. It concludes with a look at the Buddhist deity Heruka, the central deity of this text, and in particular an exploration of the myth of Heruka's subduing of Bhairava and Kālarātri, which played an important role in the dissemination of this tradition to Tibet and the Himalayan regions.

One of the central problems that faces the scholar of Tantric traditions is their obscurity, which has hindered the development of the field of Tantric studies, despite the importance of Tantric traditions in both Indian and, with Buddhist traditions in particular, Asian religious history. It is probably mainly for this reason that they have received relatively little recognition in the West, despite the achievement of Japanese scholars, who have written extensively on the topic, although principally from the perspective of the Japanese traditions of esoteric Buddhism.

The Tantras themselves have received little attention in part because few have survived in Sanskrit, the preferred object of Indological studies, and those that have typically do not conform well to the standards of classical grammar or poetics. Tantric Buddhism had died out in the sub-Himalayan regions of India by the time that the British

entered the scene, i.e., by the eighteenth century,[1] and most of its texts were lost. It was not until this century for the most part that scholars have had access to both the surviving Sanskrit texts preserved in Nepal, and to the Tibetan world in which the tradition was preserved intact, both in text and practice.

Even with access to the texts, however, the Tantras are still typically quite obscure; according to the tradition, a complex hermeneutic is required to unlock their often multiple layers of meaning; to gain even an approximate understanding one needs quite a bit more than language skills. The Tibetans generally considered that these prerequisites would include thorough understanding of the tradition in general, as well as help from a qualified instructor concerning the particulars, along with at least an introduction to the meditative practices. As a result, the study of the Tantras was generally restricted to a relatively small number of persons who had both the motivation and the capability to undertake such a considerable course of studies.

There has been an increase in the number of studies dedicated to the Buddhist Tantras over the past few decades, spurred in part by the exile of Tibetan scholars and gurus whose teaching activity in the West has led to an increasing awareness of the traditions among both scholars and ordinary persons. A number of popular books have been written, and the number of critical editions has increased as well, particularly in the area of the *Kālacakratantra;*[2] the growing interest in this Tantra was no doubt inspired by

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[1] This date is much later than typically given; most scholars associate the demise of Buddhism in India with the thirteenth century depredations of the Turks in the Buddhist heartland of northeastern India. Hazra, for example, argued that due to a decline of patronage and Muslim attacks Buddhism suffered a double blow from which it could not recover. (1995:392-95) This appears to have been the case with *monastic* Buddhism, which was already on the decline in many parts of India (see Heitzman 1984) and which was kept alive in the northeast in large part through the patronage of the Pālas; with the Turkish invasion both their patrons and monasteries were destroyed, and did not recover. On the other hand, it will be argued in chapter 3 that the Tantric traditions were the product of liminal renunciates who tended toward non-sectarianism, and there is some evidence that Tantric Buddhist traditions continued to survive in India for quite some time following the devastation of the monasteries, even if their "Buddhist" identity was attenuated. This is suggested by the visit of Buddhaguptanātha, a "Buddhist" nāth siddha who visited Tibet in 1590 CE, and took on as his disciple the well-known Tibetan historian, Tāranātha. Buddhism did of course survive in out of the way places such as Nepal, and also in an attenuated form in Orissa, as Vasu (1911) has shown. See also Dasgupta 1946, pp. 259 ff.

[2] See for example the dissertations of Wallace (1995) and Hartzell (1997).

the large, public bestowals of its initiation by H. H. the Dalai Lama and other high lamas around the world. The Buddhist Tantric works which have been thus studied, however, are a small fraction of the total. There are thousands of works on the subject of the Tantras that were translated into Tibetan between the eighth and fourteenth centuries; of these most of the Sanskrit "originals" have been lost, but even of the texts for which Sanskrit manuscripts have been located only a few have been studied in any depth, much fewer edited and translated. This is no doubt due in part to the difficulty of these texts, which remain challenging even when one has acquired the significant language skills needed to even approach them.

Today the researcher into Indo-Tibetan Tantric traditions is aided by six factors which, taken together, enable one to shed light on hitherto little-known traditions. They are: 1) the not insubstantial number of Sanskrit texts that have been discovered; 2) the generally excellent quality of the Tibetan translations; 3) a small but sound group of reliable editions and studies and in Western languages and Japanese; 4) the assistance of Tibetans scholars who are often quite willing to help with the task of elucidation, so long as the traditions are treated respectfully; 5) the plethora of excellent commentaries written by generations of Tibetan scholars, which, although generally untranslated, are a great aid to fluent readers; 6) the Chinese canon, which remains a vast but largely untranslated and unexplored record of the past eighteen hundred years of Buddhist history. All of these factors have been utilized, to varying degrees, in this study.

One of the purposes of this dissertation is to bring together a number of these resources in the study of an important but hitherto neglected Tantra, the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* which is the "root" text of a significant tradition of Tantric Buddhism. Judging by the vast corpus of texts in the *Cakrasaṃvara* corpus which was translated into Tibetan, it must have been quite important in India by the time this translation activity began in the tenth century. It was received with great appreciation by the Tibetans, who in turn disseminated it into Central Asia and Mongolia. Its study and practice by Tibetans and by

those Buddhists instructed or influenced by the Tibetans have continued uninterrupted to this day.

The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra's* content, significance and relationship to the larger body of Tantric literature will be the subject of chapter four. Here it is important to note that it is one of the most important of the so-called "Mother" or Yogini Tantras, which are characterized by an increased emphasis upon the feminine principle of wisdom *(prajñā)*, in part due to an historical relationship with the "Wisdom" class of Mahāyāna literature, the *Prajñāpāramitā,* which is also the name of a Goddess, the Mother of the Buddhas, as well as an increasing presence of feminine figures, of goddesses, *ḍākinis* and *yoginis.*

This dissertation will contribute to our knowledge of this trend in Indian religion which became in turn of central significance in Tibet, and the contribution will be significant, not so much due to the virtues of this work, but because so little work has been done in this field. The pioneer here is Giuseppe Tucci, who has written several works relevant to the Cakrasaṃvara (1932, 1935, 1949, 1961), and whose descriptions of artistic representations of its maṇḍala remain unsurpassed. Snellgrove edited and translated the *Hevajra Tantra* (1959), an important and closely related Tantra, which is an work marred only by his failure to translate the more scandalous portions of the text. His later works on the history of Indo-Tibetan Tantric Buddhism (1987, 1988) are also important. Kvaerne prepared an edition and translation of the *Caryāgitikośa* (1977), which remains a standard resource for the study of this branch of Tantric literature. Tsuda (1974) contributed a partial edition and translation of the *Saṃvarodaya,* an Explanatory Tantra of the *Cakrasaṃvara,* and has subsequently produced a series of interesting articles, the significance of which shall be addressed below (1978, 1982, 1990). Kalff produced a partial edition and translation of another Explanatory Tantra, the *Abhidhānottara* (1979), and Elder edited and translated the first section *(kalpa)* of the *Sampuṭa Tantra* (1978), the exact portion of which has since been re-edited, but not retranslated, by Skorupski (1996).

Until now the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* itself has not been edited or translated, although Cicuzza has prepared a soon-to-be published edition of Vajrapāṇi's commentary on the first chapter of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra;* this work contains the first ten and one half verses of the chapter, which Cicuzza has already edited and published (1997). Aside from that, Wayman has throughout his various works translated scattered verses from the Tantra, as has Shaw in her book (1994); neither of them, however, consulted the Sanskrit, and worked primarily from Tibetan translations and Tsongkhapa's commentary.

Other works on the topic have been either deceptive or obscure. An example of the former would include Kazi Dawa-Samdup's *Shrichakrasambhāra Tantra: A Buddhist Tantra* (1919), which actually has nothing to do with the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* itself, but is an English translation and Tibetan edition of a number of minor *Cakrasaṃavara* texts, including *maṇḍalavidhi, abhiṣekaprakaraṇa,* and *stotra* texts. In the more obscure (but certainly important nonetheless) category we might include Finot's (1934) edition of Sanskrit *sādhana* texts found in China, several of which can be included within the *Cakrasaṃvara* corpus. One of these, the *Hastapūjāvidhi,* was translated into German by Meisezahl (1985), who also edited the Tibetan editions.

The neglect of the *Cakrasaṃvara* by Indologists and Buddhologists is no doubt due to its relative inaccessibility, namely the lack of abundant Sanskrit manuscripts; only one reliable manuscript has been recently discovered, and it is incomplete.[3] Until recently, then, this work has been accessible only to scholars who are both fluent in Tibetan and conversant with Tantric discourse, which no doubt accounts for its relative obscurity, and also may have contributed to errors on the part of scholars unfamiliar with it.[4]

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[3] While it is tempting to attribute this neglect to a Sanskritic bias on the part of previous generations of scholars, such an accusation is unfair, in that it is very difficult to translate the Tantras on the basis of the Tibetan translations alone; while I had been reading and translating Tibetan commentaries on the Cakrasaṃvara Root Tantra for years, it was only after I located and began to study the Sanskrit manuscripts that I even considered undertaking an edition and translation of the Root Tantra itself, and even then only a relatively small portion of it.

[4] For example, Hock, in discussing the texts that may have been associated with the Heruka images at Ratnagiri, cites the Hevajra. As far as I can tell, there is no reason to focus on the Hevajra rather than the large number of other Heruka Tantras, unless one's access to them is limited to what is available in

This project, then, in undertaking the edition and translation of the first four chapters of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* as well as the translation of the relevant portions of Tsongkhapa's commentary, and an exploration of the earlier Indian and Tibetan commentaries, will contribute in some small way to our understanding of this tradition. Perhaps, through its exploration of the ways in which a certain sort of ideological discourse is produced from the myths and rituals that are, respectively, the context and subject of this text, it may contribute as well to our understanding of Indian and Tibetan religious and political history.

1.1 "Tantrism" and Colonialism

As mentioned above, the obscurity surrounding Tantric texts and traditions has obstructed to some extent the development of a broad and deep understanding of them among scholars in the West. This lack has led to their being misrepresented by both some Western and also some Indian scholars; some examples of these misrepresentations will be discussed below. These misrepresentations arose out of what Ruegg identifies as "a persistent tendency to stress, without due regard to its religious, psychological and philosophical outlook as a whole and without paying enough attention to its symbolic systems, one particular aspect represented in these texts such as the erotic." (Ruegg 1967:20) This misrepresentation is no doubt due to the difficulty, ambiguity and complex

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translation, leaving only Snellgrove's edition of the *Hevajra.* In fact, the vast number of texts translated into Tibetan connected with the Cakrasaṃvara is far greater than those connected with the Hevajra, suggesting that among this class of Tantras the Cakrasaṃvara was by far the most popular in India. Tibetan prejudice does not seem to be a factor here; the Hevajra was one of the most important Tantras practiced by the Sa-skya-pa and the bKa'-brgyud-pa, with whom were associated a significant number of important translators. Hock wrote "The presence of Heruka in a single large sculpture and on two small *stūpas* assures us that some version of the *Hevajra tantra* was known at Ratnagiri for Heruka is first found in this text." (p. 6) The dating of texts such as the *Hevajra* and the *Cakrasaṃvara* is unclear, so there is no certain basis for even such a relative dating. The inaccessibility of this text must be the reason for her failure to take it into account, particularly given her citation of an article by Debala Mitra, in which she identifies an image from Ratnagiri as a Saṃvara image. (Mitra 1961, op. cit. Hock 1987 p. 15).

symbolism of the Tantras; it may also, however, be attributed to a failure of more philologically oriented scholars to see the texts in their contexts; that it is, to try to understand their relationship to the praxis with which the Tantric traditions were and are preeminently concerned. And while the historical contexts of the texts will most likely never be fully transparent, obscured as they are by the mists of history, they can at least be approached, via appreciation of the ways in which the texts are understood and practiced by both their commentators as well as by contemporary Buddhists. The contextualization of Tantric texts will be a primary concern of this study, particularly regarding their relationship to praxis.

Orzech has noted the prevalence and importance of Buddhist Tantric traditions in Eurasia; their adherents spread from India into East, Southeast Asia, and Central Asia, as far West as Astrakhan in the Caucasus Mountains, the gateway to Europe. (Orzech 1998:8) Despite their historic and continued importance as a world religious tradition, they have been attacked as nefarious, superstitious or degenerate cult, a cause of the decline of Buddhism in India by scholars ranging from Monier-Williams (1819-1899) to Conze.[5] While these misrepresentations are unlikely to be repeated today, it is still important to draw attention to them, since scholars such as Conze are still widely read and thus likely to influence the non-specialist. Conze, who specialized in Mahāyāna sūtras rather than the Tantras, nonetheless had no qualms about writing about Buddhist Tantrism, which, he claimed, "deviates completely from its original teachings, and prepares the way for its own extinction". (1951:190) He thus evokes the old chronology of the decline of Indian civilization, which, as Inden has shown, is inseparable from the British Colonialist enterprise.[6] Conze also takes the path well-worn by Victorian moralists such as Monier-Williams, which was to take textual passages out of context and use them as a basis for

[5] Monier-Williams, who was active in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, was hostile to Buddhism in general, viewing it as he did through the narrow lens of Victorian morality and Christian missionary condemnation; specific examples of his rhetoric are quoted below.

[6] This is the central argument of Inden's important 1990 book.

slamming the tradition. Conze, for example, quotes some of the more scandalous lines from the *Guhyasamāja Tantra,* and then condemns the tradition as an "aberration of the human mind." (1951:195)

These attacks cannot be divorced from the enterprise of colonialism, the context in which they were made, or the institutions of Orientalism, which though spawned in the colonial context continue challenged but unbowed to this day.[7] Generally speaking, their authors tended to ignore the social realities, in which Tantric traditions were often extremely popular and influential in a wide array of Asian societies. Orzech notes that:

> This popularity was not accidental, and it is no exaggeration to say that the Buddhist tantras were among the most important vehicles for the spread of Indian political and religious ideas throughout East, Central, and Southeast Asia. The literal English rendering of its common East Asian name (*Mi-chiao,* "esoteric teaching") gives the misleading impression that it is practiced only in secret, occult groups. While access to the most profound of its "mysteries" is indeed given through initiation, most of these initiations are quite public in character, and its mysteries are of the same sort as those found in Catholic or Orthodox sacramental theology. Like the Catholic traditions of Europe, Esoteric Buddhism was patronized by kings, courtiers, and aristocrats in grand temples with elaborate public ceremony. (1998:8)

The dismissal of Tantrism as an aberration, and the consequent failure to recognize its social, political and historical significance, results from approaching the Tantric traditions textually without consideration of their social realities. This approach is part and parcel of

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[7] Said (1978) argues that "institutions of Orientalism" can be traced back to the relationships "of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (p.5) which characterized colonialism. Amongst these institutions he included academies, books, congresses, universities, etc. (p. 6), which seems to be a rather broad list. He defines Orientalism, however, as a type of discourse characterized by "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (p.3), as well as "a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident'." (p.2) So while there may be nothing intrinsically "Orientalist" to these institutions, there may be a tendency toward the production of Orientalist discourse and practices, in that such institutions may be a sort of "habitus" productive of Orientalist discourse. He argued that "the metamorphosis of a relatively innocuous philological subspecialty into a capacity for managing political movements, administering colonies, making nearly apocalyptic statements representing the White Man's difficult civilizing mission – all this is something at work within a purportedly liberal culture, one full of concern for its vaunted norms of catholicity, plurality, and open-mindedness. In fact, what took place was the very opposite of liberal: the hardening of doctrine and meaning, imparted by 'science', into 'truth'. For if such truth reserved for itself the right to judge the Orient as immutably Oriental in the ways I have indicated, then liberality was no more than a form of oppression and mentalistic prejudice." (p. 254) It is not my concern to evaluate these broad claims, as this has already been done elsewhere (see for example Young 1990 pp. 119-40). My purpose here is to show that a colonial hegemonic discourse which might very well be labeled "Orientalist" contributed to the scholarly neglect and rejection of the Tantras as an important object of inquiry. One might object here that Said's critique does not apply to South Asia. Almond (1988), Inden (1990) and the essayists in Lopez (1995b), however, have argued persuasively that it does.

colonial modes of engagement with "native" traditions.[8] In the South Asian context, as Kapferer has argued, native traditions were subordinated and defined as "weak" vis-à-vis the hegemonic colonial power, and native religious traditions, particularly those labeled "superstitious" or "idolatrous" from the perspective of Christianity, which aligned itself with the hegemonic power of the colonizers, were spurned, and even attacked by indigenous "purification" movements which were ideologically influenced by colonialism and incorporated within the structures of colonial rule.[9]

Tantric traditions, with their colorful pantheons of deities and fascination with supernatural powers and magical arts, were attacked as superstitious, and denied fair, unbiased scholarly treatment, for colonialism was based upon the subordination of native traditions and institutions; the physical violence on which colonialism depended was justified by means of a hermeneutic violence, a misrepresentation of Asian societies and history. This was practiced by scholars who were agents of colonialism, or products of the Orientalist academic milieu. Kapferer notes that "The British claim of a 'natural right' to rule was founded in their belief in the advanced stage of their civilization, its basis in a rationality validated in their expansion of scientific knowledge and technological progress. The power of the British appeared to rest in their 'rational knowledge'." (1983:32) But this

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[8] Said is adamant in his insistence that Orientalist discourse involves the misrepresentation of its intended objects, with the implication that it thus tells us more about the culture in which it was produced than the culture it purports to describe. He wrote that "in any instance of at least written language, there is no such thing as a delivered presence, but a *re-presence*, or a representation. The value, efficacy, strength and apparent veracity of a written statement about the orient therefore relies very little, and cannot instrumentally depend, on the Orient as such. On the contrary, the written statement is a presence to the reader by virtue of its having excluded, displaced, made supererogatory any such *real thing* as 'the Orient'. Thus all of Orientalism stands forth and away from the Orient; that Orientalism makes sense at all depends more on the West than on the Orient, and this sense is directly indebted to various Western techniques of representation that make the Orient visible, clear, 'there' in discourse about it. And these representations rely upon institutions, traditions, conventions, agreed-upon codes of understanding for their effects, not upon a distant and amorphous Orient." (1978:21-22) Said unfortunately runs into a difficulty here, for if representation is indeed impossible one might wonder on what basis is he is able to criticize the Orientalists. (Young 1990:138) Young, while highlighting Said's methodological problems, takes Said's point here a bit further, arguing that "Orientalism did not just misrepresent the Orient, but also articulated an internal dislocation within Western culture, a culture which consistently fantasizes itself as constituting some kind of integral totality, at the same time as endlessly deploring its own impending dissolution...Orientalism represents the West's own internal dislocation, misrepresented as an external dualism between East and West." (1990:139-40). Orientalist "knowledge" of the Orient is thus misknowledge to the extent to which it misconceives and/or misrepresents its object.

[9] See Kapferer 1983, p. 33,4.

appearance was at times deceptive, as their "knowledge" so often turned out to be misknowledge, distorted, sometimes perhaps knowingly but often unknowingly, as a justification for a hegemony based on violence.[10]

In the case of Buddhism, the approach used by Orientalists was a study of the texts, but typically without considerations of their contexts. As a result, their conclusions often matched their negative presuppositions which served as their interpretive paradigm. In the case of Tantrism it did not take much skill to ferret out "scandalous" passages in the Tantras and use that as a basis for condemning the tradition. More often than not, however, Buddhist texts concerned with ritual, which includes the majority of Tantric texts, were simply ignored.[11] The other approach, which was "positive" in that it involved more than explicit condemnation, involved a study of the texts to discern the original intentions of the author and thus the "original", "pure" state of Buddhism before it was corrupted by superstitions; such was the project of the Pali Text Society, founded in 1881 by T. W. Rhys Davids. Although the contribution made by members of the society, particularly in the edition and translations of texts, was great, their mistakes cannot be ignored. For through their hermeneutic they produced a distorted picture of Buddhist traditions, distorted by the imposition of the colonizers' own peculiar conundrums.

A most significant conundrum is the Protestant rejection of Catholicism and most particularly the ritualism which characterized the latter in Protestant representations. Protestant missionaries played a significant role in the British colonialist construction of (mis)representations of India; the study of Buddhism during this period characteristically

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[10] Nigel Crook discussed the curious paradox concerning colonialist knowledge. The British were obsessed with gathering information on India, but tended toward superficial, broad encompassing generalization, holding the view that thereby "India's remoteness could thus, in some way, be encompassed. It was a 'representational view' intended both to impress and encourage the commercial adventurer, the civil servant and the subjects of the British crown in general. What it failed to do was to adequately equip the same with a critical understanding, as those that actually ventured out found to their cost. It was reinforced by a literature that...was as racist as it was dysfunctional. By characterizing Indians as being without critical competence as a race, it once again denied the British themselves, as colonial rulers, the critical competence that could result from treating their teachers as if they had something to teach. By assuming otherwise, they would not even interact with Indian intelligence." (Crook 1996:14)

[11] See Hallisey 1995 p. 45.

dismissed popular or ritual elements of the religion on the basis of comparing it to Catholicism.

T. W. Rhys Davids (1843-1922) is notable for the Protestant presuppositions he brought to the study of Buddhism; he depicts Buddhism as undergoing a decline into error from an original "pure" state, as follows:

> As the stronger side of Gautama's teaching was neglected, the debasing belief in rites and ceremonies, and charms, and incantations, which had been the especial object of his scorn, began to live again, and grow vigorously, and spread like the Birana weed warmed by a tropical sun in marsh and muddy soil. As in India before the rise of Buddhism and the degrading worship of Śiva and his dusky bride had been incorporated into brahmanism from the wild and savage devil-worship of the dark non-Aryan tribes, so as pure Buddhism died away in the North, *the Tantra System,* a mixture of magic and witchcraft and Śiva worship, was incorporated into the corrupted Buddhism. (1925: 207,8)

Elsewhere he makes explicit what is here an implicit comparison to the "history" of the fall of Christianity into the error of Catholicism, stating that "the development of the Buddhist doctrine which has taken place in the Panjab, Nepal, and Tibet is exceedingly interesting, and very valuable from the similarity it bears to the development which has taken place in Roman Catholic countries." (1925:199)

It is not quite fair to single out Rhys-Davids for critique, for he was certainly a product of his time and social milieu, and this needs to be taken into consideration when judging such statements, and evaluating his overall contribution to the field.[12] But it is

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[12] There is no denying that Rhys-David's contributions to the field of Buddhist studies were extensive; on the other hand, prejudiced misrepresentations must not be excused simply because they are endemic to a field. Said recognized this when he qualified his critique with the following statement: "I would not have undertaken a book of this sort if I did not also believe that there is scholarship that is not as corrupt, or at least as blind to human reality, as the kind I have been mainly depicting. Today there are many individual scholars....whose production is deeply valuable as scholarship. The trouble sets in when the guild tradition of Orientalism takes over the scholar who is not vigilant, whose individual consciousness as a scholar is not on guard against *idées reçues* all too easily handed down in a profession. Thus interesting work is most likely to be produced by scholars whose allegiance is to a discipline defined intellectually and not a "field" like Orientalism defined either canonically, imperially, or geographically." (1978:326) I cite the writings Rhys Davids and others like him to provide examples of the sort of "misknowledge" which has hindered the understanding of Buddhist traditions such as the Tantric, and of which all scholars of Buddhism should be wary. It is important not to reject their work blindly, but to learn from them. Regarding such "classics" Said wrote that "the challenge is to connect them....with the imperial process of which they were a part; rather than condemning or ignoring their participation in what was an unquestioned reality in their societies, I suggest that what we learn about this hitherto ignored aspect actually and truly *enhances* our reading and understanding of them." (1993:xiv) For a specific critique of T. W. Rhys Davids, see Wickremeratne 1984; for a defense of him, see Gombrich 1971 (p. 61) and 1986; see also Hallisey 1995.

important to point out his misleading representations precisely because he was one of the luminaries of the field of Buddhist Studies, whose influence is still significant to this day. Here he was not an innovator, but was merely following a well-worn path laid out by his predecessors.

The myth of the inexorable decline of Buddhism was common, and is certainly found in sources preceding Rhys Davids. Monier-Williams, for example, wrote that "I hold that the Buddhism....contained within itself, from the earliest times, the germs of disease, decay and death, and that its present condition is one of rapidly increasing disintegration and decline." (1889:xv) Less generous than Rhys Davids, Monier-Williams would not allow Buddhism even a robust youth, painting a dismal picture of the religion from beginning to end. He continued, expressing his view that Buddhism, being in such a sorry state, was on the verge of extinction, to be replaced, no doubt, by a triumphant Christianity, bolstered by the colonial powers:

> but at all events it may be safely alleged that, even as a form of popular religion, Buddhism is gradually losing its vitality – gradually loosening its hold on vast populations once loyal to its rule; nay, that the time is rapidly approaching when its capacity for resistance must give way before the mighty forces which are destined in the end to sweep it from the earth. (1889:xviii)

Monier-Williams, like other scholars of his day, compares the decline of Buddhism to that of (non-Protestant forms of) Christianity, but in doing so he is careful to contrast them as well, to the detriment of the former, of course. He warns that

> here it is important to caution the student of religion against forcing a comparison between two systems of doctrine like Christianity and Buddhism, which are radically and essentially opposed to each other. The unchristianlike incrustations and divisions which have marred the original teaching of the Head of our religion exist *in spite* of Christianity. They are not the result of any development of its first principles; whereas, on the contrary, the corruptions and schisms of Buddhism are the natural and inevitable outcome of its own root-ideas and fundamental doctrines. (1889:49)

Reading on, we discover that for Monier-Williams the essential, fatal flaw of Buddhism is its "nihilistic" failure to acknowledge a supreme god, which only shows that he did not really *see* Buddhism at all, but simply propounded prejudiced misconceptions.

This myth of the decline of Buddhism, with Tantric traditions located somewhere around the nadir, is a colonialist misrepresentation, although its pervasiveness may be due to the fact that Buddhism has long theorized that the Buddhist Teachings *(saddharma)*, following their propagation, persist in the world for a period of roughly two thousand years before disappearing, reappearing with the appearance of the next Buddha.[13] It is possible that Orientalist scholars were influenced by this idea, which could have been adopted, say, from a Theravādin critique of other Buddhist traditions. This, however, is unlikely. The disappearance of the Dharma was not a relative but an absolute loss, and to invoke this to criticize one's opponents would also undermine one's own claims to orthodoxy. Sri Lankan Buddhists have, for example, criticized Tantric Buddhist traditions, but not on this basis.[14] Typically, in Buddhist discourse this idea has not been invoked by more conservative traditions to criticize innovative traditions, but, on the contrary, by advocates of the innovative traditions, who had nothing to lose in undermining the orthodoxy of the old, and who insisted that in the degenerate times the old approaches are no longer effective, which thus require new, often more simple approaches.[15]

It thus appears that the colonialist myth of the decline of India and the Indian spiritual traditions was a scheme developed as a support for the hegemonic ideology of the superiority of European civilization in general, and more specifically to support the efforts of Christian missionaries, who were inclined to paint unflattering portraits of the non-

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[13] For a discussion of this myth see Lamotte 1988, pp. 191 ff.

[14] They have, for example, criticized the Tantras as being essentially non-Buddhist, i.e., the product of Māra, the evil deceiver. See section 3.2.2.2 below.

[15] This strategy was often taken in East Asia. See for example Orzech 1998, pp. 99 ff., and Overmeyer 1976. For an example of this sort of reasoning see Unno 1998, p. 3.

Christian religions they encountered.[16] Unfortunately, this scheme bore sufficient prestige to facilitate its uncritical adoption by a number of Indian scholars.[17]

Comaroff noted this phenomenon of racist historicism in a recent article, wherein she points out that "in classical sociology the 'religions of Asia' were often invoked as evidence for a global evolutionary scheme in which Europe emerged as the birthplace of secular reason, the sine qua non of modern life." (1994:301) It is the duty of scholars today to avoid these mistakes, although this may be easier said than done, given the pervasiveness of this evolutionary schema in Euro-American historical and political thought.[18]

One objection that might be made here concerns the study of texts, which has often been associated with the colonialist enterprise. While not engaging in an extended apologetic, it is important to note that no form of knowledge is inherently conducive toward bias; it is the way in which forms of knowledge are interpreted and translated into social practice that is significant. Textual study may tend toward distortion if taken out of context, but it holds no monopoly on misinterpretation; archaeology and anthropology have

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[16] The ulterior motives of the Christian missionaries and their sympathizers, including Monier-Williams, was exposed and critiqued by Carus in his 1897 book.

[17] Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, for example, began his study of Tantric Buddhism with the following disclaimer: "If at any time in the history of India the mind of the nation as a whole has been diseased, it was in the Tāntric age, or the period immediately preceding the Muhammadan conquest of India. The story related in the pages of numerous Tāntric works is supposed to be so repugnant that, excepting a few, all respectable scholars have condemned them wholesale and left the field of Tantras severely alone. But in spite of what the great historians of Sanskrit literature have said against Tāntrism and the Tāntric literature, one should not forget that the Hindu population of India as a whole is even today in the grip of this very Tantra in its daily life, customs, and usages, and is suffering the same disease which originated 1,300 years ago and consumed its vitality slowly but surely during these long centuries." (Bhattacharyya 1932:vii) This statement implies that Tantric traditions were responsible for all of India's woes, from the Muslim invasions up to the author's time. Ironically, it also acknowledges that simply on the basis of superficial first impressions, the entire field of study had been avoided by scholars, thus showing that their invective was indeed misguided, or rather, how easy it is to despise that which one does not understand.

[18] This problem is the focus of Young's (1990) book, *White Mythologies*. We might also note that it was not only Indian religions that were portrayed as mired in an irreversible decline. The Indologist Vincent Smith, for example, saw India as in a state of political decline following Harṣa, and literary decline following Kālidāsa. See Inden 1990, p. 79.

historically served the colonialist interests as well, and in a similar fashion.[19] It is of central importance no matter what the field of knowledge to contextualize as much as possible. For example, though writers such as Rhys Davids castigated ritual and ritualized forms of Buddhism, they avoided the study of texts concerning ritual, which are not few even in the Theravāda traditions.[20] In drawing their conclusions they did not even consult the texts, not to mention *their* social and historical contexts. It is not textual study per se that is problematic, but the uses to which that study is applied, as well as the contextualization (or lack thereof) in which it is placed. This means that it is important to take into consideration the findings in other fields of knowledge. For an understanding of a Buddhist tradition, therefore, it is important to take into account the archaeological record.[21] As Strickmann (1990:6) points out, it is also essential to consider anthropological accounts of contemporary Buddhist societies.[22] But to neglect the textual record would be to reject our greatest source of information for the study of medieval Indian religious history; it is not only our most extensive source, but for some traditions such as the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* it is virtually the only source, the most important "trace" and record of an important

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[19] For a critique of archaeology see Schopen 1991a; art history, see Stanley Abe 1995; anthropology, particularly the sort that advocated the idea of "social evolutionism; see Asad 1993 pp. 21,22 and 269, as well as Said 1988.

[20] Hallisey (1995:44-49) shows how Buddhist texts concerning ritual were typically ignored by scholars such as T. W. Rhys Davids, simply because they did not fit into his representation of Buddhism in its "pure" form devoid of ritual.

[21] Schopen's (1991) critique concerning the frequent failure of Buddhist studies scholars to consider archaeological data alongside textual is just. Unfortunately, in the case of Tantric Buddhism much of the archaeological record was destroyed; Nālandā was reduced to ruins, and Odantapur and Vikramaśila were so thoroughly leveled that even their locations are uncertain (see G. S. Majumdar 1983:128-32). Eaton, in a very important study largely drawn from Muslim sources, confirms the account give by Tāranātha (Roerich 1959). The Turkish invaders of Northern India did do a quite thorough job of destroying Buddhist monastic and temple complexes, going to the extreme, in some cases, of completely destroying them and then reincorporating their components into new structures such as mosques. (see Eaton 1993, esp. pp. 37-38, 42-48)

[22] Strickmann lists a substantial number of such works, including those by Tambiah, Gombrich, Obeyesekere and Kapferer (1990 n. 3 p. 107). Fortunately, more work has been published since that time, such as Scott (1994). In the Tibetan and Himalayan regions there has been somewhat less research done, and there is still undoubtedly much to do. Important works include those by Aziz, Levine, Mumford, Ortner and Samuel; the latter's *Civilized Shamans* is notable despite the imposition of a 'shaman' vs. 'cleric' dichotomy which has the fault of being both vague and not easily supported without extensive conceptual gymnastics, such as the claim that the Tantric visualization meditations are a form of possession (see Ray 1995 for a critique of this work, and Samuel 1997 for a defense of his work). Also notable is a recent dissertation by Huber (1993).

religious movement in early medieval India. And while it will certainly never be possible to reconstruct the history of a religious movement more than a thousand years old, textual study, combined with other forms of scholarship, can at least shed some light on this subject, if not fully dispel the obscurity surrounding it.[23]

There seem to be two major ways in which the Tantric traditions can and have been misrepresented. The first and most obvious is the manner previously discussed, which is to devalue it by means of textual passages taken out of context. Another is romanticization, which equally misrepresents the traditions. Examples of the latter include the imaginative fabrications of persons such as Madame Blavatsky, a founder of the Theosophical Society, who portrayed Tibet as a fantasy land filled with otherworldly, mystical "Mahatmas".[24] She also inspired numerous attempts to disprove her representations of Tibet; her critics often, however, had no better understanding than she did.[25]

Both views, of Buddhist traditions and countries as degenerate and corrupt or purely spiritual in an ideal, unreal fashion, are equally erroneous, and both share as a common element an important element of Orientalist discourse: the bifurcation of the world into the East and West, with the East either "ideal" or "flawed", but in either case unreal vis-à-vis the West which is unambiguously "real". This is another aspect of Colonial

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[23] This case has been made by Collins, who argued that in the case of Buddhism textual and anthropological studies are potentially mutually informative: "my particular concern is precisely how far the theoretical texts of the Buddhist tradition reflect and incorporate what they see to be the social whole in which they operate. I will argue that the picture of the social and psychological reality in which Buddhist theory sees itself as inserted is, albeit in simplified, schematized and idealized form, congruent with that developed by modern anthropologists working on the subject." (1982:15) Collins' book is an excellent example of a textual study enriched by consultation of relevant anthropological studies. Likewise, Tambiah's anthropological works are excellent in part because they do not ignore the rich body of relevant textual data.

[24] See Lopez 1998, pp. 49-51.

[25] For example Kenneth Saunders in his book *Epochs in Buddhist History* (1924) wrote the following concerning Tibet and the Tibetans: "But of the Mahātmas or of the great spiritual and mental achievements described by the theosophists, there is no trace. Their medical science is quackery, their religion a raw material terribly perverted too often by blind leaders. Here, as in other Buddhist lands, the gospel of Christ awaits great and signal triumphs. It will replace countless capricious deities and demons by a loving Father God, and will bring to fruition the devotion of these spiritually hungry peoples, filling with new meaning whatever is loving and of good repute." (p. 210) It is arguable who amongst Blavatsky or her critics had less understanding, or shall we say, more misunderstanding, of Tibet. A more informed observer is found in Waddell, who actually traveled to Tibet, but his (1895) book is hampered by misrepresentation in its depiction of Tibetans as demon-worshipping idolaters. (Lopez 1995b: 259-63)

discourse, wherein the colonized societies are labeled as "traditional", if not "primitive", with the implication that they are static, passive, and reactionary, while the colonizer styles himself and his society "modern", dynamic, active and progressive, in the sense of more progressed along the scale of "evolution".

Perhaps it is this very assumption of "progress" which is most at fault here; it appears to imply a quite subjective, chauvinistic judgment, and one that seems almost inevitable for the naive, uncritical observer. Here a passage written by Montaigne, quoted in similar context by J. Z. Smith, is quite relevant:

> Everyone terms barbarity whatever is not of his own customs; in truth it seems that we have no idea of what is true and reasonable, except the example and idea of the customs and practices of the country in which we live. We may call them barbarians, then, if we are judging by the rules of reason, but not if we are judging by comparison with ourselves, who surpass them in every sort of barbarity.[26]

Indeed, looking over the history of the past few centuries, the behavior of the supposedly civilized, "progressive" West has far exceeded in barbarity that of any of the Buddhist peoples whom they governed with brutal violence. This historical context should not be conveniently erased from our critical consciousness, but should be kept in mind, as an antidote to the mire of naive chauvinism into which scholarship tends at time to sink. Studying another culture does not require that one becomes convinced either of the truth or falsity of their traditions, or that one idealize them as "noble savages" or denigrate them as monsters. (Smith 1978:136-37) Rather, open-minded tolerance is the basic prerequisite for understanding, in cross-cultural exploration or any other scholarly endeavor.

Having looked a bit into the false paths that flank the scholarly endeavor, one might reasonably ask: Where is the middle ground on which to stand? Where can one begin? How does one avoid the twin, well-traveled boulevards of Orientalism, of blind idealization or equally blind denigration? One might answer, seemingly facetiously, that the only place one can begin is "here". That is, scholarship cannot and should not be divorced from the

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[26] Cited in Smith 1982, p. 105. This is taken from Montaigne's essay, "Of Cannibals", translated by D. M. Frame, *The Complete Works of Montaigne* (Stanford 1958).

context in which it is produced. It is contextualized by recognizing the basis on which it is composed, the motives and preconceptions which underlie its production.[27] A scholar writing about an Asian tradition in the context of the Western academy should not fail to take into account the legacy of Orientalism; however, to be cowed by this legacy such that one does not attempt the task of understanding is to fail before one even begins. Faure was probably right when he wrote that the challenge of Orientalism is "merely an exotic variant of the hermeneutic circle, and we know since Heidegger that this circle is a prerequisite of understanding, rather than its denial. Any attempt to understand another person or tradition offers a similar challenge." (Faure 1993:7) Indeed, all understanding requires an awareness of the conditions under which such understanding is possible. Heidegger wrote that "if the basic conditions which make interpretation possible are to be fulfilled, this must rather be done by not failing to recognize beforehand the essential conditions under which it can be performed. What is decisive is not to get out of the circle but to come into it the right way."[28]

Methodologically, the best approach appears to be the contextual, since misinterpretation is ultimately really a matter of insufficient information; the question of what information should be deployed is of course a political question. Insofar as an ancient textual tradition is the object of study the vast majority of the evidence deployed here is

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[27] Concerning this dilemma Faure commented: "Although Said's criticism of Orientalism was long overdue, its radicalism is not only in some respects a case of reverse ethnocentrism, but it also proves counterproductive by both forgetting that even the most blatantly Orientalist approach might yield some valuable insights and failing to recognize that the post-Orientalist vision has its own blind spots. To paraphrase the Japanese Zen master Dōgen (1200-1253), 'When one side is clarified, one side is obscured.' Accordingly, one usually privileges a certain vision that remains, just like the opposite vision it condemns, largely ideological. Said is not sufficiently sensitive to the reasons that prevented earlier scholars, who were not always simply agents of Western imperialism, from escaping the trap of Orientalist categories. He therefore fails to question the sociohistorical and epistemological changes that have allowed him (and us, dwarves sitting on the shoulders of Orientalist giants) to perceive this trap. By denying all earlier attempts, within the framework of Orientalism, to question Orientalist values, Said forgets to acknowledge his own indebtedness to this tradition and the epistemological privilege that made his own vision possible. In other words, Said paradoxically shows us how easy it is to fall into methodological scapegoatism: in condemning individuals for failures that are ultimately owing to epistemological constraints, we tend to forget, just as the Orientalists did, that our vision is not entirely our own, that it is grounded in a specific time and space." (1993:6-7)

[28] Heidegger 1962, pp. 194,5; this is partially cited in Faure 1993, p. 7.

textual, although reference is made to relevant archaeological data as well. Undoubtedly the deployment decisions made here are not perfect, and there is always more that can be said on any subject. It is hoped, however, that some contribution will be made here to the study of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition in particular, and to the study of South Asian religious history in general.

From a theoretical point of view, concomitant with Orientalist discourse was the assignment of myth and ritual to the context of "traditional societies", with the implication that myth and ritual somehow invariably bolster the political stasis which allegedly characterized "traditional" societies.[29] Comaroff articulates an alternative approach, in arguing that:

> once "traditional societies" are allowed to exhibit agency, even instability, they turn out to have had politics and history all along. Their cosmologies appear less as sacred gardens than as ruling hegemonies – more or less firmly entrenched – that differ from those of modernity in degree rather than kind....our assumptions of stability have persistently blinded us to the dynamic role of ritual activity in precolonial societies. (1994:304)

In challenging misrepresentations of Buddhist societies it is not necessary here to expose either their unwitting authors or their idealized objects as "flawed". Rather, the purpose here is to clear the conceptual ground so as to lay the foundation for the study of a typically misunderstood tradition. This study will seek to dispel the notion that Tantric traditions are somehow "otherworldly", immune to the ordinary concerns of the world, i.e., politics. Like Abé (1999) and Orzech (1998) in the case of East Asian Esoteric Buddhism, I will argue that Tantric traditions are very much concerned with this world, including its politics, and that they developed quite sophisticated political and social ideologies, and that these

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[29] This argument has been made, for example, by Bloch (1974), who, assuming that "traditional" societies are dominated by a static, unchanging hegemonic mode of authority, argues that ritual, and in particular language use within ritual, contributed to this political rigidity. This characterization of traditional societies seems to be particularly prevalent in the works of Marxist scholars, no doubt due to the prevalence of the ethnocentric model of social evolution in Marxist historicism, as Young (1990) has extensively documented. I refer to this model as "Orientalist" because, as Ranger (1993) has argued in the context of colonial Africa, indigenous societies and their religious institutions were characterized as rigid, outdated, etc. by the agents of the colonial powers (i.e. missionaries, ethnographers, etc.) as a strategy for the legitimization of colonial domination. This characterization is more informative of the colonial process than of the actual social realities purportedly described.

ideologies played a central role in their dissemination throughout Asia. And contrary to what some might wish to believe, this concern of Tantric traditions does not in any way violate their supposed higher ideals, but rather is in complete harmony with them, teaching as they do the non-duality of the phenomenal world and the transcendent, along with the idea that all things in the world are theoretically conducive to liberation.

My purpose here is simply to describe this ideology and briefly look at some of its historical consequences and manifestations; this will be done primarily through a study of texts; this will never permit the production of complete account, if for no other reason than because the texts are the product of an elite, literate minority. As the texts were composed in India during the seventh to eleventh centuries, however, there is very little evidence aside from these texts. The reader should thus beware, and bear in mind that the texts do present a view of an elite group. It is also up to reader to evaluate whether the social and political ideologies implicit and explicit within the texts, and supported and replicated within the practices, are positive or negative relative to those of other societies.

Another interesting problem that a study of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* brings to light is its relationship to other traditions. This Tantra is significant in that it abounds with Śaiva imagery, implying at least the possibility that its author(s) were influenced by one or more of the many Śaiva traditions that were growing in importance and influence in early medieval India, the period spanning the seventh through thirteenth centuries,[30] which is also the era when most Tantric text were composed. Here one already confronts the possibility of a multiplicity of "origins" for this tradition. It will be argued that there were multiple *origins* and influences, and that it would be difficult if not impossible to sort them out and make the case that one was central, and the others peripheral. On the one hand, one can take the Buddhist position and argue that the Tantras are continuous, in import and origin,

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[30] Here I follow Inden's definition of "early medieval India" as a period bounded by "the collapse of the kingdom of the Cālukyas around AD 750 and the establishment of the Delhi Sultanate early in the thirteenth century". (1981:99) For reasons that will be stated in chapter three, the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* was clearly composed well before the end of this period, but was unlikely to have been composed before the mid-eighth century.

with the more "normative" Mahāyāna traditions, and that Tantric Buddhism is in fact a branch of Mahāyāna Buddhism; this case can be made. But the evidence of Śaiva influence is also striking, and any such argument would have to contend with Sanderson's claim that the Yogini Tantras such as the Cakrasaṃvara owe a strong debt to the so called "Kāpālika" Tantras.

This study focuses in particular on the first four chapters of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* which deal with the production of the maṇḍala and the rites of initiation that are conducted in close proximity to it.[31] It is in the context of the performance of the rites of maṇḍala production and initiation, and the myths which surround them, that Tantric discourse functions. These functions are not fixed, nor fundamentally and intrinsically linked to any particular use; as human constructs they are susceptible to multiple interpretations and applications, and they have functioned in different ways in different social and historical contexts.[32] I will argue that Tantric discourse did function as means for counter-hegemonic resistance in India. However, in a different context, namely, in Tibet, it came to function as a hegemonic ideology, supported by the very same practices which in the previous context constituted a form of anti-hegemonic resistance.[33] Before

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[31] This study began with the editing of the first four chapters of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* as well as the translation of Tsongkhapa's commentary on the above, the *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning,* which constitutes a bit more than one quarter of the total commentary, roughly 130 pages/folio sides in Tibetan. These works are appended to the end of this text, which thus gives the impression that they are secondary to this work; this is a false impression, as this work began with the study of these texts, and to a significant extent remains grounded within and limited by the scope of these works, despite the fact that distinctly Western methodologies are used, and are supported by material from a wide array of other related Indian, Tibetan and Chinese sources.

[32] While the ways in which discourse bolsters authority have been repeatedly demonstrated, the ways in which it can potentially challenge authority has been less often discussed. Lincoln argues that "discourse can also serve members of subordinate classes (as Antonio Gramsci above all recognized) in their attempts to demystify, delegitimate, and deconstruct the established norms, institutions, and discourses that play a role in constructing their subordination." (1989:5) If Thapar and Warder are correct, and Buddhism was a protest movement receiving particular support from urban merchants and artisans who were excluded from the brahmana-ksatriya hegemonic alliance, Buddhism could be seen as productive of an alternative discourse which did indeed attempt to demystify, etc. the hegemonic discourse of the brahmans. This argument will be pursued in chapter three of this work.

[33] It seems that under Chinese colonial rule for the past fifty years, Buddhism in Tibet may have reverted back to the counter-hegemonic stance in resistance to colonial repression; the Chinese, recognizing this, reacted following the cold, calculating logic of the colonizer, the rule of which is fundamentally based on violence, both physical and rhetorical, proceeded to attempt to stamp out Buddhism in Tibet. So far, however, it seems that they have not been successful, and despite their efforts the Tibetans have been able

this can be done, however, it is necessary to define the essential terms and explore the central features of this discourse.

1.2 Defining "Tantrism" and the Tantric

"Tantrism" has all of the elements that, taken together, to some extent have inspired a great deal of interest and research, and no doubt will continue to do so. For it was truly a pan-Indian religious movement which penetrated, to some degree, most if not all of the major Indian religious traditions, and which was gradually understood to be the pinnacle of the development, the final and complete revelation of the truth, in certain of these traditions. It was pan-Indian in that it penetrated all of the subcontinent, including the marginalized, tribal or border areas that had hitherto received only the slightest degree of influence from the so-called Sanskritic "great traditions",[34] and which may have in fact played an important creative role in the development of Tantric traditions. Unlike the earlier Vedic tradition,[35] the study and practice of which was proscribed to the lower classes, it was open to a much

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to some extent to both recover and recreate their traditions. See Germano 1998, and also Kapstein 1998, Goldstein 1998.

[34] I refer here to the arguments made by Marriott (1955) and Srinivas (1952) that Hinduism can be conceptually divided into a literate, "great" tradition and local, generally non-literate "little" traditions of the villages. This dichotomy has been much criticized (see for example Tambiah 1970 pp. 367-77), in part because it does not closely correspond to the social realities which the anthropologists are claiming to describe. Quite serious is the charge that "embedded in the anthropologist's notion of the two levels is the serious danger of the past civilization represented in the classical literature being imagined as a static and consistent whole expressing clear-cut principles. The historian may well find this orientation naïve: for him there are periods, eras, continuities and changes, not a single unbroken tradition." (Tambiah 1970:372) While I do not see early medieval Indian religion as static and unchanging, nor do I surmise that Indian religious traditions, past or present, neatly break down into "greater" and "lesser" components, I follow Collins (1982:17,18) in holding that the distinction is at least marginally useful provided that we do not confuse it with the social structure of actual communities; in the context of the Buddhist Tantras, it is useful as a reminder that the texts which have come down to us, while potentially deriving from multiple origins, are the products of literate communities and thus do not necessarily reflect the concerns of the society as a whole.

[35] Here I use the term in the limited sense of the ideology and ritual practice described in the *brahmaṇa* literature.

wider range of the social spectrum. Indeed, the lowest members of the Indian social world, the untouchables, were theoretically included within the sphere of Tantric worship.[36]

A broadly accepted definition of "Tantra" has not yet emerged; this may be in part due to the bewildering range of ideas and practices that could possibly be subsumed under the term. Traditional explanations are a typical and appropriate starting point for many definitions; these often derive the term Tantra from the verb √*tan* "to stretch".[37] A technical definition, well known in the Indo-Tibetan traditions of Buddhism, is contained in the eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra,* which in the Tibetan canon occurs as a separate text called the *Uttaratantra:* "*tantra* is known as a 'continuum', and it has the three aspects of basis, nature, and non-deprivation. Its nature aspect is the cause, and non-deprivation is the fruit, and the base is the means. These three comprise the meanings of the [term] *tantra.*"[38]

The explanation of the term *tantra* here is based on a concept that is peculiar to Buddhism, namely, the idea of the voidness or absence of the intrinsic reality of one's self and all other persons and things. As we shall see, the notion that all things are thus void implies that in their ultimate reality they are interdependent, and that there is from the perspective of ultimate reality not individually separable existents but rather a 'continuum' of beings and things which exist only in relationship to each other. Lacking any sort of fixed reality, all living beings are transformable and thus potentially able to become fully

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[36] The Buddhist orders, of course, were open to persons of all social backgrounds (see Locke 1989, p. 109); Tantric traditions can be seen as continuing the anti-caste inclusivism typical of Buddhism, in theory if not in practice.

[37] These generally understand the word *tantra* as being formed from the verbal root √*tan* with the instrumental *-tra* affix; sometimes mentioned is the older meaning of *tantra* as a loom or more specifically the warp of the loom, as well as the related word *tanu,* an adjective meaning thin, fine or delicate (possibly related to *tantu,* that which is stretched, i.e., a thread) and also a noun meaning the body (see Apte 1965, p. 466 col. 3-467 col. 2).

[38] prabandhaṃ tantram ākhyātaṃ tat prabandhaṃ tridhā bhavet / ādhāraḥ prakṛtiś caiva asaṃhāryaprabhedataḥ // prakṛtiś cākṛter hetur asaṃhāryaphalaṃ tathā / ādhāras tad upāyaś ca tribhis tantrārthasaṃgrahaḥ // (Matsunaga (1978), vs. 34-35, p. 115); / rgyud ni rgyun zhe bya bar grags // rgyud de rnam pa gsum 'gyur te // gzhi dang de bzhin rang bzhin dang // mi 'phrog pa yis rab phye ba // rnam pa rang bzhin rgyu yin te // de bzhin mi 'phrogs 'bras bu'o // gzhi ni thabs shes bya ba ste // gsum gyis rgyud kyi don bsdus pa'o /. (DK fol. 150a).

awakened Buddhas, since there is no permanent unawakened self that could somehow obstruct this development. Tantric Buddhists sought to capitalize on this potential for awakening, and claimed that they could dramatically accelerate this evolution into Buddhahood by means of practices which assume *continuity* between the limited, mundane sense of self and the awakened, expanded sense of self which is, we are told, characteristic of the Buddhas.[39]

This entails the attempt to assume, through visualization and other meditative practices, the body, mind and environment of the Buddhas and their Pure Land abodes. For the Buddhists the term *tantra* is conceived as denoting a 'continuum' that spans from the *fruit* or goal of practice, which is awakening, down to the *cause* or ground of practice, the fundamental potential to achieve awakening which all beings are said to have, and, most importantly, the means of actualizing this potential, which are the practices taught within the Tantric traditions, as well as the texts themselves. Or, according to the late Venerable Tara Tulku, Tantra involves a process of deconstruction followed by reconstruction. "Having demolished with wisdom the samsaric world by removing its foundation, ignorance, [it is] the process of rebuilding the Buddhaworld on the basis of wisdom itself," replacing a mundane experience of the relative world with a vision of extraordinary yet still empty, relative world.[40] From this perspective, Tantra is understood as the *continuum* which spans the gap between the realm of suffering characterized by misknowledge *(saṃsāra)* and the nondual-intuition *(advayajñāna)* which is inseparable from the transcendent realm of awakening *(nirvāṇa)*. These two are understood as being non-dual, being differentiated by

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[39] The term I translate as 'Awakening' is *bodhi*, which is derived from the root budh, 'to wake' (Whitney 1963:106). This translation captures better the Buddhist sense of the term than the more common translation "enlightenment", a more general and somewhat overused term. Verbs formed from this root were translated into Tibetan with the compound *'tshang rgya ba*, lit. "awakened expanded". See Beyer 1992 pp. 107-8.

[40] Cited in Thurman 1998, p. 127. Insert is mine.

misknowledge and its antidote, true knowledge.[41] This continuum links the practitioner to the structure of the cosmos itself, and provides the base whereby both the practitioner and her environment can be transformed.

So far this issue has been explored only from the Buddhist perspective, which is appropriate, since this dissertation is concerned with a Buddhist Tantric tradition. It seems that one might hesitantly suggest that this notion of the non-duality between the practitioner and his spiritual ideal, between bondage and liberation, is also of central importance to Hindu Tantric traditions as well. It is evidently an ancient idea, as the *Upaniṣads* contain teachings which claim that one can reach a divine state through an understanding of one's identity with *brahman.*[42] While generalization here may be less warranted than in the case of the Buddhists, it does appear that Śaivas accepted the identity of the individual soul with Śiva, although different schools described the path to this goal differently.[43] The nondualistic philosophy of the Advaita Vedānta[44] played a major role in the development of at least one major school, that of the Trika or Kashmir Śaivism. According to Flood, there is a

> relation between the Trika Śaiva soteriology and cosmology, or the way in which, while keeping beings bound in the cycle of birth and death, the structure of cosmos allows for their liberation....the liberation conceived by the Trika Śaiva as the eradication of the pollution of individuality *(āṇavamala),* which is also immersion *(samāveśa)* into the higher reality of Paramaśiva, thought to be achieved through the assimilation of higher levels of the universe. (1989:225-26)

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[41] Misknowledge *(avidyā)* has long been considered to have been the ultimate source of suffering and samsaric existence by Buddhists. Misknowledge and the true knowledge considered to be its antidote will be discussed in section 2.1 above.

[42] See for example *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, 4.1, which identifies *brahman* with various aspects of one's psycho-physical complex such as the breath, sight, hearing, mind and the heart, and which claims that one who knows this becomes a god and joins the company of the gods. See Olivelle 1996, pp. 52-56, and also Dviveda, who in a 1992 article discusses Tantric significance of such passages.

[43] Brunner wrote that "Śaivas, on their side, although accepting exactly the same conception of *mokṣa* (identification of Śiva), maintained that the essential nature of the soul was the same as Śiva's; and they had to decide only about the proper means to unveil this true nature. The majority of the Siddhāntins saw no other possibility than a direct intervention of Śiva's Grace, in the form of *dikṣā*" (1992:29).

[44] Advaita philosophers such as Padmapāda, a disciple of Śaṃkara, held that liberation is possible due to the existence of a *continuum* or non-duality between the individual self *(jiva),* in need of liberation, and the liberated Self, the One Self *(ātman),* indicated by the famous Upaniṣadic statement "That thou art" *(tat tvam asi).* See Potter 1963, pp. 174-76.

The interrelationship between the practitioner and the supreme state, however conceived, is a requisite for liberation. The interrelationship between the mundane and transmundane states has been well documented in the case of Trika Śaivism.[45]

While this certainly provides us with a theoretical criteria for ascertaining whether or not the soteriology of a given school is typical of those advocated by practitioners of the *Tantras*, it may be necessary to seek other criteria as well, since there are schools of thought which advocate the non-dualistic perspective which would not label themselves as "Tantric". It is thus necessary to examine the term and its uses in more depth.

First of all, the term *tantra* is polysemous. Urban provides a short synopsis of different meanings ascribed to the term, as follows:

> The Sanskrit word *tantra* has appeared since Vedic times with an enormous diversity of meanings, denoting, for example, *siddhānta* (conclusion), *śrutisākhā* (a branch of śruti, i.e., the Vedas), *itikartavyatā* (set of duties) , *prabandha* (composition), and *śāstraviśeṣa* (a particular *śāstra*). In its earliest appearance in the *Ṛg Veda* (X.71.9) and *Atharva Veda* (X.7.42), *tantra* denotes a kind of weaving machine or loom; later, in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa,* and *Taṇḍya Brāhmaṇa,* the range of the term is extended to refer to the chief essence portion or essence of a thing; and still later, as we see, for example, in the works of Śaṇkāra, [sic.] the term is used to denote simply a system of thought.... the term has also been used throughout Sanskrit literature to signify not only 'any rule, theory or scientific work' *(Mahābhārata)* but also an 'army, row, number or series' *(Bhāgavata Purāṇa,* x.54.15) and even a 'drug or chief remedy'. (1999:125)

The term *tantra* clearly can refer to a type of literature, although its usage here is not fixed; "it is applied in several other provinces of Indian literature to a technical 'exposé' or 'handbook' which in a more of less extensive way deals with a certain subject." (Goudriaan 1981:7) This description more or less fits the term *tantra* as a name for a type of text, but in the Tantric traditions its import includes but extends beyond the realm of literature.

Tantra came to designate a central body of literature of an esoteric religious movement which developed in India, but properly speaking it does not refer to the

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[45] See for example Isayeva 1995.

movement as a whole, or the sectarian traditions contained within it. That is, "Tantrism" is a neologism unattested in Sanskrit sources. As Padoux noted,

> The word "Tantrism" is assuredly a Western creation. India traditionally knows only texts called Tantras. These texts, moreover, fall far short of covering the entire Tantric literature; nor are only Tantric texts called Tantras. India also knows the word *tantraśāstra*, "the teaching of the Tantras," as well as the adjective *tāntrika*, "Tantric," which is opposed to *vaidika*, "Vedic," thereby placing a new form of revelation and rites against Vedic tradition and rites. (1981:351)

While a Western scholarly term such as Tantrism need not be abandoned solely for the reason that it is not an *emic* term, here it will not be used, since its use constructs Tantrism as an entity which may be qualified by adjectives such as "Buddhist" or "Hindu". However, in the Buddhist case, and most likely in the Hindu case as well, Tantric theory and practice is considered a subset within the larger religion as a whole. It thus appears more correct to speak of a "Tantric Buddhism" or "Tantric Hinduism", as adherents of both religions would tend to consider the "Tantric" theories and practices as being concordant with their larger traditions;[46] it may be unnecessary and even undesirable to reify the Tantric traditions into a *Tantrism*. Such a reification focuses on the superficial similarities between Tantric traditions, but ignores their substantial functional and ideological differences.[47] Instead, here the *emic* adjectival usage will be followed, which also corresponds to one of the theses of this work, that ritual systems such as those described in the Tantras lack any fixed or rigid meaning, but rather can be understood in different ways, and were in fact put to different ideological uses in different social contexts.

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[46] With regard to the Buddhism, the Indo-Tibetan traditions generally use the terms *vajrayāna (rdo rje theg pa)* or *mantrayāna (gsang sngags theg pa)*, while in East Asia the name *shingon* (真言), literally a translation of *mantra*, is used to designate an important Japanese tradition; this usage might be considered to approximate the Sanskrit *mantrayāna*. More generally the term *mikkyō* (Japanese; Chinese *mi-jiao*, 密教), "Esoteric Teachings", is used to refer to Tantric Buddhism as a whole. In all cases Esoteric Buddhism is understood to be a special division of the larger Mahāyāna tradition.

[47] I use "functional" in the sense used by Sanderson, who argued that numerous elements in Tantric Buddhism originated in Śaivism (which is, as we shall see, a controversial claim to say the least), but that Tantric Buddhism is "entirely Buddhist in terms of its function and self-perception" (1994a:96), which is of course the case. The same ritual element in Buddhist and Śaiva practice may have entirely different functions, and also be understood in entirely different ways.

It is possible that the "Tantric" is not clearly definable by any single criteria; this is suggested by the fact that a number of scholars have located "Tantrism" or elements thereof in scriptures or traditions that do not in fact designate themselves as Tantras or Tantric, and which were most likely composed before the term *tantra* came into use as a term for esoteric scriptures. It may be that Tantric traditions can only be identified by means of what Smith called the polythetic mode of classification, in which a number of criteria would be admitted, not all of which would necessarily be possessed by all members of the class.[48] This is suggested by the fact that most "definitions" of "Tantrism" have so far actually been descriptions of characteristic features, often presented in list form. An influential description of central features of Tantric Hinduism was provided by Goudriaan,[49] while Snellgrove has produced a list of criteria which he understood to be polythetic in Smith's sense.[50] A similar and slightly longer list has been proposed by Hodge.[51] Such catalogues

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[48] Smith described a "polythetic mode of classification which surrendered the idea of perfect, unique, single differentia – a taxonomy which retained the notion of necessary but abandoned the notion of sufficient criteria for admission to a class. In this new mode, a class is defined as consisting of a set of properties, each individual member of the class to possess 'a large (but unspecified) number' of these properties, with each property to be possessed by a 'large number' of individuals in the class, but no single property to be possessed by every member of the class." (1982, p. 4). See also Urban 1999, p. 126.

[49] As Goudriaan's formulation remains influential, it is reproduced here as follows: "What is most often called by this term is a systematic quest for salvation or for spiritual excellence by realizing and fostering the bipolar, bisexual divinity within one's own body. This result is methodically striven after by specific means (kinds of *sādhana*): the recitation of mantras or *bījas*; the construction of geometrical cosmic symbols *(maṇḍala)*; the making of appropriate gestures *(mudrā)*; the assignment or "laying down" *(nyāsa)* of powerful sounds or syllables on the body; the meditation on the deity's concrete manifestation *(dhyāna)*; the application of these and other elements in special ritual procedures, to wit Tantric worship *(pūjā)*, initiation *(dikṣā)* etc.; besides, the performance of Kuṇḍaliniyoga by means of which the microcosmic form of Śakti (female divine power) present in the body in the form of a fiery tube or serpent is conducted upwards along the yogic nerves towards Śiva's mystic residence at some distance above the head." (Goudriaan and Gupta 1981:1).

[50] Snellgrove defines Tantric Buddhism as "a system of practices, either of ritual yoga or of and physical and mental yoga, by means of which the practitioner identifies himself with his tutelary divinity, which is identified both with the practitioner's own teacher and with the goal of final enlightenment. However many different elements, few of which are peculiar to Tantric Buddhism, have contributed to the formation of this complex literature. They may be listed thus: (i) the philosophical basis; (ii) the cult of particular divinities; (iii) the development of the *maṇḍala* or circle of divinities; (iv) the use of *mantras* and symbolic gestures; (v) the concept of Buddha-Families; (vi) the concept of buddhahood as fivefold; (vii) the concept of Buddha-Bodies; (viii) the use of highly ritualized consecrations; (ix) the practice of yoga, both mental and physical; (x) the conception of the whole of existence as an essential duality in unity (Sanskrit: *yuganaddha;* Tibetan: *zung-'jug*). *All tantras do not comprise all these elements,* and....they have been categorized mainly in accordance with the particular elements they happen to contain." (1988:1359, emphasis mine)

[51] Hodge's article has thus far not received much attention, but as his list is notable at least in its comprehensiveness it is reproduced here as follows: "(1) Tantric Buddhism offers an alternative path to

of criteria would be of central importance in constructing a set of criteria if it is indeed ascertained that a polythetic mode of classification is required here. Whether this is the case or not will, however, require further investigation.

Closer to a definition is Muller-Ortega's identification of three characteristics of Tantrism. The first, which properly speaking is a description of *tantra* as text, holds that

> a text is tantric which presents itself as revealed, without attaching itself in any way to the Veda. Such texts on the whole prescribe other rituals and other means to salvation than those offered by Vedic texts....these rituals and practices are typically open to all, without distinction on the basis of caste or sex. (1989:50)

This is not a definition per se, for all texts that might conceivably fit this description are not necessarily Tantras; many Buddhist non-Tantric texts would fit this description, but it is important in that it identifies what is, from the Hindu perspective, the radical Tantric claim to authority completely outside of the scope of the Vedic tradition. The Tantric de-emphasis of caste-based distinctions should be seen in the light of its broader challenge to the authority of the Vedas and the brahmins whose claims to social superiority ride upon that authority.

Muller-Ortega continues by noting that Tantric texts contain what he calls "a strong reaction against what may be termed the Upaṇiṣadic spirit of renunciation." (1989:50) Instead, Tantric practitioners consider the absolute state to be attained, i.e., liberation, to be immanent within the world, which of course calls into question the rejection of the world

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Enlightenment in addition to the standard Mahāyāna one. (2) Its Teachings are aimed at lay practitioners in particular, rather than monks and nuns. (3) As a consequence of this, it recognizes mundane aims and attainments, and often deals with practices which are more magical in character than spiritual. (4) It teaches special types of meditation (*sādhana*) as the path to realization, aimed at transforming the individual into an embodiment of the divine in this lifetime or after a short span of time. (5) Such kinds of meditation make extensive use of various kinds of *maṇḍalas, mudrās, mantras* and *dhāraṇis* as concrete expressions of the nature of reality. (6) The formation of images of the various deities during meditation by means of creative imagination plays a key role in the process of realization. These images may be viewed as being present externally or internally. (7) There is an exuberant proliferation in the number and types of Buddhas and other deities. (8) Great stress is laid upon the importance of the guru and the necessity of receiving the instructions and appropriate initiations for the *sādhanas* from him. (9) Speculations on the nature and power of speech are prominent, especially with regard to the letters of the Sanskrit alphabet. (10) Various customs and rituals, often of non-Buddhist origins, such as the homa rituals, are incorporated and adapted to Buddhist ends. (11) A spiritual physiology is taught as part of the process of transformation. (12) It stresses the importance of the feminine and utilizes various forms of sexual yoga." (Hodge 1994:59). This list, while broad, does not go far in achieving depth, and terminology such as *maṇḍala, mudrā* and so forth need further, comprehensive explanation. It problematic for several reasons. It is not at all clear, for example, that Buddhist Tantrism is primarily intended for the laity. Nor do all Buddhist Tantras emphasize the feminine and sexual yogas. Some of these issues will be addressed further below.

that asceticism implies. He writes that "Tantric practitioners strive to reconcile the ascent to *mokṣa* or liberation with the experience of joyful enjoyment of the world, *bhoga.*" (1989:50) This requires then a new spiritual path, one which involves "the attempt to employ desire *(kāma)* and all the values associated with it at the service of liberation. This attempt results from a general aim of not sacrificing this world to the purposes of salvation, but of reintegrating it somehow to the perspectives of salvation." (1989:50).[52] This radical change in orientation is, as will be shown in chapter two, not only an essential feature of Tantric traditions, but one which is not quite so radical when viewed from the Buddhist perspective.

Lastly, he identifies a third feature which clearly does underlie both Tantric thought and practice, and which can be understood as a central link which unites the two. He argues that

> the Tantra establishes a series of correlations between man , the universe, the gods, and the tantric ritual. These correlations or homologies are elaborated in a complex system of symbols that includes the human body with its so-called mystical physiology. In addition, this system of symbols takes on a markedly sexual character abounding in what Bharati terms "polarity symbolism," involving descriptions of the "mystical" union of male and female....Much of this symbolism is expressed in a kind of secret or technical language that is deliberately ambiguous, multivalent, and, it seems, intended to shock the prudish or exclude the uninitiated.[53]

The correlations between the practitioner, the universe and the deity in Tantric practices appears to be a central feature linking theory with praxis, and which underlies both Hindu and Buddhist Tantric traditions. And while the differences between these traditions are

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[52] A similar point, also with regard to Tantric Hinduism, was made by Biardeau, who wrote: "Rather than placing desire and liberation in opposition to each other, and rather than denying the one to the benefit of the other, the theory holds, quite to the contrary, that desire is the hallmark of each and every individual's initiation into the path of salvation. It is the seal of the divine in man, so long as he is schooled in the proper techniques for its transformation. It is therefore no longer one's acts, ritual or otherwise, that are valorized as such; rather, it is desire itself which is actually positively re-evaluated; and this change occurs, as always, from the starting point of a modified concept of godhead...The divine takes the form of a couple, the analogue of the human couple and, conversely, no man – or woman – can approach the divine unless he or she seeks to reproduce this primal couple in him or herself." (1991:149-50)

[53] Muller-Ortega 1989, pp. 50-51. Muller-Ortega here refers to Bharati's article "Polarity Symbolism in Tantric Doctrine and Practice" (Bharati 1993:199-227).

both numerous and significant, they do appear to share this central feature, on the basis of which it might be possible to formulate a definition.

One might define as "Tantric" any meditative or ritual technique that assumes an identity or continuity between the practitioner and a "deity" (in the Buddhist context, the "deity" would be a Buddha, a fully Awakened being), which really is just a concise restatement of Muller-Ortega's third feature.[54] This identity may occur on the following levels: 1) mentally, by assuming the Awakened or divine state of mind;[55] 2) vocally, by means of the recitation of the deity's mantra or seed syllable; and 3) physically by means of gestures characterizing the deity *(mudrā)*, or the presence of emblems or implements *(samaya)* symbolic of the deity. This definition does not exhaustively catalogue the many features which Tantric traditions share, nor does it address those particular only to certain traditions, such as the complex Perfection Stage yogic techniques of the Buddhist Unexcelled Yogatantras.[56]

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[54] The centrality of the discourse of identity or continuity with a deity has naturally been recognized by others. See for example Eliade 1958 p. 208 and Jackson 1994 p.131, and also Snellgrove 1988, p. 1359, quoted in note 42 above.

[55] For the Buddhists this would entail an experiential realization of voidness of self and other, which involves the expansion of one's sense of self beyond the narrow confines of being an alienated individual *(prthagjana)* to a more universal sense based on the awareness of the profound interrelatedness of all things. In the Hindu context, the realization of the identity of the *ātman* and *brahman* might provide the theoretical underpining for the ritual identification of oneself and one's chosen deity.

[56] These techniques are of central importance in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition and will be discussed in more depth below. It is important to note however that even in the Tibetan tradition, where these techniques are emphasized, they have also been understood as derivative to the primary foci of Tantric meditation, which according to Tsongkhapa are the view of voidness and the deity yoga wherein one visualizes oneself as a deity. He wrote in his *sNgags rim chen mo* that "In short, the view ascertaining that phenomena are empty of inherent existence and the deity yoga of generating oneself as a deity conjointly achieve the fruit, the Two Bodies. This means of achievement is the sole path of passage of all the chief trainees for whom the Vajra Vehicle was set forth. One should know that the many paths other than these two, which are explained in the individual sets of tantras, are either methods for heightening cognition of emptiness or branches of deity yoga. Knowing this, one should hold [these two] to be their essential meaning." (Hopkins 1977:134) The current Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso also rejected the idea that "deity yoga" *(devatāyoga, lha'i rnal 'byor)* is limited to the Creation Stage of Buddhist Tantric yoga, wherein one develops the perception of oneself and one's environment as divine. Instead, he explains that it occurs in the Perfection Stage as well (Hopkins 1977:72).

Here the term "Tantra", like the adjective "Tantric" which is derived from it, does not imply a defining 'essence', but rather a defining performative context.[57] Mantra recitation, for example, is not necessarily Tantric if simply recited as a charm without a conscious sense of identification with a deity. Likewise, a ritual act such as a *homa* fire sacrifice would properly be understood as Tantric only if performed in a Tantric context, i.e., by a practitioner who identifies with a deity, and supports such identification through the use of *mantra, mudrā* and so forth. A *Tantra* then we could define as an authoritative text which is Tantric in content and which is considered to be the revelation of a deity or Awakened being. The presence of the ideology of union with a Buddha or deity might then distinguish a Tantra from any other "revealed" text which contains "Tantric elements", i.e., those things usually considered to be characteristic of Tantric texts, such as *mantras* or descriptions of *homa* or *abhiṣeka* rites.[58] Unless they contain the notion of union, however, here they will not be considered "Tantric" texts, but rather "proto-Tantric".[59]

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[57] This notion follows from the Buddhist concept of voidness, which denies the ultimate validity of any reified essences and is thus oriented toward process, on relatives modes whereby entities come in and out of existence in dependence upon one another, and the ways in which they are functionally interdependent.

[58] This point has been made by Eastman, who argued, "Even though an array of features, such as maṇḍala, mantra, and yoga, are commonly portrayed as distinctive of tantra, these are not genuinely definitive of Vajrayāna literature per se. The soteriological technique of identifying oneself with the divinity through the process of visualization distinguishes Vajrayāna from other forms of Buddhism. The doctrine is not found in the *dhāraṇi* genre of Buddhist scripture, although the ritual elaborations in this literature contributed to Vajrayāna scripture; nor is it the same as the *buddhānusmṛti* visualizations known from the Mahāyāna sūtras, to which the development of the tantras seems equally indebted. This meditative notion of generating oneself as the divine being is the essential, although not always obvious, referent of Vajrayāna, and was therefore the basis for early affiliations of such scripture, as well as the unique doctrinal feature of the traditions known in dynastic Tibet as Mahāyoga." (1983:45)

[59] This term, which does imply a diachronic evolution of Tantric traditions, can only be used in the case of texts which evidently preceded in time the full flowering of "Tantrism" in India which was underway by the seventh century; "proto-Tantric" texts, then, would include those texts translated into Chinese during and before this era which contain such elements. It may be objected that this definition excludes from the category "Tantric" certain texts which are considered by the Tibetan tradition to be Tantras, usually of the lower (*kriyā* or *caryā)* categories. This classificatory pattern is problematic, however, despite its uncritical acceptance by scholars, which has been criticized by Strickmann (1977b:140). Aside from the fact that those who use this model rarely consider alternate Indo-Tibetan models, or those found in the Chinese Tripiṭaka, the very fact that it is a fourfold division should trigger a critical stance, given the infatuation with the number four in Indian sources. It is, as I will argue in chapter three, a somewhat arbitrary division, and also somewhat anachronistic, as it identifies as "Tantras" a number of texts which do not in fact use the term, and refer to themselves using some other designation such as *sūtra, kalpa,* etc. Many of these texts would, in the Japanese classification, be considered "mixed esoteric" texts (*zōmitsu,* 雑密), meaning texts which contain noticeably Tantric features, but which lack the sophistication and elaboration of the later genuine Tantric texts, no doubt because they were composed before Tantric Buddhism arose as a bona-fide, self-conscious movement.

If this definition is correct, the other frequently cited, supposedly "defining" characteristics of Tantrism such as *mantra, mudrā,* and so forth can be seen as epiphenomena of the idea of union with a Buddha or deity, since they are taken to be *practices* which achieve that goal. The issue here is complicated, however, by the fact that in many cases, the *practices* seem to have preceded the *theory*; it appears that *homa* fire sacrifices were performed long before the distinctly Tantric ideology of union or continuity with the divine had developed. This does not pose a problem, however. I will argue, following Abé, that what makes a Tantric tradition Tantric is not the presence of a certain density of "Tantric elements", but rather the presence of a certain type of discourse only through which might ritual elements such as *homa* be recognized as Tantric. Through this discourse ritual, yogic and meditative processes could be appropriated from other sources and put to use in the overarching Tantric process of integrating the microcosm with the macrocosm.

This definition is not necessarily sectarian; in the Hindu context one might follow Padoux, who wrote that

> the nature of the Tantric vision of the world, its anthropocosmic reach, is best revealed in such practices. Deity is thus achieved by a corporal, mental and spiritual process: A process by which the body itself is made cosmic and divine and yet, at the same time is transcended. These practices express better than anything else the extraordinary attempt of Tantrism to reintegrate man, made divine, into a universe that is itself seen and experienced as divine. This indeed is Tantrism. (1981:360)

In the Buddhist context, which is the main concern of this dissertation, one might define Buddhist Tantrism as a distinctly Buddhist movement which integrates Tantric theory and practice within a Mahāyāna framework, with an emphasis placed upon compassion and voidness.[60] Indeed, Buddhist Tantras portray their objective as simply being the

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[60] We might also add the spirit of renunciation, which, as we shall see below, informs even the most "transgressive" practices of Buddhist Tantrism following Thurman, who wrote (regarding the Buddhist *anuttarayogatantras*) that "All these Tantras emerge from the same path of transcendent renunciation, the enlightenment spirit of universal love, and the wisdom of selfless voidness. All of them accelerate the deepening of wisdom and the development of compassionate evolution to make possible the achievement of Buddhahood within the single well-endowed human lifetime. All of them employ the imagination to approximate the goal state and reach it more quickly. All of them mobilize the subtle mind as great bliss wisdom to realize ultimate reality and shape its energies for the happiness of all beings. (1994:74).

presentation of particularly effective and rapid techniques for the achievement of the classical Mahāyāna goal: to achieve complete Buddhahood for the sake of benefiting all sentient beings. They claim to provide the aspiring Buddha, the "Awakening Hero" or *bodhisattva*, with liberative arts *(upāya)* which accelerate both his or her ability to help others as well as his or her spiritual evolution, as the aims of self and others are understood to be inseparably interdependent. The Buddhist Tantras in particular elaborate the notion of the "Spirit of Awakening" *(bodhicitta)*, which was originally understood to be the aspiration and determination to achieve complete Awakening which characterizes the bodhisattva. While *bodhicitta* never loses this connotation in the Buddhist Tantras, it comes to be conceived as being a psycho-physical substance, the cultivation, retention and transformation of which is essential for the achievement of Buddhahood.

The term "deity" is vague, and may have different senses in different traditions. While terms such as *devatāyoga* and *adhidaivatāyoga* occur in Buddhist Sanskrit literature and in Tibetan and Chinese translations, it is important to note that in the Buddhist context the "deity" is typically a Buddha, and the adept, as an essential part of his or her *sādhana*, views her or himself as equal, nay identical, to the Buddha/deity who is the object of meditation. This sort of identification would be considered heretical in certain theological traditions, in which the relationship between practitioner and deity is not conceived as one of equality. While the practice of meditating on self as deity appears to be an essential aspect of Tantric theory and practice, evidently certain Hindu traditions have "back pedaled" away from it. With regard to the *Pāñcarātra* tradition Gupta concludes that "the new *bhakti* ideology of self-surrender *(prapatti)* made the very idea of what the *sādhaka* was originally supposed to do heretical, for man could no longer aspire to become identical with God." (1983:88-89) The idea of identity with the deity does not seem compatible with the idea of surrender to a supreme being, for the non-dualistic point of view erodes the strong sense of difference between the divine and the human which theistic traditions tend to

assert.[61] If Gupta's characterization of the *Pāñcarātra* tradition is accurate it would not necessarily be classified as a Tantric tradition according to this definition, at least in its modern, *dvaita* theistic manifestations. Such a movement away from the Tantric perspective is evident in other traditions as well, such as Śaivism.[62]

This description does not necessarily imply any particular origin claim; whether Tantric Buddhism, for example, developed largely within Mahāyāna Buddhism, or was absorbed into it from without is not at issue here. It will, however, be argued later that although both processes occurred to some extent, neither can be privileged to come up with a singular origin without committing significant distortion and misrepresentation. "Tantrism" may have been a genuinely pan-Indian movement, although its history and development vary between different traditions.[63]

Tantric Buddhism was also a pan-Asian religious movement, and as Buddhism had largely died out in India proper by the sixteenth century, any discussion of Buddhist Tantric traditions must address to some degree the process whereby these traditions were transmitted from India to other parts of Asia. The past representations of Tantric traditions

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[61] A case in point is the philosopher Madhva, who appears to take issue with Śaṃkara's non-dualism precisely concerning the issue of the relationship between God, the individual selves and the world, which Madhva insists on separating via his doctrine of the "fivefold difference" *(pañcabheda)* governing the relationships between these entities. See Potter 1963, p. 249.

[62] Brunner claims that the role of the *sādhaka*, the adept seeking union with Śiva, is stressed in the older *Śaivāgamas*, and that "his importance has lasted up to a time (two or three centuries ago?) when a change in outlook occurred and he was put at the back of the stage, if not totally ignored. Now this *sādhaka* was solely busied with rituals; he had nothing else to do, even was forbidden to comment on the Āgamas" (1992:28) This seems to reflect a gradual de-emphasis of the heroic Tantric goal of an individualistic quest for liberation, and a proportional emphasis placed on the temple cults.

[63] Eliade wrote, concerning the word *tantra*, that "we do not know why and under what circumstances it came to designate a great philosophical and religious movement, which, appearing as early as the fourth century of our era, assumed the form of a pan-Indian vogue from the sixth century onward. For it really was a vogue; quite suddenly, tantrism becomes immensely popular, not only among philosophers and theologians, but also among the active practitioners of the religious life (ascetics, yogins, etc.), and its prestige also reaches the 'popular' strata. In a comparatively short time, Indian philosophy, mysticism, ritual, ethics, iconography, and even literature are influenced by tantrism. It is a pan-Indian movement, for it is assimilated by all of the great Indian religions and by all of the 'sectarian' schools." (1958:200). I generally agree with his characterization and even with his chronology; I hesitate, however, to speak of a "tantrism" which was assimilated by different "sects", not only because of the differences between different Tantric traditions, but also because it is not clear that we can speak of a "Tantrism" apart from the traditions, i.e., it seems to be a case where the universal can only be known from the particular, which calls into question the existence of the universal; my view is that the concept of "Tantrism" has only heuristic value, and that this value is itself limited.

as degenerate cults should not blind us to the fact that these traditions were accepted as a valid if not supreme manifestation of Buddhism. Their prestige was such that they were accepted widely in Tibet, Mongolia, China,[64] Japan and Southeast Asia.[65] Its importance is such that a history of Tantric Buddhism, were one ever written, would not merely chart the rise and fall of a now dead movement; rather it would be one that properly speaking would have no clear cut end, in that Tantric Buddhism today persists in a number of living and vibrant traditions.

1.3. Tantrism in Context

1. Non-Origins

For the study of the Tantras, perhaps more than many other subjects, the critique of historicism begun by Nietzsche and carried on by Foucault is particularly apt. For Tantric traditions, while they do not deny history *per se*, do appear to deny origins, or at least historical origins. The origin of most Tantras is portrayed as ahistorical, origins that defy or transcend our normal categories of time and space. Most Tantras claim a mythic origin, and portray their production as occurring via a witness to some sort of divine discourse or dialogue, coming from the mouth either of a Buddha or Śiva and his consort, Umā.

Some Tantras, arguably, do appear to be making a historical claim when they portray their revelation as occurring in seemingly historical contexts. An example among Buddhist Tantras is the *Kālacakra*, for which has been concocted an elaborate myth of teaching by Śākyamuni Buddha and transmission thence to the hidden kingdom of

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[64] As Orzech has shown in his 1989 article, Esoteric Buddhism has played and continues to play an important role and influential role in China, but its "importance has been obscured because it has been viewed from a series of sectarian perspectives, perspectives which have been generated by the orthodoxies of Shingon Buddhism, neo-Confucianism, and Western sinology and Buddhology." (1989:88)

[65] Nihom has written an excellent book (1994) and a useful article (1998) concerning the transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Indonesia.

Shambhala,[66] or those Hindu traditions that trace their revelation to the overhearing of the ur-dialogue by a human.[67] On the other hand, many Tantric traditions profess that their 'origins' are in fact beyond history, and that their appearance in history is merely a rediscovery or revelation of a pre-existent truth, an example being the legend of the iron stūpa, in which Nāgārjuna is depicted as penetrating an otherwise impenetrable stūpa in Southern India, and receiving therein the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* and the *Tattvasaṃgraha Sūtra* from Vajrasattva, who in turn received them from Vairocana Buddha.[68] The Cakrasaṃvara tradition likewise depicts a divine intermediary between the ultimate source of the tradition and its revelation amongst the humans.[69] In these traditions the Tantra derives from an ultimate, timeless and hence unhistorical source, and its appearance in history is twice removed from its origin. And sometimes, as in the case of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, it is not a single but multiple origin(s) which must be taken into account. The search for origins is not aided, either, by the likelihood that these legends are "revisionist myth presented as revisionist history."[70]

According to Tantric traditions themselves, if we seek a single point of origination we are likely to be disappointed, finding only "traces" which if doggedly followed lead us to non-origins. Derrida's observation is particularly trenchant here:

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[66] Concerning the myth of the teaching of the *Kālacakra* and its dissemination in Shambhala see Bernbaum 1980, pp. 232 ff.

[67] The myth, for example, of the reception of the Hindu Tantras by Matsyendra who overheard them while hidden in the belly of a fish is discussed at length by White (1996a, 1996b). The story is also recounted in the Buddhist accounts of the life of the siddha Minapa. See Robinson 1979 pp. 47-49 and Dowman 1985, pp. 76-80. See also Tucci 1930.

[68] The Chinese account of this legend is translated in Orzech 1995. For a critical discussion of the legend and its importance in the construction of Esoteric Buddhism by Kūkai, see Abé 1999 pp. 220-235.

[69] According to the lineage lists there were two revelations of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, the first imparted by Vajradhara to Vajrapaṇi who in turn transmitted it to the mahāsiddha Saraha, the second deriving from Cakrasaṃvara, which passed to Vajravārāhi and then the mahāsiddha Lūipa.

[70] Lopez argues that Mahāyāna traditions, and the Vajrayāna by extension, deliberately avoid the question of origins via a rewriting of history, perpetually placing their texts in the authoritative context of the Buddha. Lopez writes that "this rewriting in a certain sense displaces what was for the Mahāyāna a problematic question, the question of origins, by introducing a different frame of reference in which tales lead back not to events, but to other tales. (1995a:26)

> The trace is not only the disappearance of origin – within the discourse that we sustain and according to the path that we follow it means that the origin did not even disappear, that it was never constituted except reciprocally by a nonorigin, the trace, which thus becomes the origin of the origin. From then on, to wrench the concept of the trace from the classical scheme, which would derive it from a presence or from an originary nontrace and which would make of it an empirical mark, one must indeed speak of an originary trace or arche-trace. Yet we know that that concept destroys its name and that, if all begins with the trace, there is above all no originary trace. (1976:61)

In what follows we shall look at a number of "traces", several of which have been wrenched from their context for the construction of origin schemes. These, however, are unsatisfactory, perhaps because of their arbitrary nature, and perhaps because the search must always continue onward as Derrida points out, until we reach the point of entering into a vicious rather than a hermeneutic circle. Instead, it might be more fruitful to follow here the Buddhists, who, in rejecting metaphysical speculation into origins,[71] recommended that one develops tolerance of the nonorigination of all things (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti).*

Examples of authors who took up and reified these "traces" include, for example Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, whose *Introduction to Buddhist Esotericism* (1932) was quite influential for several decades, and indeed contributed to the growing awareness of Buddhist Tantrism in the West. Unfortunately, however, the work is marred by the continual invocation of the category of the "primitive" as the putative source of Tantric practice, a category which is not defined, nor is its connection with Tantrism proven. It is rather assumed, assumed no less from the very start of the book, which begins: "Tāntrism originated from primitive magic. The primitive people of India, like all primitive and nomadic races throughout the world, must have had primitive magical practices prevalent among them."[72] In reading the text one gets the feeling that he is attempting to explain the

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[71] See the *Cūḷamālunkyasutta,* Majjhima Nikāya 64, Ñāṇamoli 1995 pp. 537-541.

[72] Bhattacaryya 1932:1. With regard to magical practices, it is unclear to what extent the Tantras can be characterized as primitive since the magical practices typically advocated in the Tantras, the *ṣaṭkarmāṇi,* is derived from one of the oldest strata of Indian literature, the *Artharvaveda.* As Türstig has shown in a 1985 article, the magical practices in the Tantras are largely derived from a literate, pre-existant system of Indian magic. Labeling Tantric magic "primitive" is misleading in that it implies it was derived from a sub-literate source. This labeling is more informative of the presuppositions of the author, who evidently was influenced by the negative evaluation of magic in Western thought. (See Tambiah 1990)

tradition to a public who by then must have been accustomed to the attacks on Tantrism as degenerate and so forth which characterized "scholarly" studies at that time. It is unfortunate, however, that in so doing he invoked the colonialist evolutionary historicism propounded by Orientalists in all fields, and unfortunate as well that this account of Tantrism's "origin" has been repeated by other scholars.[73]

Associating Tantric traditions with "primitive magic" has political overtones that should not be ignored. From the perspective of the Western human sciences these are loaded terms. Kapferer noted that

> Anthropological interest in sorcery and magic took root at a time of Western expansion and colonial domination. It arose in a scientific climate alive with the spirit of Darwinism and concerned with the application of evolutionist thought to cultural, social, and political matters. The investigation of sorcery and magic, indeed the labeling of practices as *sorcery* and *magic,* was part of a philosophical and growing anthropological enterprise with huge political undertones. Their study was integral to the more general engagement of knowledge in the legitimation of the imperial domination of the West (the site of reason) over the subordinated rest (the site of unreason). (1997:9)

While it is true that Tantric traditions are typically interested in what might be called "magical" practices and procedures, much careful investigation is necessary before such labels can be accepted. Such interest is in fact characteristic of certain facets of Indian religions and perhaps all religions, to some extent. Buddhism was no exception, despite the rhetoric of there being a "pure" Buddhism devoid of such practices. Locating the origin of Tantrism in "primitive" religion, whatever that may be, therefore tells us nothing, in that it is meaningful only if we posit a pure Buddhism which in fact never existed.

Regarding the "primitive" origin theories of Indian religious development, Renou commented that

> I believe that these theories are exaggerated, and that they are based on superficial explanations. The empty terms 'non-Aryan' and 'primitive' are used too readily; in seeking to prove too much, one runs the risk of finally proving nothing but the obvious fact that Hinduism possesses the morphological and typological features common to all forms of religion at a certain stage of development. It must always be borne in mind that Hinduism is the expression of a great civilization and is

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[73] See for example Conze 1951, p. 176.

> closely connected with philosophical speculation and literary activity, and that it is a product of creative imagination and a systematic construction. (1953:48)

His insights are applicable to Tantric Buddhism as well. Naturally, elements of "Tantrism" no doubt are quite ancient; the cults of the goddesses which were incorporated into the Tantric traditions may very well be of great antiquity, as another Bhattacharyya argues.[74] Stressing, however, the archaic elements obscures the creative and innovative aspects of Tantric traditions, and is unwarranted since the exact historical processes that gave rise to the traditions is unclear, and some of the so-called "primitive" aspects of Tantrism may in fact be understandable products of the internal dynamics of Tantric traditions.[75] Nor should it be forgotten that Tantric traditions possess extremely sophisticated bodies of theory and practice, which are indeed the products of one of the world's great civilizations, and which differ considerably from those practices that might genuinely be labeled "primitive".[76] These theories and technologies should be appreciated as unique religious phenomena and not pigeon-holed into "primitive" categories such as the "shamanic".[77] Labeling Tantric

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[74] See N. Bhattacharyya 1970.

[75] An example here are certain of the transgressive aspects of Tantrism. Eliade argued that "such excesses, adopted in the name of a doctrine of salvation, opened the way to almost inevitable syncretisms with rites relegated to the lower levels of spirituality and with the behavior patterns of subordinate groups; tantrism finally incorporates the major and minor magic of the people, erotic yoga encourages the open emergence of secret orgiastic cults and of licentious maniacs, which, but for the prestige of the tantric *maithuna* and the techniques of Haṭha Yoga, would have continued their obscure existence in the margin of society and of the community's religious life." (1964:295). While it is certainly *possible* that the sexual rites originated in Elaide's archaic orgiastic cult, this is assumed and not proven. It is also possible for us to understand these as the product of an intra-Tantric process of development, as I will suggested below. We should note as well that these are not mutually exclusive propositions; it is perhaps most likely that "archaic rites" may lie somewhere far back in the genealogies of Tantric practices. But they are likely to have undergone extensive transformation, rendering them into a distinctly Tantric body of practice, understandable in the context of Tantric discourse.

[76] In the Indian context, one *might* fairly label the simple rites of village worship "primitive". But these rites differ greatly from genuinely Tantric rites, as Biardeau noted, writing: "Nonetheless, to speak of tantrism in the context of the small temples of the village boundary goddess is out of the question; and this is a sign that tantric practice continues to be accompanied by a certain refinement in knowledge, and correlatively by a certain social position, which village shrines cannot offer." (1991:152)

[77] Samuel opposes what he claims are two distinct trends in Buddhism, the "shamanic" and the "clerical", and hierarchically opposes them, implying that the former trend is more original and true to the spirit of Buddhism. He defines the "shamanic" as a category of practices which include "the regulation and transformation of human life and human society through the use (or purported use) of alternate states of consciousness by means of which specialist practitioners are held to communicate with a mode of reality alternative to, and more fundamental than, the world of everyday experience." (1993:8) For Samuel, the crucial link connecting shamanism and Tantric Buddhism is the experience of possession, which he understands to occur in Tantric *sādhana* which aim at effecting one's union with an awakened deity. In

traditions as "primitive", etc. is an implicit denial of this, as well as an implicit acceptance of the colonialist "historical" project.

Another author, however, sees the Tantras as deriving their inspiration from the Vedas, despite the fact that their authority was challenged by Buddhists from a very early date. Wayman derives the hypothesis that a brahmin convert to Buddhism wrote the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* simply on the basis of the fact that this sūtra contains a chapter on the rite of fire sacrifice *(homa)*. (1992:203) Now, there is no doubt that the Vedas had a very far reaching influence throughout India and beyond, and that this influence penetrated into Buddhism, primarily in the sphere of ritual. Vedic ritualism seems to have served as a sort of *lingua franca* of ritual technology in India, and it by no means remained the monopoly of the brahmins; as Staal observed, "both Buddhism and Jainism rejected Vedic ritual, but neither rejected ritual."[78] The Buddhist rejection of Vedic ritual was a rejection, in general, of the hegemonic body of discourse of which it was a part, and, in particular, the violent practice of the sacrifice. The ritual elements themselves, however, were not rejected wholesale, as is indicated by the *Kūṭadanta Sutta,*[79] in which the Buddha is portrayed as objecting to the performance of a *śrauta* sacrifice simply on the basis of its violence to animals. Instead, he redefines the rite, prescribing a non-violent "sacrifice", which is in effect the Buddhist alternative, the "Great Gift" *(mahādāna)* ceremony, which will be discussed at greater length in section 3.1.2 below.

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doing so he follows Stablein who made this claim in a 1976 article. Gombrich, however, criticizes Samuel for conflating these very distinct states of possession and meditation. He notes that "Theravāda Buddhists regard possession states, in which all consciousness is lost, as antithetical to Buddhist meditation, which represents enhanced control of one's consciousness. This antithesis is traditionally institutionalized: on *poya* days, the once weekly day of enhanced Buddhist activity, traditional shrines in which the officiate fulfills his role by getting possessed do not operate." (1997:174) The same point can be made for Tantric Buddhism, which does not at all prescribe possession by an alien being who usurps one's consciousness.

[78] Staal 1990a, p. 314. Staal here summarizes Heesterman's argument, who points out that the Buddhists did not reject Vedic ritual *per se*, but reinterpreted it in way which stressed Buddhist values such as non-violence *(ahiṃsa)*; see Heesterman's essay "Brahmin, Ritual, and Renouncer" (1985:26-44). See esp. p. 42.

[79] *Dīgha Nikāya* 5, trans. in Walshe 1987 pp. 133-41.

Such "traces" of Tantrism seem promising when viewed from a distance, but they have the tendency to dissolve under analysis. If we turn up anything at all in a search for origins, it is likely that it will be a plurality of origins, a network of interdependent strands, any of which if taken alone constitute a dead end, but is meaningful if taken together. Or, as Foucault put it, "what is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity." (1977a:142) But if we abandon the search for a mythic "inviolable identity of origin" from the start, it might be possible to take a more positive, possible and fruitful approach.

If it is not history itself that is the problem here, but rather a lack of precision. It will not be possible to identify where, when or how Tantric traditions arose unless one is clear on what exactly Tantric traditions *are*, or, in other words the paradigmatic discourse through which any assemblage of ritual and ideological elements can be understood as Tantric. In examining the elements or constituents of Tantrism, it will be necessary to identify this locus of meaning, which may not lie in the elements themselves, but in the underlying perspective which structures them into a coherent system of theory and practice.

1.3.2 Buddhist Origins

Most scholars of Buddhism, being either Buddhist or at least partial to Buddhism in the sense that their sphere of knowledge centers upon Buddhism, have tended to identify precedents to Buddhist Tantrism in earlier or exoteric Buddhist traditions. An important question here then is how do we account then for the presence in non-Tantric literature of ritual elements considered characteristic of Tantric traditions? This question is relevant to the broader field of Tantric studies.[80] Within the field of Buddhist studies, the Chinese

[80] With regard to Hinduism Tantra Goudriaan notes that "it is necessary to distinguish between 'Tantric elements' and 'Tantrism' as a ritual and doctrinal system. One can take for certain that some elements, and perhaps even early stages of the system, are much older than their first emergence in the literature. We have

Tripiṭaka has proved an excellent source of information here, since it contains a well documented body of translations from the beginning of the common era, in which the gradual increase of "Tantric elements" can be seen. This textual archeology has already been carried out by several scholars;[81] examples include the *Mahāmāyūri-vidyārajñi*, translated in the early fourth century by Śrīmitra, which contains a description of the *homa* fire sacrifice.[82] The rite of *abhiṣeka* is described in several works translated in the fifth century, including the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* (translated 419 CE), the *Suvarṇaprabhāsa Sūtra* (translated ca. 414-26 CE in Liang-zhou) and in the *Consecration Sūtra* (灌頂經), a fifth century composite translation/composition described by Strickmann.[83] The *Suvarṇaprabhāsa* is also notable for its introduction of the five Buddha (*pañcajina*) maṇḍala.[84] In the sixth century we see translated complex Mahāyāna liturgical texts like the *Avalokiteśvaraikadaśamukha*, which while not Tantras *per se* are clearly moving in the direction of the increasing ritualization which characterize the Tantras.[85] The presence of Tantric elements in some of these texts is so strong that it calls into question the later datings of the Tantric traditions,[86] suggesting that Tantric Buddhism gradually developed over many centuries, rather than popping into existence in the eighth century, when Tantric traditions are imported into Southeast Asia, China, Korea, Japan and Tibet.

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seen that the Veda contain many features which later re-appear in developed form in the Tantric sources. But without doubt the Tantra is rooted also in very old traditions of unsystematized yoga and body cult, shamanism, medicine, magic white and black, astrology, religious eroticism and folkloristic ritual which found little or no place in pre-Tantric literature." (Goudriaan et al. 1979:17)

[81] See for example Tucci 1930 and Matsunaga 1977, 1978.

[82] See Matsunaga 1977 p. 172.

[83] See Strickmann 1990, esp. pp. 85-93.

[84] See Matsunaga 1977 p. 174.

[85] *Ibid.* p. 173.

[86] This was pointed long ago out by Tucci (1930:128-29). This issue of dating will be discussed at more length in chapter 5.

This *presence* also calls into question the exoteric-esoteric taxonomy. Japanese scholars of Buddhism formulated the dichotomy of mixed and pure esotericism, *zōmitsu* (雑密) and *junmitsu* (純密). This distinction is used to articulate the difference between the schools of Esoteric Buddhism introduced to Japan during the Heian period and the Exoteric Buddhism of the Nara period. Abé has shown, however, that this distinction simplifies and distorts the actual relationship between these schools and their relationships to the Tantric literature which had in fact been substantially transmitted to Japan during the Nara period.[87]

Tantric traditions clearly place a central concern on ritual, and this concern can be and has been traced as a development within earlier Buddhist traditions. I would argue, however, that Tantric traditions are characterized not so much by the presence or absence of any particular elements, but to a distinctive interpretation of these elements and a distinctive use. As Abé has argued, it is more a perspective, or, in other words a certain sort of ideological taxonomy, that articulates the distinction between a *sūtra* and a *tantra*, an exoteric and an esoteric work. And while "Tantric elements" can probably be traced back to the time of the Buddha or even earlier, I will argue, following Abé's analysis of the Nara Buddhist establishment, that absent from Indian Buddhist discourse before the seventh century

> was not the elements, but the alternate theories, or perhaps more precisely the paradigm of Esoteric Buddhism that would detach from the general Mahāyāna context of religious practice the methods of worshipping esoteric deities, studying esoteric sūtras, chanting esoteric dhāraṇīs, and understanding the efficacy of the sūtras and dhāraṇīs chanted. (Abé 1999:177)

At issue then is not the presence or absence of a certain "critical density" of esoteric elements to make a text Tantric, but a certain consciousness or critical awareness of a body of Tantric knowledge present in both the production and reception of the texts only by

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[87] See Abé 1999 ch. 4, pp. 151-84.

means of which can an esoteric Buddhist text be recognized as such, and translated into practice.[88]

An essential element of this "critical awareness of a body of Tantric knowledge" appears to be the discourse of identification with the Buddha, of taking the goal as one's path. This critical awareness could be read back into the earlier texts, to both enrich the Tantric adept's understanding of the text and also to legitimate the Tantric perspective. According to Thurman, Tsongkhapa saw such a visionary goal-orientation present in exoteric scriptures as well. For him

> All turnings of the wheel of Dharma manifest a consecratory, or goal vehicle, reality at the same time as they interact precisely with the contingencies of ordinary history. Śākyamuni's luminous field of presence was in subtle reality an inexhaustible *maṇḍala*, automatically enthroning those who entered it on the seat of their own highest potential. His miraculous displays, often recorded in the Individual Vehicle as well as Universal Vehicle scriptures, imparted instantaneously a transformed environment to his audiences. (Thurman 1985:376.)

This discourse concerning union with the Buddha and His transformed maṇḍalic environment could not only be read into the texts, but served as an principle for imparting meaning to the rites employed in Tantric ritual. Various ritual elements such as *mantras*, *mudrās*, etc. are then understood as effecting this union in the course of larger ritual performances such as the *abhiṣeka*, *homa*, etc. This discourse is in fact the crucial identifying linchpin which imparts meaning to these. Both ritual elements such as *mantra* and ritual performances such as *homa*, etc. are not Tantric nor even Buddhist innovations; nonetheless, the *meaning* of a Buddhist *abhiṣeka* or *homa* rite is entirely different than a similar rite performed in a Vedic context, because the rites are understood in different ways and put to ideological different uses.[89]

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[88] As the body of Tantric knowledge is in fact quite extensive, the interpretation of Tantric texts is a problematic activity, requiring far more than just the philological skill to read the texts, as Kūkai discovered when he encountered a translation of the *Dainichi-kyō*, the interpretation of which required far more than mastery of classical Chinese. See Abé 1999, p. 105 ff.

[89] The question of the meaning of mantras has been a particularly vexing one, in part no doubt because as speech acts there is the temptation to analyze them semantically. I tend however to lean toward Staal's argument that *mantra* are semantically meaningless (see Staal 1989, 1990a). This is not to say that such analysis is fruitless, however here another approach is needed. The term *mantra* in fact connotes instrumentality (formed as it is with a *kṛt* suffix; see Findly 1989, p. 26), an instrumentality which is

Ritual, like texts, is of interpretable rather than fixed meaning, and thus can be put to different ideological uses. Its interpretation must have the same degree of sophistication that we would expect of textual studies. This interpretability or ambiguity of ritual was noticed by Durkheim, who wrote:

> this ambiguity shows that the real function of a rite does not consist in the particular and definite effects which it seems to aim at and by which it is ordinarily characterized, but rather in a general action which, though always and everywhere the same, is nevertheless capable of taking on different forms according to the circumstances. (1915:431)

One must take into consideration the historical process whereby a ritual action might take on multiple layers of significance in different historical and social contexts. Generally, these new layers do not obliterate, but add to, the older layers, resulting in an increase in ritual complexity, a process Schipper calls the "accretion" of ritual forms. Schipper describes this process in the context of the development of Taoist liturgy as follows:

> Taoist liturgy has constantly been renewed and elaborated throughout history, but this evolution rarely entailed the suppression of ancient forms. This process has resulted in the phenomenon of accretion, with new layers of rites superimposed on the old and new gods added to the earlier ones. Everything has been preserved and integrated into the general structure, so that within the articulation of the ritual syntax, one can detect a real stratigraphy of discourse. (1993:76)

As this process is observable as well in Buddhist ritual texts, an "archeological" exploration of the development of Buddhist ritual forms would need not only to consider *intertextual* diachronic developments but also *intratextual* synchronic embedding of ritual forms.

Kūkai's contribution here is his construction of the category of the Esoteric in Japan. He shows that it is not any particular esoteric element per se that makes the Tantras distinctive, given that most of these can be found in some form or another in the nearly endless volumes of sūtric literature. In his essay "The Difference Between Exoteric and Esoteric Buddhism" *(Benkenmitsu nikyōron)* he writes that "the meanings of exoteric and esoteric are manifold. If the more profound is compared with the less profound, the former is to be called esoteric and the latter, exoteric." This is, of course, a relative distinction,

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understood as occurring in a ritual context (Wheelock 1989:96); the "meaning" of mantras thus depends on the ritual context in which it is used. See Alper 1989, p. 262.

which Kūkai himself points out. (Hakeda 1972:156) Esoteric Buddhism is distinctive in presenting these elements in an empowering or more profoundly meaningful manner, a manner conducive to practice for the purpose of attaining complete awakening, provided that one has received the proper initiation and instructions.

A traditional explanation for the distinction between exoteric and esoteric Buddhism, the Mahāyāna and the Vajrayāna, is that the goal is the same in the both vehicles, complete awakening, but the latter has faster, more effective means of reaching this goal, collapsing the bodhisattva's seemingly endless evolution into a period as short as one lifetime, as seen above. Kūkai points this out when he writes, in a letter to Tokuitsu, that "The Exoteric Teaching *(kengyō)* and the Esoteric Teaching *(mikkyō)* are distinguished from each other in their methods of leading beings to enlightenment." (Abé 1999:207)

This idea is echoed by the Tibetan Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po in his *Pearl Garland* commentary on the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.*[90] He conceptually divides the Mahāyāna into two broad categories, the Transcendence class (*pāramitā-piṭaka, pha rol tu phyin pa'i sde snod)*[91] and the Vidyādhara or "scientist" class.[92] Sachen distinguishes the

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[90] Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po (1092-1158 CE) was a famous Tibetan scholar of the Sa-skya school whose *Pearl Garland* (PG) commentary on the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* was one of the most important and influential commentaries written on this Tantra in Tibet. The following passages are from his introduction to this work.

[91] The term *pāramitā piṭaka* here refers to the classical Mahāyāna path as exemplified by the bodhisattva and as described, in particular, in the *Prajñāpāramitā* class sūtras. While this might be the usual referent for the term *mahāyāna* by scholars of Buddhism, Sachen explicitly defines both of these classes as subdivisions of the larger Mahāyāna vehicle, for the Vajrayāna was considered to be included within the Mahāyāna, being distinguished from it only in its methodology. He describes it as follows: "The method of the Pāramitā class is that one first contemplates the suffering of cyclic existence so as to give rise to dissatisfaction concerning it, in order to achieve the three bodies of a Buddha which is the perfected fruit. As a result, since one desires to renounce cyclic existence, one goes to seek solitude. As the renunciation of cyclic existence is nirvāṇa, by contemplating its good qualities one develops the aspiration to attain nirvāṇa. Until one attains it, one seeks the refuge which protects from suffering. Therefore, first one goes for refuge in the three jewels. Then, developing the aspiration for finding refuge for oneself and protecting others, one is able to give rise spirit of enlightenment which engages that aspiration. By the preliminary practices of going for refuge and giving rise to the spirit of enlightenment, one produces the two assemblies and the six perfections. By practicing the perfection of these for [at least] three immeasurable great eons, or up to thirty three [at most], one will attain the three bodies which are the ultimate fulfillment." / de la pha rol tu phyin pa'i sde snod kyi tshul ni / 'bras bu rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas sku gsum sgrub par byed pa la / dang po 'khor ba'i sdug bsngal la bsam pas / 'khor ba la skyo ba bskyed / de las 'khor ba spang bar 'dod pas dben pa 'tshol ba 'byung la // 'khor ba de spangs pa mya ngan las 'das pa yin pas / de'i yon tan bsam pas mya ngan las 'das pa thob par 'dod pa'i 'dod pa bskyed de / rang nyid kyis ma thob kyi bar du re zhig sdug bsngal las skyob pa'i skyabs gnas 'tshol ba 'byung bas / dang po dkon mchog gsum la skyabs su 'gro ba len pa 'byung / de nas rang skyabs myed pa dang gzhan skyob pa'i blo skyes nas smon pa dang 'jug pa'i byang chub kyi sems bskyed blangs te / skyabs 'gro dang sems bskyed sngon

schools in four ways, all of which point, he claims, to the superiority of the Vidyādhara or "scientist" class, as follows:

> Also, in regard to the distinctive qualities of that second [Vidyādhara] class, it says in the *Vidyottamatantra* that "the Mantayāna is particularly noble because, even though it has the same aim, it is unconfusing, has many methods, is without difficulty, and it is mastered by those of sharp faculties."[93] Therefore, although this second class has the same aim of attaining the state of the true view, the three fruitional bodies and the five intuitions *(jñāna)* and so forth, the Vidyādhara class is particularly more noble than the Pāramitā class due to four distinctions between the two. They are distinct in regard to being confusing or unconfusing, having more or fewer methods, being difficult or free of difficulty, and in regard to [their practitioners] being of sharp or dull faculties. In regard to the first, Vidyādhara class is free of confusion because it has, in addition to the oral and written transmissions, many illustrations and examples such as the Guru's instructions, personal experience at the time of the Intuition Being's descent, the experience of the three initiations, etc. Since the Pāramitā class has none of these it is unclear.
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> Secondly, the Mantrayāna has many methods. The Vidyādhara class has not only skill in the methods of abandoning the addictions *(kleśa)*, but it also has skill in methods of attending to the addictions. The Pāramitāyāna, however, has fewer methods, for aside from methods of abandoning them it has no methods for attending to them.
>
> Thirdly, there are three [topics] in regard to the quality of being difficult or free of difficulty. First, the Pāramitāyāna is physically difficult since it is necessary to sacrifice one's body, such as the head, the best of limbs, and the eye, the best of sense organs, along with one's wealth, etc. over the course of three great immeasurable eons. The Mantrayāna is physically easy as it is accomplished merely through path of creation and perfection and so forth. Secondly, the path of Pāramitāyāna is temporally difficult as one is hindered for three immeasurable eons, while the Mantrayāna is temporally easy as it is accomplished in one or seven

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du 'gro bas pha rol tu phyin pa drug tshogs gnyis kyi bdag nyid du gnas pa de / dus bskal pa chen po grangs med pa gsum mam / sum cu rtsa gsum la sogs pa'i bar du rdzogs par spyad pas mthar thug gi 'bras bu sku gsum thob par 'dod pa'o / (PG p. 289.1)

[92] The *vidhyādhara* are mythical beings associated with the Tantras, the *vidhyādhara* class thus refers to the Tantras or Tantrism. "Regarding the method of the Vidyādhara class, the *vidyā* is the deity on whom the flower fell, his or her essence *(hṛdaya)*, and so forth. The one who holds it first enters the maṇḍala in a precise manner, and having identified [him or herself] with the deity and its blessings, adheres both to the deity on whom the flower fell and its *vidyā*. From practicing this path which possesses the good qualities of the creation and perfection of that [deity], one will attain the ultimate fruit in either this very life, in the between state, or through a succession of births [numbering up to] thirteen. In conjunction with that one will attain the four lower and eight middling achievements, and so forth. / rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod kyi tshul ni / rig pa me tog phog pa'i lha dang de'i snying po la sogs pa yin la / de 'dzin pa ni dang po dkyil 'khor du ji lta ba bzhin du zhugs te / lha dang skal ba mnyam byas nas lha gang la me tog phog pa'i lha dang de'i rig pa bzung ste / de'i bskyed rdzogs yan lag dang bcas pa lam du byas pa las / tshe 'di nyid dang srid pa bar do dang / skye brgyud nas 'bras bu mthar thugs bcu gsum pa la sogs pa thob nas / de'i shar la dman bshi pa la sogs pa dang / 'bring grub pa brgyad thob par 'dod pa'o / (PG pp. 289.1-2.)

[93] I was unable to find this quote at the beginning of this passage in the *Ārya-Vidyottama Mahātantra;* it does however occur in Tripiṭakamāla's *Nayatrayapradīpa*, as follows: / don gcig nyid na'ang ma rmongs dang // thabs mang dka' ba med phyir dang // dbang po rnon po'i dbang byas pas // sngags kyi bstan bcos khyad par 'phags / (NT DT fol. 16b).

> lifetimes, etc. Thirdly, since it is necessary to practice arduous practices and it is difficult to attain a spiritual friend, the Pāramitāyāna possesses difficulty concerning assistance. The Mantrayāna has no such difficulty as it is achieved via the bliss which is the art of serving [her] who has the good qualities which are desired on the path of assistance.
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> Fourth, in regard to distinguishing those of sharp and dull faculties, the person who enters onto the Pāramitāyāna enters as a novice, and thus is a person of dull faculties. One enters into the Mantrayāna enters as one whose continuum was purified in the Pāramitāyāna , so his or her faculties are sharper.[94]

If this is so, the greater "means" or liberative art of Buddhist Tantrism is not its ritualism per se, but the perspective through which such diverse means are yoked to the goal of the achievement of Buddhahood, via the crucial practice of "taking the goal as the path", i.e., making the *experience* of Buddhahood the *practice* by means of mental visualization, vocal mantra recitations, physical movement *(mudrā)* and so forth, accessible at the very least to those of "sharp faculties".[95]

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[94] / sde snod gnyis po de'i khyad par yang / rig pa mchog gi rgyud las / don gcig na yang ma rmongs dang // thabs mang dka' ba med par dang // dbang po rnon po'i dbang byas pas // sngags kyi theg pa khyad par 'phags // zhes gsungs pas na / sde snod gnyis po de ni lta ba dngos po'i gnas lugs dang / 'bras bu sku gsum dang ye shes lnga la sogs pa thob par don gcig pa yin na yang / pha rol tu phyin pa'i sde snod las / rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod khyad par bzhis khyad par du 'phags pa yin te / rmongs pa dang ma rmongs pas khyad par du byas pa dang / thabs mang ba dang nyung ba dang / dka' ba dang bcas dang dka' ba med pa dang / dbang rno ba dang rtul bas khyad par du byas pa'o // de la dang po ni / rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod la lung dang rigs pa'i steng du / bla ma'i gdams ngag dang / ye shes phab pa'i dus kyi nyams su myong ba dang / dbang gsum pa'i nyams su myong ba la sogs pa mtshon byed dpe khyad par can du 'gyur pa du ma yod pas ma rmongs pa yin la / pha rol tu phyin pa'i sde snod la de dag med pas rmongs pa yin no // gnyis pa ni rig pa 'dzin pa'i sde snod la nyon mongs spong ba'i thabs la mkhas pa'i steng du yang / nyon mongs pa bsten pa'i thabs la mkhas pa yod pas / sngags kyi theg pa thabs mang ba yin la / pha rol tu phyin pa'i thegs pa la spang ba'i thabs las bsten pa'i thabs med pas thabs nyung ba yin no // gsum pa dka' ba dang bcas pa dang dka' ba med pas khyad par du byas pa la gsum las / dang po pha rol phyin pa'i theg pa ni / dus bskal pa chen po grangs med gsum la sogs par yan lag gi dam pa mgo dang / dbang po'i mchog mig la sogs pa'i lus dang longs spyod la sogs pa btang dgos pas dngos po dka' ba yin la / gsang sngags kyi theg pa ni lam bskyed rdzogs gnyis la sogs pa tsam gyis 'grub pas dngos po sla ba'i phyir dang / gnyis pa ni pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa'i lam dus bskal pa grang med pa gsum la sogs par thogs pas dus dka' ba dang bcas pa yin la / gsang sngags kyi theg pa ni tshe gcig dang skye ba 'dun la sogs pas kyang 'grub pas dus sla ba'i phyir dang / gsum pa ni grogs dka' thub dang dka' spyad la sogs pa spyad dgos pas / pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa grogs dka' ba dang bcas pa yin la / gsang sngags kyi theg pa grogs lam du 'dod pa'i yon tan bsten pa'i thabs bde ba'i 'grub pas grogs dka' ba med pa yin no // bzhi pa dbang rno ba dang rtul bas khyad par du byas pa ni / pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa la 'jug pa'i gang zag ni las dang po pa'i gang zag cig 'jug pas / pha rol tu phyin pa'i lam la 'jug pa'i gang zag dbang po rtul po yin la / gsang sngags kyi theg pa la 'jug pa ni pha rol tu phyin pa'i theg pa la rgyud sbyang ba cig 'jug pa yin pas / dbang po rno pas khyad par du byas pa yin no / (PG pp. 289.2-3)

[95] At first glance the idea that the "Mantra vehicle" is both easier yet more suitable for the "sharper" students appears contradictory, as one expect that the "easier" path would be for the less competent. While many texts repeat these reasons I have not yet found any which directly address this issue directly. This and other texts suggest, however, that the Mantra vehicle is easier in that it presents a clear, concise "fast-track" (Tibetan *mgyogs lam*, also trans. as "shortcut") to unexcelled awakening which avoids the lengthy and arduous practices of the Perfection vehicle. It is best suited to the "sharper" students, however, in that most people, and particularly those who have less developed faculties of self-awareness and self-control,

1.3.3 Hindu Origins

It is impossible to view Indian Tantric traditions, particularly the later Buddhist *anuttarayogatantras* and the Hindu Tantras, with an open mind and not be struck by the criss-crossing patterns of overlaps, influences and intertextuality that link the traditions. Given the complexity of the situation a search for an "origin" here is probably futile; Buddhist scholars often have a tendency to privilege Buddhism, Hindu scholars Hinduism, but such conclusions are probably the result of a concentration of knowledge in one area at the expense of the other. A not uncommon approach, however, has been to resort to influence from "Hinduism" to explain the growth of "superstitions" in Buddhism that bore its final, poisonous fruit in the rise of Tantric Buddhism. Farquhar, for example, assumes that Tantrism was essentially a Hindu development, and accounts for the rise of Buddhist Tantrism as follows:

> A new movement, which really amounted to a disastrous revolution, arose in Buddhism during this period, the Tāntrik movement. It is in all things parallel with the Tāntrik movement in Hinduism; and, like it, it was repudiated by the best schools of the parent faith. How was such a thing possible in Buddhism? – Because the main conceptions of polytheistic paganism had never been repudiated and condemned. All Buddhists believed in the Hindu gods and demons, the need of honouring them, the supernatural power of sainthood, the occult potency of yoga-practices, both physical and mental, and the power of magic spells. Although these things were kept in the background in early Buddhism, they were not killed, and in the Mahāyāna they got the opportunity to grow and spread. The numerous Buddhas and celestial Bodhisattvas of the Mahāyāna – above all Avalokiteśvara – conceived like Hindu divinities in heavens of glory and pleasure, and worshipped in like manner, opened the door wide to Hindu superstition. (1920:209-10)

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have a tendency to overestimate their abilities, and thus, without proper guidance, are in danger of overextending themselves, which could potentially be disastrous on the Mantra vehicle, which is typically considered to be as dangerous as it is easy. For this reason it is said that the Mantra vehicle is best suited to more advanced students who have the guidance of a qualified instructor or guru, who provides an authoritative analysis of the student's abilities and needs and recommends a path accordingly. On the other hand, students who are less able or who lack a qualified instructor are better off training in the Perfection vehicle, wherein they can gradually sharpen their faculties for later use in the Mantra vehicle. This was suggested to me by Geshe Yeshe Thabkay of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath.

The problem with this sort of characterization, aside from its prejudiced condemnation of Tantrism, is that it assumes linear causation where only interdependence is warranted. This observation was made by Locke, who argued against the typical characterization of Newāri Buddhism as "corrupt" because it has "borrowed" elements from Hinduism. Locke wrote that

> One has the impression that many writers find Newar Buddhism corrupt because it is tantric. This is a biased judgement, and ultimately any evaluation of Newar Buddhism must be made against the yardstick of their Mahāyāna-Tantra tradition. A common complaint is that it is mixed-up with Hinduism. Again, this seems to be the judgement of tantric Buddhism with its multiplicity of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, protective deities and demons, plus the tantric ritual. The iconography of many such deities has been 'borrowed' from the Hindus, or better from the general treasury of Indian tradition. Thus, many forms of Avalokiteśvara (e.g., Nīlakaṇṭha-Lokeśvara) show heavy Śaivite borrowings and the very name Lokeśvara is ambiguous to the outsider. But Avalokiteśvara is not Śiva and no Buddhist would conflate the two. The rituals performed by the Vajrācāryas and the rituals performed by the Hindu tantric priests may seem identical to the casual observer, but the meaning and purpose of the rituals is totally different. (1989:109)

Obviously, religious traditions need to be studied in context. Since elements such as ritual and iconography form what could be called a "religious vocabulary" which can be put to many different ideological uses, it is not sufficient to talk only of "borrowing", which implies an essentialist understanding of religion. Even for a study on Tantric Buddhism, it is necessary to articulate its relationship(s) to "Hinduism", if for no other reason than to counteract the simplistic models which verge toward misrepresentation. For example, while the phenomena of the rise of *bhakti* devotionalism in Hindu traditions and the cults centered around celestial Bodhisattvas in Buddhism are clearly related and roughly concurrent developments, there is simply insufficient evidence to prove that either one caused the other.[96] Most likely, they were interdependent phenomena connected by multiple lines of influence.

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[96] The texts on which these traditions are notoriously difficult to date. The scriptures dedicated to Amitābha, probably the earliest Buddhist scriptures of this type, have been dated to about 100 CE (Amstutz 1998:70). Likewise, the *Bhagavad-gita* has been dated to the first century CE (Miller 1986:3). It can also be argued that the latter work can be understood as a conservative apologetic addressing the *subtextual* criticisms of the Buddhists and the Jains (see Basham 1989 p. 94), suggesting that the inter-traditional influences crisscross through time.

The argument of Hindu origins would be tenable if, in fact, the development of Hindu Tantrism were clear. Its development, however, is at least as obscure as the Buddhist, and perhaps more so. Unlike Buddhism, Hinduism does not have a datable body of texts preserved in Chinese or Tibetan translation. The relationship between Tantric Hinduism and the Vedic tradition is ambiguous at best; while the former clearly did draw from the latter, and sometimes looked to it for legitimization, the adherents of these two were at least as likely to reject the authority of the other. One could argue that Hinduism was riven by a gap constituted by the significant (and arguably ultimately irreconcilable) difference between Vedic and Tantric theory and practice; attempts at reconciling the two was a significant trend of early medieval Indian religious history.[97]

Faced with this difficulty, Goudriaan looks outside of the bastions of brahmanic Hinduism to account for the rise of Tantrism. He argues that a significant contribution to the development of Tantra was made

> by the probably always rather numerous yogins and ascetics, 'renouncers' who tried to find a direct access to the state of individual release outside the normal frame of Indian society. Their predilection for wandering or settling away from the centres of Hindu culture would bring them into contact, not only with the common people of Hinduized areas, but also with non-Hindu peoples and tribes who worshipped strange deities and practiced deviating religious customs. Unhampered as they were by the authority of upholders of dogmatic discipline or canonical scripture, they freely set to work integrating these various influences into methods of their own. (1979:39)

It will be argued below that such "liminal" figures most likely played a decisive role in the early development of Tantric traditions in India. Goudriaan's characterization above veers toward the re-importation of the "primitive", but the renouncers, the *śramaṇa*s, should not be labeled "primitive", as they were responsible for the development of sophisticated philosophical systems as well as traditions of meditation and yoga. It should be noted, however, that when invoking such figures as "wandering renouncers" we are no longer

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[97] Goudriaan comments that "although the followers of the Tantra have often been accused of heterodoxy by the upholders of the Veda-oriented brahmanical system, Tantrism usually did realize very well the prime importance of the Veda as a source of revelation (or authentication!). Hence it tried in various ways to attain a satisfactory solution to this ever-recurring problem: how to settle matters with the generally – although often only by lip-service – venerated oldest source of the Indian religious tradition, and especially: how to account for the apparent deviation from and even defiance of that source." (1979:15)

dealing with "Hinduism" or "Buddhism" as distinct religions but rather precisely with the pan-Indian religious substratum. Renunciation is found to some degree in all Indian traditions to some degree, and while renunciation was closely associated with Buddhism and Jainism, there undoubtedly remained renunciates unaffiliated with any institutionalized order. Renunciates in the forms of the *siddhas* were particularly associated with the Tantric traditions, and, as will be discussed in chapter three, they are not readily categorized in sectarian terms.

Given the seeming impossibility of sorting out the relationships between ancient Indian traditions, a number of scholars in both fields have resorted to the notion of "syncretism" to explain this complex situation.[98] This approach has the virtue of leaving aside the search for origins and respecting that certain aspects of the Tantrism are not easily pigeon-holed into scholarly categories such as "Buddhism" and "Hinduism".[99] Nonetheless, it still is somewhat problematic in anachronistically referring to, for example, a "Hindu" tradition in early medieval India, as the category of "Hinduism" is a colonialist construction, carrying within its indistinct boundaries a number of distinct traditions; there is thus little or no basis for its application to pre-colonial India.[100] While the term "Hinduism" will not be rejected here, it is important to note that it is not always meaningful in the context under investigation. For example, from the perspective of the *vaidika* brahmins Buddhists were heretical *(nāstika)* in that they rejected the authority of the Veda, but so too were a number of other supposedly "Hindu" groups such as the *Pāśupatas* and the *Kāpālikas* who were most likely played a key role in production of the "Hindu"

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[98] See for example White 1996a for a discussion of Hindu-Buddhist syncretism in regard to Tantrism and related traditions (i.e. *rasāyāna).*

[99] Indeed, this is in part due to the fact that there is a striking overlap between Buddhist and Hindu traditions in the realms of both theory and practice, although this overlap is not so great as to verge on identity; the differences are as striking as the similarities.

[100] The word "Hindu" evidently derives from the Persian pronunciation of *sindhu,* also known as the Indus River or the region through which it flows. As the Muslims first encountered India in the vicinity of the Indus the term came to refer in Muslim parlance to India in general; "Hindu" thus was a foreign term referring to Indians, and "Hinduism" is of course not an indigenous term for Brāhmanic or *vaidika* religion. See Smith 1987 p. 34-35.

Tantras. These groups were, however, also considered to be outsiders *(bāhyika)* by the Buddhists since they believed in a creator deity.

The complexity of religious life in early medieval India is not easily reduced to a simple case of "Hindu-Buddhist" syncretism. It is a useful idea, however, in that it recognizes that innovation occurred within numerous groups who, despite their sectarian identities and institutional independence, were not constituted as closed systems, but instead were engaged in a constant process of borrowing and adapting religious ideas and ritual technologies, despite the sometimes hostile rhetoric produced perhaps in an effort to hide this process. In talking about syncretism, however, one should keep in mind that it did not occur between the monolithic traditions portrayed in the textbooks, but rather betwixt a more complex field of players who, despite their later association under the rubrics of "Hinduism" or "Buddhism", had distinct identities and institutional establishments.

Appropriations of deities and religious ideas and practices commonly occurred between Indian religious traditions. It is not entirely clear, however, whether or not all such instances should be labeled "syncretic". Gombrich, for example, has argued that syncretism should be reserved for the unconscious process of adoption or compromise that often occurs when religious traditions are declining or transforming. He has argued, for example, that syncretism should be limited to cases such as when Sri Lankan "Buddhists" make animal sacrifices at Hindu temples without knowing that they are in fact violating a key Buddhist precept.[101]

Gombrich uses the term "ethicization" to refer to the much more frequent phenomenon of Buddhist adoption of the ideas, practices or deities of other sects, in which the Buddhists transform the adopted practice or deity by subordinating it to the "higher" goal of awakening. This process is justified by the doctrine of liberative art *(upāya)*, since such appropriations can be used in order to convert people to the Buddhist path. The

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[101] See Gombrich 1993, p. 166, and also Gombrich and Obeyesekere 1988, p. 34.

practices or deities are "ethicized" in the sense that they are reinterpreted, stripped of violent aspects and recast as Buddhist.

This process is well attested historically and continues at the present time. The process by which Buddhists appropriate and reinterpret non-Buddhist practices in present day Nepal has been well described by Mumford in his 1989 book.[102] This process is also narrated in the numerous legends of the conversion of non-Buddhist deities by Buddhists or Buddhist deities. These encounters typically are prompted by the unethical, harmful behavior of the non-Buddhist deities, who upon "conversion" are awakened and vow to act in an ethical manner, and to protect rather than harm Buddhists and the Buddhist religion. The Cakrasaṃvara tradition, in fact, supposedly originated in just such an act of conversion, of the "Hindu" deities Bhairava and Kālarātrī.

Unfortunately, it is not always easy to distinguish unconscious "syncretism" from conscious appropriation (ethical or otherwise) since it is not easy to judge the knowledge and motivations of the actors involved. Bharati, for example, noted that

> In certain places the Hindus and Jains worship the same icon as different entities; thus Hindus may worship a particular icon as Śiva, while Jains worship it as Pārśvanātha (one of the founders of Jainism); they might not even be aware that others around them are worshipping a different representation. If the matter is brought up, specialists around the place may declare, 'both these divinities are the same.' This is in line with the classical postulate of samanvaya, that enjoins the stressing of essential similarities and possible identities in cult and thought whenever there is an apparently contradictory situation. (1967:110)

The temples Bharati discusses here are Jain temples in the vicinity of Mount Abu in Rajasthan; this seems to represent an early stage in the same process whereby Śaivas completely absorbed and gained control over Buddhist and Jain temples in South India. Jaini describes the Kadri Mañjunātha temple, a Śaiva temple near Mangalore which was originally a Buddhist monastery called Kadarikā vihāra, which was evidently dedicated to the bodhisattva Mañjuśrī. While the exact nature of this conversion process was unknown, Jaini surmises that the Śaivas identified Mañjuśrī as a form of Śiva and proceeded to

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[102] See especially Mumford 1989 pp. 27 ff.

worship him as such, and gradually gained control of the site. While the current residents of the temple are unaware of its Buddhist derivation, no doubt their predecessors were.[103] In such cases the Hindu ideology of *samanvaya* seems to function as does the Buddhist notion of *upāya*, i.e., as a justification for the appropriation of an attractive feature of another tradition, while still maintaining the supremacy of one's own. Such might be the motivation behind subordinating claims of inclusiveness, which, rather than outright denying rival teachings, claim them as a form of one's own. For example, the Śaivite *Ajitāgama* claims that "also in the (tradition) of Bhairava, and in other (traditions) such as that of Paśupati, and in the Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist lore as well as in the worship of the deities of the regions...all that is none other than He, the Ruler of the Gods, the Eternal, called Śiva"[104]

Often, such appropriations are followed by the effacement of the original source, typically through claiming that things were always thus, that the appropriated idea, etc. was an original idea of the tradition. Quarnström notes that

> The process involved in the formation of any orthodoxy implies the requirement of conformity of the traditional exegesis to the dogma of the canonical scriptures. When new ideas are introduced into a tradition they are often presented or just tacitly incorporated as if they were old or original. For one reason or another they have been lost or forgotten, but have now been rediscovered or reintroduced into the tradition. By means of such reintroduction of ideas which from our historical perspective are new or at least partly new, but from the point of view of the tradition are considered old, the tradition itself considers itself as being reformed in accordance with the impeccable *(orthos)* doctrines *(doxa)* of the basic scriptures. In this way it has been "purified" from heterodoxy which in the course of time had become a part of its teaching. (1998:45-46)

This process of appropriation followed by incorporation is evident in both Buddhist and Hindu traditions. With regard to the former, the Cakrasaṃvara tradition is a case in point, since it clearly appropriated and incorporated significant aspects of the *Kāpālika* tradition,

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[103] See Jaini 1980, p. 87.

[104] bhairave ca tathānyeṣu paśupāśupatādiṣu viṣṇutantre ca bauddhe ca tathā dikpāladarśane... tat tat sa eva deveśaḥ śivasaṃjñaḥ sanātanaḥ (*Ajitāgama*, Kriyāpāda 1,22, *op. cit.* Goudriaan 1978 p. 439; trans. in Goudriaan 1978, pp. 36,7, with emendations by me.

which was unorthodox vis-à-vis both Buddhism and Hinduism.[105] With regard to Hinduism, the Hindu Tantric cults of the goddess Tārā and Chinnamastā are clearly derived from well-known Buddhist counterparts.[106]

I will use the term "syncretism" or the adjective "syncretic" to refer to those traditions or texts which most likely derive from *multiple origins*, but which have effaced this in portraying their origination as occurring via a unitary process of revelation descending through a hoary tradition. A tradition may also be labeled syncretic when, despite such claims, there remain traces pointing toward their derivation from a multiplicity of sources rather than a singularity. This label can be applied not only to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, which owes a debt to groups such as the Kāpālikas, and most likely to the Kāpālikas themselves as well. The concept of "unconscious" syncretism does not seem to be a helpful interpretive category, since all traditions to some extent draw upon outside sources, and whatever elements are appropriated tend to be almost seemlessly incorporated into their new contexts, and transformed in the process.

On the other hand, in cases such as the Cakrasaṃvara where there is an origin myth that clearly portrays the source from which elements was appropriated and transformed, Gombrich's concept of "ethicization" will serve nicely. These myths in fact illustrate through narrative a theory of cultic appropriation; while Hindus have their theory of *samanvaya*, Buddhists have a theory of the *control, enjoyment* and *assimilation* of non-Buddhist deities along with their attendant cults, as will be shown in section 6.3 below.

When dealing with early medieval Indian religious traditions, it is often impossible to pinpoint a definitive source for a feature found in several different traditions, making the attempt to ascertain its origin futile. Ruegg has argued that numerous practices, deities, etc.

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[105] The general relationship between Buddhist and other renunciant groups such as the Kāpālikas will be discussed in section 3.2 below, while specific evidence of such syncretism will be discussed in section 6.2.2.

[106] Concerning Tārā see Kinseley 199, pp. 112-128, while Beyer's (1973) monograph on the Buddhist Tārā remains the standard study concerning Her; see also Wilson 1986. Bernard's (1994) study of the Hindu and Buddhist versions of Chinnamastā is very interesting; see also Kinseley 1997, pp. 144-66.

found in Buddhism but also in other traditions derive from what he calls the Indian "religious substratum".[107] One might include in this category cosmological ideas found in all the major religions, as well as yogic and meditative techniques that cannot be traced to any one tradition in particular.

It also appears to be the case that religious traditions in India were not as sharply divided as scholarly categories would lead one to believe. This certainly appears to be the case with Tantric traditions, which often include many of the same figures among their lineage lists of founding figures, the so-called *mahāsiddhas*, of some of the most important Buddhist and Śaiva[108] Tantric traditions. Certain of these "founders", such as Lūipa/Matsyendra, are so important to both traditions that it calls into question facile categorizations, implying that sectarian identities may not have been as important as we might be led to believe. This is suggested not only by examples of borrowing or appropriation of doctrines or ritual or meditative techniques across sectarian lines.[109] With regard to yogic groups, in fact, identity may have been based on *lineage* much more than sect, and these lineages may have very often crossed sectarian boundaries.

An relevant example may be the case of the *nāth* traditions, which are commonly considered to be Hindu. Briggs, however, has shown the influence of Buddhism on these traditions in his influential (1938) book on the *nāths*. The *nāths* appear to be a truly liminal group, not easily pigeon-holed into any neat sectarian category,[110] but the similarities of the

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[107] He argues this in his 1964 and 1989c articles.

[108] I use the term *śaiva* not in the specific sense defined by Brunner, i.e., as referring to the Southern *śaivāgama* tradition (1986:514). Rather, I use it in the more general sense defined by Apte, i.e., "one of the three principle Hindu sects" (1965:927.2). In the Tantric context I will use it in reference to those traditions which place their greatest emphasis on the god Śiva in any of his forms, such as Bhairava. I will use the term Śākta to describe those traditions on which the greatest emphasis is placed upon the goddess in her various forms. These terms do overlap somewhat, but I will provide clarification when necessary.

[109] Examples of borrowing by the Cakrasaṃvara tradition from Śaiva sources will be discussed below in chapter six.

[110] Regarding the *nāths* Gonda wrote that "the so-called Nātha-Yogins constitute a religious movement which, while probably originating in the North-East or East of India, and after playing an important part in the history of medieval Indian mysticism, still has adherents in many parts of the subcontinent. Being nearly related to the other currents which aim at conquering death they have amalgamated with tantrist and

doctrines to Tantric Buddhist doctrines have led some to conclude that they owe a debt to the Buddhists.[111] On the other hand, a number of Tibetan Buddhist lineages appear to originate with *nāth* yogins whose identity as Buddhists are far from certain, and who may have had closer affiliation with Śaiva or even Sūfī groups.[112] Some have claimed that the complex relationships between these groups is due to a lack of sectarianism. Dowman claims that

> During this [early medieval] period there was little or no sectarianism, and a siddha could accept initiation and practice the instruction of Buddhist, *śaiva* and *śākta* Gurus concurrently or consecutively. Although this may have led to some exchange of metaphysics and techniques between lineages, doctrines and yogas remained separate. (1985:78)

This evident lack of sectarianism is perhaps attributable to a greater emphasis placed on lineage, which we would expect of groups of yogins loosely organized around charismatic gurus, rather than sects, which would have implied a certain degree of institutional establishment which had perhaps not occurred until a later date. Chapter three will develop the argument that these yogin groups constituted a liminal group in the structure of early medieval Indian society, loosely organized around the charismatic leadership of the *gurus*. As such they may have had more in common socially than the later sectarian identifications would lead us to believe. The sectarianism and strife was most likely the product of a somewhat later development as distinct lineages became institutionalized into distinct sects

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śāktist ideas and practices. Their highest aspiration is to become God in their present bodily existence and they try to attain this ideal by means of techniques presupposing the corrolation between, and the identity of, maçrocosm and microcosm: everything that is found in creation has a parallel in the human body. Their Śivite origin is very uncertain, but they impress us, especially in their Bengali representatives, as a variety of that religion.: it is Śiva who is their High God and the first teacher of their doctrines; it is union with him which they aspire to; Śivite temples and festivals are frequented and rules of Śivite asceticism followed. However, in the West of India they are nearer to Viṣṇuism, in Nepal Buddhism, and their customs and literature evince a tendency to adopt many heterodox elements." (1977:221)

[111] Bose, for example, wrote that "some of the Natha-Siddhas had definite Saivite leanings. But it would not be correct to label the Natha-Siddhas as a Saivite sect. Their tenets bear too much resemblance to [the] Vajrayana....The Natha-Siddhas were originally nine in number and many of them were included in the list of the 84 Buddhist Siddhas. It is quite likely that many of them started as disciples of Buddhist Tantrikas. Later they somewhat Hinduised the teachings of the Buddhist tantras. They introduced many new theories in the realm of yoga and hathayoga thereby making a departure from the Vajrayana." (1988:200, insert mine)

[112] See Templeman 1997 for an account of Tāranātha's studies under a Nāth guru. See Walter (1992 & 1996) for a discussion of the rNying-ma tradition attributed to a Nāth yogin "Jābir" *(dza-ha-bir)* whom Walter identifies with the Islamic alchemist Jābir ibn Ḥayyān (ca. 721-815).

competing for influence, patronage and scarce resources. And while sectarian identities are applicable to the study of Tantric traditions at a later date, it may be anachronistic to apply them to the early medieval period when their social position is far from clear. That distinct lineages formed which were transmitted separately, and around which institutions in some cases later crystallized, is clear.[113]

Tantric Buddhism thus presents a certain challenge to those who would investigate its development. On the one hand, traces and contributions from numerous sources, Buddhist and non-Buddhist, can be identified, pointing toward a multiplicity of origins. On the other hand, Tantric Buddhism not only maintained its identity as Buddhist in the process of the absorption and transformation of the various practices that would constitute the Tantras, but also created a new discourse and new identity for Buddhists that probably did not bring about the downfall of Buddhism in India, but revitalized it and assured its survival well into the second millennium.

In the chapters that follows I will seek to contextualize the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, to shed light on the social, historical and intellectual tends that contributed to it development and interpretation in India. Given the lacunae that exist concerning the early medieval period in question this study will necessarily be incomplete, and will address only several issues out of the many that *could* possibly be addressed. In particular, this study will focus on the peculiar dialectic that unconventional Tantras such as the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra exhibit. That is, they both contain renunciant tendencies, seeking to locate themselves in the liminal spaces such as the charnel ground in which they take a stance diametrically opposed to normative social values, but yet at the same time assert a mastery which is at the same time an appeal for power and patronage within the social world. As Mookerjee and Khanna put it,

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[113] Snellgrove noted "whatever features they have in common, Buddhist tantras are quite distinct from Hindu tantras, and there was never any confusion in their transmission." (1987:118)

> Tantra evolved out of the same seeds in which the traditional system germinated and therefore grew up in the mainstream of Indian thought, yet in the course of time it received its nourishment from its own sources, which were not only radically different from the parent doctrine but often heretical and directly opposed to it. In this way, tantra developed largely outside the establishment, and in the course of a dialectical process acquired its own outlook. (1977:14)

This outlook is neither simplistically this-worldly nor other-worldly, but rather involves the integration of seemingly paradoxical positions, an integration possible by means of a nondualistic philosophy which negates extreme, essentialist positions. This allowed both the critique of the status quo, as well as the formation of an alternative vision of reality, as well as an alternative social ideology.

Chapter Two

Passion, Compassion and Self-Mastery: Approaches to Tantric Buddhism

Past criticisms of Tantric traditions stemmed from a literal interpretation of transgressive passages contained in the Tantras themselves. These criticisms were typically made without regard to the interpretations such passages were given in the commentaries. They thus ignored the understanding of the texts of held by the traditions themselves, as well as their place within the larger context of Mahāyāna Buddhist thought.

This chapter begins with a discussion of Mahāyāna nondualistic philosophy by means of which commentators approached these passages, and which thus represents the intellectual context in which they should be understood and interpreted. This also informs the Tantric discourse concerning praxis and social action, since nondualism was used as a justification for the rejection of the ideology, for example, of purity and pollution which was central to normative Indian religious and social theory.

This chapter continues with an examination of some of these passages, arguing that the literal interpretation to which they have been subjected is inadequate, and that a more sophisticated approach is needed to approach this highly challenging and sophisticated body of Buddhist literature. This approach will require a better understanding of their social contexts, i.e., the Buddhist polities in which these texts were composed, studied and practiced. It will be argued that the rhetoric of transgression in Tantric texts is best understood to represent not antinomianism per se, but rather a striking illustration of the mastery in and beyond the world that Tantric praxis is supposed to effect. This is significant because it is an underlying principle to the social ideology found in Tantric texts, which will be discussed in Chapter Three below.

2.1 Purity

Tantric Buddhism was often considered to be dangerous due to the likelihood that it would be misinterpreted by those who are philosophically and yogically unprepared. The visualization of oneself as a Buddha might sound appealing, but could be harmful to the unprepared in that it might inflame the already enlarged egos of those who have not truly taken to heart the teaching of selflessness. On the other hand, the seemingly transgressive nature of the Tantras have led many to conclude that they have somehow fallen from the lofty ideals of earlier forms of Buddhism. In what follows, however, I will argue that the transgressive rhetoric of the Tantras can be understood as a consequence of certain trends already present within earlier forms of Buddhism, and that relevant ideas cluster particularly fruitfully around the idea of "purity" and what that means in terms of both theory and practice.

In exploring the relationship between the cosmos and meditation in Buddhism in the last chapter it was observed that this is possible only due to the doctrine of selflessness *(anātman)* or voidness *(śūnyata)*. This idea, that all things and beings lack any sort of intrinsic reality, yields, when rigorously applied, the doctrine of nonduality, which denies the ultimate validity of any of the dichotomous constructions on which it appears human thought and language is based. This idea, somewhat paradoxically, is expressed in the classical Mādhyamika formulation of the two truths, which simultaneously affirms the existence of the world from a *conventional* point of view, while at the same time holding that its *ultimate* truth is precisely the fact that it or any of its component parts is devoid of any intrinsic reality. These two levels are linked by the idea of relativity *(pratityasamutpāda)*; since things lack any intrinsic basis for their existence, they exist in an interdependent fashion.

There have been various attempts to add a third term to this equation to mediate between the conventional and the ultimate levels,[1] but according to the classical Mādhyamika this is unnecessary, for relativity, which can be understood as a description of the conventional, is itself devoid of intrinsic reality. Or, as Candrakirti wrote in his *Mādhyamakāvatāra,* "Even though [things] are not in reality produced, it is not the case that they do not serve as objects that are perceived in the context of everyday experience, as in the case of a barren woman's son."[2]

Therefore, in the philosophy of the Mahāyāna all dichotomies are ultimately false and collapse into the state of non-difference, which is not precisely identity, and which is called nonduality *(advaya).* This applies even to the distinction between the phenomenal and transcendental worlds, bondage and liberation, *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa.* Hence Nāgārjuna argued in his *Mūlamadhyamakārikā* that "there is nothing distinguishing cyclic existence *(saṃsāra)* from liberation *(nirvāṇa)*; there is nothing distinguishing liberation from cyclic existence. That which is the limit of cyclic existence is the limit of liberation; there is nothing between them, not even a very subtle thing."[3] Objectively it may not be possible to distinguish *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa,* meaning that no place or thing is privileged as a locus for liberation. Instead, the case can and has been made that bondage and

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[1] For example, see Swanson 1989 for a discussion of Zhi-yi's introduction of the "middle way" (中道) as a third mediating term betwixt the Two Truths. Donner, however, argues that this third term does not merely mediate between the two. He argues that it "is not truly a compromise, a 'middle way' between extremes as we might first think, but instead emphasizes the paradoxical nature of reality: that the truth cannot be reduced to a single formulation." (1987:205). It is arguable that the middle of the three natures of the Yogācārins, the "other-dependent" or "relative" *(paratantra)* nature, serves the same role; such a scheme, however, is arguably unnecessarily or at least misleading insofar as it fosters or points toward an unwillingness to fully apply the doctrine of śūnyatā to conventional reality, leaving untouched by its critique a intrinsic identity to the designative base of concepts and language. See Thurman 1984 pp. 117-18, 201-03, 299.

[2] / de nyid du 'di ji ltar skye med kyang // mo gsham bu ltar gang phyir 'jig rten gyi // mthong ba'i yul du mi 'gyur ma yin pa /. *Mūlamādhyamakāvatāra* 6.110a-c, Huntington 1989, p. 208 n. 88. cf. Huntington 1989:47.

[3] ch. 25, vv. 19-20: na saṃsārasya nirvāṇāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇaṃ // na nirvāṇasya saṃsārāt kiṃcid asti viśeṣaṇaṃ // nirvāṇasya ca yā koṭiḥ koṭiḥ saṃsaraṇasya ca // na tayor antaraṃ kiṃcit susūkṣmam api vidyate // (Kalupahana 1986:365-66) / 'khor ba mya ngan 'das pa las // khyad par cung zad yod ma yin // / mya ngan 'das pa 'khor ba las // khyad par cung zad yod ma yin // mya ngan 'das mtha' gang yin pa // de ni 'khor ba'i mtha' yin te // de gnyis khyad par cung zad ni // shin tu phra ba'ang yod ma yin // (MMK fol. 17a).

liberation, while not ontologically separate, are experientially separated by two distinct modes of cognition.

This view was that held by both of the major schools of Mahāyāna philosophy, the Idealists *(vijñānavādin)* and Centrists *(mādhyamika)*.[4] The Idealists expanded upon the Vaibhāṣika theory that there are two types of existence, expressed by Saṃghabhadra as follows: "Existents are of two sorts: those which exist substantially, inherently, and those which exist as designations. These two categories correspond, in effect, to the distinction between ultimate truth and experiential truth."[5] The Centrists also attacked the Vaibhāṣika notion that there were intrinsically real existents, and replaced the belief in ultimately real *dharmas* or constituents of reality with the idea that ultimate reality is precisely the voidness or lack of any such intrinsically real existents.[6]

This had the effect of ontologically destabilizing the world, which could no longer be seen as real as it appears. For if substantial existence *(dravyasat)* is negated, existence can only be conceived as representation (*vijñāpti*) or designation *(prajñāpti)*; what is accepted is that there are representations or appearances, and linguistic conventions, but it is not accepted that ultimately realities lie behind them.[7] The net effect of this critique is that emphasis or the focus of critical analysis is shifted away from the outside world, which is

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[4] See Thurman 1984 for an in-depth discussion of these schools.

[5] From his *Nyāyānusāra;* quoted from Griffiths 1986 p. 50.

[6] It has been argued that one of the central motivating factors in the development of Mādhyamika philosophy was the attack on the Abhidharma theorists, and in particular the *dharma* theory, which holds that persons and things lack any intrinsic reality in that they are composite, but argues that the parts to which they can be reduced are intrinsically real. Nāgārjuna's writings can be understood as a thorough critique of this idea; from the Mahāyāna perspective the proponents of the dharma theory failed to undertake a complete deconstruction of reality. A thorough description of the *dharma* theory, as well as the early critiques by the Sautrānikas and Prajñāptivādins, see Lamotte 1988a, pp. 593-609, as well as Sanderson 1994b; concerning the importance of this debate in the development of the Mādhyamika positions see Huntington 1989, esp. pp. 17-19.

[7] The critique of the conventional aspect of reality was the particular focus of Mādhyamika philosophy. Nāgārjuna (24:26, pāda 2) wrote that "no truth has been taught by the Buddha for anyone, anywhere." *na kvacit kasyacit kaścid dharmo buddhena deśitaḥ* (trans. in Sprung 1979:262) Candrakirti, commenting on this in his *Prasannapāda,* assumes a representation model of language, i.e. that "there are....no entities to which words refer. There is no entity 'person' distinct from an individual psycho-physical history, though we mistakenly think we refer to such; there is no entity corresponding to the word 'chariot' distinct from its axles, wheels and so on. In all such cases the noun word functions not by naming, not by furthering cognition, but as a *prajñāpti.*" (Sprung 1979:17)

ultimately unknowable to the discursive mind and which is de-reified, to the mind, which, although equally or even more unstable, is given primacy as the source or constructor of the representations of the world which the uncritical assume to be real. Perhaps the most illustrative example of this idea occurs in a famous verse in Vasubandu's *Viṃśikakārikā*, which occurs as follows, "the mind is indefinite, as in a dream, just as all *preta* see a stream as pus and so forth, or like an injury received in a dream."[8]

In his autocommentary on this verse, the *Viṃśikavṛtti*, Vasubandu explains that a single locus of perception, the stream in the above example, might be viewed in radically different ways by different beings. A deity might see it as nectar luminous and pure, a human as a stream of water for bathing, drinking, etc., a hungry spirit *(preta)* as a stream of filth, and a fish as the world itself. The world then is very much a matter of perceptual representation, and there is no basis for confidence that any one view of the world is complete, or even accurate. This might seem a radical idea, but it is not in the Buddhist context; the underlying assumption is the same as that which underlies the ancient Buddhist idea that the cultivation of different meditative states such as the four *dhyāna* gives one access to different realms of reality, which will be discussed in section 3.3 below. Vasubandu simply shakes up the cosmology a bit by implying that different "realms" may not necessarily occupy different fields of physical space; instead they might occupy different but overlapping fields of psychic space.

Seen in this light, his position seems less extreme, and not far from the normative Buddhist view. Vasubandu's use of the lake metaphor is an explanation of the Buddhist idea that one's mental and meditative state condition one's experience of reality.[9] As a

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[8] / rmi lam'o sems kyang nges pa med // yi dags bzhin te thams cad kyis // klung la rnag la sogs mthong bzhin // bya byed rmi lam gnod pa 'dra /. *Viṃśakakārikā*, DT fol. 3a.

[9] This idea is supported by Bronkhorst's (1986:102-3) argument that *prajñā*, which we might translate as "discerning wisdom" or "insight", referred in the context of Buddhist meditation to an essential insight into the altered states of consciousness that arise in meditation, and which a successful meditator must have in order to negotiate these altered states. This *prajñā* or insight was considered particularly essential in the mediations on the four dhyāna, which, as we have seen, have cosmic as well as psychological significance.

result, negative states characterized by suffering were seen as ultimately deriving from misknowledge *(avidyā),* while correct understanding would serve as their antidote.

The perception of "purity" or "impurity" could be seen as the products of a different modes of perception, and not a condition of the entity itself. For Buddhaghoṣa, for example, purity is definitely the product of understanding rather than birth status or any other inherent condition; he bases his masterpiece *The Path to Purity (Viśuddhimagga)* on the following verse from the *Dhammapada*: "All conditioned things are impermanent. He who understands this truth becomes disgusted with suffering. This is the path of purity."[10] In this text Buddhaghoṣa equates "the path to purity" with the development of the wisdom which eradicates the misknowledge that is the origin of all suffering. The reinterpretation of "impurity" as misknowledge is clearly made in the following passage from the *Mahāniddesa:* "Delusion, not dust, is that which we call 'dirt', and 'dirt' is just a term used for delusion; delusion the wise reject, and they abide, keeping the Law of him without delusion."[11] This same point is made in the *Vatthūpama Sutta,* in which the Buddha depicts purification as occurring via a mental process.[12]

The case that the purity or impurity of the world is conditioned by one's mental state is made in several Mahāyāna sūtras. For example, in the first chapter of the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra* the Buddha describes the purity of a Buddha's buddha-field as dependent upon the mental state of the bodhisattva who gives rise to it. Śāriputra, the classic straw man in Mahāyāna sūtras, thereupon wonders if, since the Buddha's pure land/buddha-field, this "Tolerable" *(sahā)* world in which we dwell, is impure, the Tathāgata's mind is thus impure. He is quickly disabused of this notion in the exchange which follows:

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[10] *Dhammapada* v. 277: sabbe saṅkhārā aniccā yadā paññāya passati / atha nibbindatī dukkhe esa maggo visuddhiyā // (C. A. F. Rhys Davids 1920 p. 2; cf. Pe Maung Tin 1923 p. 3 and Kaviratna 1980 p. 109).

[11] *Mahāniddesa* I.505, trans. in Tambiah 1985b.

[12] *Majjhima Nikāya* 7; see Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, pp. 118-122.

> The Buddha, knowing telepathically the thought of the venerable Śāriputra, said to him, "What do you think, Śāriputra? Is it because the sun and the moon are impure that those blind from birth do not see them?"
>
> Śāriputra replied, "No Lord, it is not so. The fault lies with those blind from birth, not with the sun and the moon."
>
> The Buddha declared, "In the same way, Śāriputra, the fact that some living beings do not behold the splendid display of virtues of the buddha-field of the Tathāgata is due to their own ignorance. It is not the fault of the Tathāgata. Śāriputra, the buddha-field of the Tathāgata is pure, but you do not see it."
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> Then the Brahmā Śikhin said to the venerable Śāriputra, "Reverend Śāriputra, do not say that the buddha-field of the Tathāgata is impure. Reverend Śāriputra, the buddha-field of the Tathāgata is pure. I see the splendid expanse of the buddha-field of the Lord Śākyamuni as equal to the splendor of, for example, the abode of the highest deities."
>
> Then the Venerable Śāriputra said to the Brahmā Śikhin, "As for me, O Brahmā, I see this great earth, with its highs and lows, its thorns, its precipices, its peaks, and its abysses, as if it were entirely filled with ordure."
>
> Brahmā Śikhin replied, "The fact that you see such a buddha-field as this as if it were so impure, reverend Śāriputra, is a sure sign that there are highs and lows in your mind and that your positive thought in regard to the buddha-gnosis is not pure either. Reverend Śāriputra, those whose minds are impartial toward all living beings and whose positive thoughts toward the buddha-gnosis are pure see this buddha-field as perfectly pure."[13]

This text presents a direct challenge to the reader in implying that dissatisfaction with the world, along with the concomitant suffering, are not the product of the world per se but of the mind of the beholder, and in particularly of a certain way of thinking about things, a partial mode of thought which draws the sorts of distinctions made by Śāriputra. But it is not simply a matter of perspective in the ordinary sense of the word; the difference between the perception of Śāriputra and Brahmā Śikhin here seems closer to the difference between a human's and a *preta*'s perception of water, radically different. Radical difference must then characterize the two modes of cognition that underlie them.

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[13] Thurman 1976:18. Another formulation, popular in East Asia, is the division of the mind into two aspects, the "pure" ultimate aspect and the "impure" relative aspect, contained in the *Awakening of Faith*. These two aspects, however, are understood to exist in an interdependent, non-dual fashion. See Hakeda 1967, pp. 31-46.

From here it does not require a giant leap to reach the position of the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra,* which like Vasubandhu propounds that one's experience in the world is conditioned by one's mental state, as in the case of the following passage:

> There is no subject nor object, nor is there bondage or that which is bound; [all things] are like an illusion, a mirage, a dream, a blind eye. If one who understands reality *(tattvārthi)*[14] sees non-discursively *(nirvikalpa)*, free of taint *(nirañja)*, then perfected in yoga he sees me without a doubt. Here is nothing to cognize, like a mirage in the sky; one who cognizes things acknowledges nothing. In the relativity of being and non-being things do not arise; it is from the wandering of mind through the triple world that variety is known. The world has the same nature as a dream, and so too the various forms within it....This mind is the source of the triple world, and wandering the mind appears hither and thither.[15]

The crucial mode of cognition that seems to play the central role in the construction of a delusory view of the world is that which is called "discursive thought" *(vikalpa).* The term in Sanskrit implies both a process of construction or elaboration, derived as it is in the verbal root kḷp, which has meanings ranging from "to produce" to "to imagine" (Apte 1965:373.2), while the *vi-* affix implies separation or division (Goldman et al. 1987:139). The term could be very loosely translated as "that which is productive of division, dichotomy, etc.", but in this context it refers to a type of cognition, hence the translation "discursive thought".[16] *Vikalpa* is productive of a certain sense of reality which tends

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[14] For a justification of this translation of *tattvārthi* see Willis 1979, pp. 37-39.

[15] LS *sagāthaka* vv. 31-36: (31) na grāhako na ca grāhyaṃ na bandhyo na ca bandhanam / māyāmaricisadṛśaṃ svapnākhyaṃ timiraṃ yathā // (32) yadā paśyati tattvārthī nirvikalpo nirañjanaḥ / tadā yogaṃ samāpanno drakṣyate māṃ na saṃśayaḥ // (33) / na hy atra kācid vijñaptir nabhe yadvan maricayaḥ / evaṃ dharmān vijānanto na kiṃcit pratijānati // (34) sadasataḥ pratyayeṣu dharmāṇāṃ nāsti saṃbhavaḥ / bhrāntaṃ traidhātuke cittam vicitraṃ khyāyate yataḥ // (35) svapnaṃ ca lokaṃ ca samasvabhāvaṃ rūpāṇi citrāṇi hi tatra cāpi /....(36) cittaṃ hi traidhātukayonir etad bhrāntaṃ hi cittam ihamamutra dṛśyate / (Vaidya 1963 p.109; cf. Suzuki 1932 pp. 228-29.)

[16] Ruegg criticizes the translation of *vikalpa* as "discrimination" and suggests instead "dichotomic conceptual construction" (1995:148 n. 4) While I concur with his critique of the former translation, his suggestion, while apt seems too unwieldy. I have thus chosen, following Willis (1979:35) the translation "discursive thought" for *vikalpa.* I generally use the translation "non-discursiveness" for *nirvikalpa,* and "non-discursive intuition" for *nirvikalpajñāna,* dropping the word "thought" in these latter cases since it is not at all clear that *nirvikalpa* is a type of "thought", in the sense of a narrative or discursive stream of cognitions. While these translations do not capture the sense of a falsely constructed sense of reality implied by the root kḷp, it does at least capture the sense of an ongoing stream of thought patterns which may be productive of a sense of reality that is superficially reasonable and convincing but which collapse under intense analysis. Here R. A. Stein's comments are relevant: "If Buddhists want to liberate themselves from 'discursive thought,' it is because the latter proceeds, like 'discourse' (whence the French – and English – term), in sequential steps. On the other hand, the supreme meaning appears to them to be connected to simultaneity in space (omnipresence) or in time (synchrony) or in thought (*cognitio intuitiva,* direct and immediate comprehension of unity in multiplicity, of the dharma in the dharmas)." (1987:55).

toward the dichotomous, and which is thoroughly condemned as false and conducive to bondage in Buddhist literature. Opposed to it is 'non-discursiveness' *(nirvikalpa)* or 'non-discursive intuition' *(nirvikalpajñāna)* which refrains from drawing such distinctions, and which is conducive of liberation. This distinction is neatly made by Āryadeva as follows: "Discursive thought is the great seizer who casts one into the ocean of samsāra. Non-discursiveness is the great spirit which liberates from the bonds of the world."[17] Using a cosmological metaphor, Āryadeva links *saṃsāra* and *nirvāṇa* to two oppositional states of mind; the ontological distinction between the former pair which was denied so thoroughly by Nāgārjuna is thus transformed by his successors into an epistemological distinction.

The idea that there is a mode or manner of cognition that is productive of liberation is not, as we have seen, an innovative idea in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Defining or describing this non-discursive intuition *(nirvikalpa-jñāna)* is not necessarily an easy task, however, as it supposedly transcends the dichotomies which apparently underlie language and ordinary thought. It seems reasonable to say, however, that it is a way of knowing which abandons the dualistic conceptions and the more elaborate web of conceptions which are constructed therefrom, which in the ultimate analysis have no basis in reality, and are only the projections of another mode of cognition, the imaginatively constructive yet deceptive worldly cognition *laukika-jñāna.*[18]

Underlying this idea is the notion that there is some sort of pristine mode of cognition or gnosis *(jñāna)* which is free of all defilements and negative propensities, and which is the foundation, so to speak, from which realization is possible. As opposed to ordinary knowledge, *(laukikajñāna),* there is another mode, *lokottarajñāna,* which is

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[17] CV v. 25: vikalpo hi mahāgrāhaḥ saṃsārodadhipātakaḥ // avikalpā mahātmāno mucyante bhavabandhanāt // (Patel 1949:2) / rnam par rtog pa gdon chen po // 'khor ba'i rgya mtshor ltung byed yin // rnam par mi rtog bdag nyid ches // srid pa'i 'ching las grol bar 'gyur / (Patel 1949:21)

[18] In the context of commenting upon ch. 8 of Asaṅga's *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha-śāstra,* Nagao explains that "It is not an easy task to define the term, because, in spite of the fact that it refers, without doubt, to knowledge that lacks discrimination, the term 'discrimination' (*vikalpa:* to construct or to divide) is understood in various ways. If one should say something about *nirvikalpa-jñāna,* it may be said that it is characterized as knowledge lacking the subject/object dichotomy" (Kawamura 1991:42).

perhaps best translated as "intuition," which stresses its non-discursive immediacy.[19] This mode of cognition is sometimes described with metaphors of luminosity or clarity.

The best known of such descriptions occurs in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā* as follows: "Thus mind is not mind, and the nature of mind is luminous."[20] The concept of luminosity, in the sense used here, often appears to be synonymous with purity.[21] This interpretation is commonly found in Mahāyāna exegesis. Dharmakīrti, in the second chapter of his *Pramānavarttikakārikā,* states that "the nature of the mind is luminous, which means that the defilements are adventitious."[22] This idea appears a few centuries earlier, in a supplement to Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmi* attributed to Saṃgharakṣa translated into Chinese during the late third or fourth centuries.[23] Saṃgharakṣa invokes the concept of the undefiled, luminous mind in explaining the "practice of leaping" *(vyutkrāntacaryā),*

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[19] I use "intuition" here in a Bergsonian sense. Bergson distinguished between a Kantian "sensous" or *sensible* intuition, and what he terms an "ultra-intellectual" intuition (1911:359-63). I use "intuition" here in his later sense. An Yanming noted that "Bergson defines intuition as 'the kind of intellectual sympathy by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and consequently inexpressible.' Due to the identity of intuition with reality, intuition as a method is quantitatively superior to the intellect. In intuition 'what I experience will depend neither on the point of view..., since I am inside the object itself, nor on the symbols..., since I have rejected all translations in order to possess the original.' And I am 'capable of following reality in all its sinuosities and of adopting the very movement of the inward life of things." (An 1997 p. 340, quoting from Bergson 1955, pp. 7, 2-3, 69) His formulation corresponds quite closely to the two types of *jñāna* recognized by Buddhists, the *laukika* and the *lokottara,* the "worldly" and the "super-worldly". Rather than follow the standard Indological translation of *jñāna* as "knowledge", or the Buddhist translation as "wisdom" (or even worse, "pristine cognition"; for a critique of these trans. see Ruegg 1995, p. 148); I have chosen to translate the term as "knowledge" when used in a *laukika* context, and "intuition" when used in a *lokottara* context. Here I follow the Tibetans, who distinguished between these two senses of *jñāna* by translating them by two different terms, *shes pa* and *ye shes.* The former, corresponding to 'knowledge', is simply a nominal form of the verb to know. The latter is a translation term, for which, however, the English translation "pristine cognition" is not even accurate despite its appearance of being literal, for 'cognition' is better used as a translation of its cognate *saṃjñā.* Obviously, it is not always clear which sense of the term is intended; the translator needs some discretion here, but as translation is fundamentally interpretive this is simply an requisite of the art. Generally, when the context is unclear I would choose the term "knowledge"; in a Tantric context, however, it might be wiser to err on the side of "intuition."

[20] tathā hi tac cittam acittam prakṛtiś cittasya prabhāsvarā / (AP, Vaidya 1960 p. 3).

[21] For example, while the Tibetans chose to translate *prabhāsvarā* more or less literally, if somewhat substantively as "clear light" *('od gsal,* see AP DK fol. 3a*).* The Song dynastic translator Dānapāla, however, chose to translate it metaphorically as 淨, "pure, clean" (T 228, p. 587.2).

[22] / sems kyi rang bzhin 'od gsal te // dri ma rnams ni glo bur ba / (PV, DT fol. 115b)

[23] This work, the 修行道地 (T 606), was studied by Demiéville (1954), who dates its translation between 284 and 384 CE. See also Ruegg 1989b, p. 150-51.

by which the bodhisattva speeds up his evolution by leaping over an incalculable eon of gradualistic progression through the stages of the path. He wrote that

> Regarding the practice of leaping, beings originally gave rise to [the idea of] self by means of misunderstanding. But by the application of liberative art, one attains liberation from bondage by means of bondage. But if there is no application [of liberative art] and no bondage, who could attain liberation? For example, the five elements, which exist in a void manner, cannot be sullied by clouds, fog, dust, smoke or ash. The mind is originally void, and the poison of the five aggregates is like the five elements. The unobscured mind, originally luminous, is completely formless, and when wisdom is unobstructed [mind] enters into the tolerance of the profundity of things.[24]

The concept that all beings possess at the very least *the potential* for developing an awareness of this sort of "luminous mind" free of all taints is extremely important in the development of Buddhist theory and practice. It underlies the development of influential ideas such as the "buddha-nature" *(tathāgatagarbha),*[25] and constituted a central role in the theory underlying Tantric practice. Ruegg (1989b) has argued that ideas such as the *tathāgatagarbha* do not represent occult Vedāntic influence, but rather represent a cataphatic approach to ultimate reality, which differs more in rhetoric than in import from the apophatic approach found in the Prajñāpāramitā literature.[26] This is born out in the Buddhist Tantras and śāstras, wherein the positivistic descriptions are themselves deconstructed,[27] and wherein the cataphatic *tathāgatagarba* theory is reconciled with the apophatic doctrine of *śūnyatā.*[28]

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[24] 何謂超行。人本一故用不解之便起吾我。適著便縛以縛求脫。不著無縛何謂求脫。譬如五事而住虛空。雲霧塵煙灰。不能為彼虛空作垢。心本如空。五陰之毒喻如五事。不蔽心本曉了無形。慧無礙入深法忍。 (T 606, p. 229.1)

[25] Ruegg explains that "the term *tathāgatagarbha* is used to denote the 'buddhomorphic' Base or Support for the practice of (p. 19) the Path, and hence the motivating 'cause' *(hetu: dhātu)* for the attainment of the Fruit *(phala)* of buddhahood. Even when the texts do not use the term *tathāgatagarbha* to designate this factor making it possible for all living beings ultimately to attain liberation and buddhahood, the importance of the theme of the *tathāgatagarbha* is therefore basic to the soteriology and gnoseology of the Mahāyāna." (1989b:18-19)

[26] See Ruegg 1989b, pp. 35-50 and 1967, pp. 37-38.

[27] A well known example concerning the idea of "mind", often described cataphatically, occurs in the second chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra,* as follows: "Devoid of all existents, free of the aggregates, the sense objects and media, and subject and object, one's mind, being identical to the selflessness of dharmas, is originally unarisen and void in its nature." Ch. 2 v. 4: sarvabhāvavigataṃ skandhadhātvāyatanagrāhyagrāhakavarjitam / dharmanairātmyasamatayā svacittam ādyanupannaṃ śūnyatāsvabhāvam //; dngos po thams cad dang bral ba / phung po khams dang skye mched dang / gzung

A common metaphor for the uncovering or revealing of this underlying potential for awakening is the refinement of gold, since gold, being chemically inert, may get mixed up with or obscured by defilements without losing its intrinsic luster.[29] Commenting on the refinement of gold metaphor in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* (II.29), Nagao wrote that so long as ordinary modes of cognition persist, "the whole world remains as the imagined world of ordinary beings. But when burned away by the fire of non-discriminative wisdom, the one world is transformed into the consummated world of the enlightened ones" (Nagao 1991:68).

The cleansing of the mind then is compared to a chemical process of refinement. This process is described with alchemical and naturalistic imagery by Āryadeva as follows:

> If the mind itself is causally cleansed by the learned, it is non-discursive, unobjectified, of a nature stainless, and luminous. And if a fire, even when waning, is provided with oil, a wick, etc., its stainless, unwavering luminosity completely dispels the darkness. And just as a tree adorned with leaves, roots and fruits develops from a minute fig seed, and can change color through the application of turmeric and quicklime, likewise a wise person who understands reality can, through the application of art and wisdom, neutralize poison with butter and honey. Using this sort of procedure is the supreme alchemy; just as copper, rubbed by mercury, becomes faultlessly golden, likewise the addictions are made truly beneficial through purification by knowledge. The adherents to the lower vehicle, however, are fettered by it in just an instant.[30]

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dang 'dzin pa rnam spangs pa // chos bdag med pa mnyam nyid pas / rang sems gdod nas ma skyes pa / stong pa nyid kyi rang bzhin no / (Fremantle 1971: 192-93; Matsunaga 1978:10). This verse quite strongly argues that mind itself is void as are all other existents in reality. Concerning the importance of this verse in Tantric exegetical literature see Namai 1997.

[28] The Tibetan master sGampopa (1079-1153 CE), in his *Stages of the Mahāyāna Path called the Precious Garland of Liberation which is the Wish-fulfilling Jewel of the True Teaching* (dam chos yid bzhin nor bu thar pa rin po che'i rgyan ces bya ba theg pa chen po'i lam rim), gives three reasons why all beings possess the *tathāgatagarbha*. The first reason is that "The Reality Body (*dharmakāya*) is voidness, and since all beings are pervaded by that voidness, beings thus possess the Buddha essence." / chos sku ni stong nyid yin te / stong nyid des sems can thams cad la khyab pa'i phyir na / sems can sangs rgyas kyi snying po can yin pa'o / (ch. 2 fol. 3b).

[29] For a discussion of this metaphor and its use in the debates concerning subitism and gradualism in Tibet and China see Gómez 1987.

[30] CV vv. 46-52: (46) idam eva hi yac cittaṃ śodhitaṃ hetubhiḥ śubhaiḥ / nirvikalpaṃ nirālambaṃ bhāti prakṛtinirmalam // (47) yathā vahniḥ kṛśo 'py eṣa tailavartyādisaṃskṛtaḥ / dipo nirmalaniṣkampaḥ sthiras timiranāśanaḥ // (48) vaṭabījaṃ yathā sūkṣmaṃ sahakārasamanvitaṃ / śākhāmūlaphalopetaṃ mahāvṛkṣavidhāyakam // (49) haridrācūrṇasaṃyogād varṇāntaram iti smṛtam / prajñopāyasamāyogād dharmadhātuṃ tathā viduḥ // (50) ghṛtaṃ madhusaṃyuktaṃ samāṃśaṃ viṣatāṃ vrajet / tad eva vidhivad utkṛṣṭaṃ tu rasāyānam // (51) rasaghṛṣṭaṃ yathā tāmraṃ nirdoṣaṃ kāñcanaṃ bhavet / jñānaśuddhyā tathā kleśāḥ samyakkalyāṇakārakāḥ // (52) hīnayānābhirūḍhānāṃ mṛtyuśaṅkā pade pade / (Patel 1949:4) /de ltar sems ni 'di nyid kyang // gtan tshigs bzang pos sbyangs byas na // rnam par mi rtog dmigs med pa // rang bzhin dri med rab tu snang // ji ltar me ni chung du yang // mar dang snying sogs 'dus byas bas // snang

For the Buddhists, then, purification is effected by means of a certain sort of knowledge or intuition *(jñāna)* which is characterized as being free of the dichotomous, discursive thought patterns *(nirvikalpa)* which typify ordinary modes of cognition. It should not be surprising that ordinary means of purification relying on mere physical or outer ritual actions are criticized as foolish and ineffective. Āryadeva, for example, continues with his discussing by criticizing the idea that ritual bathing in sacred waters *(tirtha)* can effect any sort of purification of mental defilements or sins:

> Here asceticism should not be performed, nor fasting, bathing or purity. Abandon the customs of the village. Bone, marrow, teeth and nails derive from the father's semen, and flesh, blood, hair and so forth arise from the mother's blood. How can the body, a heap of impurity arising thus from impurity be purified by bathing in the Gangā? A heap of impurity is not cleansable like dirty vessel, even when washed with water again and again. Dogs swimming in the Gangā are not thereby cleansed. Therefore, for those persons who desire the dharma bathing at fords *(tirtha)* is fruitless. For if bathing purifies, then fish have achieved that goal; what need is there to speak of the fish, etc. which live in the water day and night? There is no certainty that bathing removes sin, as lust and so forth have been seen to increase in those who honor *tirtha*. Lust, hatred, delusion, envy, thirst and doubtful views are known to be the root of sin, and they are not cleansed by bathing. They arise from grasping at the 'me' the 'mine', and from life; and they are caused by misknowledge, which is said to be delusion.[31]

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ba dri med mi g.yo ba // bstan pa'i mun pa rnam 'jig 'gyur // ji ltar phra ba'i sdong po las // ji ltar lo ma 'bras bu yis // brgyan pa'i shing chen 'byung bar 'gyur // yung dang rdo thal sbyar ba las // kha dog gzhan zhig 'byung bar 'gyur // shes rab thabs kyi cho ga yis // chos dbyings mkhas pa de ltar shes // mar dang sbrang rtsi mnyam ldan pas // dug nyid du mi 'gyur ba yin // de nyid cho ga bzhin spyad na // bcud kyi len gyi mchog tu 'gyur // dngul chus reg pa'i zangs ma ni // ji ltar skyon med gser du 'gyur // de bzhin yang dag ye shes ni // sbyangs pas nyon mongs bzang por byed // theg pa dman la zhon pa rnams // skad cig skad cig 'ching bar byed / (QT p. 1.5; cf. Patel 1949, pp.26-27).

[31] CV vv. 58-66: (58) na kaṣṭakalpanāṃ kuryān nopavāsena ca kriyām / snānaṃ śaucaṃ na caivātra grāmadharmaṃ vivarjayet // (59) nakhadantāsthimajjānaḥ pituḥ śukravikārajāḥ / māṃsaśoṇitakeśādi mātṛśoṇitasaṃbhavam // (60) ittham aśucisaṃbhūtaḥ piṇḍo yo 'śucipūritaḥ / katham saṃstādṛśaḥ kāyo gaṅgāsnānena śudhyati // (61) na hy aśucir ghaṭas toyaiḥ kṣalito 'pi punaḥ punaḥ / tadvad aśucisaṃpūrṇaḥ piṇḍo 'pi na viśudhyati // (62) prataran api gaṅgāyāṃ naiva śvā śuddhim arhati / tadvad dharmadhiyāṃ puṃsāṃ tīrthasnānaṃ tu niṣphalam // (63) dharmo yadi bhavet snānāt kai (?) vartānāṃ kṛtārthatā / naktaṃ divaṃ jalasthānāṃ matsyādīnāṃ tu kā kathā // (64) pāpakṣayo 'pi snānena naiva syāditi niścayaḥ / yato rāgādivṛddhis tu dṛśyate tīrthsevinām // (65) rāgo dveṣaś ca mohaś ca īrṣyā tṛṣṇā ca sarvadā / pāpānāṃ mūlam ākhyātaṃ naiṣāṃ snānena śodhanam // (66) ātmātmīyagrahād ete saṃbhavantīha janminaḥ / avidyāhetukaḥ so 'pi sāvidyā bhrāntir iṣyate // (Patel 1949:6); / dka' thub brtag pa mi bya zhing // bsnyung ba yang ni bya ba med // 'dir ni khrus dang gtsang sbra med // grong ba'i chos ni sbang bar bya // sen mo rkang dang rus pa so // pha yi khu ba rgyu las skyes // sha dang khrag dang skra la sogs // ma yi khrag las yang dag byung // 'di ltar mi gtsang las byung zhing // mi gtsang bas gang ril po gang // de lta bu yi lus 'di nyid // gang gār bkrus kyang ji ltar 'dag // mi gtsang phur ma chu dag gis // yang yang bkrus kyang dag mi 'gyur // de bzhin mi gtsang bas gang ba'i // phur ma 'di yang 'dag mi 'gyur // gangā'i glung la khyi dag gis // rkyal zhing 'phyo yang dag mi 'gyur // de phyir chos 'dod skye bu dag / 'bab stegs khrus byed 'bras bu med // khrus kyi gal te dag 'gyur na // nya rnams kyang don byas 'gyur // nyin dang mtshan du gnas pa yi // nya la sogs pa smos ci dgos // khrus kyis sdig pa zad pa yang // nges par yod pa ma yin te // ji ltar 'bab stegs bsten pa la // 'dod chags la sogs 'phel bar mthong // 'dod chags zhe sdang gti mug dang // nga rgyal lta ba the tshom rnams // sdig pa'i rtsa bar rab tu grags // 'di dag sbyang bya khrus

This sort of criticism is not uncommon in both early Buddhist literature[32] and Buddhist Tantric literature,[33] and is found in Hindu Tantric literature as well.[34] and similar ridicule is also found in the songs of the bhakti saints who lived centuries later.[35]

Tantric Buddhism, like the related tendency toward subitism in Chinese Buddhism, "implies a criticism of the naive perception of the world, of the kind of 'juvenile ontology' that advocates striving for a remote perfection because it fails to see or believe that everything is already perfect(ed)." (Faure 1991:46) This rhetoric, however, was at times however applied toward Tantric practice itself. For as Tantric traditions advocate a great deal of ritual activity, there always lurked the danger that certain practitioners might develop

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kyis min // bdag dang bdag gir 'dzin pa las // srog chags rnams las byung ba yin // de yang ma rig rtsa ba las // ma rig de yang 'khrul bar 'dod / (QT p. 2.1; cf. Patel 1949, pp. 29-31).

[32] For example, in the *Vatthūpama Sutta* the Buddha was questioned by the brahmin Sundarika Bhāradvāja concerning the efficacy of bathing in the *tirthas*. He responded as follows: "Bāhuka and Adhikakkā, Gayā and Sundarikā too, Payāga and Sarassatī, and the stream Bahumatī – a fool may there forever bathe yet will not purify his dark deeds. What can the Sundarikā bring to pass? What the Payāga? What the Bāhukā? They cannot purify an evil-doer, a man who has done cruel and brutal deeds. One pure in heart has evermore the Feast of Spring, the Holy Day; one fair in act, one pure in heart, brings his virtue to perfection. It is here, brahmin, that you should bathe, to make yourself a refuge for all beings. And if you speak no falsehood nor work harm for living beings, nor take what is offered not, with faith and free from avarice, what need for you to go to Gayā? Any well will be your Gayā." (*Majjhima Nikāya* 7.20; trans. in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, p. 121.)

[33] For example, we find the following verse in Lakṣmiṃkarā's *Advayasiddhi* : "If unequipped with reality, one will not succeed in oath making, asceticism, fasting or the recitation of seed syllables even in a billion eons." v.7: niyamavratopavāsair akṣaroccāraṇabhāvanaiḥ // atattvayogi na siddhyet kalpakoṭiśatair api // (Samdhong et al. 1987:161). / dam bca' dka' thub smyung ba dang // snying po sgom pa smra ba la // 'di nyid med par gyur na ni // bskal pa 'bum phrag brgyar mi 'gyur / (Samdhong et al. 1987:147)

[34] For example, the 23rd chapter of the *Kubjikāmatatantra* contains the following passage: "The person who realizes the fivefold self *(ātman)* in his own body is identical with all sacred fords *(tirtha);* the *tirthas* themselves are only artificial. He is a *siddha* among all people, no matter where his abode may be. By his power a *tirtha* comes into existence; a *tirtha* is not [merely] a place filled with water. Those who are made perfect by the realization of wisdom, who are able to procreate wisdom – the place on which they take their stand, that is a *tirtha* in the supreme sense of the word. Vārāṇasī, Kurukṣetra, Naimiṣa, Bhairava, [in short], all *tīrthas* are there where a *guru* is present. *Tīrthās* are merely filled with water, [idols] of gods consist only of stone or clay; those who know the *ātman* do not respect them as *tirthas*, only other people do" (vv. 105-9; trans. in Goudriaan 1983, p. 98; Sanskrit edited in Goudriaan and Schoterman 1988, p. 431.); This text takes an ambiguous position; it claims that proper knowledge of the self is the true method of purification and seems to criticize the naive belief in the efficacy of the *tirtha,* but much more lightly than the Buddhist texts, which are typically unrelenting in their criticism of such practices. It appears to want to preserve the practice by assimilating to the cult of the guru propagated by such traditions. Some other texts clearly place the inner methods of yoga above outer activities such as pilgrimage. Chapter 15 of the *Kulārṇava Tantra* contains the following verse: "Asceticism, pilgrimage to *tirthas*, sacrifices, charity, observances, etc. do not equal even one sixteenth of this [method of] *prāṇāyāma.*" tapāṃsi tīrthayātrādhyā makhadānavrathadayaḥ / prāṇāyāmasya tasyaite kalāṃ nārhanti ṣoḍaśīm // (v. 41, edited in Bühnemann 1992, p. 67).

[35] See for example the songs of Kabir, translated in Hawley et al. 1987, pp. 50-57.

attachment to the ritual forms themselves and lose sight of the process of mental and physical transformations which they can supposedly effect. In the *Caryāpada* Dārika asks: "Of what use to you are mantras, of what use tantras, oh! of what use explanations of meditation (when you are) immersed in spontaneous Great Bliss in the ultimate Nirvāṇa, difficult to characterize?"[36] Such a statement, however, is made from the Awakened perspective wherein liberation has already been attained, and should not be taken as a wholesale rejection of *praxis.* These statements, as Stone has argued, are "articulated from the perspective of someone who has realized nondual original enlightenment and are not intended as a denial of the need for Buddhist practice." (1999:221)

Āryadeva critiques the naive conception of purity with reference to the fact that the body is a conditioned entity composed of elements such as blood, etc. which are strongly considered impure in India. This deconstruction of the notion of purity is by no means devoid of social consequences, for it constitutes a rather explicit critique of the social structure which is based on precisely this sort of distinction, as will be argued in chapter four. But while this discourse can and should be viewed as a social critique, it can also be seen as the consequence of a certain sort of meditative or philosophical deconstruction, that which can perhaps be characterized as *nirvikalpa.*

It is perhaps arguable that equanimity is a primary goal of Buddhist practice, as it forms the mean between the extremes of attachment and aversion; one way to achieve equanimity is though the reversal of the ordinary responses of attraction and repulsion to desired and undesired objects. Hence we see in Buddhist literature a great fascination with the impure and the disgusting, either as an object of meditation in and of itself, or, more commonly, as a deconstruction of the desired object, a demystification process which "reveals" its impure or undesirable nature, as in the meditation on corpses, or the imaginary

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[36] *caryā* 34 v. 3, trans. in Kvaerne 1977, p. 207. kinto mante kinto tante kinto re jhāṇabakhāṇe / apaïṭhāna mahāsuhalile dulakha parama nibāṇe //; / khyod kyi sngags gang khyod rgyud dang // khyod kyi bsam gtan ci zhig bshad // rang gnas bde ba chen por thim // mchon dka' don dam mya ngan 'das / (1977:208). Similar passages are also found in the *dohākośa;* see Guenther 1973 and 1993, and also Jackson 1994b.

dissolution of the desired body into its impure components such as viscera, body fluids, feces and so forth. The discourse on purity then can be seen as a consequence of the discourse on selflessness. In the *Pañcaviṃśatisāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* the claim is made that the self and all dharmas are pure precisely because they are unreal.[37]

Purity then can be understood as a description of things as they actually are in reality, which is intrinsically pure, free of the taint of discursive thought which distinguishes between things such as purity and impurity. In Tantric Buddhist discourse, the purity/impurity dichotomy is negated as an ultimately valid distinction, with the implication that social distinctions based upon such are also ultimately invalid. This notion was not without social consequences, as will be argued in the next chapter.

Snellgrove has suggested that this idea is the philosophical (and we might add, ideological) basis of the Tantras. It permits the argument that "defiled mind be recognized for what it essentially is, namely mind in its pure state....a necessary corollary of this is the assertion that all living beings are essentially of Buddha-nature, if only they knew it. These perfectly orthodox Buddhist teachings provide the philosophical basis for all tantric theory and practice". (1987:125). This realization is not automatic; one has to awaken to it. But since all living beings are already awakened, and the vessel worlds in which they dwell are already completely pure, all that is necessary is that one effects the transformation in one's vision required to see things as they actually are.

Tantra practice claims to effect this sort of transformation, the premier locus for which is the maṇḍala, a representation of the transformed and pure visionary world of awakening. This is in effect what was argued by Rong-zom Chos-kyi bZang-po in his work *The Attainment of Divine Vision in the Mantra-Vajrayāna.* Rong-zom was an important rNying-ma scholar who lived in Tibet during the eleventh century, the period when traditions such as those of the Cakrasaṃvara were being transmitted into Tibet. He explains that:

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[37] Ch. 36, see Conze 1975 p. 297.

> In the mantric method, the two truths are inseparable....Furthermore, there is no production of non-delusion by means of removing delusion, and awakening occurs through purification by means of the very actuality of delusion. Therefore, all things are completely awakened from the beginning, and things which appear in diverse states are the maṇḍala of the adamantine body, speech and mind itself; they are similar to the Buddhas of the three times who have not passed beyond the actuality of purity. The characteristics of sentient beings and Buddhas are not different from the very actuality of things. The mind attributes to them distinct appearances through the power of imagination (*parikalpita*), in the same way that things appear distinct and caused in a dream.[38]

Accordingly, purity, understood as a positive description of the way things exist on the basis of their *ultimate* lack of intrinsic reality, permits the equation of the path with the goal. The means of achieving awakening thus ultimately consists of nothing but identifying one's "body, speech and mind," with awakened state itself, here represented by the maṇḍala. The appearance of self and environment as impure and bewilderingly diverse is a product of misknowledge manifesting as discursive thought. The cure for this is precisely the knowledge that things are otherwise, understood not discursively and intellectually but realized through a transcendent intuition of *(lokottarajñāna)* or instantaneous awakening *(ekakṣanābhisaṃbodha)*[39] to reality. According to Sferra,

> This knowledge constitutes the purifying element *par excellence* and represents, in the final analysis, the very nature of reality, transfigured and shining. It is not by chance that, according to some texts, the last phase of yoga, in which transformation of the physical and psychical elements of the *yogin* into pure elements actually occurs is, indeed, nothing but the attainment of a body of gnosis *(jñānadeha)*. (1999:84)

Rong-zom, following the classical Vajrayāna formulation, understands this transformation as occurring through the medium of the maṇḍala:

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[38] / gsang sngags kyi tshul las bden pa rnam pa gnyis dbyer med pa dang /..../ de bas na snang ba'i chos 'di dag thams cad 'khrul pa yin de zad de / de yang 'khrul ba bsal nas ma 'khrul ba zhig bsgrub tu med de / 'khrul pa ngo bo nyid kyis rnam par dag pas sangs rgyas pa yin te / de bas na chos thams cad ye nas mngon par sang rgyas pa'o / de bas na mtshan ma sna tshogs su snang ba'i chos rnams sku gsung thugs rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor nyid yin te / rnam par dag pa'i ngo bo nyid las ma 'das pa dus gsum gyi sangs rgyas nyid dang 'dra ba'o / sems can dang sangs rgyas kyi khyad par ni chos kyi ngo bo nyid kyis phye ba ma yin te / rmi lam gyi rgyu 'bras bu so sor snang ba bzhin du / kun tu btags pa'i dbang gis blo so sor snang ba tsam la bzhag par zad do / (NL pp. 127-128)

[39] Ruegg explains that *ekakṣanābhisaṃbodha* is "defined as being characterized by the single-moment comprehension of all *dharmas* as marked by non-duality *(advayalakṣaṇasarvadharmaikakṣanalakṣaṇa)*. With regard to this the *Abhisamayālaṃkāra* compares the non-duality of what is dreamt *(svapna)* and its cognition in dream". (1989b:158) Ruegg also comments that according to Haribhadra this synchronic awakening is dependent upon the realization of voidness. (1989b:155).

> Since all things are pure through their reality *(dharmatā)*, their reality is not even slightly impure. Body speech and mind also have purity as their reality. Purity is awakening, and through purity body, speech and mind which are differentiated become inseparable and unelaborated (*niṣprapañca*), and thus should be understood to be the maṇḍala of the adamantine body, speech and mind, since it is completely pervasive.[40]

Purity is redefined as awakening, making "actual" physical purity or impurity irrelevant. This points toward the Tantric *sādhana*, which in its early form is portrayed in the accounts of the lives of the *mahāsiddhas* as the product of the guru-disciple relationship, a specific antidote to the specific problem of the student as understood by his or her spiritual guide. Interestingly, several of these encounters involved "hang-ups" concerning purity. The typical scenario involves a relatively advanced, but as yet unrealized monk, typically identified as of brahmin origin, who is identified as being overly attached to a notion of personal purity. The "cure" for this problem is intense experiential engagement with impurity so as to alleviate attachment to purity and aversion to pollution, and, ultimately, to the underlying misconception of self. In the case of Lūipa this involved living on a diet of fish guts, a diet inspired by a *ḍākini* who chided him for his attachment to personal purity deriving from his upbringing as a brahmin.[41]

The Tantric fascination with the impure seems to be understandable in this light; it is an attempt at offering an antidote to a pathological attachment to purity in Indian culture. The justification for this is that all things are empty, devoid of any sort of intrinsic identity; all things are thus experientially of "one taste"; and distinctions such as pure and impure are thus more indicative of one's mental state than anything else. To achieve this state of equanimity was long recognized in India as a sign of spiritual realization.[42] Of course,

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[40] / chos thams cad chos nyid kyis dag pas / ma dag pa'i chos cung zad kyang med pa chos rnams kyi chos nyid yin pas / lus ngag yid gsum yang rnam par dag pa rang gi chos nyid yin te / rnam par dag pa ni sangs rgyas pa'o / des na rnam par dag pas phye ba'i lus ngag yid ni dbyer med cing sprod pa med pa dang / rdzogs par khyab pa'i phyir sku gsung thugs rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor nyid yin par rigs par bya'o / (NL p. 130).

[41] For the legend of Lūipa see Dowman 1985 pp. 33-38.

[42] For example, the Mūlasarvāstivādin vinaya contains an a story in which the great disciple-saint Mahākāśyapa, excluded from a feast given by a wealthy lay donor due to his ragged appearance, accepts an offering of rice water from a leprous woman containing one of her rotted fingers. That he would accept

there is nothing intrinsic to the impure that would make it any more conducive to liberation that the pure. Were someone to become addicted to fish guts, convinced somehow that they were essential to one's happiness and well-being, then one could imagine a satirist such as Āryadeva or Kabir composing verses ridiculing him. The focus on impurity, then, is a specific skillful means to deal with a specific problem, that of attachment to purity, and, perhaps, the social inequality which is justified by that ideology.

The Tantras teach a purity by association, or, perhaps more appropriately, by identification, of the mundane with the divine. It is effected through union with the deity; this union is justified by the idea that there is no intrinsic difference between the adept and the awakened Buddha, and the appearance of difference is due to delusive, dichotomous, discursive thought patterns (*vikalpa*).

In the Unexcelled Yogatantras, "purification" of the psycho-physical complex is effected through the systematic identification of aspects of this complex with deities who represent awakened qualities. The five components of the "self", the "filthy heaps" or aggregates, are identified with the five Buddhas, and the five emotional poisons with the Buddhas' five wisdoms. At first glance this process may appear antithetical to the spirit of early Buddhism, which went to great lengths to deconstruct the notion of an enduring self, and which often portrayed the constituent components of the psycho-physical complex in less than glowing terms. It is important, however, that we keep in mind the context of these arguments. The negative portrayal of the aggregates usually occurs in the context of the deconstruction of the self, and attempts to alleviate one's attachment to it. The Buddhist Tantras, however, presume that one has already undergone such a deconstruction process, and the meditation texts typically begin with a meditation on voidness to reaffirm this understanding.

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such an offering indicates his high degree of meditative realization, for which he was traditionally famed. See Ray 1994 pp. 109-10; text contained in N. Dutt's *Gilgit Manuscripts*,3.1, 81-84.

A systematic process of "purification" by means of identification of components of one's self and environment with the deities of the maṇḍala is the typical means taught in the Tantras. The *Hevajra Tantra* thus begins its chapter on purity with the following:

> All things are regarded as intrinsically pure. As a result one can speak of their individual differentiation in terms of the deities. The six sense powers, the six sense media, the five heaps *(skandha)* and the five elements are naturally pure, but they are obscured by the addiction of misknowledge *(ajñānakleśa)*. Their purification consists in self-experience, and by no other means of purification may one be released. This self-experiencing, this bliss supreme, arises from the pure condition of the spheres of sense. Form and so on and whatever other spheres of sense there are, for the yogin all these appear in their purified condition, for of Buddha nature is this world.[43]

This process is worked out in *sādhanas,* which are meditation guides meant to be recited while meditating, a sort of personal liturgy. A *sādhana* of central importance in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition is Lūipa's *Śrībhagavad-abhisamaya.* It equates the five sense powers with five male deities, and the five sense objects it equates with the five goddesses who also represent the five elements. All sensation, symbolized as a sexual union between the respective deities, is understood as being potentially productive of great bliss.[44] This implies that all experience, no matter how attractive or repulsive, pure or impure, in the conventional sense, should ideally be experienced as an experiential uniformity *(ekarasa)* of great bliss.

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[43] HV I.9 vv. 1-4: sarveṣāṃ khalu vastūnāṃ viśuddhis tathatā smṛtā / paścād ekaikabhedena devatānān tu kathyate // ṣaḍindriyaṃ pañcaskandhaṃ ṣaḍāyatanaṃ pañcabhūtaṃ / svabhāvena viśuddham apy ajñānakleśair āvṛtaṃ // svasaṃvedyātmikā śuddhir nānaśuddhyā vimucyate / viṣayaśuddhabhāvatvāt svasaṃvedyaṃ paraṃ sukhaṃ // rūpaviṣayādi ye 'py anye pratibhāsante ni yoginaḥ / sarve te śuddhabhāvā hi yasmād buddhamayaṃ jagat //; / nges par dngos po thams cad kyi // dag pa de bzhin nyid du brjod // phyi nas re re'i dbye ba yis // lha rnams kyi ni brjod par bya // phung po lnga dang dbang po drug // skye mched drug dang 'byung chen lnga // rang bzhin gyis ni rnam par dag // nyon mongs shes bya'i sgrib byang bya // rang rig bdag nyid dag pa nyid // dag pa gzhan gyis rnam 'grol min // yul gyi dngos po dag pa'i phyir // rang gi rig pa'i bde chen mchog // gzugs la sogs pa'i yul rnams dang // gzhan yang rnal 'byor pas mthong ba // dngos po de kun dag pa ste // 'di ltar 'gro ba sangs rgyas 'gyur / (Snellgrove 1959 vol. 2 p.32-33). Snellgrove's translation (1959: vol.1 pp. 78-79) emended by me.

[44] The symbolization of the contact between the sense power and sense object in terms of sexual intercourse is not in itself a revolutionary idea peculiar to the Tantras; the sixth link in the chain of relativity *(pratītyasamutpāda)* is *sparśa* or "contact", referring to the contact between sense organ and object. It was typically symbolized by a couple engaged in intercourse, and is depicted thus in the Ajanta cave paintings, and also in written sources such as the Mūlasarvāstivādan vinaya. See Schlingloff 1988, pp. 167-180, and also Nihom 1994, pp. 185-86.

This re-imagination of one's self and environment is understood to effect purification through the elimination of the underlying cause of all problems, the misknowledge which manifests as attachment to self. As Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna explains in his commentary on Lūipa's *sādhana*, "one whose heaps and so forth are thus purified, is naturally purified, birthlessly, as is a magical deity, because one has purified one's clinging to that which is of the self."[45] What the Buddhist Tantras prescribe then is a sort of "reconstruction" process to follow the process of the deconstruction of the self, i.e., the realization that it is devoid of any intrinsically real, permanent entity.

The *Saṃvarodaya Tantra* makes a similar claim concerning the meditation practices taught therein, as follows: "One who abides in the concentration of Śriheruka will attain the state of clear light. It will be a non-discursive state due to the union of the sense subject and object. Awakening to the purity of the objects of sense, one abides in all modes."[46] A more general claim to efficacy in purification is made in the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, as follows: "For example, a pot filled with grease is placed in the midst of a fire, and the butter running melts, and the pot's taint is destroyed. Likewise, sin is destroyed by means of the name "Śriheruka", in meditation, or mere reflection, through reading, recitation or writing."[47]

The rhetoric of purity found in both Mahāyāna and Tantric sources reveal a common factor that links the two. It is a tendency toward a nondualistic interpretation of reality, with the focus directed inward toward the mind and body as the *locus* for the

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[45] / de ltar zhes bya ba la sogs pa la / gang dag pa phung po la sogs pa dang / gang gi rang bzhin du dag pa sgyu ma lta bu'i lha dang / ji ltar dag pa skye med du dag pa'o // bdag gir 'dzin pa dap par bya ba'i phyir / (AV DT fol. 187b).

[46] My trans., cf. Tsuda 1974 p. 250. SV ch. 4 v. 21-22: śriherukasamādhisthaḥ prabhāsvarapadam āpnuyāt // viṣayaviṣayiyogena nirvikalpapadaṃ bhavet // viṣayaviśuddhi bodhavyā sarvākāravare sthitiḥ // (Tsuda 1974:82) 'od gsal ba'i go 'phang thob // heruka dpal yang dag gnas // yul dang yul can sbyor ba yis // rnam rtog med pa'i go 'phang 'gyur // rnam pa kun gyi mchog gnas pas // yul ni rnam dag shes par bya / (Tsuda 1974:173-74).

[47] CST ch. 51, v. 7,8. ghṛta pūrṇaṃ yathā bhāṇḍaṃ sthāpitam agnimadhyake // dravantaṃ dravate sarpiḥ kālaṃ naśyati bhāṇḍayoḥ // tathā pāpaṃ ca naśyati śriheruketi nāmataḥ // dhyāne cintitamātraṃ vā pāṭhasvādhyāyalekhanāt //; / dper na mar gyis gang ba'i snod // me yi dbus su bzhag na ni // mar sar steng du zhu 'gyur zhing // snod kyi dri ma 'jig par 'gyur // de bzhin śrī he ru ka yi // mtshan gyis sdig pa 'jig par 'gyur // bsam gtan sems pa tsam gyis sam // klog cing kha tog bris pa yis / (DK fol. 246a)

resolution of the problem of suffering and the attainment of awakening. This seems to be Śāntideva's intention when he wrote:

> How will I destroy the wicked who are as extensive as space? But when the angered mind is destroyed, so too are all enemies. How can I cover the entire earth with leather? The earth is so covered simply by [wearing] leather sandals. As it not being possible for me to control the outside world, were I to control my own mind, what need would there be to restrain others?[48]

To project one's inner hatreds and passions onto the objects of the outside world, and thus to fight enemies that are ultimately self-constituted, would be to fight a battle that could never be won. It does not help to project one's dissatisfaction outward onto the world like Śāriputra, or even worse, to attempt to transform the world by means of a maladapted methodology based on misknowledge, to "pave the world with leather," so to speak. The logic of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and in particular Buddhist Tantrism, is to transform oneself, and thereby transform the world.

2.2 Transformation and Perfection

1. The Alchemy of Passion and Compassion

When discussing the transformations that occur during the process of awakening, Buddhist texts frequently make use of alchemical metaphors in describing this process. Of particular importance is the catalyst of the process, which effects the transformation just as the purified mercury elixir transforms base metals into gold. The catalyst for Mahāyāna Buddhism, and for its Tantric traditions in particular, is *bodhicitta*, the "Spirit of Awakening", which is the aspiration to achieve complete and total awakening in order to

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[48] BC ch. 5 vv. 12-14: (12) kiyato mārayiṣyāmi durjanān gaganopamān / mārite krodhacitte tu māritāḥ sarvaśatravaḥ // (13) bhūmiṃ chādayituṃ sarvāṃ kutaś carma bhaviṣyati / upānac carmamātreṇa channā bhavati medinī // (14) bāhyā bhāvā mayā tadvac chakyā vārayituṃ na hi / svacittaṃ vārayiṣyāmi kiṃ mamānyair nivāritaiḥ // (Vaidya 1960:53); / sems can mi srun nam mkha' bzhin // de dag gzhom gyis yong mi lang // khro ba'i sems 'di gcig bcom na // dgra de thams cad choms dang 'dra // sa stengs 'di dag kos g-yogs su // de snyed ko bas ga la lang // lham mthil tzam gyi ko bas ni // sa stengs thams cad g.yogs dang 'dra // de bzhin phyi rol dngos po yang // bdag gis phyir bzlog mi lang gi// bdag gi sems 'di phyir bzlog bya'i // gzhan rnams bzlog go ci zhig dgos / (DT fol. 10b); cf. Batchelor 1979 p. 39.

benefit all sentient beings. The transformative aspect of the Spirit of Awakening is stressed by Śāntideva in the following passage:

> One wretched and bound in the prison of existence becomes fit to be praised in both the human and immortal worlds as a 'scion of the Sugata' just as soon as he or she has given rise to the Spirit of Awakening. Since, like the supreme mercurial elixir, it makes this impure form [we] have taken transmutable[49] into the priceless form which is the Conqueror's treasure, quickly take up the thought of the Spirit of Awakening.[50]

This interesting passage attributes to the Spirit of Awakening *(bodhicitta)* the same sort of catalytic power of transmutation attributed to the mercurial elixir of alchemy. The question might arise, however, how might this be possible?

Tantric traditions follow the Mahāyāna in placing great importance upon the notion of compassion and the liberative arts (*upāya*) inspired by it. Compassion is the instinctual or spontaneous, rather than contrived, desire to alleviate the suffering of others. Since Buddhists, however, recognize that ultimately we are all responsible for our own condition, alleviating the suffering of others often requires liberative arts *(upāya),* strategies or tricks which, while sometimes on the surface deceptive, are designed to lead suffering individuals either out of danger of which they are unaware,[51] or into stage of development or frame of

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[49] The gerundive *vedhaniyam,* derived from the root vidh 'to pierce', has in the alchemical context the meaning "transmute", as David White explains: "Transmutation is called *vedhana* ('piercing'), as this is what happens on the conceptual level. Because of its subtle nature, mercury is able to pierce or penetrate less subtle metals. In doing so, it 'kills' them, such that their sūkṣma form emerges, as resurrected, from its previous, more sthūla envelope (which has 'sweated off', as in dīkṣa – through the agency of mercury), leaving that old body behind as an ash *(bhasma)* in compound in other substances. Thus, depending upon its own degree of perfection, mercury is capable of forcing the 'self-transformation' of other elements by causing them to slough off their less dense, sthūla content." (White 1984:53) The alchemical simile is apt, since *bodhicitta* is said to effect 'self-transmutation' in those who give rise to it.

[50] BC ch. 1 vv. 9-10: (9) bhavacārakabandhano varākaḥ sugatānāṃ suta ucyate kṣaṇena / sanarāmaralokavandaniyo bhavati smodita eva bodhicitte // (10) aśucipratimām imāṃ gṛhitvā jinaratnapratimāṃ karoty anardhām / rasajātamativa vedhaniyaṃ sudṛḍaṃ gṛhṇata bodhicittasaṃjñam // (Vaidya 1960:7-8); / byang chub sems skyes gyur na skad cig gis // 'khor ba'i btson rar bsdams pa'i nyam thag rnams // bde gshegs rnams kyi sras zhes brjod bya zhing // 'jig rten lha mir bcas pas phyag byar 'gyur // gser 'gyur rtsi yi rnam pa mchog lta bu // mi gtsang lus 'di blangs nas rgyal ba'i sku // rin chen ring thang med par bsgyur bas na // byang chub sems zhes byaba rab brtan zung / (DT fol. 2a,b); cf. Batchelor 1979, pp. 4-5.

[51] The classic example here is that described in the parable contained in chapter 3 of the Lotus Sūtra, wherein a Father lures his sons out of a burning house with promises to give them diverse sorts of carts, when in fact he only has one type to give them. See Hurvitz 1976, pp. 58-61.

mind wherein they can reach deeper levels of self-understanding.[52] This aspiration must be fundamentally inspired by compassion, and is oriented toward the development of the liberative arts, the perfection of which occurs at the moment of perfect awakening, i.e., the achievement of Buddhahood. It represents a total transformation of one's aim and consequently one's behavior, being fundamentally a motivation toward the good of others rather than one's own selfishly, narrow-mindedly conceived good. For this reason the Spirit of Awakening was understood to effect the transformation from a benighted to an Awakened state. This transformative power is expressed well by a passage in the Chinese translation of the *Vajragarbhatantra,* which occurs as follows:

> If a bodhisattva gives rise to the unexcelled spirit of awakening, then he or she is known as a Vajrasattva. This spirit of awakening effects not only one's own benefit but also benefit for others. In this way a bodhisattva mahāsattva practices with an understanding of the liberative arts (*upāya;* 方便), causing the sense faculties (*indriya;* 根) and the sense objects (*viṣaya;* 境界) which are their respective cause and function to attain the tolerance of the non-origination of all things (*anutpattikadharmakṣānti;* 無生法忍盡).[53]

Buddhist Tantras particularly stress the importance of cultivating and maintaining the Spirit of Awakening, which became one of their central and organizing principles. The Vajrayāna further develops the idea; in certain of the Perfection Stage Yogas, *bodhicitta* is seen less as an abstract aspiration and more as a psycho-physical energy or substance which must be cultivated and manipulated in yogic exercises. *Bodhicitta*, regardless of how it is understood, is significant not only because of its centrality to Buddhist Tantric practice, but also because it is taken as distinctive mark of such practice; or, from another perspective, we can say that this altruistic aspiration serves as a mark of Buddhist practice. Practices which might otherwise be equally adaptable to non-Buddhist contexts become Buddhist

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[52] A classic example of this sort is contained in *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra,* in the beginning of which Sudhana, having developed the Spirit of Awakening, is sent on an extensive quest by Mañjuśri to learn the practice of the bodhisattvas, only to realize, when he finally achieves a liberating vision in Vairocana's tower, that he was in fact awakened from the moment he conceived the spirit of enlightenment. See Cleary 1993.

[53] 若有菩薩發於最上大菩提心。是即名為金剛乘　　性。是菩提心能自利益復利於他。如是菩薩摩訶薩行解於方便。能於諸根各各境界所緣所作。當獲無生法忍。 (T. 1128, pp. 543.1,2); cf. Bagchi 1944, p. 36.

when framed by altruistically intended actions, namely, when preceded by the generation of the Spirit of Awakening, and followed by the dedication of merits gained through practice to the welfare of other beings. In fact, certain Buddhist scholars, such as 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul, have gone so far as to claim that the perfection stage yogic processes are essentially non-Buddhist if not conjoined to this altruistic orientation.[54]

The centrality of *bodhicitta* as a fundamental idea underlying Buddhist Tantric theory and practice is demonstrated by the wide variety of texts in which either the *idea* is invoked, or the *practice* of generating this altruistic aspiration is prescribed. It is evinced by the famous line in the first chapter of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, that "The Buddha said, 'The Spirit of Awakening *(bodhicitta)* is the cause, great compassion *(mahākaruṇā)* is the root, and liberative art *(upāya)* is the ultimate'."[55] Spirit of Awakening is the cause in that it serves as the basis from which Awakening is attained. But the compassion that arises from it is itself constructive of the store of merit which gives rise to the form body *(rūpakāya)* of a Buddha, and is thus the "root". Liberative art is the "ultimate" in that the attainment of a Buddha's power to liberate beings is the ultimate goal of the bodhisattva.

In this passage the term *bodhicitta* in fact has a dual sense, implicitly connected to the idea of the "seed of awakening" *(tathāgatagarbha)* developed in certain Mahāyāna sources. For example, in the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra,* Sudhana learns at the end of an extensive spiritual journey that he was Awakened from the moment he conceived of the Spirit of Awakening, which in a sense identifies the cause with the effect. He is told that "the determination for enlightenment is the seed of all elements of Buddhahood...it is the source of all the practices of enlightening beings, and from it come all Buddhas of past, future and present." (Cleary 1993:352-4). This identification is made explicit in Buddhaguhya's commentary to the above verse from the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra,* which occurs as follows:

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[54] See Germano 1994, p. 224, esp. n. 56.

[55] MV ch. 1: / ngas khyod la bshad do // rgyu ni byang chub kyi sems so // rtsa ba ni snying rje chen po'o // mthar thug pa ni thabs so /; 佛言菩提心為因。悲為根本。方便為究竟。 (Miyasaka 1995:86); cf. Yamamoto 1990, p. 3, Tajima in Wayman and Tajima 1992, p. 256.

> Bodhicitta has two aspects, which are the aspiration for Awakening and the mind which is the nature of Awakening. While the aspiration for Awakening is also the pure mind of faith, in this occasion it should be taken as the Spirit of Awakening of the first [bodhisattva] stage. This spirit of the first stage is linked to the essence of Complete Awakening, and the mind which is the nature of Awakening is also thus. Since the Spirit of Awakening of the first stage is understood to be in nature equal to all things, it is of the same nature as the mind of Complete Awakening. This Spirit of Awakening is known to be the principle cause for Omniscience *(sarvajñajñāna).*[56]

As Tantric Buddhism's basic approach is to take the goal as one's path, it exploits this ambiguity and focuses on *bodhicitta* as the goal itself, while never losing the sense of bodhicitta as a *path* or orientation characterized by a compassion that ideally permeates all actions; its cultivation is tantamount to awakening.[57]

What is transformative here is one's intention; the expansion of one's sense of self, with a concomitant desire to help others in the same way that an ordinary person seeks to benefit himself, acts as a catalyst, so to speak, transforming the negative emotions which are basically epiphenomena of a selfish, self-centered perspective, into motivating energies; this alchemy then aims to transform the passions into compassion. Compassion thus has the capacity to transform the passions through a process of reorientation.

Compassion did not lose, however, its association with the passions; if anything, this association was strengthened in the Tantras.[58] In chapter two of the *Vimalakirti Sūtra* we learn, for example, that examples of Vimalakīrti's "inconceivable skill in liberative art" includes his ability to frequent brothels and bars to reform those within, presumably

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[56] MVV ch. 1: / byang chub sems la yang rnam pa gnyis te / byang chub kyi phyir sems pa dang / byang chub kyi rang bzhin gyi sems so // byang chub kyi phyir sems pa ni smon pa dang 'jug pa'i sems dag kyang yin mod kyi skabs 'dir sa dang po'i byang chub kyi sems la bya ste / sa dang po'i sems de mngon par byang chub pa'i snying por sbyor ba'i phyir ro // byang chub kyi rang bzhin gyi sems kyang 'di lta ste / sa dang po'i byang chub kyi sems de ni chos thams cad mnyam pa nyid du rtog pa'i rang bzhin yin pas mngon par byang chub pa'i sems dang rang bzhin gcig pa'i phyir ro // de lta bu'i byang chub kyi sems ni thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes kyi rgyu'i gtso bor rig par bya'o / (DT fols. 271b-272a, Miyasaka 1995 p. 87).

[57] This point is made by Hopkins in his 1990 article, pp. 93-94.

[58] Indeed, as Hopkins pointed out, compassion *(karuṇā)* came to be associated with the bliss produced by sexual intercourse in which semen is retained. (1990:93)

without himself becoming attached to the addictive "pleasures" of those places.[59] In the *Gaṇḍavyūha Sūtra* Sudhana met the Lady *(bhagavatī)* Vasumitrā, a bodhisattva who could liberate beings through her glance, wink, kiss or embrace.[60] A Tang dynasty story collection contains a similar tale of a woman notorious for her promiscuity, who after death was revealed to be a bodhisattva, one who manifested her compassion in a socially unacceptable manner.[61] Evidently, the observance of social norms is no criteria for ascertaining bodhisattva status.

The line between passion and compassion appears to be thin. In his autocommentary to the first chapter of his *Pramāṇavarttika,* Dharmakirti acknowledges that, from a certain perspective, compassion *(karuṇā)* can be understood as passion *(rāga)* in that it is a type of motivating intention. However, he goes on to qualify and define compassion as follows: "Even in the absence of compulsive grasping for the Self, compassion arises through inculcating it (in one's mind) by merely apprehending a certain kind of suffering."[62] This idea, which is grudgingly accepted by Dharmakirti, is wholeheartedly embraced by Tantric theorists, such as Anaṅgavajra, who wrote that "Compassion *(kṛpā)* is said to be passion *(rāga)* because it delights *(rañjati)* all beings

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[59] See Thurman 1976 p. 21.

[60] A good translation of this passage occurs in Paul 1979, pp. 155-62.

[61] Chou summarized this story in Li Fu-yan's (李復言) late Tang *Xu-xuan Guai-ji* (續玄怪記) as follows: "There appeared in Yen-chou a beautiful woman about the age of twenty-four or five, who wandered alone in the city. All the young men in the city loved her and associated with her. She would do what the young men wanted and never refused anybody. After several years she died. Her funeral was arranged by the people in Yen-chou with great sorrow. Since she had no relatives, they buried her right beside the road. During the Ta-li period (766-779 A.D.), a monk from Central Asia came to the city. Having seen the tomb, he made obeisance to it, burned incense, walked around it and recited hymns of praise. The people of the city said to him: "She was but a voluptuous woman who would take anybody as her husband. Why should you worship her like this?" The monk replied: "You do not know. She was a great sage with deep compassion and good-will to give. Therefore she granted whatever desire the world had. She was a So-ku p'u-sa 鎖骨菩薩 (Bodhisattva of Chained Bones). If you do not believe, you may open the tomb and see." So the people did. The bones of the skeleton were interlocked with one another like chains." (1945:328)

[62] Dunne 1996:539, modified by me. This occurs in Gnoli's edition as follows: asaty apy ātmagrahe duḥkhaviśeṣadarśanamātreṇābhyābhyāsabalotpādinī bhavaty eva karuṇā (1960:9). For a lengthy treatment of Dharmakirti's argument see Dunne 1996.

who are inundated with every sort of suffering, and who are thereby released from the cause of suffering."[63]

Tantric psychological alchemy is conceptually akin to homeopathy, in holding that the very source of a problem can be transformed into its own remedy. This idea was concisely expressed by Lakṣmiṃkarā who wrote that "By the very means that living beings are bound by dreadful actions, one is liberated from the bonds of existence through liberative art."[64] Tantric literature in fact is filled with this sort of transformative metaphor, which imply that the "poisons" of ordinary existence can be neutralized or transformed by one equipped with the proper knowledge. A succinct statement to this effect occurs in the *Hevajra Tantra* as follows:

> If he drinks strong poison, the simple man who does not understand it falls senseless. But he who is free from delusion with his mind intent on the truth destroys it altogether. Just so those who know the art of release and make effort in Hevajra are not held by misknowledge nor by the bonds of delusion and so forth.[65]

This process not only is capable of neutralizing the "poisons" of the passions, but can potentially be transformed into the "ambrosia" of great bliss. Padmasambhava, the *mahāsiddha* who journeyed to Tibet during the eighth century, used the analogy of the process of fertilization to explain that:

> If the three poisons are calmed, the poison will become non-poison. Progressively approximating ambrosia, they become ambrosia. For example, the sewage of a large town will benefit fields of sugarcane, rice and grapes. Accordingly, whatever

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[63] *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi.* Ch. 1 v. 15: rañjaty aśeṣaduḥkhaughān utthāṃs tu duḥkhahetutaḥ / sarvasattvān yatas tasmāt kṛpā rāgaḥ pragīyate // (Samdhong et al. 1987:68); / ma lus sdug bsngal rgya mtsho dang // sdug bsngal las 'don gang yin pa // snying rje sems can la chags pas // 'dod chags zhes ni bya bar grags / (Samdhong et al. 1987:113).

[64] *Advayasiddhi* v.7: yena yena hi baddhyante jantavo raudrakarmaṇā / sopāyena tu tenaiva mucyante bhavabandhanāt // (Samdhong et al. 1987:161); / 'di ltar sems can 'ching ba ni // drag po'i las kyis sems can rnams // de ltar thabs dang ldan pa yis // 'khor ba dag las grol bar byed / (Samdhong et al. 1987:148); cf. Mishra 1993, p. 32.

[65] HT II.iv.71-72; trans. in Snellgrove 1959, vol.1, p. 107 with minor emendations by me. Verse 71 is in *apabhraṃśa,* which Snellgrove translated relying upon the commentaries and the Tibetan translation. The text occurs as follows: (71) ghasmai garalaha bhakkhāṇahi jo niccedya ṇa loa / mohavaivarjitā tatumaṇa tatva para tuṭua soa // (72) tathā nivṛtyupāyajñā hevajreṣu kṛtaśramāḥ / avidyādyair na gṛhyante na ca mohādibandanaiḥ //; / gang zhig mi shes 'jig rten pa // btsan dug zos pas brgyal bar 'gyur // rmongs spangs de nyid yid kyis ni // de yis de nyid yongs su gcod // de bzhin zhi ba'i thabs shes zhing // kye'i rdo rje ngal bsos nas // ma rig sogs pas mi 'dzin cing // gti mug la sogs 'ching bas min / (Snellgrove 1959: vol. 2 pp. 70-71).

addictions are in the body will benefit one who is omniscient. This is the lord of supreme medicines, the highest method of removing pain.[66]

Āryadeva likewise takes recourse to naturalistic imagery:

Just as someone who has overcome poison can neutralize poison with poison, or as water is drawn out from the ear with water, or a thorn with a thorn, likewise the wise draw out passion with passion. For example, the washer, by means of the stain makes the clothing stainless, so too the intelligent should make themselves stainless by means of their very own stains. Just as a mirror is cleansed by being wiped clear of dust, the intelligent make use of the faults to destroy the faults. Just as a single lump of iron cast in water sinks to the bottom, likewise one who is a suitable vessel should liberate others to liberate himself. The enjoyment of desire by means of wisdom and art liberates the mind of one who is a suitable vessel, and can even cause others to be liberated. If the unwise partake of desire, it becomes a fetter. The wise, however, relying upon desire, achieve liberation. It is known throughout the world that non-toxic milk becomes highly toxic if drunk by cobras. Just as a goose is skilled in drinking milk mixed in water, likewise the skillful is liberated enjoying poisonous objects. Poison, if used properly, is transformed into ambrosia. For the fools, however, sweetmeats and so forth become poisonous if misused.[67]

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[66] This passage is attributed to him in his biography, the *The God and Demon Precepts (lha 'dre bka' thang)*, in the *bka' thang lde lnga* collection, which was "discovered" by Urgyan gLing-pa. It occurs as follows in the Beijing edition: / dug gsum nye bar zhi gyur na // dug ni dug med bya ba yin // bdud rtsi rim gyis bsten byas nas // bdud rtsi nyid du gyur pa yin // dper na grong khyer chen po'i lud // bu ram shing gi zhing dag dang // 'bras zhing rgun 'brum zhing la phan // de bzhin nyon mong lus gang yin // thams cad mkhyen pa nyid la phan // sman pa che mchog gtso bo ste // zug rngu 'byin pa bla na med / (pp.11,12). A possible source for this "fertilization" metaphor is the *Āryakāśyapaparivarta-nāma-mahāyānasūtra*, wherein the following passage occurs: "For example, the impure sewage of the towns can enrich a field of sugarcane. Likewise, the ordure of the bodhisattva's addictions can be made to enrich the Victor's Teachings." / dper na grong khyer rnams kyi mi gtsang lud // de ni bu ram shing gi zhing phan // de bzhin byang chub sems dpa'i nyon mongs lud // de ni rgyal ba'i chos la phan par byed // (DT fol. 130a).

[67] CV vv. 36-45: (36) viṣākrānto yathā kaścid viṣeṇaiva tu nirviṣaḥ // (37) karṇāj jalaṃ jalenaiva kaṇṭakeṇaiva kaṇṭakam / rāgeṇaiva tathā rāgam uddharanti manīṣiṇaḥ // (38) yathaiva rajako vastraṃ malenaiva tu nirmalam / kuryād vijñas tathātmānaṃ malenaiva tu nirmalam // (39) yathā bhavati saṃśuddho rajonirghṛṣṭadarpaṇaḥ / sevitas tu tathā vijñair doṣo doṣavināśanaḥ // (40) lohapiṇḍo jale kṣipto majjaty eva tu kevalam / pātrīkṛto sa evānyaṃ tārayet tarati svayam // (41) tadvat pātrīkṛtaṃ cittaṃ prajñopāyavidhānataḥ / bhuñjāno mucyate kāmo mocayaty aparān api // (42) durvijñaiḥ sevitaḥ kāmaḥ kāmo bhavati bandhanam / sa eva sevito vijñaiḥ kāmo mokṣaprasādhakaḥ // (43) prasiddhaṃ sakale loke kṣīraṃ viṣavināśanam / tad eva phaṇibhiḥ pītaṃ sutarāṃ viṣavardhanam // (44) jale kṣīraṃ yathāviṣṭaṃ haṃso pibati paṇḍitaḥ / saviṣān viṣayāṃs tadvad bhuktvā muktaś ca paṇḍitaḥ // (45) yathaiva vidhivad bhuktaṃ viṣam apy amṛtāyate / durbhuktaṃ ghṛtapūrādi bālānān tu viṣāyate // (Patel 1949:4-5); / ji ltar dug gis zin 'ga' zhig // dug nyid kyis ni dug med byed // rna las chu la chu nyid dang // tsher ma zug la tsher ma nyid // de bzhin chags pa chags nyid kyis // mkhas pa rnams kyis 'dzin par byed // nyes pa sbyangs phyir bsten par bya // lcags kyi gong bu chur bcug na // ji ltar gting du 'gro bar 'gyur // de nyid snod du byas pas su // bdag dang gzhan yang sgrol bar byed // de bzhin snod du byas pa'i sems // shes rab thabs kyi cho ga yis // 'dod pas spyod bzhin grol bar 'gyur // gzhan dag kyang ni grol bar byed // rnam shes ngan pas bsten byas na // 'dod pa 'ching ba nyid du 'gyur // de nyid mkhas pas bsten byas nas // 'dod pas thar par rab tu sgrub / (p. 1.5) / 'o mas dug ni zhig 'gyur ba // 'jig rten kun la rab tu grags // de nyid sbrul gyis 'thungs nas ni // dug ni shin tu 'phel bar byed // ji ltar chu dang 'o ma 'dres // ngang ba 'o ma 'thung bar mkhas // de bzhin dug bcas yul dag pas // mkhas pas spyad nas grol bar byed // ji ltar cho ga bzhin spyad na // dug kyang bdud rtsir 'gyur ba yin // byis pa rnams kyis mar kham sogs // bza' ma legs pa dug du 'gyur / (Patel 1949:25-26; cf. QT p. 1.4,5).

This notion that the passions themselves are transmutable into their own release, while a thoroughly Tantric idea, has its basis in older levels of Buddhist thought, in the apophatic *Prajñāpāramitā* texts as well as in the classical Mahāyāna commentary literature. A famous example occurs in Asaṅga's *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkara;* although the relevant portion of this text has already been translated,[68] its significance warrants its inclusion here:

> *Since no thing exists apart from the sphere of reality (dharmadhātu), the Buddhas hold that the passions and so forth are their own transcendence (niḥsaraṇa).*
> The Blessed Lord said, "I say that apart from passion there is no transcendence of passion, and likewise for hate and delusion." This shows the intended import here. There is no thing separate from the sphere of reality, meaning that no thing exists in a state of separation from reality. Therefore, it is understood that the reality of passion, etc. is designated as "passion," and likewise the transcendence of passion, etc. It should be understood that this is the intended import here.
> *As no thing exists apart from the sphere of reality, the wise hold that this is relevant in regard to the teaching on the addictions.*
> It is said that "Misknowledge and Awakening are one." The intended import here is that this is relevant to the teaching on the addictions. Figuratively speaking misknowledge can be [understood to be] the reality of awakening.
> *Through being thoroughly engaged with passion etc., one is liberated from them through their transcendence.*
> Thoroughly engaging in the passions, etc., one is liberated from them; this is acknowledged to be their transcendence. That is the intended import here.[69]

In the Buddhist view, the spiritual "path" should be characterized by great bliss, and this bliss arises from a nondual perspective, from an integration of artificially separated aspects of reality, be they the passions and awakening, bondage and liberation, self and other, or theory and practice, which are articulated as "wisdom" *(prajñā)* and "art" *(upāya)* in Buddhist discourse. As the *Śrisaṃvarakhasama* put it, "the path of great bliss is the

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[68] See Snellgrove 1987:126.

[69] Trans. based in part on Thurman's (unpublished manuscript) pp. 196-97. Ch. 13, vv. 11-13, with Asaṅga's autocommentary: (v. 11) dharmadhātuvinirmukto yasmād dharmo na vidyate / tasmād rāgādayas teṣāṃ buddhair niḥsaraṇaṃ matāḥ //; yad uktaṃ bhagavatā / nāham anyatra rāgād rāgasya niḥsaraṇaṃ vadāmy evaṃ dveṣān mohād iti / tatrābhisaṃdhiṃ darśayati / yasmād dharmadhātuvinirmukto dharmo nāsti dharmatāvyatirekeṇa dharmābhāvāt / tasmād rāgādidharmatāpi rāgādy ākhyāṃ labhate sa ca niḥsaraṇaṃ rāgādīnām ity evaṃ tatrābhisaṃdhir veditavyaḥ /. (v. 12) dharmadhātuvinirmukto yasmād dharmo na vidyate / tasmāt saṃkleśanirdeśe sa saṃvid dhīmatāṃ mataḥ //; yad uktaṃ avidyā ca bodhiś caikam iti / tatrāpi saṃkleśanirdeśe sa evābhisaṃdhiḥ / avidyā bodhidharmtā syāt tad upacārāt /. (v. 13) yatas tān eva rāgādīn yoniśaḥ pratipadyate / tato vimucyate tebhyas tenaiṣāṃ niḥsṛtis tataḥ //; tān eva rāgādīn yoniśaḥ pratipadyamānas tebhyo vimucyate tasmāt parijñātās ta eva teṣāṃ niḥsaraṇaṃ bhavatīty ayam atrābhisaṃdhiḥ // (Bagchi 1970:85).

supreme nonduality of art and wisdom, achieved through the power of joy which arises from great compassion."[70]

The Buddhists thus take here a relativistic stance; there is nothing that is intrinsically conducive to bondage or liberative, and ultimately all distinctions such as "purity" and "impurity" are illusory. Such ideas are, at best, only heuristically meaningful.[71] Whether any particular phenomenon or behavior is binding or liberating is dependent upon a certain kind of knowledge, an insight into the nature of things which deconstructs selfish attachment and allows the aspiring bodhisattva to engage with the world without being bound to it.

2.2.2 Union and Self-Consecration

The eventual identification in Mahāyāna Buddhism of the aspiration for Awakening with Awakening itself conceptually pioneered the course of development that would lead to the techniques of self-identification with an Awakened deity which is a central feature of Buddhist Tantrism. The claim that the impure, benighted sphere of existence, i.e., *saṃsāra,* and the sphere of liberation, *nirvāna,* are identical or nondual, and differ only cognitively, i.e., via the distinction between misknowledge and correct knowledge of reality, is a powerful claim, and one that opened the way for the very development of Buddhist Tantrism. This claim was in fact made by Tripiṭakamāla, who wrote the following in his *Nayatrayapradipa:*

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[70] / snying rje chen po las skyes pa // dga' ba'i shugs las rnam par grub // thabs dang shes rab gnyis med mchog / bde ba chen po lam yin no / (DK fol. 262a)

[71] Asaṅga, for example, comments in his *Madhyānta-vibhaṅga,* that "If there were no passions, all men would be liberated. If there were no purity, their effort would be fruitless. Emptiness neither has nor lacks the passions; it is neither pure nor impure. The mind is pure by nature, but soiled by adventitious passions." (Demiéville 1987:16) He seems to maintain a certain tension between the ultimate and conventional views, asserting the truth of the former while accepting the limited value or inevitability of the latter.

> It is said in both the *sūtras* and the *tantrarājas* that nondual intuition *(advayajñāna)* alone is the cause of perfections, that is, the Stages *(bhūmi)*, Concentrations *(samādhi)*, *dhāranis*, Transcendences *(pāramitā)*, Superknowledges *(abhijñā)*, and the infinite doors of Liberation which were proclaimed with the very ambrosial voice of great compassion.[72]

It is also an important idea underlying the practice of "deity" or Buddha-yoga.[73] Deity yoga is the meditative practice of visualizing oneself as a deity, the term *yoga* here translatable as "union". And the object of union is either the Buddha or some other Awakened deity, which in either case symbolize Awakening, the highest goal of Buddhist practice.

The identity of the potential for Awakening with Awakening itself is made possible through a specific sort of "knowledge" (*jñāna*) of reality, an understanding of the voidness which permits one not so much to understand but to *tolerate* the inconceivable manner in which phenomena are deeply interrelated. This view of reality is described in Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Vimalakirti* and the *Avataṃsaka.*[74] This appears to be a case where the translation "knowledge" for *jñāna* is inappropriate, and instead a more suitable and felicitous translation would be "intuition" understood in the Bergsonian sense, since it involves no mere intellectual apprehension of an object, but rather a deeply experienced realization of the nature of reality which is not necessarily expressible in the terminology of dichotomous thought and language constructs, and which has a transformative capacity which extends beyond the experience itself.[75] Thurman described it is as follows, saying that

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[72] / mdo sde dang rgyud kyi rgyal po de dang de rnams su sa dang / ting nge 'dzin dang / gzungs dang / pha rol tu phyin pa dang / mngon par shes pa dang / rnam par thar pa'i sgo mtha' yas pa rnams thugs rje chen po'i bdud rts'i gsung nyid kyi ston par mdzad pa ni gnyis su med pa'i ye shes kho na phun sum tshogs pa ma lus pa'i rgyu yin par gsungs la / NT DT fol. 7a.

[73] As noted above, both the terms *devatāyoga* and *buddhayoga* occur in Buddhist texts. It is important to keep in mind in the Buddhist Tantric context that the "deity" is not an absolutely existent entity whom the practitioner approaches as a supplicant as in theistic religions, but rather an embodiment of the ideal of Awakening with whom the practitioner seeks to assimilate him or herself via a process of meditative identification.

[74] See Thurman 1976 and Cleary 1993.

[75] See note 19 above.

> the bodhisattva, upon arising from direct, nonconceptual gnosis of nonduality etc., experiences the "aftermath gnosis" *(pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna)*, in which the entire causal realm, the relative world appears to be like a dream, illusion, echo, reflection, etc. In what sense does it so appear? Clearly, these metaphors intend to convey that the enlightenment-universe is not a "solid", realistically uniform, causally normative realm, but is rather fluid, inconceivable, magical, etc. (1980:347)

Reality here is viewed in a nondual fashion; not only are conventional, phenomenal existents and their ultimate, void nature understood as existing in a nondual, interdependent fashion (理實無礙), but phenomena themselves are understood to exist in an inconceivable, interpenetrating fashion (實實無礙). The Avataṃsaka school in China, the Hua-yan or Kegon (華嚴) school, developed intricate meditative practices for the cultivation of this vision of reality, characterized not only by the interpenetration of the ultimate and the convention,[76] it is perhaps not surprising that Kūkai placed this school just below the Esoteric (*Mikkyō*) form of Buddhism in the hierarchy presented in his "Jeweled Key to the Secret Treasury" (秘藏寶鑰, *Hizō hōyaku*).[77] Kūkai, in his essay "Attaining Enlightenment in this very Existence" (*Sokushin jōbutsugi*, 即身成佛義), described the Tantric vision of reality drawing on the imagery typical to this school, as follows:

> Endlessly reverberating like Indra's net is that which is called the body"; this is a metaphor for the compete interpenetration without obstruction of the three mysteries, the atoms of which are luminous Buddhalands. "Indra's net" is the jeweled net of Indra which is also called the "body", which designates one's own body, the Buddha's body and the bodies of sentient beings. The "body" also has four types, such as the Truth *(svabhāva,* 自性), Beatific (*saṃbhoga,* 受用), and Emanation (*nirmāṇa,* 變化) [bodies], etc. The body also can be thrice characterized as word, gesture and image, which are also like those [above types]. The body is vertically and horizontally vibrant like an image in a mirror or rays of lamplight. Interpenetrating, that body is this body, and this body the bodies of sentient beings, whose bodies are the Buddha's body: [these] are not the same yet similar, not different yet differentiated.[78]

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[76] 66 Regarding Du Shun's system of meditation see Cook 1977, as well as Cleary's (1983) translations of the writings of Du Shun and Zheng-guan.

[77] See the translation of this text in Hakeda 1972 pp. 157-224

[78] 重重帝網名即身者是則舉譬喻以明諸尊剎塵三密圓融　無礙。帝網者因陀羅珠網也謂身者我身佛身眾生身是名，身又有四種身言自　　性受用變化等流是名曰身又有三種字印形是也如是等，身縱橫重重如鏡中影像燈光，涉入彼身即是此身。此身即是眾生身，眾生身即是佛身，不同而同不異而異。(Kukai 1910,p. 100). cf. Hakeda 1972, p. 232.

Tantric visualization implies at least an understanding of reality as not "solid" and unpliable but rather transformable and deeply interrelated to one's own body, mind and imaginative powers, which from a certain perspective create one's perception of it. It thus involves a process of active imagination coupled with the discipline of meditative concentration (*samādhi*), without which the visualization has no power, and yogic techniques such as breath control which enrich and empower the meditative experience. It is based upon the assumption of a fundamental link between cause and effect, such that the attainment of the latter requires a similar cause; Buddhahood is thus attained through a process of identifying oneself, mentally, verbally and physically, with the Buddha.[79]

This process is typically called "deity yoga", or, in the case of the *Sarvarahasya-nāma-tantrarāja*, "buddhayoga", which it described as follows:

> If one meditates upon joining with the Buddhas *(buddhayoga)*, one by that means becomes identical to the Buddhas. All Buddhas are alike in nature in that they arise from concentration (*samādhi*) and intuition *(jñāna)*. Without the practice of Buddhayoga, the yogin will not attain Buddhahood.[80]

According to the Tibetan tradition the meditations which might be characterized as "buddhayoga" have two aspects, the cultivation of both the "divine pride" of oneself as a deity, and the "vision" or vivid appearance of one's environment as a divine environment. The current Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, has described them as follows:

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[79] Vinayadatta included a clear exposition of this idea in his *Gurūpadeśa-nāma-mahāmāyāmaṇḍalavidhi*, as follows: "Through meditation on the Form Body *(rūpakāya)* and the Reality Body *(dharmakāya)*, True Awakening is attained. If the Reality Body is attained through the Victor's concentration, why is the Form Body not meditated upon? Although the Form Body is attained through the store, [amassed] by the inferior over a long period of time, by taking the cause as the effect, the three bodies simultaneously appear." / gzugs sku chos kyi sku yin sgom byed pa // ka yis nges par byang chub thob pa yin // chos sku rgyal ba'i bsam gtan gyis thob na // gzugs kyi sku la ci ste bsgom mi byed // gal te gzugs sku bsod nams tshogs kyis thob na'ang // de yis yun ring dus gzhan dman pa ste // 'bras bu'i khyad par rgyu yi khyad par las // sku gsum dus mnyam par ni snang ba yin / (fol. 93b-94a) A similar explanation is given by Śrīdhara in his *Śrīyamāritantrapañjikā-sahajāloka-nāma*, as follows: "The cause of the attainment of Buddhahood is Union with the Buddha *(buddhayoga)*. Is it not completely evident that the effect is always akin to the cause?" / sangs rgyas nyid ni sgrub pa'i rgyu // sangs rgyas rnal 'byor kun du yang // rgyu dang 'dra ba'i 'bras bu nyid // kun du mthong ba ma yin nam / (DT fol 82b). Both of these quotes are included by Tsongkhapa in the first section of his NRC (TL fol. 23a,b), cf. Hopkins 1977 p.131.

[80] v. 17.c-18.d: 觀想諸佛若相應。是故我即同諸佛。三摩地智所出生。平等一切佛自　　性。佛相應行既非無。從相應心得佛　　性。(T 888 p. 537.) This passage is also quoted by Śrīdhara in his Śrīdhara. *Śrīyamāritantrapañjikā-sahajāloka-nāma* (DT fol. 82b), which is cited by Tsongkhapa in his NRC (TL fol. 23a), cf. Hopkins 1977 p.131.

> Divine pride protects one from the ordinary [conception], and divine vivid appearance protects one from ordinary appearances. Whatever appears to the senses is viewed as the sport of a deity; for instance, whatever forms are seen are viewed as emanations of a deity and whatever sounds are heard are viewed as the mantras of a deity. One is thereby protected from ordinary appearances, and through this transformation of attitude, the pride of being a deity emerges. Such protection of mind together with its attendant pledges and vows is called the practice of mantra.[81]

The "divine pride" of Tantric practice differs from ordinary pride in that, unlike the latter, it does not imagine a false distinction between subject and object, self and other, glorifying the former at the expense of the latter. Instead, it involves the re-imagination of both self and other as deities, and one's environment as a divine deity palace which is schematically represented by the maṇḍala. This practice is necessarily built upon the foundation of an awareness of both subjective and objective voidness, for if one still imagines that there is an intrinsically real self it is impossible to rise beyond the level of ordinary, gross perceptions of reality.[82]

This point is clearly made in the *Sarvarahasya Tantra,* which begins with what we might term as a statement of the Tantric ethos:[83]

> If one does not regard sentient beings as having definite bodies, produced as they are from the five elements,[84] and if one also does not ascertain a definite mind, then meditate on the buddhas in this way also. If a great hero (*mahāsattva*) were to desire to bow down to the buddha, he or she should bow down to his or her own intuition.[85] The Buddha's intuition and one's own have the same original source. Their secret nature is that they exist in a nondual fashion. If one understands that all things arise selflessly, then that which arises is nondual

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[81] Translated in Hopkins 1977, pp. 48-49, insert provided by Dr. Thurman. This explanation began with the traditional etymology of mantra as "that which protects the mind", which is why the notion of protection occurs throughout it.

[82] Of course, there is always the danger that if one engages in deity yoga practices without having realized voidness that one will simply strengthen one's coarse attachment to self and egotism, i.e., one's "ordinary pride". According to the tradition, however, the proper practice of deity yoga undermines rather than strengthens attachment to self. This is because the deity yoga practice of visualizing oneself as arising as a deity out of voidness, and then dissolving the vision back into voidness again, is believed to be a powerful tool for strengthening one's realization of voidness. See Cozort 1986 pp. 28, 58.

[83] I use *ethos* in the general sense defined in the OED, "the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, community, institution, etc." (Brown 1993, vol. 1 p. 857 col. 3).

[84] Chinese: 五身 ; Tibetan: 'byung lnga.

[85] 實智, lit. "true knowledge" or "knowledge of reality", a translation of *jñāna* in its supramundane or *lokottara* aspect.

> intuition. As liberation is attained amidst both the desirable and the undesirable, there is nothing to which one should not bow down. Things have neither arisen nor will they arise. That which has been born and that which has died do not abide. Contemplating the Buddhas thus, bow down to your own true wisdom.[86]

Similar passages occur in "Unexcelled Yogatantras" as well. The *Sandhivyākaraṇa,* for example, recommends that "through the union of oneself and one's deity, worship oneself and others."[87] While "Buddhayoga" so conceived definitely implies a previous or concurrent realization of voidness, the Tantric tradition portrays itself as superior to the Mahāyāna in its method. A classic textual example of this claim occurs at the end of the first chapter of the *Vajrapañjara Tantra,* as follows:

> If voidness is taken as a liberative art, then there is no Buddhahood, since the effect is none other than the cause. Liberative art thus is not voidness. The Victors taught voidness to counteract selfish conceptions for the sake of those who have wrong views and those who seek a view with regard to the self *(ātman).* Therefore liberative art is "the maṇḍala wheels", the binding of bliss. Through the yoga of Buddha pride Buddhahood is rapidly attained. The Teacher who has the thirty-two signs and who has the eighty marks: his artful form is that which is attained by means of liberative art.[88]

Tsongkhapa, in his *Great Mantric Process,* argued that the Mantrayāna assumes the voidness taught by the Mahāyāna, but goes beyond it, teaching meditative arts which enable one to rapidly achieve the mental and physical state of an Awakened Buddha.[89]

This idea that identification of oneself with an Awakened being is the most efficacious means to achieve Awakening pervades a wide range of Buddhist Tantric texts,

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[86] *Sarvarahasya-nāma-tantra,* vv. 1-4: (v.1) 五身作者如是生。不見眾生決定身。亦復不見決定心。觀想諸佛亦如是。 (v.2) 若欲頂禮佛大士。應當頂禮自實智。佛智自智本同源。秘密 性中無二相。 (v.3) 若了一切無我生。所生即是無二智。愛非愛中得解脫。彼頂禮相無所有。 (v. 4) 法非已生非現生。已生已謝現無住。觀想諸佛相亦然。應當頂禮自實智。 (T 888 p. 536). I found the Chinese translation of this text to be considerably clearer than the Tibetan.

[87] / rang gi lhar ni bdag sbyor bas // bdag and gzhan ni mchod par bya / (DK fol. 178a).

[88] / gal te stong pa thabs yin na // de tshe sangs rgyas nyid mi 'gyur // 'bras bu rgyu las gzhan min phyir // thabs ni stong pa nyid ma yin // ltar rnams la log rnams dang // bdag tu lta ba tshol rnams kyis // bdag zhen bsam pa bzlog pa'i phyir // stong par rgyal ba rnams gyis gsungs // de phyir dkyil 'khor 'khor lo zhes // thabs ni bde ba'i sdom pa ste // sangs rgyas nga rgyal rnal 'byor gyis // sangs rgyas nyid du myur bar 'gyur // ston pa sum cu rtsa gnyis mtshan // gtso bo dpe byad brgyad cur ldan // de phyir thabs kyis bsgrub bya dang // de ni thabs kyi gzugs can no / (VP DK fol. 31a,b). Cf. Hopkins 1977, p. 117. For lists of the 32 signs and 80 marks of a great being see Thurman 1976, pp. 156-57.

[89] See Hopkins 1977, pp. 118-22.

and is stated directly in many of them. These include not only the *yogatantras* such as the *Sarvarahasya Tantra,* in which this practice of deity yoga is of central importance, but also the so-called "lower" Tantras,[90] as well as the "Unexcelled Yoga Tantras".

In the terminology of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras, this meditation is characteristic of the Creation stage, the stage which focuses on creating a vivid divine perception of self and environment. There is another stage, however, called the Perfection Stage, which purports to perfect the divine vision created in the former. Cozort described these stages as follows:

> Highest Yoga Tantra comprises two stages, the stage of generation and the stage of completion. Both are concerned with the transformation of one's mind and body into the mind and body of a Buddha. On the stage of generation, one generates a vivid imaginative visualization of one's transformation into a deity; then, the stage of completion "completes" the transformation by actually bringing about a new physical structure, that is, by transforming into an actual deity, a Buddha.[91]

The Perfection Stage is typically considered to have five stages.[92] The first two stages, "body isolation" and "speech isolation," begin where the Creation Stage concludes, and prepare for entry into the dissolution process which is a rehearsal of the death process. Body isolation practices stabilize one's perception of oneself as a deity. Speech isolation fuses the breathing process with mantra recitation. This extremely stable concentration afforded by these practices, effected by intense concentration on the navel center coupled

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[90] Hopkin's title *Deity Yoga* for his translation of the *kriyā* and *caryātantra* sections of Tsongkhapa's *sNgags rim chen mo* seems appropriate.

[91] 1986:27. Note that Cozort translates *anuttara / bla na med pa* as 'highest' while I translate it as 'unexcelled'. While 'highest' is not a logically inaccurate translation, it is not the best either, since Sanskrit has another word best translated as highest, *uttama.* The word *anuttara,* on the other hand, literally means, 'that than which there is no greater', *na vidyate uttaram adhikaṃ yataḥ* (as the word is defined by Abhinavagupta in his *Parātriśikāvivaraṇa;* see Singh 1988, p. 20). *Uttara* means 'higher', greater', so *anuttara* expresses a state where no such comparison is possible; we are clearly dealing with a case where Sanskrit, a semantically rich language, has several words to express the same idea. Since English too is semantically rich, there is no need to impoverish the language by rigidly sticking to a narrow, uninspiring range of translation terminology. He translated *utpattikrama / bskyed rim* as 'stage of generation' vs. my 'Creation Stage', and *saṃpannakrama / rdzogs rim* as 'stage of completion' vs. my 'Perfection Stage'. Here the difference is purely aesthetic.

[92] The following description is a summary of Thurman's accounts of these processes, briefly described in his 1988 article "Vajra Hermeneutics" (see pp. 130-33), and his more extensive description in his 1994 book (see pp. 73-81).

with the deep "vase breathing" technique, allows one to open the central channel and focus the flow of the winds into it, awakening the subtle "Fury Fire"*(caṇḍāli)* which travels up the channel and melts the subtle "drop" of the brain center, whose molten descent down the channel awakens increasingly intense levels of bliss. This meditation is particularly important in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition and will be discussed further below.

The stage of speech isolation is also called "vajra recitation", and it has the aim of unraveling the heart center, which opens up the third stage of mind isolation, so-called because "the mind is isolated from any nonexperience of great bliss. The subtlest mind becomes the ultimate subjectivity for the cognition of the still metaphoric clear light of universal voidness or of selflessness." (Thurman 1994:77). This stage is also called "self-consecration" *(svādhisthāna)*, wherein one arises in the divine magic body effortlessly *(niṣprapañca, spros med)*, just like a fish jumping out of water, as Āryadeva describes the process in his *Svādhiṣṭhānakramaprabheda*. It is a perfection of the divine vision of the Creation stage; it views all reality as a void but nonetheless magically compelling vision into which one can enter for the sake of compassionately benefiting beings. Āryadeva describes the theory underlying this practice as follows:

> The adept is made of all Buddhas (*sarvabuddhamayaḥ*), and s/he has the four aspects of earth and so forth, which are likewise the four voids. There are eight types of states; these should be understood to be the cause of birth and death. From clear light comes the great void, from which emerges art. Wisdom is generated from that, and from it emerges wind. From wind fire is born, whence water emerges. Earth is born from water, and from them sentient beings evolve. Earth dissolves into water, and water into fire. Fire enters into the subtle realm, and wind dissolves into mind. Mind arises from mental factors, and mental factors enters into misknowledge, which in turn goes to clear light, putting an end to the three states.[93] To the extent that one does not see with the illusion-like concentration *(māyopamasamādhi)*, to that extent one enters the wheel of life at the beginning of time.[94]

Perfection Stage practice focuses on the dissolution process which purportedly occurs at death, and which involves the eightfold progressive dissolution of the elements and

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[93] *srid pa gsum, tribhava,* referring here to the birth, death and between states.

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consciousnesses associated them into increasingly subtle levels, culminating in the experience of clear light. The Self-Consecration process involves the visualization of oneself arising as a deity through these stages in reverse order, while the fourth stage, Clear Light *(prabhāsa)*, focuses on immersion in clear light, which is equated with an ultimate understanding of voidness. The focus here is on the ultimate basis of perception, on the clear light which is considered to be the pristine basis for all cognition; this is particularly emphasized in the "Mother Tantras", which include the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, as will be discussed below in chapter four. The final stage, Integration *(yuganaddha)* fully unifies the experience of clear light and the magic body, voidness and compassion, and is equated with the achievement of Awakening.

While these meditative techniques are characteristic of only the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras, they are understood in the Tradition as complementing the deity yoga techniques which appear to be the common ground shared by all Buddhist Tantric traditions. They thus are in harmony with the general goal of Buddhism, Complete and Perfect Awakening.

2.3 The Way of Great Bliss

1. Joy and Asceticism

In the discussion of possible definitions of "Tantrism" or the "Tantric" I argued that the theory and praxis of meditative union with an Awakened deity serves as a unifying, defining principle of Tantric Buddhism, a principle on the basis of which the Vajrayāna is often termed the "goal vehicle". This form of meditation is in many ways at odds with previous trends of meditation in India, many of which were characterized by their focus on asceticism. The Tantric Buddhist traditions of yoga, according to numerous Buddhist Tantric texts, are characterized by joy rather than pain. While past authors have tended to view Buddhist Tantrism as constituting a radical departure from earlier forms of Buddhism,

noted for their austerity and ethics, this portrayal may be distorted, and Tantrism may constitute less a departure from the Buddhist norm than a progressive and natural development based on tendencies already present in Buddhism from a very early date.

An early and uncompromising position held by the Buddhists was that liberation was not attainable by means of any mechanistic process, such as by the austerities practiced by the Jains and some other śramaṇas, who evidently held that the *karma* which bound one to the world was an actual material substance which could only be removed by means of fasting, physical and mental immobility, and so forth. On the contrary, the Buddhists held that liberation could only be attained by means of knowledge, and it is knowledge or its contrary, misknowledge or wrong ideas about reality, that are productive of liberation or bondage in the world, rather than any intrinsic quality inherent in actions or their "residues" in the body.

The origins and development of asceticism in India is a complex issue which cannot be addressed here at length. A number of scholars held that it represents a *śramaṇa*-based reaction against Vedic brahmanism.[95] Heesterman, on the contrary, sees ascetic renunciation as developing within the Vedic tradition itself.[96] Bronkhorst, however, has argued that there are in fact two distinct traditions of asceticism in India, one of which developed amongst the Vedic brahmins and the other of which developed amongst non-Vedic *śramaṇa* groups, of which the Jains are the best known component. Bronkhorst, however, excludes Buddhism from either of these two traditions of asceticism. He concluded that

> early Buddhism, in spite of the efforts of some modern scholars to obfuscate this, was in fact markedly different from the other religious movements that existed in its day. It shared, to be sure, many of the ideas (rebirth determined by one's actions) and ideals (reaching freedom from rebirth) with the non-Vedic current which we have identified, yet appears to have introduced an altogether different method to reach this goal. Earliest Buddhism as we know it from the texts does

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[95] These include T. W. Rhys Davids and Paul Deussen. See Bronkhorst 1993 p. 4.

[96] See his article "Brahman, Ritual and Renouncer" in Heesterman 1985, pp. 25-44. See also Bronkhorst 1993 pp. 5-6.

> not preach immobility of body and mind, nor does it search for the true, i.e. inactive, nature of the soul. (1993:93-94)

In another (1986) work Bronkhorst explored in more detail this "different" method prescribed by the early Buddhists in contradistinction to their Vedic and *śramaṇic* contemporaries. In that work he argued that Vedic and non-Buddhist *śramaṇic* traditions together constitute what he calls "the main stream" of meditation in India. Drawing from a variety of sources, including the *upaniṣads* and the *Mahābharāta*, as well as Jain, Saṃkhya and Vaiśeṣika texts, he concluded that the "main stream" traditions, despite their various differences, are in agreement in holding that liberation is affected through the knowledge of the self, which is viewed as passive and detached from phenomenal existence, and that ascetic practices are a precondition for the acquisition of this knowledge.[97]

Buddhists works, however, rejected such arduous practices as unnecessary and harmful, and instead advocated a course of meditation which avoids the extremes of sensory indulgence or mortification. In early Buddhist works such as the *Mahāsaccaka Sūtra* we learn instead that "Buddhist meditation is a pleasant experience, accompanied by joy *(piti)* and bliss *(sukha)*, or bliss alone, in all but its highest stages, whereas non-Buddhist meditation is not described as pleasurable." (Bronkhorst 1986: 17).

The rejection of the necessity of ascetic practices is an early hallmark of Buddhist practice; the most famous example is the Buddha's refusal of Devadatta's suggestion that the five ascetic practices *(dhutaguṇa)* be made compulsory for monks; instead they remained an option not considered essential for liberation.[98] Bronkhorst is not the only

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[97] See Bronkhorst 1986 pp. 51-59.

[98] Concerning the legend of Devadatta and his demands that the *dhutaguṇas* be compulsory see Ray 1994, pp. 162-73. Bronkhorst lists a number of early Buddhist sources in which ascetic practices are criticized. (1986:24-26). He concludes that "It is perhaps more surprising that the early Buddhists are against all these practices. In some cases they contrast the non-Buddhist practices aiming at non-activity with what are, in their opinion, the practices to be performed in their stead. Rather than fasting, restraining the mind and stopping the breath, one should perform the Four Dhyānas. And rather than aiming at the non-functioning of the senses, one should remain equanimous in the face of the experiences they offer." (1986:26).

scholar to notice this fact, and see through the facile misrepresentation of Buddhist as a "pessimistic" religion. Warder, for example wrote that

> Penance was unnecessary to wear out bad karma, knowledge of the causation of suffering sufficient to turn the suffering person away from the cause of his troubles even in 'serious cases' of bad karma; a good teacher could thus effect the sudden release of many people who otherwise might have gone on in ignorance transmigrating according to past karma and building up more undesirable tendencies for the future. (Warder 1956:50)

The characterizations of Buddhism as a "negativistic" or "pessimistic" are at best superficial, and at worst totally incorrect. Przyluski was correct in his characterization of Buddhism as a "religion of joy";[99] it certainly was in comparison to the "mainstream" traditions of Brahmanism and Jainism, which held that "happiness should not be reached through happiness, happiness should be reached through hardship". The Buddhists, however, held the inverse of this statement to be true.

This does not mean that the Buddhists were hedonistic; in their own perception they followed a "middle way" which avoided the extremes of both asceticism and hedonism. This does not, of course, mean that the Buddhist path was easy. On the contrary, its focus was on the practice of meditation, which was generally understood to be difficult due to the unruly nature of the mind. Buddhist meditation practice did not require the arduous denial advocated by groups such as the Jains, but there were a group of strenuous exercises designed to heighten one's meditation practices known as the *dhutaguṇas*, such as the vow not to lie down but to remain in meditation posture throughout the night.[100] These practices were always considered to be optional, and not required for the achievement of Awakening.

Among the early *suttas*, the Buddha is depicted as rejecting mechanical methods of achieving purity and awakening, and instead prescribes a method of meditation which does not *necessarily* proscribe moderate enjoyment of pleasurable phenomena. The problem for the Buddhists is not the objects in the external world per se, but the mind which, motivated

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[99] See Warder 1956 p. 45.

[100] See Ray 1994, p. 87.

by misknowledge, gives rise to attachment to them. Hence, in the *Vatthūpama Sutta* the Buddha recommends a method of meditative purification that involves, externally, virtuous conduct, and internally, the pervasion of the mind by the four "divine stations" *(brahmavihāra)*, which are love, compassion, joy and equanimity. Regarding a monk who practices this the Buddha claimed that

> if a bhikkhu of such virtue, such a state [of concentration], and such wisdom eats almsfood consisting of choice hill rice along with various sauces and curries, even that will be no obstacle for him. Just as a cloth that is defiled and stained becomes pure and bright with the help of clear water, or just as gold is becomes pure and bright with the help of a furnace, so too, if a bhikku of such virtue....eats almsfood consisting of choice hill rice, etc....that will be no obstacle for him.[101]

For the Buddhists, it was not denial or indulgence per se which characterized the spiritual life, but rather the attitude with which one approached life, which was to be disciplined and mindful, but not necessarily austere.

Tantric Buddhism continues this trend of avoiding asceticism and advocating bliss as a path to liberation, and thus from this perspective can be seen as being in harmony with the general historical development of the Buddhist tradition as a whole. Regarding the former trend, the mortification of the body by means of fasting and other ascetic practices appear to be anathema to the Tantric tradition, where the focus instead is on the cultivation of the sense powers so that they might be *yoked* to the vehicle of Awakening. There are numerous passages which recommend the abandonment of asceticism. The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* has but the following brief injunction, "Put an end to asceticism", as is fitting for a 'light' *(laghu)* text.[102]

There are numerous other, more lengthy passages which advocate the rejection of painful practices. For example, the *Sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvara Tantra* claims that

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[101] *Majjhima Nikāya* 7.12, trans. in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, p. 120.

[102] This occurs in chapter 28, which advocates the practice of the "Conduct of the Left"(*vāmacārya*): / dka' thub nges par zad par 'gyur / (DK fol. 233a).

> In this there is no need for ablutions or vows, and no need for asceticism or burdensome practices; one will succeed with bliss and joy, and without ascetic vows. You may practice as you desire, eating everything and engaging in everything. Yea, practice as you desire, taking pleasure in whatever toward which you are inclined. Sit or rise, go or abide as you wish, laugh or speak as you like. Practice wherever you like, there is no need to enter the maṇḍala. Have all the sins you want. For if you join yourself to your deity, you will succeed even if your merit is slight. When you accomplish everything with this yoga, you will accrue no faults through any evil food or evil deed. That which all of the Holy Buddhas could not attain in ten million eons will be completely attained if one practices with the rites of the mudrā.[103]

The seventh chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* begins with a similar injunction to enjoy instead the pleasures of the senses and to avoid asceticism, as follows:

> Enjoying all sensual pleasures as desired, indeed, by means of this yoga Buddhahood is easily attained. Enjoying all sensual pleasures as desired, worship oneself and others through union with one's own deity. One will not succeed by practicing asceticism, restraints and fasting, but one will quickly succeed by enjoying all sensual pleasures.[104]

Bliss is particularly emphasized in the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras, where it is considered to be the result or fruit of *yoga*, but, following the logic of the Vajrayāna whereon the goal is taken as the path, the cultivation and experience of bliss is a central concern in many of the Tantras.[105] Bliss, rather than the pain of ascetic deprivation, characterizes the yogas described in the *Vajrasattvamāyājālāguhyasarvādarśa Tantra*, as follows:

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[103] / 'di la khrus dang sdom mi dgos // dka' 'thub dka' spyad mi dgos // dka' thub sdom pa med pa dang // bde ba dang ni dga' bas 'grub // de bas ji ltar 'dod spyod cing // kun za de bzhin thams cad spyod // spyad pa ji ltar 'dod pa byed // g.yo ba dag kyang ci dgar byed // lang pa dang ni 'dug pa'am // 'chag gam ji ltar gnas kyang rung // dgod dam rab tu smra yang rung // gang na ji ltar spyod kyang rung // dkyil 'khor du yang ma zhugs pa'am // sgrib pa kun dang ldan pa'ang rung // rang gi lhar ni bdag sbyor na bsod nams chung yang 'grub par 'gyur // de nyid rnal 'byor 'di yis ni // thams cad sgrub par byed pa na // ngan zos ngan spyod thams cad kyis // nyes pa dag tu yong mi 'gyur // bskal pa bye bar mi thub pa // sang rgyas dam pa thams cad de // phyag rgya'i cho ga dag gis ni // bsgrubs na kun tu thob 'gyur ba / (JS kalpa 2, DK fol. 152b).

[104] GST Ch. 7 vv. 1-3: (1) sarvakāmopabhogaiś ca sevyamānair yathecchataḥ / anena khalu yogena laghu buddhatvam āpnuyāt // (2) sarvakāmopabhogais tu sevyamānair yathecchataḥ / svādhidaivatayogena svaṃ parāṃś ca pūjayet // (3) duṣkarair niyamais tīvraiḥ sevyamānair na sidhyati / sarvakāmopabhogais tu sevyaṃś cāśu sidhyate //; / 'dod pa'i longs spyod thams cad la // ji ltar 'dod par bsten na ni // 'di lta bu yi sbyor ba yis // sangs rgyas myur du thob par 'gyur // 'dod pa'i longs spyod thams cad ni // ji ltar 'dod pas bsten bya ste // rang gi lha yi sbyor ba yis // bdag dang gzhan la mchod par bya // dka' thub sdom pa mi bzad pas // bsten kyang 'grub par mi 'gyur gyi // / 'dod pa'i longs spyod thams cad la // bsten na myur du 'grub par 'gyur / (Freemantle 1971:214-15; cf. her trans. at 1971 p. 46 and 1990 p. 107; the former is a more literal trans., the latter more interpretive.)

[105] Tsongkhapa argues that the central import of the Unexcelled Yogatantras is the "indivisibility of bliss and voidness", an idea he expresses throughout his commentary translated below. According to the Dalai Lama, the intuition which realizes the voidness taught in the Mādhyamika scriptures, and which is the central import of the "Perfection Vehicle" *(pāramitāyāna)* is cause or basis for the practice of the

> Through union of one's three doors with the deity, abandon the inferior views of ordinary people. Through the experience of great bliss, abandon the view of the vehicle of asceticism. Through the nonduality of art and wisdom, stabilize the experience of bliss. By meditating firmly without interruption, one will reach the stage of Vajrasattva.[106]

This bliss is typically described via physical metaphors, and the union with the Awakened Being that produces it is compared to carnal union. The *Śrisamvarakhasama Tantra,* for example, claims that "great bliss is the nonduality of joy and the unobjectifying compassion supreme. Śriheruka is art, and Vajrayoginī wisdom; their non-duality is the supreme integration."[107] The union of the divine couple here is a metaphor for the nondual perspective which does not distinguish between self and other, which is implied by the term "unobjectifying compassion", which is the compassionate attitude that arises automatically when one conceives as other *qua* oneself, and responds to their sufferings with the same uncontrived spontaneity that one would respond to ones own.[108] Another example occurs in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasaṃvara Tantra* as follows:

> Adhering to bliss through the enjoyment of all yogas, worship yourself through union (*yoga*) with your own deity. And if, worshipping through repeated union (*anuyoga*), you taste everywhere the bliss of all yogas, you will attain the ultimate union (*atiyoga*). This bliss which extracts the essence (*rasāyāna*) of all Buddhas achieves supreme bliss and the glorious life of Vajrasattva, youthful and free of disease.[109]

The centrality of bliss, i.e., embodied experience, in Unexcelled Yoga theory and practice is perhaps both a cause and a product of the increased focus on bodily processes and their

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Unexcelled Yogatantras, while the intuition of great bliss is the result of that and is the central import of the Mantra vehicle *(mantrayāna).* See Hopkins 1977 p. 49.

[106] / sgo gsum lha ru mnyam sbyor bas // tha mal dman pa'i lta ba spong // bde ba chen po nyams myong bas // dka' thub theg pa'i lta ba spong // thabs dang shes rab gnyis med pas // bde ba'i nyams myong brtan par byos // brtan pa bar chad med bsgoms pas // rdo rje 'chang gi sa la 'gro / (DK fol. 173a)

[107] / dmigs pa med pa snying rje'i mchog / dga' ba gnyis med bde ba che // thabs ni he ru ka dpal nyid // shes rab rdo rje rnal 'bor ma // gnyis su med pa zung 'jug mchog (DK fol. 262a)

[108] This sort of compassion is what Śāntideva so eloquently argues for in chapter 8 of his *Bodhicaryāvatāra;* see Batchelor 1979, pp. 113 ff.

[109] / rnal 'byor kun gyi longs spyod kyis // ji ltar bde bar sten byed cing // rang gi lha yi rnal 'byor gyis // bdag nyid rab tu mchod par bya // rje su sbyor bas mchod byed cing // rnal 'byor kun gyi bde ba dag / bdag nyid kun tu myong byed na // shin tu sbyor bas grub par 'gyur // sangs rgyas kun gyi bdag nyid kyi // ra sa ya na bde ba 'dis // rdo rje sems dpa'i dpal tshe dang // lang tsho nad med bde mchog 'grub / (JS kalpa 2, fols. 153 a,b). Concerning the terms *yoga, anuyoga* and *atiyoga* see section 3.2 below.

potential for transformation by mean of the yogic art in these traditions. In the Creation Stage processes the body is the foremost locus for the re-imagination of self that *buddhayoga* entails.[110] For the Perfection Stage meditations involve a different attitude toward the body; no longer is it one's outer appearance as a deity that is important, but experience of inner transformations which supposedly produce the experience of bliss. These involve

> *internal* meditations on a subtle or imaginal body-image through visualizing its triune elements known as "the channels, winds, and nuclei" *(rtsa rlung thig le).* This is in contrast to focusing on *external* visualizations of deities in front of one's self, or as one self, or even internal visualizations of constellations of such deities as a "body maṇḍala." These types of perfection phase meditations are innovative and distinctive in the history of Buddhist tantra in that they introduce overtly sexual symbolism as the basis for contemplation through reliance on non-anthropomorphic representations of a subtle body. Correspondingly they mark a move towards *felt* tactile sensations (especially sexual bliss and sensations of warmth) rather than exclusive reliance on our capacity for vision. In this way it marks a movement towards embodiment and processes internal to our body, with sexuality involving intensely tactile felt presences in contrast to vision, the coolest and most metaphorical of our senses. (Germano 1994:221)

Tantric yoga is known for its focus on the inner body, on its vacuous spaces, filled with diverse winds and drops which melt and flow, producing the experience of great bliss. The mahāsiddha Tilopa gives a very concise account of these processes in his *Ṣaḍdharmopadeśa,* as follows:

> The network of channels, coarse and subtle, of the yogic body, contains the winds, which are inhaled, retained and ejected, controlled by means of physical restraints *(yantra).* [It consists of] the left, right and central channels (*lalanā, rasanā, avadhūtī)* and the four wheels. The Fury Fire *(caṇḍālī)* in the navel rises from a subtle drop, [melting] a flow of ambrosia from the *haṃ* [at the crown], which gives rise to the four joys. There are four fruits similar to there cause, and they are augmented by six physical restraints. This is the instruction of Cāryapa.[111]

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[110] Kāṇha, commenting on HV 1.5.14.c,d ("That which arises in the body is called the deity", dehe saṃbhavatity asmād devateti nigadyate, Snellgrove 1959 vol. 2 p. 16), explains in his *Yogaratnamālā*: "As it arises in the body and since the practice of it should be performed in the body, for that reason it is called the deity." dehe eva sambhavati tato dehe tasyābhyāsaḥ kartavyaḥ yasmāt karaṇāt devateti nigadyate / (Snellgrove 1959 vol. 2 p. 118.) Kāṇha here plays upon the similarity between the words *deha* and *deva.*

[111] / rnal 'byor lus kyi rtsa yi tshogs // phra rags rlung dang ldan pa ni // dbang du byed thabs 'khrul 'khor gyis // dbyung rngub dgang dang gzhil ba ste // la la nā dang ra sa nā // a wa dhū ti 'khor lo bzhi // lte bar tsaṇḍa lī yi me // phra rab las 'phel hāṃ las ni // bdud rtsi'i chu rgyun dga' bzhi'i 'gros // rgyu mthun la sogs 'bras bu bzhi // 'khrul 'khor drug gis rgyas par bya // tsārya pa'i u pa de sha'o / (DT fols. 270a,b; cf. Mullin 1997, p. 27)

The Tantric yoga *upadeśa* texts often stress the need to meditate on the vacuity of the body in order to overcome the coarse sense of physical density which supposedly obstructs the sense of the body as a dynamic and transmutable entity, transmutable precisely because it is void. This point is well made by the yogini sisters, Kanakalā and Mekhalā, who described voidness in relation to the body as a precursor to the visualization of subtle "structures" *(nandyāvarta)* follows in their *Nandyāvartatrayamukhāgama:*

> Having obtained the instructions of the guru, we, Kanakalā and Mekhalā, will explain the instructions on the three structures *(nandyāvartatraya)* in order that one might understand the meaning of voidness. Visualize one's body as vacuous, with three channels that run from the crown to the navel, yellow, white and red, internally vacuous and naturally luminous.[112]

Taylor describes the body in a way that seems compatible with the manner in which it is visualized in Tantric yogic practice, as follows:

> as a result of its holey-ness or gappiness, the living body cannot be defined in terms of the binary opposites that structure conceptual reflection. The body is neither 'subject nor object'....rather, the body is the *mean* between extremes – the 'milieu' in which opposites like interiority and exteriority, as well as subjectivity and objectivity, intersect. Never reducible to the differences it simultaneously joins and separates, the body is forever *entre-deux* (1987:69)

In Tantric *praxis* the body the site for the blissful integration of the dualities; an integration effected by the union of the winds from the left and right channels of the subtle body *(rasanā, lalanā)* into the central channel *(avadhūti).* Merleau-Pony argues that the body cannot properly be understood as a subject or object, as a sensor or the sensible, since it simultaneously shares the qualities of both of these conceptual extremes:

> The sensor and the sensible do not stand in relation to each other as two mutually external terms, and sensation is not an invasion of the sensor by the sensible. It is my gaze which subtends colour, and the movement of my hand which subtends the object's form, or rather my gaze pairs off with colour, and my hand with hardness and softness, and in this transaction between the subject of sensation and the sensible it cannot be held that one acts while the other suffers the action, or that one confers significance on the other. (1962:214)

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[112] bla ma'i zhal gdams thob byas nas // g.yung drung gsum gyi gdams pa ni // stong nyid don ni rtogs pa'i phyir // kaṃ ka me kha la bshad bya // rang gi lus ni khong stong la // spyi bor brtsams nas lte ba'i bar // rtsa gsum ser dang dkar dmar ro // de rnams nang ni khong stong ste // g.yas kyi rtsa la kha rtse chad // rang bzhin bsal ba par bya / (DT fol. 34b)

The body receives increased significance in Tantric Buddhism as the locus of liberation, a liberation which is characterized as blissful. This bliss arises in the body insofar as the body mediates the subject and object, integrating the two is a state symbolized as sexual union. Great Bliss, for example, is said to arise in Tantric practice through the visualization of the subjective and objective aspects of reality as deity couples in sexual union. Regarding this Tsongkhapa wrote that

> In brief, if you meditate on the perfection stage, you generate the Spirit of Awakening from the blazing and dripping of the white and red spirits of awakening. That very thing is that on which the yogin relies, as well as that which must be served, is the commitment *(samaya)*. The object of the engagement of that practice is the enjoyment of the six types of objects (*ṣaḍviṣaya*) by the six sense faculties *(ṣaḍindriya)*. The 'object of engagement' is designated vis-à-vis the sense faculties because ultimately sense faculty and object are inseparable. These objects, by the process of their arising as the play of great bliss, are enjoyed and therefore cause the blazing of great bliss. Object and subject are not perceived as isolated, but rather attain to the occasion of orgasmic experiential uniformity.[113]

The Tantric attitude regarding the body can probably be summed up by the following question and answer from the *Hevajra Tantra*, which asks, "Without bodily form how should there be bliss? Of bliss one could not speak. The world is pervaded by bliss, which pervades and is itself pervaded."[114] Bliss so conceived is a characteristic of all life forms, suggesting a parallelism with the Buddha-nature *(tathāgatagarba)*; the innate potential for Awakening present in all beings.[115]

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[113] Excerpted from section III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.3 of my translation below.

[114] Trans. Snellgrove 1959 vol. 1 p. 92; HV kalpa 2, ch. 2, v. 35: dehābhāve kutaḥ saukhyaṃ saukhyaṃ vaktum na śakyate / vyāpyavyāpakarūpeṇa sukhena vyāpitaṃ jagat //; / lus kyi dngos med gang las bde // bde ba smra bar mi nus so // khyab dang khyab byed tshul gyis ni // bde bas 'gro ba khyab pa nyid / (1959:vol. 2 pp. 48-49). This conception of bliss seems to have parallels in the Trika school of Kaśmiri Saivism. Abhinavagupta, in his magnum opus the *Tantrāloka*, described a "Universal Bliss" *(jagadānanda)* which is pervasive, and from which lower forms of bliss are only a pale reflection. See Sharma 1992, p. 441.

[115] This association is clearly made in the *Hevajra Tantra* as follows: "There is no being that is not enlightened, if it but knows its own true nature. The denizens of hell, the *pretas* and the animals, gods and men and titans, even the worms upon the dung heap, are eternally blissful in their true nature, and they do not know the transitory bliss of the gods and titans." (Snellgrove 1959: vol. 1 p. 107) HV kalpa 2 ch. 4 vv. 73-74: (73) abuddho nāsti sattvaikaḥ saṃbodhāt svasya svasya ca / narakapretatiryañ ca devāsuramanuṣyakāḥ // (74) amedhyakiṭakādyān tu nityaṃ sukhinaḥ svabhāvataḥ / na jānanti yataḥ saukhyaṃ devasyāpy asurasya ca /; rang dang rang gis rtog pa las // sangs rgyas ma yin sems can ni // gcig kyang yod pa ma yin no // dmyal ba yi dvags byol song dang // lha dang lha min mi rnams dang // bshang ba'i srin bu la sogs pa // lha dang lha ma yin gyi yang // bde ba gang phyir mi shes pa // rtag tu rang bzhin bde ba can / (1959: vol. 2 pp. 70-73).

For the Unexcelled Yogatantras, then, Awakening *is* bliss, and since the goal is taken as the path, bliss is accomplished through bliss. This "path" is understandable by means of the logic of the larger Mahāyāna tradition of which it is a part, and it has been repeatedly justified by recourse to the this quite extensive scholarly tradition.

2.3.2 Transgression and Self-Mastery

1. Interpretation and Ambiguity

The path between attachment and aversion is a narrow one, and dangerous too, according to the tradition itself. There is the spiritual danger that in practicing Tantric meditations one might maintain one's attachment and aversions, and even possibly attempt to justify them through the use of the antinomian rhetoric found in some Tantric literature. The danger of falling into attachment cloaked by the persona of a yogin, is, supposedly, quite acute.

However, there is a more fearsome force to contend with when traversing the twisted path of Tantric exegesis, and that is the intense fascination with the apparent transgressions of the Tantras, and the misrepresentations that have arose from shallow interpretations of these aspects. Urban has critiqued the late nineteenth and early twentieth century scholarship on Tantrism, writing that the "Orient" in Orientalist scholarship

> was progressively constructed as the quintessential 'Other' of the West. Conceived as an essentially passionate, irrational, effeminate world, a land of 'disorderly imagination', India was set in opposition to the progressive, rational, masculine and scientific world of modern Europe. And 'Tantrism", it would seem, was quickly singled out as the darkest, most irrational core of the Indian mind – as the extreme orient, the most Other. For if Orientalist scholars had identified the Golden Age of India with the Vedas or Upanisads, they also identified its darkest, more perverse age with the tantras – 'superstition of the worst and most silly kind', as Sir Monier Williams put it. (Urban 1999:124)

There is no doubt that Tantric texts contain an intriguing array of transgressive elements, mainly relating to the two perennial favorites: sex and violence. The import of these

elements, however, is far from clear. Generally speaking, those scholars who have oppugned Tantrism as being degenerate or opprobrious have done so on the basis of the sexual and violent imagery contained in the texts. Few of them actually explored the complex hermeneutic employed by the Tantric traditions, and based their criticism upon a literal interpretation of the texts; and even fewer actually investigated Tantric practice in its social context. A notable exception here among the past generations of scholars is Ernest Payne, who, in his (1933) book on the *Śākta* tradition, re-evaluated the idea that the "Tantrics" were and are thoroughly morally corrupt by taking into consideration a larger range of data:

> Apart from the ceremonial taught, many of the general principles laid down breathe a liberal and intelligent spirit. That caste distinctions are so minimized may, as Glasenapp has suggested, point to the strong influence of non-Aryan ideas. Women are honoured, and can act as teachers. The burning of widows is forbidden, and girl widows are allowed to remarry. The murder of a woman is regarded as a particularly heinous crime. Prostitution is denounced. There is considerable truth in the remark which Eliot makes in *Hinduism and Buddhism:* "Whereas Christianity is sometimes accused of restricting its higher code to church and Sundays, the opposite may be said of Tāntrism. Outside the temple its morality is excellent.[116]

The actual behavior of typical Tantric practitioners, be they Indian or Tibetan, in fact shows no sign of being morally corrupted by the trangressive elements in their scriptures, as anyone who has spent time among them knows. This is not to say that there are no exceptional individuals who use the transgressive rhetoric as a justification for immoral behavior. However, the texts which contain these elements are difficult and obscure and typically not widely disseminated. Those who do study them tend, in the traditional context, to be people dedicated to a disciplined spiritual lifestyle; if anything the influence of Western popular culture, which is both more sexual and violent and much more widely

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[116] Payne 1933, p. 59. Since structure implies and engenders its negation, it is not necessary to invoke the "non-Aryan", whomever they might have been, to account for resistance to the powerful hegemonic taxonomy which underlies the caste system. That such influences, whatever they might have been, may have been operative is of course possible, but it does not seem profitable to invoke this distinction here, given the extremely problematic nature of the "Aryan" vs. "non-Aryan" distinction, not to mention the fact that our knowledge of the period is too slight to take such a distinction far beyond the realm of pure conjecture. Payne here refers to Glasenapp's arguments in his (1926) book *Brahma und Buddha.* He also cites Sir Charles Eliot's (1921) book *Hinduism and Buddhism* (vol. 2 p. 285).

disseminated, has had the greater morally corrosive effect. This suggests that the literal interpretation of these elements is inadequate,[117] and that a more sophisticated hermeneutic is therefore necessary to understand the relation between text and practice in Tantric traditions.[118] Payne seems to have had a glimmer of understanding here, but unfortunately he seems to have misunderstood the Tantric hermeneutic as a simple justification for antinomian behavior. This misunderstanding led him, in the end, to reject the tradition toward which he had otherwise shown a sensitivity uncommon amongst scholars of his era.[119]

Tantric Buddhist texts are not unique in containing radical but ambiguous passages. Many Mahāyāna sūtras contained statements equating the passions with liberation, which is simply a strain of the same nondualistic thought as discussed above. A typical example is a statement made by the Goddess in chapter seven of the *Vimalakirtinirdeśa Sūtra.* "Liberation is freedom from desire, hatred, and folly – that is the teaching for the excessively proud. But those free of pride are taught that the very nature of desire, hatred, and folly is itself liberation." (Thurman 1976:60) Such passages express the concept of "original Awakening" (本覺, *hongaku*), in that they posit that the factors which appear to bind one to cyclical existence *(saṃsāra)* are, if approached properly, not different than liberation therefrom. This doctrine was well known and somewhat infamous, for it was considered by some a justification for the transgression of morality. However, it does not appear that such equations typically led Buddhists to engage in antinomian behavior, as

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[117] One might argue that the fascination of of Western scholars with the transgressive aspects of Tantric texts is an indication of larger trends at work with in their own cultures; Urban has argued that "this fascination with the licentious practices of Tantrism was part of the broader discourse about sexuality in nineteenth-century England." (1999:124) Once again, Orientalist discourse may be more informative about its authors than its purported objects.

[118] The topic of Tantric hermeneutics has received extensive treatment in scholarly literature. See Thurman 1988, Steinkellner 1978, and the articles written by Broido.

[119] Payne concluded that "The *Tantras* not merely sanction the lowest rites of primitive savagery and superstition, they are guilty of the crime of seeking philosophical justification for such things." (1933:60).

Faure noted.[120] Perhaps this is because, as Stone argues, that a statement such as the above is about

> the nondual nature of reality and is experientially meaningful only in the case of someone who has realized that nonduality; it is not an endorsement of misconduct. However, in warning that it be kept secret and given only to advanced practitioners, the compilers of these texts seem to have realized that 'evil karma is precisely liberation' and similar ideas related to original enlightenment thought were open to abuse. (1999:221)

The need for such secrecy is implied in the example above, where we are told that "the excessively proud" were taught the dualistic view, as if the nondual doctrine was inappropriate for such beings; this is indeed the claim made in a number of Buddhist texts, that the misinterpretation of this doctrine can have grave soteriological consequences.[121]

Tantric texts often make use of the same rhetoric of nonduality and original Awakening, and often taking them more radical directions. As a result, the literal interpretation of Tantric texts is plagued with pitfalls, one of the largest being the interpretation of the "transgressive" passages in the texts, those referring to violence and sexuality, which are symbolically interpreted within the tradition itself. Broido has shown that seemingly straightforward statements in the Tantras such as "kill living beings" are understood in the tradition as being examples of intentional language *(dgongs bshad)*, metaphorical statements which are not to be taken literally. (1983a:22) In the commentatorial tradition of the Unexcelled Yogatantras this and other similar passages are understood as symbolic codes referring to inner yogic processes.[122] These interpretations are justified by the claim that they represent the *intention* of the purported author of the text. And while the scholar might criticize this claim, ultimately the intention of the author is

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[120] See Faure 1991 p. 61.

[121] Such misinterpretation can have not only serious soteriological consequences, but serious cosmological consequences as well. The *Padma Thang-yig*, a Tibetan biography of the mahāsiddha Padmasambhava, attributes the origination of the evil god Rudra to precisely this sort of misinterpretation. See Kapstein 1992 for a translation and discussion of the relevant passage in that text. For an alternate (and somewhat inaccurate) translation of the same see Toussaint 1978, vol. 1 pp. 26 f. This passage is also discussed by Paul in his 1982 book.

[122] See Broido 1988 for specific examples of this sort of commentary.

beyond our ken. The reception of the texts by individuals within the Buddhist tradition, however, is open to investigation, and here the interpretations of the commentatorial traditions is extremely influential, and should not be lightly dismissed.

One is hindered here by the fact that traditionally the Tantras and their commentaries were considered secret precisely due to such enigmatic statements, which are thought to have been intended for sharper students, i.e., for those intelligent enough to understand them or use them as a *koān* of sorts, as the basis for realization.[123] Secrecy is thus needed to protect those who are not so intelligent, who are prone to literal interpretation and thus will tend miss the opportunity for poetic *gnosis*. The tradition here is perhaps more vulnerable to the criticism that it is elitist rather than that it immoral.

Many of the transgressive passages hedge somewhat, however, perhaps for the sake of those of "duller" wit. Take for example the following passage from the *Sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittaguhyālaṃkāravyūha:*

> Listen to the holy commitments. One's mother, sisters and likewise daughters should always be served with a mind devoid of the moon and the sun. You should kill all sentient beings, and always protect the practice of the observances (*vratacārya*). Steal the wealth of the greedy, and give it to miserable people. Even though you act thus, make offerings to the Three Jewels, and revere the guru. Do not speak false words, and do not drink alcohol, except at the time of the commitment (*samaya*), for the sake of the blessed commitments, and because it produces bliss. And, in order to delight the master and benefit the Three Jewels, always speak false words, and lie with other men's women. One who has thus applied himself to the commitments should exert himself in everything else for the sake of beings. The intelligent should not proclaim secret commitments.[124]

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[123] See Thurman 1988 pp. 138-39.

[124] / dam tshig dam pa nyan du gzhug // ma dang sring mo nyid dang yang // de bzhin bu mo dag kyang ni // som nyi rnam par bral sems kyis // khyod kyis rtag tu bsten par bya // sems can thams cad gsad bya zhing // brtul zhugs spyod pa bskyangs bar bya // 'jungs pa rnams kyi nor phrogs te // skye bo sdug bsngal can la sbyin // rdo rje rnal 'byor mi sbyor bas // yang na bdag nyid kyis kyang spyad // dkon mchog gsum la mchod bya zhing // bla ma la ni gus par bya // brdzun gyi tshig kyang smra mi bya // chang ni btung bar mi bya'o // dam tshig dus ni ma gtogs shing // byin gyis brlabs pa'i dam tshig dang // gzhan yang bde bar bya phyir dang // slob dpon mnyes par bya don dang // dkon mchog gsum la phan pa'i phyir // rdzun gyi tshig ni rtag tu smros // gzhan gyi bud med bgrod par bya // dam tshig du sbyor ldan pas // gzhan pa yang ni thams cad kyang // sems can don la brtson bas bya // gsang ba'i dam tshig 'di dag ni // blo gros ldan pas bsgrag mi bya / (DK fol. 108b).

Such a passage might seem exciting at first glance, but with further examination it becomes apparent that the text significantly restricts the performance of these activities. Lying and adultery, for example, appear to be acceptable so long as they "delight the master and benefit the three jewels", but it is difficult to imagine scenarios in which these conditions would be fulfilled; the function of transgressive rhetoric might here be to highlight the need for being totally dedicated to one's guru, his teaching and his community of followers; i.e., you should be prepared to do *anything* for his sake.[125] The final proviso, that one should engage in the commitments for the sake of beings, also would severely hinder the conscientious would-be libertine. To miss this point is, from the Buddhist perspective, to miss the point the point entirely.[126]

Before taking this literally, however, it should be noted that these types of passages seem to be a common trope of Tantric literature, a "rhetoric of transgression" which dissolves under close analysis. Faure describes this sort of language as clichéd;

> the saint in a brothel is a commonplace theme in Mahāyāna literature. The mythic layman Vimalakirti, remember, visited lupanars and taverns. There is no need to raise a fuss about these apparent transgressions, for, despite all of its discourses on the identity of passions and awakening, the *Vimalakirti-nirdeśa* remains strangely virginal regarding the behavior of its hero in the alcove. (1998:108)

Tantric literature may be somewhat less virginal, but the repetition of transgressive clichés might make one pause to consider their purpose in the text.

The prescription of immoral activities with the instruction that they should be performed out of compassion suggests that compassion is the main import of the passage, and the transgressive rhetoric functions as hyperbole, placing greater emphasis on the compassion itself. Or, the hyperbole may be for the sake of glorifying the teaching itself, which seems to be the case with the *Prajñāpāramitānaya Sūtra,* which states, for example:

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[125] As will be shown in the next chapter, Tantric traditions are ideologically oriented toward the aggrandizement of the guru.

[126] To miss this point, i.e., the centrality of compassion, in the exegesis of Buddhist Tantras is likewise undesirable and leads to a warped presentation of the traditions; see Thurman 1988 p. 147, n. 22.

> Vajrapāṇi, were there a person who listened to this method, received it, upheld it, studied and recited it, even if he killed all the sentient beings of the three worlds, he would not fall into an evil destiny since his passions are subdued. He would instead quickly attain unexcelled complete, perfect Awakening.[127]

One can hardly claim that the slaughter of all living beings is being commended here; rather, the text uses shocking rhetoric to commend itself, which merely takes a trend in Mahāyāna sūtra literature to an extreme. Perhaps as a result of this fact, texts such as this were often treated with care. Abé points out that

> Kūkai viewed this as an advanced sūtra that could only be studied in conjunction with a trained teacher's personal instruction. In an 817 letter to the priest Enzō of Tōdai-ji, who asked Kūkai about difficult passages in this sūtra, Kūkai points out that the sūtra often resorts to radical subjects like killing and sexual desire to express the unconventionality of *prajñāpāramitā*, and warns Enzō that these are esoteric metaphors that must not be interpreted literally. Kūkai emphasizes that the sūtra's profound meaning can only be grasped through the practice of meditation, an "esoteric meditation that cannot be discussed on paper, that must be transmitted face to face from master to disciple". (1995:125)

This sort of rhetoric does, however, point to a more general characteristic of Buddhist ethics. For Buddhists, there is no absolute right or wrong actions; whether an action is correct or not depends on the intention and skill of the actor; even murder is conceivably appropriate if performed with a purely compassionate motivation. Other sources suggest that if one has a correct understanding of reality, one is liberated regardless of one's actions.[128]

In the case of sex, its practice is prohibited only to the monastic community, and not to the laity, for whom the sexual practices described in the texts would constitute no offense. Generally speaking, Buddhist societies tend to be tolerant of worldly conventions

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[127] T 243. 大樂金剛不空真實三麼耶經。 (*Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatikā*, Amoghavajra's translation): 金剛手 若有聞此理趣 受持讀誦 設 設害三界 一切有情 不墮惡趣 為調伏故 疾證無上正等菩提。 (p.784.3).

[128] For example, we learn in chapter 29 of the *Vajraḍāka Tantra* that "If one cognizes voidness with an intuitive mind, one's mind will be rapidly liberated. Examine the objects of knowledge with knowledge, and examine the mental factors and living beings. It is said that were one to kill both parents, waylay pure brahmins and conquer the king and his kingdom, such a person would purified provided that his intuition were joined to all of reality." / ye shes la sogs sems kyis ni // gang zhig stong nyid shes byes na // sems ni myur du thar par 'gyur // ye shes kyis shes bya brtag / shes byas 'gro ba brtag par bya // pha dang ma ni bsad byas shing // bram ze gtsang ma gnyis bzung nas // rgyal po yul 'khor bcas bcom na // mi de dag par 'gyur zhes bya // ye shes rang bzhin kun dang sbyor / (VD, DK fol. 67a; PTT p. 121.2,3).

including sexuality, provided that they do not break Buddhist rules of morality, which generally mean that they cause no harm to other beings. This observation applies even to relatively conservation traditions such as the Theravāda of Sri Lanka. For example, Gombrich and Obesekeyere comment:

> Buddhism is an ethic of intention that sees as it highest goal of life a dispassionate lucidity. Even at its least sophisticated level the Sinhala Buddhist tradition has been informed by these values. It harmonizes with the ethic of intention that the only formulation of what is binding on all Buddhists, the "five precepts", is presented not as commandments but as undertakings that function as ethical guidelines. Within these guidelines it has been possible to incorporate diverse moral codes and cultural norms indigenous to the societies that have accepted Buddhism...[For example,] the third precept enjoins abstention from illicit sexual behavior, but Buddhism nowhere attempts to define the right kind of marriage for laymen, and Buddhist societies have permitted monogamy, polyandry, and polygamy.[129]

Even for the monks and nuns it is the intention rather than the physical act that counts in ascertaining whether or not an action violated the monastic code.[130] For "in all cases of sexual misconduct, at issue is not just control of genital organs but, more importantly, control over a higher organ, the mind. The source of the passions that Buddhists combat is not the penis per se but rather the mind."[131]

There has been a tendency to regard violent or erotic passages as symbolic, which is in effect a denial of that they were in effect practiced. This in fact points to a complex problem of hermeneutics which is beyond the scope of this work; fortunately, however, there has been considerable effort applied to this subject.[132] As it turns out, the question as to whether the Tantras are to be interpreted either literally or symbolically is rather

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[129] 1988:28,9. For more on polyandry in Sri Lanka see Tambiah 1966, and in Tibet see Aziz 1978 and Levine 1988. Fürer-Haimendorf has noted that Buddhist societies have tended to have a "tolerant attitude to sexual laxity. Polyandry does not seem compatible with a puritan outlook on sex, and in all polyandrous so far studied it has been found that sexual relations are not held to be of great moral relevance. Such an attitude seems more germane to Buddhist than to Hindu society, and the coincidence of polyandry with Buddhism in the Tibetan sphere and in Ceylon is perhaps not entirely fortuitous." (1966:8)

[130] See Fiser 1993 pp. 59-60, as well as Horner 1938 pp. 192-245 for a translation of the *Suttavibhaṅga* passage dealing with sexual transgressions.

[131] Faure 1998 p. 86. Faure attributed this quote to Fiser's article, but I was unable to find it therein.

[132] See Steinkellner 1978, Thurman 1988 and the numerous articles by Broido.

simplistic and does not do justice to the materials. Regarding the apologetic argument that the transgressive passages in the Tantras are to be understood as "symbolic", Orzech has commented that

> Many scholars of Buddhism regard the pursuit of enlightenment as somehow necessarily detached from the various "applications" of Vajrayāna ritual to everyday life. Both pursuits are termed *siddhi*, but these mundane "applications" are clearly denigrated as being secondary to the pursuit of enlightenment. Such an interpretation does violence to the basic principles of Vajrayāna and betrays a modern, Western bias against anything in religion that seems remotely magical, too worldly or political. We might term this a transcendentalist or essentialist bias, and it often manifests in the interpretations of objectionable or worldly elements in the Vajrayāna as purely symbolic. (1989:97)

The materialistic, literalistic interpretation is clearly inadequate, but so too is the "transcendental", purely symbolic interpretation. Both are inadequate because they are based upon a dualistic premise, a premise that is heartily attacked and undermined by the nondualism of the Buddhist Tantras, which critiques the escapist desire to flee from the world as much as it critiques the uncritical attachment to the world. For the Tantric Buddhist adept, neither aim is tenable, and liberation is achievable only in the context of existence in the world, and by means of the very worldly passions that are themselves the source of bondage.

The idea that there is only one correct interpretation of such textual passages is foreign to the Indian context in which they were written. As Broido has shown, Indian Tantric commentaries employed different methods of interpretation yielding different results.[133] Any interpretation that privileges one of the many significations of a word would seem simplistic in the Buddhist context, as the Buddhists have long stressed the polysemous nature of language, and have argued against the essentialist position. Nāgārjuna argued this in his *Vaidalya-nāma-prakaraṇa*, as follows:

> Furthermore, it is evident that scholars of the world apply a signifier to many significands; they apply to many things the word *go*, and likewise the word *hari*. The various things to which the word *go* is applied include the following: speech, a quarter of the compass, the earth, a light ray, a diamond, cattle, the eye, water, heaven. Scholars thus limit the word *go* to nine meanings. Likewise, scholars

[133] See Broido 1988, esp. p. 100.

> understand the word *hari* [to refer to] Viṣṇu, the lion, serpent, frog, the sun, moon, light, the monkey, tawny color, the parrot, Indra and nāgas.[134]

The difficulty in interpreting Tantric texts is that they use evocative language, which opens up not one or two but often numerous possible interpretations. This often "radical use of language" appears to have been a deliberate strategy; Thurman has shown that the Tantras do not even take "clarity" as their goal, but rather tend toward an obscurity. He noted that

> while the usual Buddhist hermeneutic seeks to travel from darkness into light, cultivating *clarity* above all, there is a Buddhist hermeneutic that comprehends also the movement back from light into darkness. And so this hermeneutic of compassion, this vajra hermeneutic, encompasses the uses of *obscurity* in the art of liberating beings. (1988:144)

This use of language is similar to the poetic use of language described by Riffaterre, wherein words are used ambigiously, lacking set meanings; he coined the term "hypogram" to refer to the range of possible significations which surrounds such words.[135] It is perhaps not a coincidence that the poetic, ambiguous use of language in the Tantras has been missed and misinterpreted by a number of scholars; it has been noted, however, by the poet Octavio Paz, who may have been right when he wrote:

> I do not mean to say that the allegorical language of the *Tantras* consists only in attributing sexual meanings to words that designate spiritual concepts. The language of the *Tantras* is a poetic language and its meanings are always multiple.

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[134] / gzhan yang 'jig rten pa'i mkhas pa dag kyang rjod par byed pa dang brjod par bya ba du ma la sbyor ba mthong ba'i phyir ro // 'jig rten pa'i mkhas pa dag ni go sgra du ma la sbyor bar byed de / hari'i sgra yang de bzhin no // go sgra rnam pa du ma la 'jug pa ni 'di lta ste // ngag phyogs dang ni sa gzhi dang // 'od zer rdo rje phyugs dang mig / chu dang mtho ris don dgu la // mkhas pas go sgra nges gzung bya // ji ltar khyab 'jug seng ge glang po sbal // nyi zla 'od dang spre'u dang // ser skya ne tsho dbang po glu // mkhas pas harir shes par bya / (DT fols. 106b-107a)

[135] Riffaterre wrote that "Significance, and let me insist on this, now appears to be more than or something other than the total meaning deducible from a comparision between variants of the given. That would only bring us back to the given, and it would be a reductionist procedure. Significance is, rather, the reader's praxis of transformation, a realization that is akin to playing out the liturgy of a ritual – the experience of a circuitous sequence, a way of speaking that keeps revolving around a key word or matrix reduced to a marker (the negative orientation whose semiotic index is the frustration implied by *vox clamans in deserto*). It is a hierarchy of representations imposed upon the reader, despite his personal preferences, by the greater or lesser expansion of the matrix's components, an orientation imposed upon the reader despite his linguistic habits, a bouncing from reference to reference that keeps on pushing the meaning over to a text not present in the linearity, to a paragram or hypogram – a dead landscape that refers to a live character, a desert traveled through that represents the traveler rather than itself, the significance is shaped like a doughnut, the hole being either the matrix of the hypogram or the hypogram as matrix. The effect of this disappearing act is that the reader feels he is in the presence of true originality, or of what he believes to be a feature of the poetic language, a typical case of obscurity. This is when he starts rationalizing, finds himself unable to bridge the semantic gap inside the text's linearity, and so tries to bridge it outside of the text by completing the verbal sequence." (1978:12-13)

> It also has a quality that I would call reversibility: each word can be converted into its contrary and later, or simultaneously, turn into itself again. The basic premise of Tantrism is the abolition of contraries–without suppressing them. This postulate brings on another: the mobility of the meanings, the continuous shifting of the signs and their meanings. Flesh is mental concentration; the vulva is a lotus that is emptiness that is wisdom; semen and illumination are one and the same thing; copulation is, as Mircea Eliade emphasizes, samarasa, the *identité de jouissance*, a fusion of subject and object, a return to the One. (1982:64,5)

However we might want to interpret these poetic uses of language, Eastman seems to be correct in surmising that they are an aspect of the methodology of the Tantric traditions, and our failure to appreciate this is fact is nothing more than a failure to understand them. Eastman wrote that

> the eroticism and attendant features of Vajrayāna Buddhist literature that many scholars....have found morally objectionable are not the property of a literature confined to late medieval India, nor the products of a long period of 'degeneration'; but the radical use of language, indebted to the canons of poetics and theatrics to a yet undetermined extent, seems to be an essential and defining feature of Vajrayāna literature as such and the property of its earliest redactions. (1981:31)

Tantric language is radical in attempting to subvert the essentialist understanding of language. When it comes to interpretation, the Tantric author, like the poet, would insist that no interpretation is final, due to the multiplicity of meanings inherent in language which is intrinsically unstable. Tantric discourse is not unique in this regard, but only radical: it actively seeks to dispel the illusion of permanence adheres to 'normal' hegemonic discourse. Its purpose here, as Thurman has pointed out, is compassionate; for the Tantric adept all things are theoretically at least conducive to liberation, so it is natural that they would use language as a liberative technique, by emphasizing the poetic, symbolic, de-reifying aspects of language. The radical use of language is also behind the critique of hegemonic ideology of caste found in the Tantras, but it should be noted this critique is only one aspect of the radicalness of the Tantric traditions, and probably not the most important one, either.[136] This tendency was observed by Bharati, who argued that the

[136] The Tantric discourse concerning caste will be discussed in chapter three.

intentional, systemic ambiguity in the Tantras was a means of countering rigid orthodoxies.[137]

Recognizing that Tantric texts contain, and rhetorically exploit, the multiple layers of signification of words is merely the first step in interpretation. Given the large use of such rhetoric in Tantric texts, the literal approach is untenable, for one might ask why an author insists on taking, say, sexual language literally, when he as a matter of course interprets less transgressive passages metaphorically. One suspects that in such cases she takes this approach because the literal interpretation accords well with the myth of Tantra as a degenerate religion in a degenerate India. A similar point was made by Jung regarding the interpretation of dreams:

> the sexual language of dreams is not always to be interpreted in a concretistic way....it is, in fact, an archaic language which naturally uses all of the analogies readiest to hand without their necessarily coinciding with a real sexual content. It is therefore unjustifiable to take the sexual language of dreams literally under all circumstances, while the other contexts are explained as symbolical. But as soon as you take the sexual metaphors as symbols for something unknown, your conception of the nature of dreams at once deepens.[138]

The interpretation of the Tantras requires a sophisticated hermeneutic, one which does not fall into the either/or dichotomy of literal versus symbolic modes of interpretation, and which respects if not employs the sophisticated hermeneutic devised by Tantric exegetes.

That this is the case is suggested by the various interpretations that have been proposed for an evocative passage in Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopayaviniścayasiddhi*, which occurs as follows:

> Those who desire liberation should in every way serve Prajñāpāramitā, who is ultimately pure and yet manifests in the feminine form. She abides everywhere taking on the form of an alluring woman *(lalanā)*, and is commended by the Adamantine Lord as one who arises for the sake of others' aims. Success will come easily for the adept who, through union with reality *(tattvayoga)*, loves the consort *(mudrā)* who appears in clans such as those of the brahmin, etc., or is born as an outcast, or is an undisciplined wife of another, or one maimed or

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[137] See Bharati 1961, p. 270.

[138] This is from Jung's 1948 essay, "Über die Energetik und das Wesen der Träume", translated in Jung 1974, pp. 49-50.

> crippled, or likewise [one's] mother or mother-in-law, one's own daughter or sister.[139]

Bhattacharyya interprets this passage literally, and takes it as an occasion to engage in a diatribe concerning the alleged degeneracy of the Tantras, writing that "Vajrayānists went beyond due limits in their spite against the strict rules of morality, and they violated all of them and plunged headlong into the worst immortality and sin." (1925:32) This interpretation is problematic in that it takes a highly ambiguous textual passage as proof that Tantric practitioners engaged in transgressive practices such as incest.

Bagchi rightly takes issue with this interpretation, but his own, which swings to the opposite extreme of symbolic interpretation, which seems an equally limited if less egregious interpretation. Bagchi insists that the term *mudrā* refers to hand gestures, even though in this context Bhattacharyya's assumption that it refers to a 'woman' actually seems more appropriate. Bagchi justifies his interpretations by claiming that the verse refers to an inner yogic process. He rightly points out that *lalanā*, translated above as "alluring women", also refers to one of the three main channels of the subtle physiology.[140]

Bagchi's attempt to refute Bhattacharrya's simplistic interpretation is admirable. However, there is no basis in the text to take one interpretation over another, so we are forced to concede that this passage exhibits an irresolvable polysemy which, like a poem, makes it ultimately untranslatable. His interpretation of *mudrā* as a hand gesture is not incorrect, but he is probably wrong in asserting that *mudrā* does not refer to a woman here; it is probably its primary sense in the case of this passage. In Tantric texts the term *mudrā*

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[139] Ch. 5. vv. 22-25: prajñāpāramitā sevyā sarvathā muktikāṅkṣibhiḥ / paramārthe sthitā śuddhā saṃvṛtyā tanudhāriṇi // lalanārūpam āsthāya sarvatraiva vyavasthitā / ato 'rthaṃ vajranathena proktā bāhyārthasaṃbhavā // brāhmaṇādikulotpannāṃ mudrāṃ vai antyajodbhavām / duḥśilāṃ parabhāryāṃ ca vikṛtāṃ vikalāṃ tathā // janayitriṃ svasāraṃ ca svaputriṃ bhāgineyikāṃ / kāmayan tattvayogena laghu sidhyeta sādhakaḥ // (Samdhong and Dwivedi 1988:93); / thams cad du ni thar 'dod pas // shes rab pha rol phyin bsten bya // dam pa'i don du gang gnas pa // kun rdzob dag pa'i lus bzung nas // bud med mdzes pa'i gzugs kyis ni // thams cad du ni kun tu gnas // de bas phyi rol don las byung // rdo rje mkhan pos don de gsungs // bram ze'i rigs sogs las 'byung dang // mtha' yas skyes dang phyag rgya dang // gzhan gyi chung ma tshul nyams dang // dman dang cha lugs mi sdug dang // skye ma dang ni sgyug mo dang // rang gi bu mo sring mo dang // de nyid sbyor bas 'dod spyod na // sgrub po myur du 'grub par 'gyur / (1988:137)

[140] See Bagchi 1939, pp. 35 ff.

possesses a broad range of potential significations.[141] The *hypogram* centered around the word *mudrā* is clearly presented[142] in the ninth chapter of the *Mahāmudrātilaka*, which is translated here as follows:

> Now I will explain the signification of *mudrā*. The earring *(kuṇḍala)*, the choker *(kaṇṭhikā)*, the wheel *(cakra)*, necklace *(rucaka)*, ash *(bhasma)* and sacred cord *(brahmāsūtra)* are the six insignia *(mudrā)*,[143] which are the Six Transcendences *(pāramitā)* of generosity *(dāna)*, discipline *(śila)*, tolerance *(kṣānti)*, effort *(virya)*, meditation *(dhyāna)* and wisdom *(prajñā)*. Generosity is the *dharmamudrā*, discipline *karmamudrā*, tolerance *samayamudrā*, effort *samādhi*, meditation *jñānamudrā*, and wisdom the *mahāmudrā*. This should be known as the ultimate [meaning].[144]
>
> One should purify the six sense media *(āyatana)*.[145] They are well known to be the six consorts *(mudrā)*, which should be known as the six clans respectively. The six consorts are in essence goddesses, [their seed syllables being] *yaṃ*, *raṃ*, *laṃ*, *vaṃ*, *aṃ* and *haṃ*. Worship her through the process of the goddesses, her worship being the process of experiential uniformity *(samarasa)*, [effected] by means of the processes of control, enjoyment and dissolution. [The six goddesses] are Caṇḍālini, Rajaki, Ḍombi, Narti, Kapālini and Brahmaṇi. Caṇḍālini is of the Lotus clan, Rajaki is of the Jewel clan, Ḍombi is of the Vajra clan, Narti is of the Flaying Knife *(kartri)* clan , Kapālini is of the Wheel clan; these are the five consorts, and Brahmaṇi is the wisdom consort *(jñānamudrā)*, and she is of the Vajrasattva clan. Brahmaṇi is one's mother, Kapālini is one's sister, Narti is one's daughter, Ḍombi is one's wife, Rajaki is one's daughter-in-law, and Caṇḍālini is one's mother-in-law. They should be worshipped without discursive thought, through the procedure of wisdom and art. Through non-discursive thought success is attained in an instant. "Mother" is shown to be mind, and "sister" speech. "Daughter" is body, and "wife" the life-force. "Daughter-in-law" is exertion, and "mother-in-law" equality. The channel of power is the "mother", and it is the precious receptacle of the Buddhas. The "sister" is the channel of semen which is in the supreme place. The "daughter" is the channel of blood, which is below the channel of semen. The "wife" is the channel of urine which exists between those two. The "daughter-in-law" is the channel of saliva which exists in the throat, while the "mother-in-law" is the channel of nasal mucous which exists in the forehead. Mother is known to be earth, sister as water, daughter as fire, wife as wind, daughter-in-law as space, and mother-in-law as non-space. Mother is sweet, sister is sour, daughter is bitter, wife is salty, daughter-in-law is spicy, and mother-in-law is astringent.

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[141] These and many other significations are discussed by Gonda in a very interesting (1972) article on the polysemy of the term *mudrā*.

[142] This passage is somewhat unusual in trying to force the *mudrās*, which are usually taken as fivefold, into a six-fold pattern in order to correspond them to the six goddesses of this Tantra.

[143] Concerning the meaning of *mudrā* as sectarian insignia see section 6.2.2 below.

[144] The Six Transcendences are together thought to constitute the path of practice to be mastered by an aspiring *bodhisattva*.

[145] The six *āyatana* consist of the sense faculty, object and consciousness for each of the six senses.

> One should worship them with effort, and one will rapidly attain success. I have explained the clans of the *mudrā*s which are difficult to find in the Yogatantras.[146]

In short, *mudrā* possesses a wide range of meanings in the Tantric context, extending far beyond the alternatives proposed by Bhattacharrya and Bagchi. It is possible that Anaṅgavajra's text refers to an outer sexual-yogic practice, but the passage does not provide enough detail to be anything more than merely suggestive.[147] It might also (or instead) refer to an inner yogic process. It is difficult to ascertain the exact meaning here because the inner yogic processes are often described with sexual imagery.

Passages such as Anaṅgavajra's above occupy a broad semantic range, probably deliberately so. The simultaneous cross-indexing to the inner and outer spheres might facilitate the mapping of correspondence of the microcosm and macrocosm, oneself and the

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[146] Ch. 9: / de nas gshan yang bshad bya ba // phyag rgya'i brda ni rab yin te // rna cha gdu bu 'khor lo dang // mgul do de bzhin thal ba dang // tshangs pa'i skud pa phyag rgya drug / pha rol phyin drug dran pa'o // sbyin pa tshul khrims bzod brtson 'grus // bsam gtan shes rab drug yin no // sbyin pa chos zhes bstan pa ste // tshul khrims las zhes dran pa'o // bzod pa dam tshig ces su dran // brtson 'grus ting 'dzin shes par bya // bsam gtan ye shes zhes byar dran // shes rab ces bya phyag rgya che // don dam par ni shes par bya // skyes mched drug ni dag par bya // phyag rgya drug tu rab tu grags // rigs drug rim par shes par bya // lha mo'i bdag nyid phyag rgya / yaṃ raṃ laṃ vaṃ aṃ haṃ ste // lha mo yi ni rim pas so // de ru mchod pa rab tu bya // mchod pa ro mnyam rim pa'o // thim dang longs spyod dbang gis ni // gnas kun gyi ni de bzhin no // gtum mo btso blag ḍombi dang // gar mkhan thod pa bram ze mo // gtum padma'i rigs yin te // btso blag rin chen rigs su dran // ḍombi rdo rje'i rigs zhes bya // gar mkhan ral gri'i rigs su dran // thod pa can ni 'khor lo'i rigs // de lnga dag pa phyag rgya'o // ye shes phyag rgya bram ze mo // rdo rje sems dpa'i rigs su dran // bran ze mo ni ma yin te // thod pa ma ni sring mor dran // gar mkhan bu mor shes par bya // ḍombi chung mar rab tu grags // btso blag mkhan ni mna' ma yin // gtum mo sgyug mor dran pa'o // shes rab thabs kyi cho ga yis / rtog pa med pas mchod par bya // rnam rtog med pas dngos grub 'grub // ji ltar bsnyen pa skad cig gis // ma ni sems zhes bstan pa ste // gsung ni 'di ru sring mor dran // bu mo skur rnam par grags // chung ma srog ces bya bar dran // mna' ma rtsol bar dran pa ste // sgyug mo mnyam par dran pa'o // ma ni mthu yi rtsa yin te // sangs rgyas rin po che yi snod // sring mo khu ba'i rtsa yin te // mchog ma'i gnas na yod pa'o // bu mo khrag gi rtsa yin te // khu ba'i rtsa yi 'og na yod // chung ma dri chu'i rtsa yin te // gnyis gyi bar na yod pa'o // mna' ma mchi ma'i rtsa yin te // mgrin pa'i gnas na yod pa'o // sgyug mo snabs kyi rtsa yin te // dpral ba'i gnas na yod pa'o // ma ni sa ru shes par bya // sring mo chu ru dran pa'o // bu mo me ni yin par dran // chung ma rlung du rab tu grags // mna' ma de ni nam mkha' ste // sgyug mo nam mkha' ma yin no // ma ni mngar ba yin pa 'gyur // sring mo de ni skyur bar dran // bu mo kha bar shes bya ste // chung ma lan tshvar 'di ru dran // tsha ba de ni mna' ma ste // sgyug mo bska bar dran pa'o // de rnams 'bad pas mchod par bya // myur du dngos grub thob par 'gyur // rnal 'byor las rnyed dka' ba // phyag rgya'i rigs su bdag gis bshad // dpal phyag rgya chen po'i thig le las phyag rgya'i brda dang mchod pa'i cho ga zhes bya ba'i le'u ste dgu pa'o / (DK fols. 72b-73a)

[147] It could refer, for example, to the second and third initiations of the *anuttarayogatantras*, which in its classical form required that the candidate approached the master with a female consort who was also a disciple of that master. The candidate would be blindfolded while the master and consort engage in sexual union. A drop of mixed male and female sexual fluids is placed on the candidates tongue, bestowing the second or "secret" initiation *(guhyābhiṣeka)*. The disciple then unites with the consort, and is instructed in the experience of the four joys *(caturānanda)*, bestowing the third or "wisdom-intuition" initiation *(prajñājñānābhiṣeka)*. (See Kvaerne 1975 concerning these initiations.) In the course of these encounters, the consort serves in various roles vis-à-vis the master and candidate, and these roles can be articulated as family relationships since the master and his disciples are often considered to be a "family". She is the "daughter" to the master and, as a being a fellow disciple, a "sister" to the candidate. When in union with the master she is the candidates "mother" and the master's "wife".

Awakened State which the Tantric adept seeks to attain.[148] That is, Buddhists made deliberate and sometime radical use of the polysemous nature of language, in order to yoke language to the spiritual path outlined in the Tantras themselves.

2.3.2.2 The Logic of Mastery

On the basis on these evocative but ambiguous textual passages alone it is not possible to draw conclusions concerning the practices engaged in by Indian Tantric adepts. While there is substantial evidence that sexual yogas were practiced by certain persons under certain circumstances, no speculation concerning the details of these practices, persons, or circumstances will be entertained here. Nevertheless, it appears likely that sexual practices were engaged in by at least a small minority of practitioners, for there are texts which criticize those who literally interpret the texts and translate them into practice, and such critiques would have been superfluous unless there actually were such persons.[149] Insofar as sexual yogas were practiced by Tantric Buddhists, there is considerable evidence suggesting that the engagement in sensual pleasures recommended in the Tantras were not intended to simply provide hedonistic release, but to afford instead an opportunity for yogic practices which probably differ considerably from mere libertinism. Buddhaśrījñāna,[150] in his *Dvikrama-tattva-bhāvana-nāma-mukhāgama*, describes a sexual practice which starts out with relatively mundane foreplay, but appears to culminate in the deliberate stimulation of subtle channels present in the vicinity of the vulva. He recommends that the adept

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[148] Bucknell and Stuart-Fox wrote that Intentional Language *(sandhābhāṣā)* was "originally a statement of microcosm-macrocosm parallelism, but it apparently soon became a secret code and teaching aid." (1986:190)

[149] Some of these texts will be discussed in this section below.

[150] Buddhaśrījñāna, the founder of the *Jñānapāda* school of Guhyasamāja exegesis lived in the eighth century, and is reputed to have studied the Tantras in Oḍḍīyāna under numerous ḍākinīs, the yogini Guneru, and the ācārya Vilāsavajra. See Roerich 1949, p. 367.

> Rub the maṇḍala of the lotus with your left hand, and stimulate it with your tongue. Gazing at it from above and from below, desire it with your mind. Then that joyful lady says the following, displaying her lotus: "Lord of Self-arisen Great Bliss! Enter into this lotus. Seek out your channel wheels *(nāḍicakra)* through realization of the winds and channels." Then you should open up the great channel wheel which abides within the lotus, and which is ornamented with eight petals, a corolla, filaments and the five essences. Seek out the three channels *(nāli)* [called] the Vowel and Consonant Mantra *(ālikālimantra)*, the Turtle *(kūrmaka)* and the Rabbit *(śaśaka)*. The channel which is the Lord of the Adamantine Realm *(vajradhātu)* within the vulva, free of subjectivity and objectivity, must be known with the finger through the power of the Guru's oral instructions.[151]

This practice was evidently carried out for the mutual discovery and manipulation of elements of the subtle body by a trained yogin and yogini, and it appears to differ quite significantly from mundane sexual behavior;[152] the very specificity of this passage suggests

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[151] This appears to be a description of a practice akin to those contained in the *aṣṭakāmakalāprayoga* categorization of the Kaulas, which are conveniently illustrated on several Orissan temples. In particular there is a striking similarity to the *yonyābhiśekha* 'consecration of the yoni' or *puraścaraṇa* 'foreplay' stages. See Donaldson 1986, esp. p. 156. Buddhaśrijñāna's text occurs as follows: / g.yon gyis padma'i dkyil 'khor ni // mnye zhing lce yis bskyod par bya // steng 'og tu yang blta byas nas // sems kyis de la chags par bya // de nas dga' ba'i bu mo des // padma bstan nas 'di skad smra // rang 'byung bde chen rgyal po ni // padma 'di la rab tu gnas // rtsa dang rlung gis rtogs 'gyur bas // khyod kyi rtsa yi 'khor lo tshol // de nas de yi sor mo yis // nang nas rtsa yi 'khor lo che // padma la gnas snying po lngas // rgyan byas ze'u 'bru ge sar dang // 'dab ma rgyad pa gsal byas nas // ā li kā li mantra dang // kur ma ka dang sha sha ka // nā li gsum po btsal bar bya // rdo rje dbying kyi dbang phug rtsa // gzung gdzin bral ba bha ga'i dbus // bla ma's man ngag stobs kyis ni // sor mos go bar bya dgos so / (DT fol. 6b).

[152] This point was made by Jackson (1992), who analyzed several of the songs attributed to the *mahāsiddha* Kāṇha and argues against the facile, literal interpretation of them made by Siegal (1981). One problem with Jackson's otherwise commendable analysis is his implicit equation of yoga with ascesis; for example, he argues that Kāṇha's songs are strongly suggestive of yogic practices, and goes on to say, "If this is so, then asceticism plays *some* role in his life". (1992:95). Jackson himself defines asceticism as "the denial of ordinary pleasures for the purpose of attaining an extraordinary goal." (1992:96 n. 2). I would argue that Tantric yogic practices precisely do not involve asceticism in this sense. As numerous Tantric texts suggest, pleasure in whatever form is not to rejected or sublimated to a higher goal. Rather, "ordinary" and potentially addictive activities such as eating, drinking and sex are taken up as part of Tantric practice, and while these are practiced in a way that is not "ordinary"; there does not appear to be any rejection of pleasure as such. Unlike asceticism, which appears to imply a duality between purity and impurity and so forth, Tantric Buddhism, like Zen Buddhism as described by Clasquin, "remains true to its own philosophical basis of non-duality by refusing to recognize a distinction between enlightened and ignorant action, Nirvana and Saṃsāra, celibacy and sexuality." (Clasquin 1992:79) Or, a distinction which Tantric Buddhists recognize is that between skillful, liberating actions and unskillful, limiting actions. Here the distinction rests not in the ultimate nature of any action or phenomenon, but rather in the intention, insight and artfulness that underlie its execution. Rather than labeling Tantric sexual practices as a type of "asceticism", we might instead consider them to be yogas which require an advanced degree of mastery over one's body and mind. While this mastery does not *necessarily* require or entail ascetic deprivation, it definitely entails a degree of control which is not present in normal sex acts, and thus departs significantly from them. Tsongkhapa would concur here; as we shall see, he explicitly commented that these practices were not the same as the ordinary ones they superficially resemble, and thus have nothing to do with the orgies imagined by the literal-minded Siegal, which Jackson rightly pointed out. On the other hand, this departure from the ordinary does not mean that ordinary sexual bliss is renounced. If anything, Tantric texts claim to exceed this bliss, enabling one to achieve the great bliss *(mahāsukha)*, supreme bliss *(paramasukha)* or orgasmic bliss *(sahajasukha)*, which are often described using sexual metaphors; that it, it is a bliss which encompasses and exceeds the ordinary, made possible by the yogic mastery which allows the adept to experience the ordinary in a heightened fashion.

that we are no longer in the realm of pure rhetoric, but praxis. Or rather, we are dealing with *textual representations* of praxis; it is probably not possible to ascertain the extent to which descriptions such as this were deployed in practice. Yet the fact that this passage comes from a *mukhāgama,* a text that accompanied a specific tradition's lineage of practice, suggests that it was deployed to some extent, even if we can never know by whom or under what circumstances, or even exactly *what* took place.

This description does appear to evoke the general ethos of the *kāmaśāstra*s, although the exact relation between the *tantraśāstra*s and the *kāmaśāstra*s is far from clear. The sophistication of these texts, however, clearly points away from a "primitive" origin and toward a more civilized, urban milieu.[153]

The consequences of such practices were evidently quite different than those of normal sexual relationships. The Tantras prescribe a devotion on the part of male adepts toward their female consorts as a prerequisite for achieving success.[154] The spiritual success attainable through such service is supposedly quite great, as is the danger for the insincere yogin seeking only sexual gratification. Concerning this issue Tsongkhapa, commenting on verses in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,*[155] wrote the following:

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[153] A thorough investigation of the relationship between Tantric literature and the *kāmaśāstras* has yet to be written. Fiser's preliminary investigation into the relationship between the *kāmaśāstra* and *vinaya* literatures is a good, but brief, start. It does appear, however, that this type of literature is quite sophisticated, and points to a urbane milieu for their composition, study and practice. This seems to contradict the "primitive" hypothesis for these aspects of Tantric practice. Hence while we could conceivably translate the terms *gaṇacakra* or *cakrapūjā* as "orgy" in the classical sense of the term, from Latin *orgia,* meaning secret rites or observances, especially involving the use of song, dance, sex and intoxicants (OED, see Brown 1993, vol. 2 p. 2021.1,2), this translation may not be ideal given the current connotations of the term. This type of rite, though ancient and pervasive, is not particularly primitive, and possibly occurred in a wide variety of social and historical contexts.

[154] For a striking example in Buddhist Tantric literature see the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra* ch. 8, edited and translated in George 1974.

[155] He comments on CST ch. 27 vv. 1c-3b: "Having understood [their] characteristics, there will be rapid engagement with the powers *(siddhi).* Going from town to town, the form of the *dūti* is revealed. The *dūti* is like the sharp edge of a sword. She purifies and augments one's merit. Therefore, being well acquainted with the *dūti,* the adept will rapidly attain success *(siddhi).*" / mtshan nyid dbye ba shes byas nas // dngos grub myur du 'jug byed ni // grong dang grong du de song nas // pho nya'i gzugs ni mtshon par bya // phɔ nya ral gri'i so 'dra zhing // dag byed bsod nams 'phel byed yin // de bzhin pho nya legs 'grogs pas // sgrub pa po yis dngos grub 'thob / DK fol. 231b).

> What is the method of succeeding with the yoginīs? If one understands the previously explained characteristics of the yoginīs, one will succeed with the yoginīs. Why is this necessary? It is because relying on the *dūtī* (consort) one will attain rapid engagement with the powers *(siddhi);* [the Root Tantra thus] says "There will be rapid engagement with the powers." How does one seek the *dūtī?* The yogin, going from village to village where people gather, should observe and recognize the *dūtī* who there by means of her form, i.e., her body color, shape, and so forth. Is it difficult or easy to serve the *dūtī?* The *dūtī* is like the sharp edge of a sword. Just as it is necessary to handle a sword edge fearlessly and with an unagitated mind, if one is well associated with the *dūtī,* since one's sins are purified and one's merit enhanced, the adept will attain success. However, if one is at fault in service, not only will one attain no benefit, but the retribution will be very great. It says in the *Herukābhyudaya* that "If a hypocrite yogin who lacks yoga lies with a *mudrā*, lacking intuition on this path of intuition *(jñānamārga),* there is no doubt that he will end up in hell."[156] It is essential that one understands the scriptural passages concerning the extreme retribution for acting in this context in the impure manner characteristic of the worldly ones.[157]

The true test for the properly prepared yogin or yogini would be to engage with the most defiling or passion-inspiring of things or activities without having his or her mind disturbed, and even to alter or reverse the normal physiological responses to excitations such as the sexual; and it is arguable that the sexual rites in the third and fourth Unexcelled Yogatantra initiations, which will be discussed below, were intended as precisely such a test, designed by and for yogins and yoginis. If so, they would truly represent a *rite de passage* in the fullest sense of the term.

Filliozat suggests that the violations of morality in the Buddhist Tantras

> do not merely consist in allowing free-play to impulses. These violations are based on certain procedures into which the adept is initiated by the master and they generally take place only after a probation of asceticism which is intended to bestow a kind of immunity against the consequences of such violations....It is to

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[156] This quote occurs in ch. 7 of the HA as follows: / rnal 'byor med par rnal 'byor 'chos // phyag rgya la ni bgrod 'gyur dang // ye shes med par ye shes tshul // dmyal bar 'gro bar the tshom med /. (DK fol. 6b, QT p. 223.5).

[157] / rnal 'byor ma rnams sgrub pa'i tshul ji ltar win zhe na / rnal 'byor ma rnams kyi sngar bshad pa'i mtshan nyid kyi dbye ba ste khyad par rnams shes par byas nas / rnal 'byor ma rnams bsgrub pa'o / dgos pa gang gi don du zhe na / pho nya la brten nas dngos grub myur du 'jug pa thob par bya ba'i don du'o // myur du dngos grub 'jug par 'gyur / zhes 'byung ngo // pho nya tshol ba'i tshul ni / rnal 'byor pa de skye bo tshogs pa'i grong dang grong du song nas / de na gnas pa'i pho nya'i gzugs te kha dog dang dbyibs la sogs pa yis ni mtshon pa ste shes par bya'o // 'o na pho nya mo bsten par dka' 'am sla snyam na / pho nya mo ni ral gri'i so dang 'dra ste / ral gri'i so la brten pa na 'jigs shing yid ma yengs pa dgos pa de bzhin du pho nya mo dang 'grogs pa legs na sdig pa dag par byed cing / bsod nams 'phel bar byed pas sgrub pa pos ni dngos grub 'thob la / bsten pa nyes na phan yon mi 'thob par ma zad nyes dmigs shin tu che ste / he ru ka mngon 'byung las / rnal 'byor med par rnal 'byor chos // phyag rgya la ni bgrod gyur dang // ye shes med par ye shes tshul // dmyal bar 'gro bar the tshom med / ces gsungs te yul rten kun mtshan nyid ma tshang bar de ltar byed pa la nyes dmigs shin tu che bar gsung pa rnams shes dgos so / (KS, TL fol. 145b)

> be remembered, above all, that self-mastery is the essential element of the psycho-physiological techniques of *yoga* to which the Buddhist techniques are related. The influence of these techniques intervenes, then, to discipline the activity and to give it another significance than the one found in the ordinary libertine. (1991:333)

The emphasis on internal mastery is not unique to Tantric Buddhism, but rather was an ideal of Buddhism from a very early period, possibly from its inception. Mac Queen has argued, in fact, that it is an ideal which is characteristic of the axial age protest movements in India, which include Buddhism as well as the other movements that have been labeled "śramaṇic". According to MacQueen,

> In much of Indian literature contemporary with early Buddhism there is a tendency to portray the ascetic as a hero and to characterize him increasingly in terms previously reserved for the traditional warrior-hero of mighty deeds and exploits. For many people of this time the true man of spirit, the hero of the age, was one whose quest and adventure, as well as his battles, were internal. (1981:243)

MacQueen uses the term "ascetic", but he qualifies the term in concordance with a distinction made by Buddhists: the "true ascetic" is one who is engaged in the pursuit of self-mastery, as opposed to the "false ascetic" who engages in mortifications for the purpose of attaining selfish aims. (1981:248-49) The former type necessarily gives up narrow, self-centered goals which ultimately reduce to a desire to assert control over the external world, and instead seek an inner control which, according to the Buddhists, is a prerequisite for a true spiritual development.

Such a demonstration of yogic mastery is perhaps what Asaṅga intended in his famous and controversial verse in chapter nine of the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra,* which occurs as follows:

> In the transmutation of the foundation highest mastery is obtained, which is the non-localized nirvāṇa in the immaculate state of the Buddhas. In the transmutation of sexual union *(maithuna)* highest mastery is obtained in the abode of the Buddha's bliss, in the unafflicted presence of the consort.[158]

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[158] Ch. 9, vv. 45-46: (45) pratiṣṭhāyāḥ parāvṛttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate paraṃ / apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇaṃ buddhānāṃ amale pade // (46) maithunasya parāvṛttau vibhutvaṃ labhyate paraṃ / buddhasaukhyavihāre 'tha dārā 'saṃkleśadarśane // (Bagchi 1970:44). Trans. based on Thurman's unpublished trans.

Tantric texts are replete with the language of control and mastery, rather than hedonistic release.[159] Demonstrating this sort of mastery would, conventionally speaking, entail a violation of the *pratimokṣa* vow of celibacy, but it would be permissible for the laity, and it is possible that among certain circles such practice by properly trained monks or nuns would not be considered a violation provided that it was accompanied by an inner sense of renunciation, and conducted discretely.

That such a mastery is intended is suggested by certain Tibetan authors. The First Dalai Lama dGe 'dun grub (b. 1391-1475 CE), for example, wrote in his text *The Yogic Stages of the Kalacakra Tantra* that the prerequisite for engaging in such yogic techniques is training of the mind recommended in the *Sūtrayāna,* i.e., exoteric Buddhism. In his comment to this recommendation, Lati Rinpoche explains that

> When Gen-dun Drub refers to Sutrayana practices, he means the methods for generating a mindstream tamed by an inner experience of the free spirit of renunciation and the Mahayana attitude of great compassion. The first of these is necessary in order to use lust as the path, a qualification of Highest Tantra Yoga; and the second is necessary in order to sublimate our experience of the wrathful symbols meditated upon. (Mullin 1981:150-51)

The logic of mastery and reversal seems to apply to other "transgressions" recommended in the Tantras, such as drinking alcohol. Chapter Twenty-seven of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra enjoins that the adept engages in the "three purities", which are modes of conduct which would not in normal Indian social contexts be considered purifying. "The three purities are, first, the purity of the consort *(dūti),* second, *soma,* and eating food together. The yogin should always, always, protect these purities. If one attains to the level of these purities, whence will the powers *(siddhi)* not arise?"[160] Tsongkhapa explains that:

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[159] For example in *prānāyāma* techniques the breath is controlled, and in sexual yoga the semen is retained rather than released. Control of the mind and the sense powers is required for Buddhists of all schools. See Bharati 1976, p. 96.

[160] CST ch. 27 vv. 20.c-22.b: / pho nya gtsang sbra dang po yin // gnyis pa zhi ba yin par 'dod // zas gcig tu ni za ba nyid // gtsang sbra gsum pa yin par bshad // rnal 'byor pa yis rtag pa ru // gtsang sbra 'di dag rtag tu bskyang // gtsang ma dag pa'i rim thob na // dngos grub gang las 'byung mi 'gyur / (DK fol. 232a).

> The first of the three purities is relying on the consort *(dūti)* because she is the source of the very precious bliss of all Victors. The second is said to be *soma*, i.e. the five ambrosias and liquor. It is taught that this is not the state of drunkenness. Eating food from one vessel with the consort is explained as the third purity. The yogin should always maintain these three purities. In that way, drink *soma* and eat good food on the occasion of the expansion of the elements; relying on the *dūti* one will augment the concentration of bliss-void. Thus, if one gradually attains the state of pristine purity, whence will the success of Mahāmudrā not arise? It will arise from the three purities.[161]

Obviously, purity here is not understood in the conventional sense, as associating with a sexual partner who may be of a different social class, and sharing with him or her alcohol and meat from a single bowl, are all activities which conventionally speaking resulted in impurity. Moreover, the sexual arts that might be conducted with him or her may bear only a superficial similarity to conventional practices, and certainly a different aim, the realization of the bliss-void concentration which enables the experience of the clear light which can be glimpsed by the yogically prepared in the 'between states' *(antarābhava)* which are thought to occur in the processes of orgasm, sleeping and dying.[162] Likewise, the enjoyment of good food and drink is necessary to *expand* one's sensory powers (rather than abuse and wither them in asceticism), so that their powers can be *yoked* to the cart of liberation. Through such expansion, they can then be used to realize the experiential unification *(samarasa)* of all things, the interpenetration of the sense powers and sense objects, of subject and object, which is represented by the union of the deity couples, and which is characterized by great bliss.

This is explained more thoroughly by Tsongkhapa in the context of commenting upon a verse in chapter nine of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, which is: "Understanding what

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[161] KS: / gtsang sbra gsum las dang po ni pho nya la brten pa yin te / de ni rgyal ba thams cad kyi bde ba rin po che'i 'byung gnas yin pa'i phyir ro // gnyis pa ni zhi ba'am zla ba zhe pa bdud rtsi lnga dang chang yin par 'dod de / ra ro ba ma yin par bstan no // phyag rgya dang snod gcig tu zas bza' ba nyid ni gtsang sbra gsum pa yin par bshad de / rnal 'byor pa yis rtag pa ru ste rgyun du gtsang sbra gsum po 'di dag rab tu bskyang bar bya'o // de ltar khams rgyas pa'i thabs su zhi ba'i btung ba dang kha zas bzang po zos te // pho nya la brten nas bde stong gi ting nge 'dzin 'phel bas // gtsang ma'i dag pa'i rim pa rim gyis thob na / gtsang sbra gsum po gang las phyag rgya chen po'i dngos grub 'byung bar mi 'gyur te 'byung bar 'gyur ro /. (TL fol. 149b).

[162] For a discussion of these yogas see Mullin 1996, esp. pp. 184 ff.

was stated by the Sugata, that the savor, etc. of drinks such as barley *(caru)* and foods, etc., are the means of achieving power *(siddhi)*."[163] Tsongkhapa comments here that:

> Knowing well what was spoken by the Sugata, enjoy the savor, form, sound, scent and touch of foods such as meat and drinks such as beer. Making such excellent offerings to yourself, you will attain all the powers. As for *caru*, although there are others with which one can engage, here it is not suitable. As it is explained as *cāru*, "pleasing", it refers to enjoying extremely pleasing objects. Furthermore, one must increase bliss in order to effect the bliss-void union. In order to augment the 'lily-like' *(kunda*, semen) on which one depends since it is the support of bliss, it is necessary to expand the sense powers together with their supports by enjoying special desired objects. As it says in the *Dvikalpa*, "Since camphor (semen) is the cause, eat meat *(bala)* and especially drink wine."[164]

A very similar qualified justification for the enjoyment of normally forbidden substances, in the context of Hindu Tantrism, is given by Bhāskararāya[165] as follows:

> The form of Brahman is bliss and that is established in the body. The [ritual] substances which manifest that [bliss] are drunk by the Yogis.... However if the substances when not ritually used [and so considered] impure *(apavitram)* are drunk then because they actively obstruct the aims of human life, they bind one to sin [and] are not capable of inducing that [blissful] state.[166]

Here beer drinking and meat eating are prescribed both to expand one's sensory powers as well as, evidently, to augment semen production, which according to the Indian medical

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[163] CST ch. 9: / sugatavarṇitaṃ jñātva khānapānādicaru / bhojyabhojanaṃ rasādyāḥ sarvasiddhiś ca sādhakaḥ // (manuscript fol. 9b). / bder gshegs gsungs pa 'di shes pa // bza' btung la sogs caru yi // bza' dang btung ba'i ro sogs pa // dngos grub thams cad sgrub byed yin / (DK fol. 222a).

[164] KS: / bde bar gshegs pas gsungs pa 'di / legs par shes nas sha la sogs pa'i bza' ba dang / chang la sogs pa'i btung ba'i bza' btung gi ro dang sogs kyis gzugs dang sgra dang dri dang reg bya bsten pas / bdag nyid la rab tu mchod par byed pa ni dngos grub thams cad sgrub par byed pa yin no // cā ru ni lhag ma la yang 'jug mod kyang 'dir de mi 'grig pas / mdzes pa la 'chad pa ltar 'dod yon rnams kyang shin tu yid du 'ong ba bsten zhes pa'o // de yang bde chen dang stong pa sbyor ba la bde ba 'phel dgos la / de yang bde ba'i rten kunda lta bu rgyas pa la rag las shing / de rgyas pa la 'dod yon khyad par can rnams bsten pas dbang po rten bcas rgyas dgos pa yin te / brtag gnyis las / de la ga pur rgyu yi phyir // sha ni bza' ba nyid du bya // khyad par du yang chang nyid do / (TL fol. 94b). Tsongkhapa quotes three quarters of HT kalpa 2 ch. 11 v. 15, which occurs in Snellgrove's edition as follows: karpūraṃ piyate tatra madanaṃ caiva viśeṣataḥ / balasya bhakṣaṇan tatra kuryāt karpūrahetunā //; / de la ga pur btung bar bya // de la ga pur rgyu yi phyir // sha ni bza' ba nyid du 'gyur // khyad par du yang chang nyid do / (1959: vol. 2 pp. 98-99. Snellgrove does not translate this verse.

[165] Bhāskararāya was a brahmin Śrīvidyā practitioner who lived in Tamil Nadu during the first half of the eighteenth century. See Brooks 1990, p. x-xi.

[166] Brooks 1990, p. 113. Translated here is v. 15 of Bhāskararāya's *Tripurā Upaniṣadbhāṣya*, which comments on *Kulārṇava Tantra* 5.80.

tradition is the product of food refined sevenfold over a period of twenty-eight days,[167] and which is needed for Perfection Stage yogic practices.

When studying this tradition it becomes increasingly clear that it is not immoral transgression that is recommended, but a disciplined engagement with the very unconscious drives that motivate and empower the passions. This type of self-mastery, rather than a sign of primitiveness or immorality, is precisely the sort of self-mastery which according to Elias characterizes the "civilizing process".[168] For a tradition dedicated to the attainment of Awakening this is a logical if not inevitable development, for it is the result of intensive study and experimentation with the negative propensities. It is also a "heroic" effort, for it involves the exploration of aspects of the mind which are normally suppressed and hence unconscious, which is always a difficult endeavor. It is dangerous as well in that one engaged with this path risks social condemnation both for engaging in transgressive practices and, possibly, just for bringing into the light of day things most would prefer to be suppressed.[169] It is perhaps in part for these reasons that secrecy is enjoined for Tantric practitioners, and typically isolated places of practices are recommended.

It is perhaps inevitable that those not properly trained, however, would be attracted to these practices. The *Hevajra Tantra* warns us against those who do not know about the "practice of reversal", i.e., the mastery described above: "By the very means that persons of terrible conduct are bound, those who possess liberative art *(upāya)* are liberated thereby

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[167] See White 1996a, pp. 339-42. The time consuming process of semen production is one of the reasons why its retention is recommended in Indian medical and spiritual traditions, for if emission rates exceed production rates it is rapidly depleted, with ill health consequences. This idea is expressed in the following poem by the Tamil Saiva poet Tāyumāṇavar: "Ecstatically, you think, 'sex is bliss.' / This embracing becomes more frequent, / Growing to excess / Like the waning moon, / Your intellect becomes exhausted. / And your body shrivels up / Like a monkey's wrinkled skin. / You grow old soon.../ When the dark Lord of Death comes, / Who will protect you, / O sinful mind?" (White 1996a:340).

[168] See Elias 1982, esp. part two, pp. 229-333.

[169] If Coulianu (1987) is correct the Reformation and Counter-Reformation of sixteenth and seventeenth century Europe can be viewed as a reaction to and suppression of the arts of the active imagination which were very popular and influential in fifteenth century Europe.

from the bonds of existence. By passion the world is bound, and by passion too it is released, but by the heretical buddhists the practice of reversals is not known."[170] Regarding this sort of practitioner, still bound by self-centered motivations, Vilāsavajra gives a dark but somewhat mysterious warning in his *Mahātilakakrama:*

> If one adopts [the practice of] Anuyoga[171] without being pure, and as a result one, always obsessed with one's experience, feels there is no need to complete the observances *(vrata)*, and that it is alright to abandon the four mudrās which are like a lamp found in the darkness, then one will not experience bliss, and will achieve no transcendent activities, and even contrived virtues will be inexpressible [for such a person].[172]

Given the dangers evidently inherent to Tantric practice and exegesis, the Tantric path as set forth in the commentaries tends toward elitism in claiming that it is a higher path intended for a higher sort of disciple. And while Buddhist Tantrism in theory and in practice adheres to the doctrine of nonduality, it is not the case that there is no basis to draw provisional distinction between different sorts of practitioners. In the context of Buddhist praxis the most meaningful distinction between people is between those who have a proper understanding of reality *(tattvajña)* and those who do not. This potentially can lead to a radically different understanding of the world and what sorts of behavior is appropriate within it. Hence, Āryadeva stated: "That which is truth for the childish is erroneous for the yogins, as ultimately there is neither bondage nor liberation."[173]

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[170] HV kalpa 2 ch. 2 vv.50-51: (50) yena yena hi badhyante jantavo raudrakarmaṇā / sopāyena tu tenaiva mucyante bhavabandhanāt // (51) rāgena badhyate loko rāgenaiva vimucyate / viparitabhāvanā hy eṣā na jñātā buddhatīrthikaiḥ //; / skye bo mi bzad pa yi las // gang dang gang gis 'ching 'gyur ba // thabs dang bcas na de nyid kyis // srid pa'i 'ching ba las grol 'gyur // chags pas 'jig rten 'ching 'gyur ba // 'dod chags nyid kyis rnam grol 'gyur // bzlog pa'i sgom pa 'di nyid ni // sangs rgyas mu stegs kyis mi shes / (Snellgrove 1959: vol. 2 pp. 50-51). Trans. by Snellgrove with alterations by me; see Snellgrove 1959: vol.1 p.93.

[171] The term *anuyoga* is an old, alternative name for *anuttarayoga* class of Tantras. For a discussion of these classes see section 4.2.2 below.

[172] / gal te dag par mi 'gyur yang // a nu yo ga'i dmigs pa yis // rtag tu rang nyams 'jug par ldan // brtul zhugs zad par mi dgos na // mi gang mun sel rnyed pa bzhin // bzhi yi phyag rgya spangs kyang rung // bde ba nyams par yongs mi 'gyur // mthar phyin bya ba med par 'grub // yon tan spros pa brjod mi lang / (DT 147b).

[173] CV v. 23: yatsatyam iti bālānāṃ tan mithyā khalu yoginām // gacchannantam anenaiva na baddho na ca mucyate // (Patel 1949, p. 2); / byis pa rnams la gang bden pa // de ni rnal 'byor pa la brdzun // 'di nyid kyis na mthar phyin pa // bcings pa med cing grol ba med / (Patel 1949 p. 20).

Nāgārjuna likewise wrote: "By means of the very mind by which the childish are bound in cyclic existence, the yogin succeeds to the state of the Sugata. Nothing here is born nor is there anything which dies; even cyclic existence should be understood as existing in a mind-made form."[174] The idea here seems to be that ultimately there is no basis for *anything;* even bondage and liberation are contingent upon the way in which one engages with reality, and primarily one's mental attitude in doing so. Nothing is intrinsically liberating nor binding; even the best or most meritorious of activities would simply further one's bondage if one engaged in it with a selfish motivation, while likewise neither the most foul of things or activities will taint one if one is motivated by the interests of others rather than one's own narrow interests. Moreover, Tantric authors assert that they might even be conducive to liberation, here conceived in broader terms than simply personal release from suffering. The key to liberation, then, lies not cleaving to or avoiding anything in the world, but in understanding the nature of one's one mind, and cleansing the mind of negative patterns of thought which are conducive to bondage.

According to Āryadeva, it is essential to avoid the extremes of both attachment and aversion, and chart a middle way between the two on the basis of a thorough understanding of the nature of reality. He wrote that "The Childish are attached to forms, and the middling are free of attachment. Those of supreme intelligence, who understand the nature of form, are liberated."[175] Here he posits two extremes, attachment and aversion, which correspond to worldly existence on the one hand and ascetic rejection of that on the other. The best of practitioners, however, avoids both of these extremes. This hierarchy of practitioners reminds one of a similar categorization by Shenhui, who "distinguished two kinds of

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[174] *Pañcakrama,* Svādhistānakramapaṭala, vv. 16-17; yena cittena bālāś ca saṃsāre bandhanaṃ gatāḥ / yoginas tena cittena sugatānāṃ gatiṃ gatāḥ // na cātrotpadyate kaścin maraṇaṃ nāpi kasyacit / saṃsāra eva jñātavyaś cittarūpākṛtisthitaḥ //; sems gang gis ni byis pa rnams // 'khor bar 'ching bas bcing gyur pa // sems de nyid kyis rnal 'byor pa // bde gshegs gnas su 'gro bar 'gyur // 'dir ni gang yang skyes ba med // gang yang 'chi ba yod ma yin // sems kyi rang bzhin rnam gnas par // 'khor ba nyid ni shes par bya / (Mimaki and Tomabechi 1994:33).

[175] CV v. 20: bālā rajyanti rūpeṣu vairāgyaṃ yānti madhyamāḥ // svabhāvajñā vimucyante rūpasyottamabuddhayaḥ // (Patel 1949, p. 2); byis pa rnams ni gzugs la chags // 'bring po rnams ni chags bral 'gyur // gzugs sogs ngo bo nyid shes nas // blo mchog rnams ni grol 'gyur // (Patel 1949, p. 20).

illusion, the gross and the subtle. Gross delusion is to be attached to the passions, subtle delusion is to attempt to get rid of passions in order to reach awakening." (Faure 1998:19)

A three-fold hierarchy of students is described by Buddhaguhya in his commentary to the *Mahāvairocana-abhisaṃbodhi,* as follows:

> This Tantra of the Blessed Lord teaches that there are three types of student, the superior, middling and inferior. They are, respectively, students who understand through a nod of the head, who understand through examining the meaning, and who are merely attached to the words. Since those who "understand through a nod" are sharp, of superior wisdom and greatly learned, they sympathize with the name of this Tantra, so by merely hearing the name *Vairocanābhisambodhi-vikurvitādhiṣṭhāna* they understand the entire import of this Tantra. Through the word "Vairocana" they understand that the Blessed Lord Vairocana whose Beatific Body *(saṃbhogakāya)* is the perfection of the stores of merit and wisdom is the nature of omniscience. By the word *abhisambodhi* they understand that complete awakening is the true nature of their own mind.[176]

Buddhaguhya distinguished three types of students on the basis of their level of understanding,[177] which is simply an elaboration of Sa-chen Kun-dga' sNying-po's distinction of two types of students on the basis of the sharpness or dullness of their faculties, in the passage translated in section 1.3.2 above. Āryadeva presented a complementary hierarchy in which ascetic aversion is superior to naive attachment to forms. Superior to both approaches, however, is a sort of engagement based upon an understanding of reality and motivated by compassion, wherein one might selectively or

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[176] / de la bcom ldan 'das kyi rgyud 'di yang gdul ba'i 'gro ba rab dang 'bring dang tha ma ste rnam pa gsum gyi don du bstan te / mgo smos pas go ba dang / don rnam par phye bas go ba dang / tshig lhur len pa'i gdul ba'i 'gro ba rnams so // de la mgo smos pas go ba ni shes rab mchog tu rno zhing thos pa mang ba dang ldan pas rgyud 'di'i mtshan don dang rjes su mthun pa rnam par snang mdzad mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa shes bya ba'i mtshan tsam thos pas rgyud 'di'i don thams cad go bar 'gyur te / rnam par snang mdzad ces bya ba'i tshig gis bcom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad longs spyod rdzog pa'i sku bsod nams dang ye shes kyi tshogs yongs su rdzogs pa thams cad mkhyen pa'i rang bzhin du shes so // mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa zhes pa la mngon par byang chub pa ni rang gi sems yang dag pa ji lta ba bzhin du shes pa ste / (MVV DT fol. 261 a,b)

[177] Sometimes students are also differentiated on the basis of their meditative capabilities. For example, Abhayākaragupta wrote in his *Svādhiṣṭhānakramopadeśa* that "Beginners who abide on this excellent Creation Stage should repeatedly meditate on each of its aspects. The middling only enter and are established in the clear light instantaneously, which is the beatific body of integration. The best are just established as the self of integration. The best of the best who meditate on the orgasmic obtain the success of Mahāmudrā which is the very nature of the beatific body of integration, the ultimate radiance." / bskyed pa'i rim pa mchog la gnas pa'i las dang po pas 'di mtha' dag so sor yang dang yang du bsgom par bya'o // 'bring gis ni zung 'jug longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku skad cig gis 'od gsal du zhugs pa dang bzhengs pa kho na'o // mchog gi slar zung 'jug gi bdag nyid du bzhengs pa kho na'o // 'di nyid lhun gyis grub par bsgom pa mchog gi mchog rab tu gsal ba mthar thug pa zung 'jug longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku'i rang bzhin phyag rgya chen po'i dngos grub thob par 'gyur ro / (DT fol. 251a)

even thoroughly engage with the world in order to help beings attached therein, without oneself being entangled by the attachments that arise due to a failure in recognizing that the objects of attachment are ultimately devoid of intrinsic reality.

For one so motivated there are no strict or binding rules of behavior; even the *pratimokṣa* vows, the fundamental of vows of a monk or nun which include the vow of celibacy, are to be broken if this is demanded by the higher ethic of compassion. Hence Tripiṭakamāla wrote the following, apparently without fear that he would be misunderstood:

> For Awakening Heroes *(bodhisattva)* who practice the Super Observance *(mahāvrata)* there are no definite norms; they engage in whatever actions that can perfect the aims of others. An Awakening Hero, through his passion for all, may equipoise with women who are on the road to the bad ways *(durgati)*; for him "pure conduct" *(brahmācaryā,* i.e. celibacy) is that conduct which achieves the unexcelled state whence there is no regard for the *pratimokṣa* vows and so forth.[178]

One might be inclined to view this as a justification for cenobitic fornication. Naturally we cannot exclude this as a possible interpretation. In fact, there appears to have been some controversy concerning whether or not it was permissible for celibate monks or nuns to engage in the practice of the sexual yogas.

In particular, controversy surrounded the second and third of the four "Higher" initiations of the *anuttarayogatantra* traditions. These are the "Secret" *(guhya)* and "Wisdom-intuition" *(prajñājñāna)* initiations. The former is only alluded to in the first and third chapters of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* and the second is not discussed at all, although Tsongkhapa is quite explicit in commenting on them.[179] The Secret initiation required that the Vajrācārya enter into sexual union with the consort *(mudrā)* in the presence of the blindfolded disciple, on whose tongue was placed a mixed drop of the red and white generative "seeds", i.e., the semen and menstruum, of the couple. Through this

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[178] / brtul zhugs chen po de spyod pa'i byang chub sems dpa' ni bya ba rnams la nges pa yod pa ma yin te / ji ltar de'i gzhan gyi don gyi tshags phun sum tshogs par 'gyur ba de lta de ltar bya ba rnams la 'jug par 'gyur ro // byang chub sems dpa' rnams ni kun du chags pas ngan 'gro ba'i bud med btang snyoms su gzhag ste / so sor thar pa'i sdom pa la sogs pa la ltos par mi byed kyi bla na med pa'i go 'phang thob pa'i spyod pa gang yin 'di nyid de rnams kyi tshangs par spyod pa yin no / (NT fol. 11b)

[179] See ch. 3 vv. 7-8 in appendices A and B below, and also section III.C.b.ii. A.2.b.ii.A.2 in appendix C below.

transmission, the disciple is empowered to learn the intimate details of the tradition's most secret practices, which are symbolically revealed during the "Wisdom-Intuition" initiation, when the disciple, after being blindfolded, is instructed in the details of sexual yoga with the consort.

Obviously, this "higher" initiation process involves a violation of the vow of celibacy taken by the monks and nuns. Perhaps for this reason Jagaddarpaṇa, in his *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*, holds that these initiations should not be given by or for monks.[180] There appears to have been some controversy concerning this issue, however, and it appears that some "monks" did undertake this initiation, perhaps drawn by its reputation of being the "highest" and most efficacious available. That this was so is suggested by a letter written by the Tibetan King Ye-shes-'od, who ruled a kingdom in Western Tibet during the late tenth century and early eleventh century.[181] He was evidently quite concerned about the practice of such transgressions among the Buddhist community, and wrote an open letter condemning them, which concluded with the following remark:

> Those who have left the world *(pravrajita, rab tu byung ba)* should observe the Monastic Code *(vinaya)*. Those who have entered the Mantrayāna and practice the *kriyā, ubhaya,* and *yoga* [Tantras][182] and even the *Guhyasamāja* and so forth must endeavor to adhere to their commitments *(samaya)* without contradicting the *vinaya*. Although the *prajñātantra*s are excellent, due to misunderstanding of the import of intentional passages there have been many departures from the monastic teachings, it would also not be mistaken to simply not practice them.[183]

Concerned with reform of the monastic community in general and with moral transgressions inspired by *prajñātantra*s, a class which includes the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, King Ye-shes-'od initiated the process of the "Second Transmission" of the

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[180] See Shukla 1975, pp. 128-29, 133.

[181] Concerning his dates see Thakur 1994.

[182] Concerning these and other classes of Tantras see section 4.2.2 below.

[183] / rab tu byung ba rnams kyis kyang 'dul ba ltar bsrung zhing / bka' gsang sngags la zhugs pa rnams kyis kyang 'dul ba la brten pa dang mi 'gal bar / kri ya dang / upaya dang / yo ga dang / gsang ba 'dus pa la sogs pa'i bar la / dam tshig ma nyams par byas la 'bad do / shes rab kyi rgyud ni mchog tu gyur pa yin yang / dgongs pa can gyi tshig don ma shes nas / rab tu byung ba bslab pa dang phral ba mang bas ma byas kyang 'gal ba med pa tsam / Edited in Karmay 1980, p. 19; my trans., cf. Karmay 1980 p. 17.

Dharma to Tibet, which ironically resulted in the widespread dissemination of these Tantras to Tibet from India, where they were quite popular at that time. He was responsible for sending the "Great Translator" Rin-chen bZang-po to Kashmir, and was in part responsible for the invitation of the paṇḍit Atiśa to Tibet, who arrived in 1042 CE after the king had already died.

Atiśa was both a monk and a Tantric master, a *Vajrācārya*, and while he wrote a number of texts on Tantric subjects, including several in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, he was also concerned with the reform of the Buddhist community in Tibet.[184] To this effect he wrote his *Bodhipāthapradīpa*, in which he commented that:

> Due to the particular prohibition in the *Adibuddhamahātantra*,[185] the Secret and Wisdom initiations should not be received by the celibate. If these initiations are taken, since those who live celibately and ascetically would be engaging in what is prohibited to them, their ascetic vows would be broken, and they would incur the downfalls which defeat the observant. And as they would certainly fall into the evil destinies, [for them] there would be no success.[186]

In his auto-commentary Atiśa comments that the "higher" initiations are suitable only for the laity, and insists that they should not be taken by the monks, who would be betraying their root vows, which in his view would have dire consequences. He wrote that

> Regarding initiations there are two types: those on which householders rely, and those on which the celibate rely. That on which householder may rely includes everything taught in the Tantras, while the celibate from amongst those should avoid the Secret and Wisdom-intuition initiations. Why should they avoid those two? Celibacy is understood to be one of the virtues which occurs as a point of doctrine in reliance upon the Buddhas teaching. Those two initiations are regarded as not being in accordance with the practice of celibacy. The two initiations would bring about the end of celibacy, and the end of celibacy would be the end of the Buddha's teaching. And by its ceasing the continuum of merit

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[184] For an introduction to Atiśa's life and teaching career in India and Tibet see Chattopadhyaya 1967. For a list of works attributed to him preserved in the Tibetan canon see Chattopadhyaya 1967, pp. 445 ff.

[185] That is, the *Paramādibuddhoddhṛtaśrikālacakra-nāma-tantrarāja*, also known simply as the *Kālacakra*. Atiśa refers to a passage in ch. 3; see fols. 67b-68a.

[186] / dang po sang rgyas rgyud chen po las // rab tu 'bad pas bkag pa'i phyir // gsang ba (241a) shes rab dbang bskur ni // tshang par spyod pas blang mi bya // gal te dbang bskur de 'dzin na // tshang spyod dka' thub la gnas pas // bkag pa spyad par 'gyur bas phyir // dka' thub sdom pa de nyams te // brtag zhugs can de pham pa yi // ltung ba dag ni 'byung 'gyur zhing // de ni ngan song nges lhung bas // grub pa yang ni yod ma yin / (DT fols. 240b-241a)

making would be broken. Since from that basis there would arise innumerable non-virtuous people, the celibate should thus avoid those two [initiations]."[187]

This passage is interesting for several reasons. First, it suggests, as will be argued in the next chapter, that these Tantric traditions were initially formulated in an extra-monastic context, and while they were clearly adopted by members of influential monastic communities such as Nālandā and Vikramaśila, where Atiśa taught,[188] even by the eleventh century they were not fully integrated. Indeed, given the focus on the enjoyment *(bhoga)* of things prohibited to monks, such integration would not have come easily. That the monastic precepts were at times broken in monastic communities by Tantric adepts is suggested by the hagiographies of *siddhas* such as Virūpa and Maitrīpa, who were monks until dismissed from the monasteries for allegedly violating the monastic code.[189]

That compromise was possible on this issue is suggested by the Tibetan context, in which these Traditions came to be fully accepted within the monasteries. Evidently, the Tibetans compromised by adapting the Secret and Wisdom-intuition initiations, removing completely all sexual practice, with the red and white drops symbolized by neutral substances similar in appearance.[190] The initiations are thus performed in a symbolic fashion, and some hold that the actual performance of the sexual yogas is not necessary, and that they can be performed with an imagined consort *(jñānamudrā)* instead of an actual

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[187] *Bodhimārgadipapañjikā:* / de la dbang ni rnam pa gnyis te / khyim pa'i phyogs la brten pa dang / tshang par spyod pa'i phyogs la brten pa'o // khyim pa'i phyogs la brten pa gang zhi na / ji snyad rgyud las gsungs pa thams cad do // tshang par spyod pa'i phyogs la brten pa gang zhe na / de dag nyid las gsang ba dang / shes rab ye shes spangs pa'o // de ci'i phyir de gnyis spangs she na / 'di ltar sangs rgyas kyi chos la brten nas dge ba ji snyed cig 'byung ba de dag thams cad ni bstan pa gnas pa las 'byung ba yin la / bstan pa gnas pa yang tshang par spyod pa kho la ltos shing / dbang bskur ba gnyis ni tshangs par spyod pa'i mi mthun pa'i gnas su mthong ba'i phyir ro // de bas na dbang bskur ba gnyis ni tshang par spyod pa zad par byed pa yin la / tshangs par spyod pa zad na sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa nub par 'gyur zhing / de nub pas bsod nams mngon par 'du bya ba rnams rgyun chad par 'gyur la / gzhi de las dge ba ma yin pa dpag tu med pa 'byung ba'i phyir de gnyis tshangs par spyod pa rnams la spangs so zhes gsungs so / (DT fol. 290a,b)

[188] Concerning Atiśa's career at Vikramaśila see Chattopadhyaya 1967, pp. 127-42.

[189] See Dowman 1985, pp. 43-52 and also Tatz 1988.

[190] For example, at a recent initiation held in India yogurt mixed with a red pigment was used; at another held in New York, yogurt mixed with red Gatorade was used.

physical consort *(karmamudrā)*.[191] There is some evidence which suggests, however, that the practice tradition of the sexual yogas are still maintained, but are reserved for the "highest" class of adept, for whom the issue of celibacy may no longer be a central concern.[192]

Often texts on the "sexual" rites employ deliberately vague terminology, such as the term *mudrā*, that leaves one in doubt whether an "actual" *karmamudrā* is called for or a visualized *jñānamudrā;* given the hierarchy of disciples in these traditions, it is possible that the different interpretations were considered to be suitable for different individuals. Atiśa, for example, in his *Abhisamayavibhaṅga,* wrote an enthusiastic description of the third "wisdom-intuition" initiation which is actually quite vague in exactly this manner:

> Then, Heruka takes Vārāhī as his *mudrā,* and through being equipoised their winds dissolve. Relying on that, contemplate the experience of the orgasmic. Then you, a child of the clan *(kulaputra),* unites with the *mudrā* as Heruka, and, depending on that meditate on clear light, that wisdom which is attained in visionary experience. This is the very essence of the Transcendence of Wisdom *(prajñāpāramitā)* which is the purity of the three consciousnesses,[193] and which is liberation from birth due to the non-existence of body, speech and mind. This is the ultimate truth which has the characteristic of always appearing completely luminous like the moon, sun, fire and jewels. Regard [everything] with the eye of wisdom and intuition, the vision which is beyond the objectification of the other. In this way, do not see anything in and of itself, but *see* the clear light.[194]

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[191] See Mullin 1996, p. 70. There is a scriptural basis for this idea. According to the *Vimalaprabhā,* the commentary on the *Kālacakra,* "a *sādhana* with a *karma-mudrā* is for simple-minded Vajrayāna students, a *sādhana* with a *jñāna-mudrā* is for mediocre Vajrayāna adepts, and a *sādhana* with *mahāmudrā* is for the superior *yogis.*" (ch.4 v.110) According to the *Vimalaprabhā,* (ch. 1) "those three kinds of *sādhana* bring about the three types of attainments *(siddhi)* respectively, namely the *karma-mudrā-siddhi*" corresponds to the desire realm, the *jñāna-mudrā-siddhi* which corresponds to the form realm, and the *mahāmudrā-siddhi* which is endowed with the best of all aspects and is free from the categorization existence and non-existence. Quote and paraphrased from Wallace 1995, note 233.

[192] Mullin notes that at a lecture in India in the 1970s a monk once asked a lama (also a monk) whether a monk who wishes to practice with a *karmamudrā* should disrobe before doing so. Mullin reports that the lama laughed and gave the following enigmatic answer: "No. He just becomes an especially good monk." (1995:249 n. 17)

[193] That is, the coarse, subtle and very subtle levels of consciousness, which correspond to the corresponding levels of the taints *(trimala).* Concerning these levels see the passage from Śubhakarasiṃha and Yi-xing translated in section 3.2.2 below.

[194] / de nas he ru kas phag mo mu drar gnang ste snyoms par zhugs pas rlung thim / de la brten nas lhan cig skyes pa myong bar bsam mo // de nas dpal he ru kas rigs kyi bu khyed kyis mu dra dang gnyis sprod pa la brten nas myong ba snang ba thob pa'i shes rab de 'od gsal bar sgoms shig // de ni rnam par shes pa gsum rnam par dag pa shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa'i ngo bo nyid lus dang ngag dang sems med pa las dang / skye ba las grol ba / zla ba dang / nyi ma dang / me dang / nor bu ltar shin tu gsal ba rtag tu snang ba'i mtshan nyid can don dam pa'i bden pa de ni mthong ba gzhan gyi yul las 'das pa ste / shes rab dang

His use of visionary terminology suggests that the process he describes is to be visualized rather than enacted, but there is nothing in the text which could exclude either interpretation.

The issue of the practice or non-practice of these arts aside, the very language of passages such as that quoted above from Tripiṭakamāla and Atiśa is notable. For example, "equipoise" (*samāpatti*) is a meditative term for complete stabilization of the mind; that it evidently functions here as a euphemism for sexual practice of some sort is remarkable. The very fact that "equipoise", implying complete mental and physical mastery, would have such a connotation here seems to imply that it is not ordinary sexual arts that are the object of this discourse. There appears to be a deliberate ambiguity employed here, an ambiguity that was perhaps peculiar to Indian civilization. Tucci noted that

> The ambiguity between *eros* and religion is carried so far that the positions adopted in the act of love are called *āsana* ("attitudes") and *bandha* ("connections"), using the terms applied to the postures of *Haṭhayoga*. Similarly mysticism, although seeking complete mastery over the senses, exalts the body as a necessary instrument of salvation. (1969:74)

This does not represent a mere diffuse libertinism, but rather the inclusion of sexuality within the realm of arts conducive to self-perfection. A point that Tucci seems to have missed is that, at least for the Tantric adept, mastery of the senses achieved through their diminution and deadening as a result of ascesis is not true mastery. Rather, mastery achieved under the most difficult of circumstances, that of sensory excitation, is the most genuine form of mastery. To exclude from consideration the possibility that we are dealing here with the a sort of self-mastery which perhaps exceeds in the scale of the "civilizing process" that has been attained by modern Westerners, attached as many are to worldly possessions, is to exclude from consideration the motivation of compassion which pervades Buddhist theory and practice and assume the most base of motives. It is difficult to judge to what degree such exclusion is justified, and what degree it is motivated by the baseness of the *excluder's* motives.

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ye shes kyi mig gis ltos shig / de ltar gang gi yang rang bzhin du ma mthong ba de 'od gsal ba mthong ba yin no / (AV DT fol. 197b)

The bodhisattva path is thus a path which lacks any particular definitive norm or requirement. To use the apophatic rhetoric common to this type of literature, it is the path which is a non-path, on which everything is contingent, completely interdependent with the need of beings encountered on it. The liberating tools to be used on this path can include those things that are normally considered causes of bondage, and indeed they are for those who misuse them or become attached to them. Even when used in a "liberating" fashion, however, they are still "strategies" *(upāya),* to be used only insofar as they are useful, and thereafter abandoned. And once one is Awakened, they are no longer needed, except perhaps in assisting others. The a passage in the *Vajraḍāka Tantra* captures nicely this dialectic, as follows:

> In order to realize the authentic union *(yoga),* you must practice the contrived meditations and contrived repetitions. And once you have realized the authentic yoga through the outer, contrived yogas, you no longer need to bother with the contrivances. For example, having obtained a boat, you cross to the other side of the river, and once you have crossed you abandon it; it is just so with the contrivances. Those who clear away the outer actions produced by the contriving mind, such as the maṇḍala and so forth, are praised as being of foremost worth, since all successes abide in them. Those who follow the literal treatises in which the actuality of the Victor *(jina)* is unknown, such as those written by the sages *(ṛṣi),* and those who follow the Tantras mentally yet engage in worldly, contrived actions, are begging for misery with much exertion. Therefore, those who engage in the procedures of ritual actions *(kriyāvidhi)* such as the maṇḍala and so forth are unliberated, outer men who produce only addictions *(kleṣa).* Being unrealized they will not awaken, insofar as they have misconceptions. Yet if they thoroughly understand purification, those things that they desire will naturally arise.
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> The nature of cause and effect does not exist ultimately; yet due to the luminosity which is the nature of things, it is also not voidness. The repose *(vihāra)* of the diverse aspects of all distinct natures is like a jewel in the ocean, which has the mode of being without beginning or end. The mundane is always engaged in busy-ness; the transcendent does not accord with that. Existence and non-existence are not known to be intrinsic. Those who are thoroughly realized through this method are not liberated lacking perfection; if you rely on the path of authenticity, you will be liberated no matter what you do. Saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, the actuality of misery and bliss, which augment, respectively, mistakes and virtues, all abide in the orgasmic *(sahaja).*[195]

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[195] / rnal ma'i sbyor ba rtogs bya'i phyir // bcos ma yi ni sgom pa dang // bcos ma yi ni bzlas pa bya // rnal ma'i sbyor ba rtogs gyur na // bcos ma'i sbyor ba phyi rol nas // rnal ma'i sbyor ba rtogs gyur pas // bcos ma dag ni mi bya'o // dper na gzings la 'jus nas ni // chu yi pha rol 'gro bar byed // pha rol phyin nas 'dor ba ltar // bcos ma dag kyang de bzhin no // dkyil 'khor la sogs las gang ni // bcos ma'i sems kyis gang byed pa // phyi rol las rnams gsal byed pas // dang po'i las can rnams la bsngags // dngos grub de kun 'dir gnas pas // rgyal ba'i dngos nyid rig la min // gang yang sgra shes bstan bcos rnams // drang srong rnams kyis byas ba ltar // rang gi sems ni 'jug byed pa'i // skyes bu'i bcos ma'i bya ba rnams //

The inconceivablity of the process of Awakening, which depends so much on one's inner orientation, is well expressed by the following pair of verses in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*: "The production of the Buddhas exists in non-production. The completely inconceivable reality lacks loss and gain. Being thus equipoised, not finding fault with all the worldly ones, their inconceivable way is the Buddha's inconceivable play."[196]

2.4 Concluding Models

The preceding sections can be justifiably viewed as suggesting that certain trends within early medieval Indian Buddhism can, with some justification, be seen as a natural product of a long process of development and transformation within the Buddhist tradition, rather than a process of "degeneration" or "decline" triggered by external influences. This suggestion should not, however, be taken as a theory of origins.

Taking just the transgressive elements of the Tantras as an example, there are numerous intertwining traces pointing to a wide variety of possible loci of influence. On the one hand, there is undeniable influence on the "Mother" or "Yogini" Unexcelled Yogatantras from certain unorthodox "Hindu" groups such as the Kāpālika, which will be

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rgyud kyi rjes su 'brangs nas ni // 'bad pas sdug bsngal slong bar byed // de phyir dkyil 'khor la sogs pa // bya ba'i cho ga la 'bad pa // thar pa dang bral phyi rol te // skyes bu nyon mongs 'ba' zhig byed // mi rtogs (QK, DK has *rtog*) pas ni 'tshang mi rgya // rtog dang bcas pas kyang de bzhin // shin tu rnam dag yongs shes na // yid 'dod rnams kyi de nyid 'gyur // rgyu dang 'bras bu'i rang bzhin ni // dam pa nyid du yod min cing // rang bzhin gsal ba nyid kyi phyir // stong pa nyid kyang ma yin no // rang bzhin dbye ba thams cad kyi // rnam pa dag ni rnam gnas pa // rgya mtsho la ni rin chen bzhin // thog mtha' med pa'i tshul can yin // 'jig rten rtag tu tha snyad spyod /; 'jig rten las 'das de dang 'gal // yod dang med ces bya ba ni // rang bzhin nyid du shes pa min // 'di yi tshul gyis rab rtogs pa // rdzogs dang bral bas grol ba min // rnal ma'i lam la rten na ni // thams cad byas kyang rnam par grol / skyon (QK, DK sbyon) dang yon tan 'phel byed pa'i // 'khor ba dang ni mya ngan 'das // bde ba dang ni sdug bsngal dngos // lhan cig skyes par yang dag gnas / (VD, DK fols. 124b-25a, QK 145.1-3).

[196] CS ch. 51 vv. 20-21: utpādam api buddhānām anutpāde 'pi vā sthitaḥ / dharmatāsarvacintyā hānivṛddhir vivarjitā // ityevaṃ tu layitvā tu na nindya sarvalaukikaṃ / acintyo gatis teṣām acintyo buddhanāṭakaṃ //; / sangs rgyas rnams ni byung gyur tam // ma byung na yang rnam kun tu // bsam mi khyab pa'i chos nyid ni // 'phel 'grib spangs pas gnas pa yin // de ltar rnam par bzhag nas kyang // 'jig rten pa kun yong mi smad // de yi bgrod pa bsam yas shing // sangs rgyas rol pa bsam mi khyab /.

explored in the next chapter. Even within the Buddhist context, however, it is necessary to look beyond the simplistic two-tiered model of Buddhist polity, which has been well critiqued by Ray in his 1994 book. The "two-tiered" model divides Buddhist polity into two groups, the monastic community and the laity, and it places so much emphasis on the monastic community that it has often been forgotten that the Buddhist community *(saṃgha)* is fourfold, consisting not only of the monks and nuns, but lay women and men as well.[197] Ray comments that "this ideal takes shape as a structure composed of two normative lifestyles, that of the monk *(bhikṣu)* occupying the upper tier and that of the layperson *(upāsaka, upāsikā)* occupying the lower." (1994:15) To the monks are ascribed the activities of meditation and textual study, while the lay persons are believed to be satisfied with the practice of devotion. (1994:20)

This model is unsatisfactory on several counts. First, is not at all certain that the laity restricted themselves to devotional activities only, while the claim that monk stood apart from "popular" devotional practices such as stūpa worship is based a certain interpretation of key textual passages such as the section of the *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra*,[198] in which the Buddha allegedly proscribed stūpa worship for the monks, on the basis of which "the laity's kind of Buddhism is regarded as different from and inferior to that of the monks." (Ray 1994:29). However, this interpretation not only disregards the archeological record, but is based upon a chronic misinterpretation of these key texts, as Schopen has shown.[199]

In this model, the laity are invoked primarily to account for or explain away trends in Buddhism not reducible to the interests or activity of the monks. This model is

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[197] See Strong 1995, p.45. The term *saṃgha* is often used by scholars as if it refers to the monastic community only, or even just the monks (see for example Diana Paul, who defines the *saṃgha* as "the Buddhist community of monks" (1979:6). While not historically accurate, this restricted usage is supported by numerous textual passages in which the term *saṃgha* seems to refer to the monastic community, and it supported by traditions such as the Theravādan in which the order of nuns died out, placing inordinate emphasis upon the monks.

[198] *Digha Nikāya* 16, 5.10, trans. in Walshe 1987, p. 264.

[199] See Schopen 1991b.

inadequate, however, because it ignores the tremendous degree to which the two communities are interdependent, and the fact that this interdependence is not simply expressed via a vertical hierarchy. Both a study of ancient texts such as the Vinaya as well as observation of living Buddhist societies shows the remarkable degree to which Buddhist monastic communities are sensitive to the needs and the criticism of the laity. Horner commented that

> the believing laity, though naturally not to the forefront in the Vinaya, are in a remarkable way never absent, never far distant. They perpetually enter into the life of the Order as supporters, critics, donors, intensely interested; and themselves affected by Sakya, it seems that they were deeply anxious for its success. Thus the Vinaya does not merely lay down sets of rules whose province was confined to an internal conventual life. For this was led in such a way as to allow and even to encourage a certain degree of intercommunication with the lay supporters and followers, no less than with those lay-people who were not adherents of the faith. What was important, was that the monks should neither abuse their dependence on the former, nor alienate the latter, but should so regulate their lives as to give no cause for complaint. With these aims in view, conduct that was thoroughly seemly for them to indulge in had to be carefully defined; and it became drafted in rule and precept. (Horner 1938: xvi-xvii).

The Tantras are seemingly unconcerned with social censure, yet it does not follow that they advocate hedonism; rather, they demonstrate an intense concern with regulation, not so much of outer observable behavior, but with the workings of the body and mind. The interpretation of transgressive passages should not be divorced from the fact that in the Tantric traditions, in theory and in practice, they are treated as a forms of discipline, techniques of self-mastery. And their practice amongst living Buddhist communities emphasizes inner mastery rather than outer transgression.

This "two-tiered" model is also inadequate in that it privileges doctrine over practice, simplifying dramatically the actual way in which religious traditions interact with the larger cultural environments which contain them. Faure's argument concerning Chan Buddhism in China could be easily applied to the Indo-Tibetan cultural contexts as well:

> A closer look at "popular religion," however, has revealed it to be a concept of many hues, covering a wide range of religious trends.... Consequently, the earlier distinction between Chan and popular religion, between a "great tradition" and its margins, have become a matter of differences within both Chan and popular religion(s). This leaves us with plural, multivocal, differential traditions on both sides of the earlier divide, a divide that retains only provisional validity. The

> naive two-tiered model used by most historians of Chan cannot account for these phenomena; it hides rather than explains their intricate relationships. (1991:306)

Tantric practice, which in its extreme forms would have violated the *pratimokṣa* vows of the ordained, may or may not have been forbidden to the monks and nuns; no doubt different communities had different standards of conduct, standards which may have varied in accordance with the degree to which they were affected by the Mahāyāna rhetoric of the types explored above. Such practice would not necessarily have been forbidden to lay people, for whom it could have represented a *sādhana,* a means of spiritual achievement, for lay people. Tantric sexual practices could thus be considered a spiritualization of mundane practices in which the lay people were already engaged. That this is so is suggested by the references to the *kāmaśāstras* in Tantric exegetical literature. The *ars erotica* or *kāmaśāstra* have been described by Foucault as follows:

> In the erotic art, truth is drawn from pleasure itself, understood as a practice and accumulated as experience; pleasure is not considered in relation to an absolute law of the permitted and the forbidden, nor by reference to a criterion of utility, but first and foremost in relation to itself; it is experienced as pleasure, evaluated in terms of its intensity, its specific quality, its duration, its reverberations in the body and the soul. Moreover, this knowledge must be deflected back into the sexual practice itself, in order to shape it as though from within and amplify its effects. In this way there is formed a knowledge that must remain secret, not because of an element of infamy that might attach to its object, but because of the need to hold it in the greatest reserve, since, according to tradition, it would lose its effectiveness and its virtue by being divulged. Consequently, the relationship to the master who holds the secrets is of paramount importance; only he, working alone, can transmit this art in an esoteric manner and as the culmination of an initiation in which he guides the disciple's progress with unfailing skill and severity. The effects of this masterful art, which are considerably more generous than the sparseness of its prescriptions would lead one to imagine, are said to transfigure the one fortunate enough to receive its privileges: an absolute mastery of the body, a singular bliss, obliviousness to time and limits, the elixir of life, the exile of death and its threats.[200]

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[200] 1978 pp. 57-58. While Foucault may be writing with, arguably, either an ironic or romantic tone, his description does it fact well coincide with the claims made by the tradition for itself. His recognition of importance of secrecy and self-mastery in this tradition is also notable. While there are definite references to the *ars erotic (kāmaśāstra)* in Buddhist Tantric texts, it is difficult to gain anything but a vague understanding of the relation of discourse and praxis in this tradition, i.e., the way in which the art as described was deployed in practice, given the secrecy surrounding this topic. This secrecy, while real, is itself enigmatic; one cannot assume that it is identical to the secrecy that is constructed in sexual discourse in the West which is in fact, according to Foucault, a ruse, an essential counterpoint to the much desired sexual exposé, the obsession with the discussion and analysis of sexuality, which has increasingly dominated Western discourse over the past several centuries. As we shall see in chapter six, secrecy in Buddhist Tantric discourse serves a different role, and reflects a different understanding of "sexuality" and the body. The analysis and interrogation of Buddhist Tantric sexual practices thus may or may not bear

These arts were, in effect, concerned with the sexual practices of a sophisticated, urban elite group who were by no means concerned with celibacy or any other renunciant ideal of *mokṣa*, but were concerned with desire *(kāma)* and sexual enjoyment *(bhoga)*. Tantric practice can be seen as an attempt to transform this rather ordinary yet appealing path into a means of spiritual attainment.

An attempt will be made to sketch a less simplistic model of early medieval Buddhist polity in chapter three. Here it is only necessary to comment that the exact dynamic which led to the development of Buddhist Tantrism, as well as the causes and influences from which it arose, will perhaps never be definitively described. J. Z. Smith was probably correct when he argued that with regard to these enigmatic elements sense "cannot be found in a quest for origins, but can only be found through the detailed examination of elaborations." (Smith 1987a:195) We are fortunate to possess a rich body of textual data concerning Tantric Buddhism, but this data provides us not with its origins but with the elaborations, which were the product of an elite and atypical subgroup of Indian society. While this material can give only glimpses into the darkness of origins, it can contribute to our understanding of Indian religious history, particularly in the phases wherein the Vajrayāna was constituted as a distinct "vehicle", that is, a distinct mode of discourse. The features and history of this discourse will be the focus of the remaining chapters of this study.

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fruit. Even if they are approached with a sophisticated hermeneutic, there are several obstacles here which may be insurmountable. Firstly, the texts themselves, while a product of the early medieval Indian milieu in which the *ars erotica* were practiced, do not give any sort of direct access to either this milieu of the practices themselves; any attempt to divine them via some sort of "verstehen" is likely to be pure fantasy. While these arts as practiced by Tibetans *may* derive from Indian sources, such interrogation is not welcomed in the Tibetan context, as the Tibetans generally take quite seriously the secrecy enjoined by the tradition. Certain Tibetans, such as Gedun Gyatso, who have written openly on this subject are atypical, and possibly affected by outside influences, and hence even further removed from the hypothetical Indic "source" tradition. Even less relevant here (although quite worthy of attention in other contexts) are the exposés written by Westerners who have had the fortune or misfortune to enter into sexual relationships with Tibetan lamas; here we are even further from the alleged source, as these relationships involve a collision between two very different cultural constructions of the body and sexuality; indeed, the very act of writing such exposés is alien to the Tibetan tradition, but completely understandable to the Western, as described by Foucault.

Chapter Three

Competing Discourses in Theory and Practice

In this chapter the social and political contexts underlying the development of Tantric Buddhist traditions will be explored. This will not involve an extensive study, which would require a separate monograph, but rather a look at the ways in which Buddhists positioned themselves vis-à-vis the larger Indic context. One issue in particular will be explored, which is the ideology of *varṇa* or class hierarchy, and the development of an anti-hegemonic ideology by Buddhists and other groups. These groups were marked by their resistance as liminal vis-à-vis the larger Indian society which had, by the early medieval period, largely accepted this hegemonic ideology which came to characterize Hindu "orthodoxy". It will be argued that mythic and ritual elements, which have often been characterized as conservative and rigidly supportive of "tradition", were in fact employed by Buddhists and others groups as elements in their resistance to this orthodoxy. This resistance itself was often subverted, and these elements redeployed for hegemonic purposes, which thus suggests that myth and ritual, as human constructs, can be put to a variety of different uses.

A survey will be made of anti-hegemonic elements in Buddhist Tantras such as the *Cakrasaṃvara*, and it will be argued that Turner's theory of liminality is applicable to the context in which these Tantras developed, which can account for their resistance to the dominant social ideology. It will be argued, however, that Tantric texts do not purely and simply resist the dominant *varṇāśrama* ideology, but construct an alternative counter-hegemonic ideology. This ideology, represented in myth and ritual, literally "centers", in the mode of a maṇḍala, around the figure of the guru who incorporates within himself both political and spiritual authority. For the Tantric Buddhists, the guru is an alternative authority figure, who embodies within his person both the spiritual authority of a brahmin and the power of a king, effecting this synthesis even more effectively than the brahmin,

who is unable to resolve the tension between purity and pollution which is negated in Tantric discourse. The influence of this ideology, in India and in particular Tibet, will also be addressed.

3.1 The Discourse on Varṇa

1. Hegemonic and Counter-hegemonic Ideologies

In order to contextualize the rise of Tantric traditions in India, it is necessary to get a sense of the communities which produced, propagated and practiced them. Given both the hostile reception of the Tantras by mainstream, orthodox Indian society as well as their purported secrecy, it appears that they were produced by groups situated somewhat outside of this mainstream. The exact details of these groups are probably irrecoverable, but it may be possible to at least get a sense of their position in Indian society from an examination of their ideas and practices as preserved in their texts.

In this chapter it will be argued that the Tantras and Tantric practitioners stood in opposition to the principle of mainstream Vaidika Hindu culture, and that they popularized a body of discourse and practice which challenged the foundation of that culture.[1] While Tantric texts are not characteristically concerned with social criticism, there is one area in which they are often strident, and that is the so-called "caste" system of India, which in the Vaidika discourse is typically classified via a four-fold taxonomy, that of the *varṇa* or

[1] I follow Lincoln in seeing discourse as both constructing and maintaining a state of hegemony, and a tool which ultimately and in the long run is more important than force, which can subdue in the short term but can hardly serve as an effective strategy for long term subordination. Discourse, however, can be put to the opposite task of resisting such hegemony. Lincoln wrote that "in the hands of the elites and of those professionals that serve them (either in mediated fashion or directly), discourse of all forms – not only verbal, but also the symbolic discourses of spectacle, gesture, costume, edifice, icon, musical performance, and the like – may be strategically employed to mystify the inevitable inequities of any social order and to win the consent of those over whom power is exercised, thereby obviating the need for the direct coercive use of force and transforming simple power into 'legitimate' authority. Yet discourse can also serve members of subordinate classes (as Antonio Gramsci above all recognized) in their attempts to demystify, delegitimate, and deconstruct the established norms, institutions, and discourses that play a role in constructing their subordination." (1989:4-5).

"classes", not in the sense of "social classes" but as classes or categories of a taxonomy. Given the importance of discourse concerning social hierarchy in Tantric discourse and practice, this chapter will begin with an exploration of this theme as a means of investigating the position of Tantric practitioners in Indian society, and the vision of society which they sought to realize in practice.

The "caste-system" in India has received a great deal of attention, and in bringing up the subject here I have no pretension of being able to shed additional light on the matter. The issue is addressed here because, according to Gombrich, it is an issue that "has the greatest ideological significance" for Buddhists, and there is no doubt that, in theory if not in practice, Buddhists hold it to be "doctrinally indefensible",[2] and numerous Buddhists texts criticize, as modern Buddhists continue to criticize, the *varṇa* ideology on which it is based, and reject it as a suitable model for social organization.

This ideology has received considerable attention and has spawned a number of controversies, most of which are not relevant to this study. Probably the best known presentation is that in Dumont's (1970) magnum opus, which has been quite influential, although it has received a great deal of criticism.[3] Much attention has been drawn to the fact that the *varṇa* ideology does not in fact correspond closely to Indian social reality, and possibly never did.[4] That is, it bears little relation to the actual "birth groups" *(jāti)* or

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[2] See Gombrich 1971, p. 344.

[3] Salient critiques include those presented in reviews of his monograph by Marriott (1969) and Tambiah (1972). His work has also received criticism in the writings of Inden, especially Inden 1990. Two central criticisms of his work which bear mentioning here are, first, Marglin's critique of Dumont's attempt to resolve the conundrum of the relationship between the brahmin and king via the polarity of purity vs. impurity. While none would deny that purity is a key concept in *varṇa* discourse, Marglin has argued that Dumont's focus on it is misplaced, and that other categories such as that of auspiciousness are of central importance as well. (See Marglin 1981 & 1985). Dumont magnifies this dichotomy into a larger dichotomy between religious and political authority, arguing that the king was divested of sacral authority. Dirks, in a 1989 article, argues that Dumont has overstated the case, arguing that caste was very much a political matter and that "caste, if it ever had an original form, was inscribed from the 'beginning' by the relations and conceits of power". (1989:74) That is, far from being an unchanging, "essential" feature of Indian civilization, it was a hegemonic social system supported by both force and discourse, and contested as well, most likely since its inception.

[4] The classic attempt to explain the discrepancy between the neat hierarchy of the four *varṇa*s and the much more complex system of interrelated, loosely hierarchically organized patterns of birth-groups *(jāti)* is that which occurs in *Manu* 10.9-72, which hold that the various sub-groups resulted from cross-breeding among members of the original groups, resulting in numerous mixed sub-groups, the logic of which is explored

"castes", to use Dumont's terminology,[5] the usually endogamous, ranked birth-status groups which are often associated with occupations;[6] the confusion of the classical *varṇa* ideology with the much more complex reality of Indian social segmentation has led, to some extent, to the distortion of the latter by scholars influenced by the former model.[7] Rather, the four *varṇa* are "classes" in the sense that they constitute an taxonomy, an artificial construct for the organization of social reality.

As such, the *varṇa* discourse is a hegemonic ideology. Here I take ideology as defined by Haydn White, as "a set of prescriptions for taking a position in the present world of social praxis and acting upon it (either to change the world or to maintain it in its current state)." (1983:22) This definition presupposes that the positions people take are related to their actions in and upon the social world. The term hegemonic implies that this ideology was utilized to argue for or justify the subordination of one or more social groups to another. This was argued by Guha who, contra Gramsci, defines hegemony as a condition of dominance in which persuasion outweighs coercion.[8]

Under Guha's definition the *caturvarṇa*-based ideology can be described as hegemonic in that it largely functioned via persuasion, although coercion was definitely a possibility, as the law books such as the *Manusmṛti* and the *Mānava Dharma Śāstra*

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by Tambiah in his (1985a) article 1985a. "From Varna to Caste through Mixed Unions". On the ground, Marriott has shown that actual status is determined not so much determined through references to such fixed, mythic origins (although such myths were often fabricated to justify an improvement in a groups status, see Sircar 1983, pp. 73 f.) but to the relatively fluid pattern of transactions that occur between interrelated communities. Marriott wrote that "ranked judgments of castes' natures are difficult for actors to establish only from the castes' claimed or reputed origins, or from what might be inferred about their natures using the possibly deceptive evidence of their currently visible attributes. Persons trying to decide about rank tend to therefore to rely primarily on the evidence provided by current or recent transactions" (1976:114), a point which Marriott makes in the remainder of this article.

[5] See Dumont 1970, p. 72.

[6] Concerning this definition of "caste" *(jāti)* see Gough 1960, p. 11.

[7] This has been argued by Srinivas in his 1991 article.

[8] See Guha 1997, p. 23. This is opposed to Gramsci's formulation of dominance and hegemony as antinomies. Concerning Gramsci's conceptions of *dominio* and *egemonia* see Williams 1960, esp. pp. 590-91.

prescribed the use of force *(daṇḍa)* to support the social order.[9] One of the principle duties of the kings as described in the orthodox *dharmaśātra*s is the maintenance of the social order by means of force, *daṇḍa,* a term which Gonda describes as including the notions of "power, authority and punishment," (1966:22) in short, dominance and coercion. The failure to use force to maintain the social order would supposedly result in chaos; i.e., the *varṇa* system and the practice of sacrifice which was conceptually linked to it would collapse. The *Manusmṛti* claims that

> If the king did not, without tiring, inflict daṇḍa on those worthy to be punished, the stronger would roast the weaker, like fish on a spit; the crow would eat the sacrificial cake and the dog would lick the sacrificial viands, and ownership would not remain with anyone, the lower ones would usurp the place of the higher ones.[10]

Force alone, however, was inadequate to maintain hegemony in the long term; persuasion is needed as well. Such persuasion can take two forms; the first is to convince those involved that the maintenance of the system is in their own best interest. The second, and perhaps more effective method with those who have the least to gain from the system, is to persuade them that the system is somehow inevitable, which was the general thrust of British Colonialist historiography on India,[11] or a natural consequence of the structure of reality. Bloch observed that

> Some inequality is often manifested as unadorned oppression, but, as Weber pointed out, it is then highly unstable, and only becomes stable when its origins are hidden and when it transforms itself into hierarchy: a legitimate order of inequality in an imaginary world which we call social structure. This is done by the creation of a mystified 'nature' and consisting of concepts and categories of

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[9] Some of the punishments prescribed for transgressions were quite brutal. The *Mānava Dharmaśāstra,* for examples, prescribed the following punishments for the low-status men who insult in various ways a brahmin: "Should a low-status man try to sit down on the same seat as a high-status man, he should be branded on the buttocks and banished, or have his buttocks cut off. If out of arrogance he spits on a Brahmin, the king should have his lips cut off; if he urinates on him, the penis; if he farts at him, the anus. If he grasps him by the hair or feet, the beard, the throat, or the scrotum, [the king] should without hesitation have his hands cut off." *Mānavadharmaśāstra* 8.281-3, trans. in Wilson 1996a, p. 103. It is not clear that such examples of rhetorical violence were translated into actual violence of the sort described here, but there seems to be little doubt that the texts' brahmin authors intended or at least hoped that they would be.

[10] *Manu* VII, 20-21, translated in Guha 1997, p. 29.

[11] This was argued by both Inden (1990) and Guha (1997).

> time and persons divorced from everyday experience, and where inequality takes on the appearance of an inevitable part of an ordered system. (1977:289)

A hegemonic ideology need not be veritable, but need only possess a certain verisimilitude. Here Smith's (1994) depiction of the *catur-varṇa* ideology as a totalizing or universalizing discourse is most helpful, since it shows how this ideology gained its verisimilitude through being located in a larger body of discourse, which, taken together, appears convincing. Smith wrote that "the *varṇa* system was, in sum, a totalistic ideology, by which I mean a system of ideas or categories that account for the cosmos and its parts in such a way that the interests and concerns of those who do the accounting are established, protected, and furthered." (1994:82)

The Vedic social hierarchy was a hegemonic taxonomy in that it sought to reproduce a pattern of social division which privileged the authors of the taxonomy, the members of the brahmin class. This hierarchy was perpetuated through its correlation to the natural and cosmic worlds as conceived by the *brahmin*s, as Smith has shown, writing that

> The particular social ideology of the Brahmin authors of the Veda was....legitimated and propounded in several different but interrelated ways. The appeal to the "prestige of origins" was one modality of argumentation: the social classes were supposedly brought into being at the beginning of time by the creator god and therefore are part of the original of the cosmos. A second method of legitimating the Vedic vision of the ideal society was to appeal to the authority of the divine and metaphysical order of things. If the realm of the gods was organized in accordance with the *varṇa* system, and if the very structure of space and time could be shown to be patterned in this way, then why should the social world be any different? Third, we have witnessed how the Vedic social ideology could be made to appear as just another part of "nature," with all the authority such an implication entails... By the very fact that the framework for the caste system is laid out in the Veda, it can claim a certain canonical status. The social scheme, in other words, derives at least part of its compelling nature and historical endurance from the fact that it appears in the Veda itself. (1994:287)

Through correlations of the four *varṇa* to "natural" or cosmic factors such as the four ages of time *(catur-yuga),* as well as by the classification of plants, animals and so forth in terms

of the *varṇa* classes, the social hierarchy was naturalized, making it appear inevitable rather than arbitrary.[12]

Such correlations allowed the development of a vicious spiral, in which correlated hierarchies became mutually supporting. Insofar as society was organized along the lines propounded in the Vedas, the Vedas were legitimated, since the world appeared to conform to its precepts. When the social hierarchy was itself challenged, it could be defended by recourse to the authority of the Vedas. This same conclusion was reached by Lincoln, who argued that "within a totalistic and totalizing system of thought....all pieces of the system were mutually reinforcing. The system thus possessed enormous persuasive power, by virtue of the vast scope and variety of phenomena which could be explained within it." (1991:172) A hegemony thus actively contributes to the constitution of a specific sense of reality which is supportive of it.[13]

A central assumption of this study is that human action is *conditioned* by its social context, but not determined by it. While structuralism is correct in focusing on this conditioning process, it goes too far insofar that it denies human agency by claiming that structure determines action. As Marx wrote, "Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves,

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[12] Bourdieu observed that "every established order tends to produce (to different degrees and with very different means) the naturalization of its own arbitrariness. Of all the mechanisms tending to produce this effect, the most important and the best concealed is undoubtedly the dialectic of the objective chances and the agents' aspirations, out of which arises the *sense of limits*, commonly called the *sense of reality*, i.e. the correspondence between the objective classes and the internalized classes, social structures and mental structures, which is the basis of the most ineradicable adherence to the established order. Systems of classification which reproduce, in their own specific logic, the objective classes, i.e. the divisions by sex, age, or position in the relations of production, make their specific contribution to the reproduction of power relations of which they are the product, by securing the misrecognition, and hence the recognition, of the arbitrariness on which they are based: in the extreme case, that is to say, when there is the quasi-perfect correspondence between the objective order and the subjective principles of organization (as in ancient societies) the natural and social world appears as self-evident." (1977:164).

[13] Williams argued that "hegemony is then not only the articulate upper level of 'ideology', nor are its forms control only those ordinarily seen as 'manipulation' or 'indoctrination'. It is a whole body of practices and expectations, over the whole of living: our senses and assignments of energy, our shaping perceptions of ourselves and our world. It is a lived system of meanings and values – constitutive and constituting – which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. It thus constitutes a sense of reality for most people in the society, a sense of absolute because experienced reality beyond which it is very difficult for most members of the society to move, in most areas of their lives. It is, that is to say, in the strongest sense a 'culture', but a culture which has also to be seen as the lived dominance and subordination of particular classes." (1977:110)

but under circumstances directly found, given and transmitted from the past".[14] Or, in other words, "the structure of language and society limits, but does not determine, what people say and do: humans could have always done otherwise." (Milner 1994:5) Social context may limit practice but does not absolutely determine it; the dynamics of the generation of practice from context is described by Bourdieu with his concept of the *habitus*, which, simply put, can be characterized as the dialectical interaction between a structured (objective) environment and the structured (subjective) dispositions "engendered in people which lead them to reproduce the environment even in a transformed form."[15]

This point is important to make for two reasons. The first is that religious forms of discourse, which in the broadest sense include both myth and ritual, have often been characterized as invariably functioning as hegemonic ideologies, as if they were invariably fixed in the legitimizing mode. However, as Lincoln has pointed out, there is nothing intrinsic to any mode of discourse that inclines it to either the tasks of legitimation of or resistance to a hegemonic ideology.[16] Rather, to hold that thought and practice are socially conditioned does not mean that they *necessarily*

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[14] This famous epigram is from his *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, translated in Tucker 1978 p. 595, op. cit. Milner 1994, p. 3.

[15] Bell 1992, p. 78. Bourdieu defined *habitus* as "the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle, while adjusting to the demands inscribed as objective potentialities in the situation, as defined by the cognitive and motivating structures making up the habitus." (1977:78). The way in which the *habitus* gives rise to practice, guiding or limiting it without absolutely determining is described in his 1990 book as follows: "As an acquired system of generative schemes, the *habitus* makes possible the free production of all thoughts, perceptions and actions inherent in the particular conditions of its production – and only those. Through the *habitus*, the structure of which it is the product governs practice, not along the paths of mechanical determinism, but within the constraints and limits initially set on its inventions. This infinite yet strictly limited generative capacity is difficult to understand only so long as one remains locked in the usual antinomies – which the concept of the *habitus* aims to transcend – of determinism and freedom, conditioning and creativity, consciousness and the unconscious, or the individual and society. Because the *habitus* is an infinite capacity for generating products – thoughts, expressions and actions – whose limits are set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production, the conditioned and conditional freedom it provides is as remote from the creation of unpredictable novelty as it is from simple mechanical reproduction of the original conditioning." (1990:55).

[16] Lincoln argued against Barthes (1972) and Bloch (1977), who argued, respectively, that myth and ritual are modes of discourse which intrinsically legitimate authority, and located the potential for resistance in a "knowledge" based existing in the sphere of productive labor. Lincoln wrote "like Barthes, Bloch located a nonmystified and potentially revolutionary mode of thought and discourse within the experience of productive labor, and here, of course, they both follow Marx. This they dialectically oppose to another

> reflect, encode, re-present, or help replicate the *established structures* of society, for society is far broader and more complex than its official structures and institutions alone. Rather, such a formulation rightly implies that all the tensions, contradictions, superficial stability, and potential fluidity of any given society *as a whole* are present within the full range of thought and discourse that circulates at any given moment. Change comes not when groups or individuals use "knowledge" to challenge ideological mystification, but rather when they employ thought and discourse, including even such modes as myth and ritual, as effective instruments of struggle. (Lincoln 1989:7)

As Williams put it, "no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention" (1977:125), and thus cannot monopolize any mode of practice or discourse. The characterization of "traditional" modes of discourse, such as myth and ritual, as static and invariably conservative modes of discourse may be the result of another sort of totalizing discourse, that of colonialism, which sought to efface the agency of colonial subjects in order to legitimate their subjugation. This point has been made by Inden, who characterized Orientalist representations of India as "imperial knowledges", which are

> universalizing discourses, the world-constituting cosmologies, ontologies and epistemologies, produced in those complex polities at their upper reaches by those persons and institutions who claim to speak with authority. We should not make the mistake of seeing these knowledges as unitary and imposed by force by a ruler sharply opposed to a completely passive population of the ruled. Following Gramsci I will refer to the deployers of this knowledge as hegemonic agents. (Inden 1990:36)

Inden, in his 1990 book, had the admirable goal of dispelling such colonialist misrepresentations while restoring to Indians their agency effaced in colonialist discourse. He has been criticized, however, for denying agency to Orientalist scholars whose work he understands as being subsumed within the world of "imperial knowledges", i.e., conditioned by the colonialist context in which they worked.[17] Inden's "imperial

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mode of thought and discourse that serves only to mystify and thereby perpetuate the sociopolitical status quo. This latter they locate in myth (Barthes), ritual (Bloch), and ideology (Marx)." (1989:6)

[17] Milner comments that "drawing on the work of R. G. Collingwood, Inden suggests an alternative conceptualization of social reality that discards the notion of system, allows for overlapping rather than mutually exclusive social categories, and places human agency at the center of the analysis. There is considerable merit in much of Inden's critique. Ironically, though, he seems to turn past scholars into the hapless tools of various imperial formations, denying them the very agency he is so eager to restore to Indians." (1994:13).

knowledges" appear equally characteristic of totalizing ideologies such as the *varṇa* discourse.

An important point should be made here. It is the characteristic of hegemonic, totalizing ideologies that they wish to appear given, natural and unchallengable; they seek to obscure their human origins in order to deny that, as human creations, they are subject to contestation. Such ideologies thus tend to deny human agency and to portray humans as determined by the given social system, to which there could thus logically be no possibility of effective resistance. This characteristic of totalizing ideologies does not appear to be restricted to any one cultural system; just as no civilization has a monopoly on agency, neither does any civilization have a monopoly on totalizing ideologies that would deny agency to subordinated individuals. With this in mind, it is not at all surprising that the British appropriated and transformed the *varṇa* ideology; in so doing they were simply making use of a tool for subordination already present in the Indian sphere of discourse.[18]

With this in mind, the following sections will explore the *varṇa* ideology in a bit more depth, as well as its contestation by Buddhists and other groups. The dissent of these groups, which was significant and ongoing, indicates that despite the best efforts of the authors of the *dharmaśāstra*s, the *varṇa* system never achieved the unquestioned acceptance for which they presumably strove.

3.1.2 Myth, Counter-myth and Ritual

The classic Vedic source for the *varṇa* discourse is the "Hymn on Man" *(puruṣasūkta)* in the *Ṛg-Veda.* It occurs as follows in Lincoln's translation:

> When they divided Puruṣa ("Man") , how many pieces did they prepare? What was his mouth? What are his arms, thighs and feet called? The priest was his mouth; the warrior was made from his arms. His thighs were the commoner, and

[18] This point was made by Dirks in his 1989 article.

> the servant was made from his feet. The moon was born of his mind; of his eye, the sun was born. From his mouth, Indra and fire; from his breath, wind was born. From his navel, there was the atmosphere; from his head, heaven was rolled together. From his feet, the earth, from his ear, the cardinal points. Thus the gods caused the worlds to be created. Seven-mouthed were the sacrificial enclosures; thrice seven bundles of were made When the gods, performing sacrifice, bound Puruṣa ["Man"] as the sacrificial animal.[19]

This very well known passage is interesting for a number of reasons. It has been seen as an important and early example of Indian speculative philosophy, as it propounds the notion that there is a profound interrelation between the human microcosm and the cosmic macrocosm. It is probably best known, however, for its association of the four social classes to four distinctive parts of the body of the cosmic man, parts which are hierarchically arranged along the vertical axis, parts that also have occupational associations. Since the division of this man produced the world as we know it, the social classes are also naturalized as aspects of the divinely created world.

The social implications of this hymn were the focus of the author of the *Manusmṛti*, who saw it not only as a justification for the division of society into distinct classes, but also for the subordination for the lower classes to the highest, the brahmin class, as follows:

> But in order to protect this universe He, the most resplendent, assigned separate (duties and) occupations to those who sprang from his mouth, arms, thighs and feet. To Brahmans he assigned the teaching and studying (the Veda), sacrificing for their own benefit and others, giving and accepting (of alms). The Kshatriya he commanded to protect the people, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), and to abstain from attaching himself to sensual pleasures. The Vaisya to tend cattle, to bestow gifts, to offer sacrifices, to study (the Veda), to trade, to lend money, and to cultivate land. One occupation only the lord prescribed to the Sudra, to serve meekly even those (other) three castes. As the Brahmana sprang from (Brahman's) mouth, as he was the first-born, and as he possessed the Veda, he is by right the lord of this whole creation.[20]

Clearly, this taxonomy is ideological and not purely descriptive; its dissimilarity with the much more complex Indian social world did not go unnoticed, even by the authors of texts

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[19] Ṛg Veda 10.90.11-16, translated in Lincoln 1991, pp. 167-73; cf. O'Flaherty 1981, p. 31.

[20] *Manu* 1.87-91,93; Buhler's 1886 translation, op. cit. Tambiah 1976, p. 20.

such as the *Manusmṛti*, who developed complex schemes for reducing the numerous *jāti* birth-groups to the logic of the *varṇa* taxonomy.[21]

Guha has argued that there are two factors which need to be present to make possible the critique of "feudal" discourse. The first is rationalism, which points out the inevitable absurdities and inconsistencies of totalizing ideologies, and the second is a humanism which opposes the attempt to limit human agency, and which insists that the individual is, potentially at least, "the maker of his own history and master of his own destiny".[22]

Both of these elements are present to some degree in the Buddhist critique of *varṇa* discourse. Buddhist texts are well known for their rationalism, which is brought to the fore in these critiques. Buddhists were skeptical of the very idea of a creator god, and in texts such as the *Brahmajāla Sutta* ridiculed theism as the result of misunderstanding.[23] This sort of skepticism is not limited to the Buddhists and other "heterodox" schools, but is found even within the Vedic tradition itself. Kuiper claims, regarding the Vedic cosmogony, that "the primordial world itself was sacred, and for the process of this genesis to take place there was no need of a creator." (1975:108) The Buddhists were not alone in questioning the claims of theism, and in fact they followed a long tradition of skeptics on this issue; an early and famous example being the "Creation" hymn (*nāsadiya*) of the *Ṛg Veda*, the last two verses of which are particularly apropos here:

> Who really knows? Who will here proclaim it? Whence was it produced? Whence is this creation? The gods came afterwards, with the creation of this universe. Who then knows whence it has arisen? Whence this creation has arisen – perhaps it formed itself, or perhaps it did not – the one who looks down on it, in the highest heaven, only he knows – or perhaps he does not know.[24]

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[21] Here I refer to the concept propounded in *Manu* that the numerous *jāti* derive from the four *varṇa* via hypergamous *(anuloma)* and hypogamous *(pratiloma)* unions. The logic of this explanation, as well as its inadequacy as an actual account of the development of social stratification in India, is discussed by Tambiah in his 1985a article.

[22] See Guha 1997, p. 12.

[23] See *Digha Nikāya* 1, trans. in Walshe 1987, pp. 67-91.

[24] *Ṛg Veda* 10.129.6-7, trans. in O'Flaherty 1981:25,6.

This skepticism is echoed in *Kevaddha Sutta*[25] in which a monk travels up to the highest heaven to ask Brahmā a pressing cosmological question; Brahmā's reply was a non-reply, but merely the reflexive assertion "Monk, I am Brahmā, Great Brahmā, the Conqueror, the Unconquered, the All-seeing, All-Powerful, the Lord, the Maker and Creator, the Ruler, Appointer and Orderer, Father of All That Have Been and Shall Be." (Walshe 1995:178) After his third repetition of his still unanswered question, Brahmā took him aside and admitted he did not know the answer, but could not say so before the other gods, who thought he was omniscient. He reprimands the monk for not asking the question of the Buddha, the only one capable of answering his question. While in passages such as this the Buddhists do not deny the existence of the god Brahmā per se, they do reject the status of creator deity sometimes ascribed to him.

The claims of the brahmins to social superiority did not rest upon the existence of a creator deity however, but rather upon the claim of superior and inviolable origination. This claim was explicitly attacked by the Buddhists in the *Aggañña Sutta.*[26] This *Sutta* begins with a discussion between the Buddha and two monks who were formerly brahmins. The Buddha asks them if since they have left the life of a householder if they were reviled by the brahmins. One of them replies:

> Lord, what the Brahmins say is this: "The Brahmin caste is the highest caste, other castes are base; the Brahmin caste is fair, other castes are dark; Brahmins are purified, non-Brahmins are not.; the Brahmins are the true children of Brahmā, born from his mouth, born of Brahmā, created by Brahmā, heirs of Brahmā. And you, you have deserted the highest caste and gone over to the base caste of shaveling petty ascetics, servants, dark fellows born of Brahmā's foot! It's not right, it's not proper for you to mix with such people!" That is the way the Brahmins abuse us, Lord. (Walshe 1987:407)

The Buddha replied:

> Then, Vāseṭṭha, the Brahmins have forgotten their ancient tradition when they say that. Because we can see Brahmin women, the wives of Brahmins, who menstruate and become pregnant, have babies and give suck. And yet these

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[25] *Dīgha Nikāya* 11, trans. in Walshe 1987, pp. 175-80

[26] *Dīgha Nikāya* 27, trans. in Walshe 1987, pp. 407-15.

> womb-born Brahmins talk about being born from Brahmā's mouth....These Brahmins misrepresent Brahmā, tell lies and earn much demerit. (Walshe 1987:408)

The Buddha goes on to argue that no caste has a monopoly on moral virtue and wisdom, and that these qualities are distributed throughout persons of all social classes. He thus concludes that there is no basis for speaking of a supreme "caste", as follows:

> Now, since both dark and bright qualities, which are blamed and praised by the wise, are scattered indiscriminately among the four castes, the wise do not recognize the claim about the Brahmin caste being the highest. Why is that? Because, Vāseṭṭha, anyone from the four castes who becomes a monk, an Arhant who has destroyed the corruptions, who has lived the life, who has done what has to be done, laid down the burden, reached the highest goal, destroyed the fetter of becoming, and become emancipated through super-knowledge – he is proclaimed supreme by virtue of Dhamma and not of non-Dhamma. (Walshe 1987:408)

The Buddhist rhetorical strategy here is two-fold. First, they appeal to reason to dispel the brahmins' claim to privileged, mythic origin, by pointing to the prosaic, biological origin which they share with all other humans and mammalian animals. Recourse here to biological imagery is also a subtle assault on the brahmin claims to purity, since the conditions of womb birth were generally considered to be polluting;[27] Buddhist texts often ridicule the alleged obsession of the brahmins with purity and pollution.[28] In another text,

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[27] As noted above, Tambiah and others have criticized Dumont's thesis that the *varṇa* ideology is ultimately reducible to a dichotomy between purity and pollution. I do not disagree with this criticism. The concept of purity, however, clearly does play a central role in the discourse on *varṇa*. I would argue that it is, to use Ortner's (1973b) term, a "key symbol", of the sort she calls an "elaborating symbol", in that it is a central concept invoked in the articulation of distinctions between different caste groups, as Orenstein (1965, 1968) and Tambiah (1985a) show. Purity is also used, according to Harper (1964), to articulate the status difference between humans and gods, and amongst the gods themselves. It is probably not accidental that Buddhist and others have attacked the brahmin's claim to high status via the route of purity, arguing that they are not more pure than others, and possibly less so, on account of their performance of violent, bloody sacrifices. The mechanics of this articulation has been admirably described by Marriott, who argued for a transactional rather than essentialist model. He wrote, contra Dumont, that "pollution (better understood in strictly hierarchical terms as 'degradation') need not be a substance or quality of substances. Rather, it is a process that inevitably occurs, according to Indian ideology, through the ranked relationships of any transaction. Whatever is given – semen, food, pay, etc. – the act of giving is degrading to the receiver, upgrading to the giver. The idiom of 'pollution' provides one major way of talking about caste rank, while rank itself is the outcome of transactions in that and certain other idioms." (1969:1172) See also Marriott 1959, 1968 and especially 1976. See also Marriott 1991, in which he discusses some of the other parameters along which caste difference is articulated.

[28] Tambiah has argued that "early Buddhist polemics against Brahmanical conceptions – combining irony with etymological play,....caricature and reject Brahmanical notions of dirt defined 'material' and 'ritually'....as body pollution associated with the physiological processes of ingestion and excretion, of birth and death, and replace it with a 'mentalistic' and ethical notion of defilement as negative emotions of greed, hate and delusion of mind. The dramatic and forceful early Buddhist rejection of Brahmanical ritual notions of purity and pollution is seen in such matters as the open recruitment to the *sangha* from all *varṇas* and castes, the *bhikkhu's* acceptance of cooked food from a lay donor irrespective of his status, and

the *Assalāyana Sutta,*[29] the Buddha challenges the claim that the *varṇa* taxonomy is universal, by means of the observations that other peoples, such as the Ionian Greeks *(yona)* and the Kamboja, observe only one social distinction, that of masters and slaves.[30]

The Buddhists, secondly, propound a "humanism" insofar as they attack stratification and the assumption that humans are determined through their station of birth. Rather, they argue that "supremacy" is the product of moral virtue and wisdom which are not monopolized by any one group. Thus, the supreme goal is open to all people, no matter what their station in life, provided they cultivate the virtues and wisdom required for mastery on the spiritual path.

Such attacks on the claims made by the brahmins were not restricted to the early period of Buddhism, but were in fact a continuing feature of the religion. Dharmakirti, who lived in the seventh century,[31] was quite uncompromising in his critique of such ideas, as the following brief bit of rhetoric indicates: "The unquestioned authority of the Vedas; the belief in a world-creator; the quest for purification through ritual bathings; the arrogant division into castes; the practice of mortification to atone for sin – these five are the marks of witless men."[32]

Āryadeva, in his *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa,* uses rational, biological imagery similar to that attributed to the Buddha above to argue against caste discrimination:

> Beings are as stated by the Tathāgata: having a self of the five elements, their nature is five lumps, similar to the semen and blood [which is their source]. The brahmin is that which the outcast is, as is the body of the monk: all have the five heaps as their self. These are impermanent and characterized by suffering, for both the higher and lower castes. All are conceived in a woman's womb,

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the *bhikkhu's* willful contamination with death by taking up residence in cremation grounds, using discarded cloth from rubbish heaps, and engaging in the contemplation of death as a therapeutic act." (1985b:96).

[29] *Majjhima Nikāya* 93, trans. in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, pp. 763-74.

[30] The mention of the Greeks dates this text, or at least this portion of it, to no earlier than the late fourth century BCE. In 326 BCE the Greeks, led by Alexander, crossed the Indus. See Basham 1954 pp. 49 ff.

[31] Concerning the dating of Dharmakīrti and other important Buddhist authors see section 5.2 below.

[32] From his *Pramāṇavārttika-svavṛtti-ṭikā,* trans. in Jaini 1967, p. 41

> whether born as fisherman or born as an ascetic brahmin. Therefore, caste is an illusion. One who understands the rite should always worship one's mother, sister, daughter, mother-in-law, niece, brahmin women, kshatriya women, vaishya women, shudra women, as well as women who are deformed, defiled, inferior, despised, or outcast, with the power of adamantine intuition.[33]

The end of this passage, which recommends the reverence of all women irrespective of social class, is quite typical of Tantric texts, as will be explored below. This refusal to recognize social distinctions is justified in Buddhist texts via the doctrine of nonduality, and it is prescribed in some Buddhist Tantric traditions as an observance *(vrata)* for the Tantric adept, as will be shown below.

A striking aspect of the myth narrated in the *puruṣasūkta* is its equation of a primal act of violence with the division of humans into a hierarchical taxonomy. The equation of the *varṇa* ideology with Vedic sacrifice is probably not coincidental. Interestingly, it is precisely this violence which is denounced by Buddhists and Jains. Brahmins were criticized for engaging in animal sacrifice, which was understood by Jains and Buddhists to result in a state of impurity.[34] Buddhists, however, also condemned the very conceptual violence which sought to divide persons into such categories; as shown above, Buddhists would consider such taxonomic thought as the product of "dichotomic conceptual construction" *(vikalpa)*, which the Buddhists see as originating in the very misknowledge *(avidyā)* which is the ultimate cause of all suffering and cyclic existence *(saṃsāra)*.

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[33] CV vv. 101.d-106d: jagad āha tathāgata // pañcabhūtātmakaṃ śukraṃ śoṇtaṃ cāpi tādṛśaṃ / tanmayaḥ khalu piṇḍo 'yaṃ ko viprāḥ kaś ca vāntyajaḥ // [pañcaskandhātmakaṃ sarvaṃ] śariraṃ khalu bhikṣavaḥ / anityaṃ duḥkhaśūnyañ ca na jātir na ca jātimān // kaivarttogarbhaṃ bhūtaḥ kaścic cā[ṇḍālajātimān / tapasā brahmaṇo jātas tasmāj jātir akāraṇam // svasāraṃ mātaraṃ śvaśrūṃ svaputrīṃ bhāgineyikaṃ / brahmaṇiṃ kṣatriyāṃ vaiśyāṃ vidhijñānena śūdrikām] // ekāṅgvikalāṃ hināṃ garhitām antyajām api / yoṣitaṃ pūjayen nityaṃ jñānavajraprabhāvanaiḥ // (Patel 1949:8); / 'gro ba de bzhin bde gshegs gsungs // 'byung lnga'i bdag nyid khu ba dang // khrag kyang de dang 'dra ba dang // de yi rang bzhin gong bu lnga // bram ze gang yin mthar skyes gang // dge slong dag gi lus 'di ni // thams cad phung po lnga bdag nyid // mi rtag sdug bsngal stod pa la // rigs med rigs dang ldan pa gang // nya pa'i mngal du skye ba gang // kha cig gdol pa'i skye ldan pas // dka' thub spyad pa bram ze skyes // de phyir rigs ni sgyu ma yin // ma dang sring mo bu mo dang // sgyug mo dang ni tsha mo dang // bram ze rgyal rigs rje rigs mo // cho ga shes pa dmangs rigs mo // yan lag cig ni nyams pa dang // dman dang smod dang mthar skyes kyi // btsun mo rtag tu mchod par bya // rdo rje ye shes rnam bsgoms pas / (QT p. 2.5).

[34] In the case of the Jains, physical violence was understood to result in physical impurity, while the Buddhists, as we have seen, tended to internalize and ethicize purity, seeing it as the result of a compassionate and non-violent mental state. Purity, in the Jain view, was a consequence of the renunciation of a Jain ascetic, and that Jain ascetics could serve to purify those persons and things that came into contact with them. See Jaini 1985.

Rather, the Buddhists prescribe a nondualistic gnosis or intuition into the nature of reality which is free of such false conceptual construction *(nirvikalpajñāna).*

This same critique is represented as coming from the mouth of a Jain king in the *Dharmāraṇya Purāṇa,* a text produced by the Modh Brahmins of Gujrat most likely during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries CE.[35] In this *purāṇa* the Modh Brahmins are depicted as receiving an extensive land grant from Rāma himself back in the *dvaparayuga.* Later, they are deprived of their land by a Jain princess. The brahmins go to her father, King Āma, bearing a copper-plate land grant which they claimed was bestowed upon them by Rāma. The king, also a Jain, is skeptical and calls questions their worthiness, as follows:

> Who are you? Where do you stay? What do you want from us? For what have you come here, you killers of animals? You, who cheat stupid people, eat everything greedily, always accept gifts from others, are wicked slaves of your senses; why have you come here? (Das 1977:27)

The brahmins reply that they are beggars *(bhikṣus)* seeking the protection of the righteous king *(dharmarāja),* and in particular seeking the restoration of their grant bestowed by Rāma. The king replied by criticizing their claims, both that the grant was given to them by Rāma, and that they as brahmins are worthy of it, saying:

> All the *shastras* say that non-violence is the ultimate righteousness. Then why do you call the Jain religion a heretic religion? All our preceptors are without a trace of violence and are full of compassion. The Brahmans are always desiring sensuous pleasures and all of them are bent on committing violence. They are full of desires, prone to anger, and are greedy. Tell me which of their virtues should make me worship them? Men have to bear the fruits of their good and bad actions. Happiness and unhappiness are both attained by our actions. Rama was also born because of his *karmas* [past actions] and died because of them. What is extraordinary about him that he should be remembered? (Das 1977:28-29)

It is quite remarkable that such a trenchant critique would occur in a text written by brahmins. The brahmins give a rather ineffectual defense, claiming that violence is unavoidable. In the end, they are depicted as converting the king, but only by means of the

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[35] See Das 1977, p. 16.

miraculous intervention of Hanuman, rather than by a cogent defense of their claims to authority.

The Buddhists did not only criticize the brahmins' claims via critical reasoning and ridicule, both of which are negative forms of discourse. They also utilized positive modes of discourse; that is, they offered alternative social visions. On the one hand, the Buddha redefined terms such as *brāhmaṇa* and *āryan* in terms of moral and spiritual qualities rather than birth or appearance.[36] Another approach was the proposition of a competing or alternate ideology. In the *Aggañña Sutta,* the Buddha follows his critique of the *puruṣasūkta* cosmogony with what might be termed, following Bloch, an *alter-cosmogony,*[37] an alternate vision of the universe which is also, given the sphere of discourse in which the text is operating, an alternate vision of society as well.

In this account, the Buddha is portrayed as giving an alternate narration of the "creation" of the world, although it is really a re-creation, since what he describes is the redevelopment of the world following its periodic destruction, a process discussed in section 3.3.1 below. Following the destruction of the world, including its various hells and lower heavens, the beings who dwelled there are reborn in the higher form realm *(rūpaloka)* heavens, where they exist in luminous mind-made "bodies" *(manomayakāya)* and experience great bliss. As the lower desire world *(kāmaloka)* comes back into existence, beings are born back into it.

At this primal time, however, the world then is quite different than it is now. The Buddha described it thus:

> At that period, Vāseṭṭha, there was just one mass of water, and all was darkness, blinding darkness. Neither moon nor sun appeared, no constellations or stars appeared, night and day were not extinguished, nor months and fortnights, no years or seasons, and no male and female, beings being reckoned just as beings.

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[36] See, for example, the *Soṇadaṇḍa Sutta, Digha Nikāya* 4, trans. in Walshe pp. 125-132. Also, the *Ariyavaṃsa Sutta* redefines the four *varṇa* in terms of four "noble lineages" *(ariyavaṃsa)* which are simply monastic virtues, such as being satisfied with a single robe and delighting in meditation. See Gombrich 1992, p. 170-71.

[37] See Bloch 1989, p. 128.

> And, sooner or later, after a very long period of time, savory earth spread itself over the waters where those beings were. It looked just like the skin that forms over hot milk as it cools. It was endowed with colour, smell and taste. It was the colour of fine ghee or butter, and it was very sweet, like pure wild honey. (Walshe 1987:410)

The world then was completely undifferentiated, and so were the beings who dwelled therein, who continued to exist in blissful, luminous mind-made forms.

However, one of these beings, motivated by greed, tasted the savory earth, and enjoying it began to crave it, and it was followed by the other beings. As a consequence of their consumption of this food they lost their self-luminance, as result of which the sun, moon and other celestial objects appeared, and night and day was distinguished. As they continued to eat the food, their bodies became coarser, and they began to distinguish beauty and ugliness.

Eventually, the savory earth disappeared, and was replaced by a series of increasingly coarser foods, the greedy consumption of which led to the further bifurcation of beings into the sexes, leading to the development of sexual activity. Eventually, as food was no longer easily attained, people began to divide up the land into field plots, and conflicts developed over its possession. As a result of these conflicts, the people chose the best man amongst them to serve as king, in order to maintain order and punish evil doers. This first king was called Mahāsammata, "[he who is] agreed to be great."[38] The texts also defines king *(rāja)* as "he who pleases others with righteousness" *(dhammena pare rañjeti).*[39]

Having accounted the origin of the Kshatriya or ruler class, the text continues to describe the origin of the Brahmin class. They originated in a group of people who, disgusted with the evil and conflict that arose in the world, withdrew to the forest and lived in leaf huts meditating, thus earning for themselves the title "meditators" *(jhāyaka).* Later some of them, being unable to meditate, returned to the villages to compose the Vedas, and

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[38] See Gombrich 1992, p. 175.

[39] See Gombrich 1992, p. 174.

were thus labeled "non-meditators" *(ajjhāyaka,* Sans. *a-dhyāyaka),* which is a pun on the term used for recitors of the Vedas *(adhyāyaka).*[40]

In this passage the social world is portrayed as coming into existence through a gradual process of degeneration which is motivated primarily through greed, which gives rise eventually to social segmentation. The brahmins in particular are lampooned through the exploitation of the tension between worldly life and renunciation, which, according to Heesterman, has been a central tension within the Brahmanic tradition.[41]

By this point it is hopefully clear that, in rejecting the *varṇa* ideology, Buddhists were not merely quibbling over points in speculative philosophy. For while the *varṇa* ideology was integrated within a cosmology and reinforced by often sophisticated speculation concerning the cosmos and the natural world, it was not without profound political and social consequence. Lincoln pointed out that

> the cosmic and the social sides of this religious ideology, as expressed in myth and ritual, and as enacted in social practice and organization, were both part of one and the same system. And one cannot separate the elegant strands of speculative thought from the brutal facts of social hierarchy and exploitation: it was, and regularly is, the persuasive power of the former that makes the latter possible. The social system which was buttressed by this ideology was one in which mental labor was reserved for the privileged few, to whom were allotted the greatest shares of valued resources. The others, who engaged in manual work, were further differentiated, some enjoying a considerable measure of power, prosperity and prestige, while others – the majority – were relegated to lives of service and subordination, bearing further the stigma of impurity. All these results – real, concrete effects, and not gossamer stories – were effectively legitimated by myths of creation through sacrifice, and were also dramatized in the practice of sacrificial ritual, in which members of the highest class presided and – most often – those of the second class served as patrons, while those of the lowest class played minor roles, if any at all. (1991:174)

The Buddhist myth is an alter-cosmogony in that it portrays the creation of the social world with its distinctions not as a necessary consequence of the ineluctable process of creation, but as a process of degradation resulting from greed and ultimately misknowledge. For the Buddhists, social distinction is at its best and least oppressive a compromise, and in its

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[40] See Gombrich 1992, p. 163.

[41] See Heesterman's essay "Brahmin, Ritual, and Renouncer" (1985:26-44).

worse and more oppressive forms an inexcusable social evil, resulting from the greed, ill will and stupidity (in the sense of ignorance of the laws of causality) of those who propagate it.

Just as the *puruṣasūkta* cosmogony implies a social order, so too does this *alter-cosmogony* suggest an alternate social order, a path for social action. That myth can do more than simply describe and bolster the given social order was argued by Lynch, who following Geertz pointed out that "myths provide not just models *of* reality but also models *for* reality. They have a conative function because of motivation they can engender and because of the strategic analysis of social situations which they can provide to those who believe in them."[42]

The social order commended in this text is still based on kingly rule, but a moderated kingly rule. It is not a rule, as prescribed in the *dharmaśāstra*s, subordinated to the brahmins and in their interest, wherein the duty of a king *(rājadharma)* was largely the maintenance of social order. Instead, as Tambiah has shown in his masterful 1976 monograph, the Buddhist critique of the *varṇa* ideology was joined to a concomitant redefinition of kingly authority; rather than talking about the *duty of the king (rājadharma),* which included the use of force to suppress dissent against the *varṇa* ideology, the king's duty was to be righteous, to be a *dharmarāja.*

In attempting to redefine the role of the king the Buddhists perhaps sought to dislodge the brahmins from positions of political authority, since, according to Inden, both brahmins and kings were held to possess lordship,[43] albeit in separate fields.[44] Tambiah has pointed out that in the Brahmanical system the Brahman is given a central position, mediating between the figure of the king and the renunciant *(sannyāsin),* between mastery

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[42] Lynch 1972:111. Concerning Geertz's formulation of religious symbols as both models of and models for reality see Geertz 1973, pp. 93-125.

[43] See Inden 1985, pp. 172-77. This seems to suggest that Dumont's thesis that religious and political authority were separate is inaccurate, as Tambiah (1972), for example, suggested.

[44] Concerning the tension between the brahmin and the king see Heesterman 1985, pp. 109-27.

of the world and spiritual mastery. In the Buddhist model, however, the king as *dharmarāja* takes the center stage, with the Brahmin demoted to court functionary, and the renunciant the Buddhist *bhikṣu*, who was to be supported and protected by the king, and who in turn provided a "field of merit" *(puṇyakṣetra)* for the king and other lay patrons.[45]

It appears that this model was adopted by the Mauryan state, particularly as exemplified by Aśoka, and it remained influential in India at least until the time of Harṣa in the seventh century. Inden has argued, in an important 1979 article, that the imperial model entailed a shift from the Vedic sacrifice to the Buddhist ceremony of the "Great Gift" *(mahādāna)* as a central, unifying imperial cult.[46] The importance of king Aśoka,[47] who is the model in Buddhist literature for the exemplary king, cannot be underestimated, and he is exemplary in part because of his perfection of the *mahādāna* rite as a legitimization for his rule.[48]

The *mahādāna* was understood by Buddhists as being an alternative to the bloody *śrauta* sacrifices. Such is the point of the *Kūṭadanta Sutta,*[49] in which the Buddha is portrayed as convincing a wealthy brahmin householder to release thirty-five hundred animals he was about to sacrifice, and offer instead a vegetarian feast for the monks at the very site of the planned sacrifice. As the *mahādāna* was accepted as the imperial paradigm,

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[45] See Tambiah 1985b, pp. 104-107. This case is also argued at much greater length in his 1976 monograph.

[46] Inden argued that "the crystallization of this imperial structure under Aśoka (c. 273-236 BC) was marked by an important cultic shift. He did not take the 'revealed' Vedic sacrifice as the central cult of the empire but instead established a form of Buddhist ceremonial as its central cult, thereby making Buddhism the dominant, encompassing religion in the cultural-symbolic constitution of his empire." (1979:132)

[47] There have been attempts by some Indian scholars, such as Dutt (1962) and Thapar to downplay Aśoka's commitment to Buddhism, an effort which may not be unrelated to the attempts at that time to reinvent Aśoka as a role model for modern India, as symbolized by the adoption of Aśoka's lion capital from his edict pillar found at Sarnāth as the symbol for the state of India. These attempts, however, have been duly criticized as unwarranted by Tambiah (1976, pp. 59 ff.).

[48] Concerning Aśoka and the *mahādāna* ceremony see Strong 1979 and 1983.

[49] *Digha Nikāya* 5, trans. in Walshe 1987, pp. 133-41.

the *śrauta* sacrifice was effectively marginalized.[50] The Buddhist critique of the violence of the sacrifices led to a marginalization of the Brahmanic tradition, and that

> This shift from the 'revealed' *(śrauta)* or 'cosmoregal' to the 'traditional' *(smārta)* or 'domestic' *(gṛhya)*, from rites performed inside the cosmoregal sacrificial enclosure to those performed outside it, was a cultural-political shift from the encompassing, cosmic, and central, to the encompassed, parochial, and peripheral. The imperial level and the universal center was silently but dramatically conceded to Buddhism while the regional level and the parochial periphery were taken up as the place of the Vedic cult, reformulated in the guise of a traditional household cult and made more or less consistent with requirements set by the Buddhist cult at the center on issues such as animal slaughter. Biardeau has suggested, with her usual insight, that hierarchization is the model for change in Indian society.[51] She had in mind that the Brahmanical tradition hierarchized other traditions. Here, however, the reverse has happened. The older Vedic sacrifice, once the central cult of the contending Aryan states of north India, has itself been hierarchized and regionalized by Buddhism. The "great gift" ceremony of Buddhism became the central ceremony of the imperial kingdoms of ancient India and, so long as the Aryan states were included within it, they were confined to the performance of vegetarianized, simplified domestic forms of the Vedic sacrifice. (Inden 1979:133)

It appears that, faced with this critique from without as well as the long-standing tendency toward the interiorization of the sacrifice in brahmanic thought,[52] the brahmins took the strategy of jettisoning the practice of the actual *śrauta* sacrifice as prescribed and described in the Vedas, while maintaining the authority of the Vedas and hence their own authority as structured in the *varṇa* taxonomy. This was probably not a great sacrifice, as new innovations came to supplant the largely abandoned sacrificial tradition. Inden wrote that

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[50] A variety of gifts were commended. These ranged from modest daily gifts to the monks of their daily needs, to elaborate quinquennial assemblies *(pañcavarṣika)* in which the emperor emptied the imperial treasury in bestowing lavish gifts on the mendicants. Considered most praiseworthy were the five 'gifts' of the precepts *(śila)* – not to commit violent acts, not to steal, and so on – that the Buddhist householder was to observe (Dāna-vagga of the Aṅguttara Nikāya). All of these donations, whether large or small, literal or metaphoric, were referred in the Buddhist texts as *mahādānas*, "great gifts", and opposed to the more grandiose of the Vedic animal sacrifices, which they designated as "great sacrifices" *(mahāyajña)*. Imperial rulers turned the bestowal of these gifts into formal ceremonies and made them into the central ritual activities of the imperial states of ancient India. At the same time, they effectively forbade the performance by conquered warrior kings of the older Vedic sacrifices at the center of their (regional) states by forbidding the slaughter of animals. The performance of sacrifices in which vegetal substances – e.g., ghee and seeds – were offered was permitted, but the donation of the simple daily requisites to a monk was considered, in the rhetoric of Buddhist literature, was much more notorious. (1979:132)

[51] He refers here to Biardeau's 1972 book, *Clefs pour la Pensée hindoue*, esp. p. 125

[52] See Heesterman 1985, p. 41.

> Side by side with the reformulations of the sacrificial tradition in the *sūtras* were the efforts made, beginning in the Mahābhārata, to transform regional deities, sages, or heroes, e.g., Kṛṣṇa, of the various Aryan states into ecumenical deities of the Vedic pantheon whose icons eventually came to be honored" *(pūjā)* in much the same way as the symbols of the Buddha, enshrined as Cosmic Overlord of the imperial state. (1979:133)

With the resurgence of Hinduism in the early medieval period, the Buddhist rite of *mahādāna* was adopted and transformed by the Hindus into a rite dramatizing the unity of the cosmic and social orders, centering on the figures, respectively, of the deity and the king.[53] In this new Hindu context the *mahādāna* rite was significantly transformed, although important aspects of it remain; in particular, the force of the Buddhist (and Jain) critiques of animal sacrifice lingered on, as the Hindu *mahādāna* maintained (and thus internalized) the non-violence which was an initial impetus in the Buddhist development of a non-violent rite contra the *śrauta* sacrifice.[54]

This shift away from the practice of *śrauta* sacrifice may have had important consequences. In particular, the rise of Śiva as a great god of Hinduism may be linked to this shift; in the earlier period, Śiva was commonly depicted as an heretical, outcast god, excluded from the sacrifice.[55] But with the decline of the practice of the sacrifice, Śiva perhaps could be more easily integrated as a central force driving the development of resurgent classical Hinduism. These transformations of the "Hindu" tradition seems to confirm Roy's thesis that

> Traditions, then, in spite of their apparently monolithic and constant character, are in reality subject to pressures rendering them fluid and dynamic. These are especially obvious in situations where disseminating and/or controlling traditions are interwoven with access to various forms of power. (1996:9)

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[53] See Inden 1979, pp. 134 f. Inden claims the Hindu *mahādāna* independent of *śrauta* sacrifice was first performed by Dantidurga, the first imperial Rāṣṭrakūṭa, around 753 CE (1979:134).

[54] The doctrine of non-violence *(ahiṃsa)* continues to resonate within Hindu tradition and is quite influential even in purely Hindu contexts, such as the controversies concerning animal sacrifice in Uttarkhand described by Sax (1991:147-59).

[55] The myth of Dakṣa's sacrifice exemplifies this sort of depiction. See O'Flaherty 1971, pp. 318-23, and also O'Flaherty 1973.

This applies to the Buddhists as well. There is evidence to suggest that the adoption of Buddhism as a state religion in the imperial period brought about changes within Buddhism; this may account for the imagery of royalty and mastery found in the Mahāyāna cults of the bodhisattvas and Tantric deities. And, as will be seen, Tantric traditions appropriated elements of Hindu traditions, and these acts cannot be seen as non-political, as they most likely occurred in contexts in which patronage and power was at stake.

This brief look at two competing ideologies, which manifested in mythic, and ritual forms as well, has hopefully made the point that myth and ritual should not be assumed to rigidly serve any one role, such as the maintenance of hegemony. This assumption, as Bell has shown, follows from the bifurcation of experience into a thought/action dichotomy, with primacy given to the former, and ritual assigned to the latter, secondary and derivative category.[56] Here it seems more useful to stress the complementarity of myth and ritual as modes of discourse. Lincoln argued that myth and ritual are "stylistically different but complementary and mutually reinforcing modes for the encoding and dissemination of ideology, most often religious ideology, but not necessarily so." (1991:172)

As such, they lack an intrinsic, fixed role either in the dissemination of dominant or alternative ideologies, but can in fact be put to either uses, with the same myth or ritual element susceptible to appropriation by rival groups. This was observed by Leach, who wrote that

> Myth and ritual is a language of signs in terms of which claims to rights and status are expressed, but it is a language of argument, not a chorus of harmony. If ritual is sometimes a mechanism of integration, one could as well argue that it is often a mechanism of disintegration. (1954:278)

Rather than being fixed in either meaning or function, ritual, like any human construct, can be interpreted differently and put to different uses. Ritual can possess multiple layers of meaning, as Turner has pointed out.[57] And Durkheim, contra the Functionalist school,

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[56] See Bell 1992, ch. 2.

[57] Turner wrote with regard to symbols in ritual that "It would seem, therefore, that in any given instance of a symbol's use, we have to take into account three orders of reference: (1) its *manifest sense(s)*, of which

argued that ritual is ambiguous in function in that the same rite can be put to different uses.[58] The meaning and function of a rite differs in different contexts, both performative and interpretive.[59] Ritual should be understood historically as subject to change, rather than a fixed aspect of structure.[60] It thus seems worthwhile to take into consideration the historical process whereby a ritual action might take on multiple layers of significance in different historical and social contexts.

Thus, the *mahādāna* is not the same ceremony performed in Buddhist and Hindu contexts, but quite different ceremonies that vary in form, function and signification between these contexts, even though they are genetically linked. Likewise, the numerous ritual technologies that Buddhists adapted from Vedic sources, such as the *homa* fire sacrifice, differ in these ways in spite of the fact that the Vedic and Buddhist performance of the rite are formally similar. It is thus necessary, when exploring competing religious traditions, to examine the function as well as the form of elements that occur within both traditions, wherein a mythic or ritual element is appropriated and redeployed by a tradition, thereby creating a novel form of discourse which is nevertheless traceable to the old context in which it originated.

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the subject is fully conscious and which is (are) related to the explicit aims of the ritual (to remove sterility, bring on rain, remove a dead hunter's incisor tooth from the body of his living kinsman, and so on); (2) its *latent sense(s),* of which the subject is only marginally aware but could have become fully aware and which is (are) related to other ritual and pragmatic contexts of social action; and (3) its *hidden sense(s),* of which the subject is completely unconscious and which is (are) related to infantile (and possibly prenatal) experiences shared with most other human beings. (Turner 1975:176, the emphasis is mine.) Interestingly, Turner's threefold levels of signification correspond closely to the three levels attributed by Buddhist Tantric authors to symbols in Tantric ritual, which are the outer, inner, and secret meanings.

[58] See the discussion of ritual in section 1.2.2 above.

[59] This point is made by Bell (1997:87-88) with regard to the Swazi Ncwala rite; see also Lincoln 1989, pp. 53-74.

[60] This was argued by Comaroff in her 1985 book. See esp. ch. 7, pp. 194-251.

3.1.3 On Dissent, Protest and Counter-Culture: Resistance or Reproduction?

It has been argued that "śramaṇic" groups in India, exemplified by the Buddha and the Buddhist community he founded, represented an "ethical protest" initiated by the crises brought on, according to Jaspers, by the so-called "axial age".[61] This was a period, it is claimed, of economic, social and technological change, exemplified in India by the expansion of trade and also armed conflict, made deadlier by the dissemination of iron technologies,[62] and perhaps exasperated by the performance of agonistic rites such as the *aśvamedha*.[63] There seems little doubt that Buddhism as well as Jainism constituted "ethical protest" to the violence of this period, and it seems likely that the *karma* model of causality, with its ethical accounting of merit and sin was influenced by the growing mercantilism of the period, which also may have had the effect of destabilizing the older order.[64]

As noted above, śramaṇic groups, and in particular the Buddhists, were influential during the Mauryan imperial period, as is indicated not only by textual evidence and

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[61] See Jaspers 1962.

[62] While the introduction of iron in the first half of the first millennium BCE (in approximately 800-600 BCE) may have made military conflict more deadly, it is also connected with the development of science and rationalism. See Warder 1956, p. 46.

[63] See Inden 1979, p. 35, and also Kulke 1992.

[64] A money economy developed probably in the sixth century BCE, with the circulation of punch-marked coins such as the *kārṣapaṇa*. (Warder 1980:30) This was not without social consequences. According to Thapar, "the introduction of coined metallic money, even if only in the urban markets, extended the geographical reach of trade and also the range of items traded and led increasingly to the computation of wealth in the form of coined money. Those who were wealthy were accorded a higher status in urban life, which weakened the role of ritual status, and, to a lesser extent, the monopoly of land ownership as a criteria of social rank." (1984:102). The money economy resulted in the creation of "a new set of impersonal professional ties not necessarily based on kinship nor subservient to the requirements of the ritual status of the *varṇa* hierarchy. [Unlike Brahmanical sources,] Buddhist sources on the other hand endorse the status of the financier and carry no hint of disapproval of usury. The *seṭṭhigahapatis* are highly respected and frequently the more important patrons of the Buddhist *saṅgha*. The Buddhist sources depict the *gahapatis* in trade as an economic asset treated with respect by those in political authority." (1984:103) Likewise, evidence suggests that trade was the impetus for the introduction and use of scripts during this period; writing was quickly adopted by the Buddhists, but long seen by the brahmans as a threat to their monopoly over the Vedas. See Thapar 1984, pp. 103ff.

Aśoka's pillars, but by numismatic evidence as well.[65] Warder argued that "through compromise with the leaders of the sects of wanderers the kings at first favored the heterodox trend, which encouraged the rise of powerful monarchies, for the orthodox trend maintained that the Brahmans as highest caste should dominate society and keep the kings in check." (1956:54) Warder describes the consolidation of political power that culminated in the Mauryan empire as a "social revolution," involving the amalgamation of diffuse, undifferentiated tribal societies into consolidated, increasingly urban and differentiated societies, with a greater monopolization of power by the centralized state. He wrote that "the heretical sects, we have suggested, provided the necessary ideological armoury for this social revolution. Their internal organization grew up in harmony with that of the new states, and the kings patronized them because they found them valuable allies against the Brahman caste." (1956:60) Buddhists were also evidently closely associated with the merchant class, as is indicated by the placement of monasteries along major trade routes, which were in turn patronized by merchants and merchant guilds.[66]

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[65] The period in which Buddhists received royal patronage is typically considered to begin with Aśoka, and extended through the Gupta era, who were known mainly for their patronage of Hindu groups, but who were also responsible for the founding of the Nālandā monastic university among other things. Patronage continued in the North under Harṣa and the Pālas. (See Hazra 1995) Numismatic evidence calls into question the notion that Aśoka was the earliest patron of Buddhism, but suggests that support may have begun to dwindle under the Guptas. A possible sign for royal patronage of Buddhism is the presence of a Buddhist symbols, the stūpa, on coins. The symbol first appears on pre-Mauryan punch-marked coins, those of Mahāpadma Nanda (circa 360-317 CE) of Magadha; this could indicate royal patronage of Buddhism even as early as the mid-fourth century, although it is difficult to access the exact import of a stylized numismatic symbol on coins of such an early date, and these coins are rare and not well documented. While the stūpa itself had pre-Buddhist precedents, there is no evidence that it had strong symbolic import before the advent of Buddhism. (See Lamotte 1988a pp. 310 ff.) The symbol of the stūpa is abundantly found on Mauryan coinage from the reign of Aśoka (c. 272 - 232 BC), i.e. the silver *kārṣāpaṇa* (see Mitchiner 1976 (M76) 4229-4234, Gupta and Hardaker 1985 (GH) 510). It appears on those of his successors, namely Kunala (M76 4245, GH 590) and Samprati (M76 4195-4197, GH 574). The stūpa also is displayed prominently on the post-Mauryan copper half and quarter *kārṣāpaṇa* coins of circa 180-160 BCE (M76 4418, 4422), as well as on the double *kārṣāpaṇa* coins of the Chutus of Vanavasi of circa 160-345 (M76 4971). It also figured prominently on the reverse of the silver drahm issued by the Śaka kings of Gujarāt and Mālwā, who ruled from roughly 150-388 CE (Basham 1954:63; see M76 2706 ff.) The symbol largely disappears from Indian coinage with the rise of the Guptas, who replaced it with images such as the Garuḍa. Kushan coinage, while not depicting stūpas, is famous for its depiction of the Buddha, Maitreya, Śiva as well as other Iranian and Central Asian deities. One might argue that the appearance of Buddhist symbols on coinage signifies the ascent of Buddhism as a source of legitimation for the imperial state, and its disappearance during the Gupta period signifies a waning on political influence on the part of the Buddhists, and a corresponding waxing of influence by resurgent, theistic Hindu traditions.

[66] See Kosambi 1965, pp. 182-85.

While the formation of the Mauryan centralized state was a major "revolution" in Indian political and social history, it would probably be an overstatement to depict Buddhists as "revolutionaries", during this or almost any other period. The ideological opposition of the Buddhists to the *varṇa* ideology and its concomitant social inequality should not be taken as proof that Buddhists *actively* resisted the hegemony it represents. The Buddhists might be considered revolutionary in establishing an alternative institution, the monastery, which was relatively egalitarian in that it accepted persons of all social background, and in which, ideally, rank was based on seniority rather than birth status. Early canonical *suttas*, however, often depicted the Buddha as accepting the basic division of society in hierarchically organized groups,[67] even though he often took issue with the presumptions of superiority on the part of the brahmins.[68] But there is no evidence that Buddhism in India constituted a social protest movement. This is probably due to the Buddhist focus on renunciation from the world, which was associated with *saṃsāra*, and on liberation, *nirvāṇa*, which was not typically described as *social* liberation per se, but on liberation from suffering as a whole, conceived more as a problem of existential than social proportion.

This has been suggested by Thapar, who has argued that Buddhism in India was a dissenting group, involving the "questioning of established ideologies or belief systems, becoming the core of a new ideology." (1979:178) She argues, however, that Buddhist dissent was conditional since their renunciation was conditional; Buddhists renunciates did not "leave the world" entirely, but only symbolically, and remained a symbol of authority in the world, constituting, according to Thapar, a "counter-culture".[69] The symbolic capital

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[67] In some of the teaching directed toward laypersons, such as the *Sāleyyaka Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya* 41, trans. in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, pp. 379-85), the Buddha discusses the social classes as a matter of fact, without a tone of either approbation or condemnation.

[68] A classic, humorous example of the Buddha humbling a brahmin's pride occurs in the *Ambaṭṭha Sutta*, *Digha Nikāya* 3, trans. in Walshe 1987, pp. 111-24.

[69] Thapar suggests that "one of the paradoxes of the Indian tradition is that the renouncer, in spite of migrating out of society, remains a symbol of authority within society. An explanation of this paradox may emerge from an analysis of the social role of the renouncer. Apart from those who through austerity

accrued through renunciation was invested in the construction of an institutional base, the monasteries. The monasteries did embody the Buddhist ideal of spiritual rather than genealogical legitimacy. "The monastery gradually acquired the dimensions of an agency which cut across caste and lineage ties. That this did not lead to confrontation and conflict with social and political authority was perhaps because of the diversion of dissent into a parallel system." (1979:186) Thapar has suggested that institutionalization, which invariably required patronage, mitigated the revolutionary potential of such dissent movements. She wrote that

> It is of considerable interest that in the Indian tradition the effective questioning of or breaking away from caste obligations required the form of a religious sect. This may be explained as being substantially due to the logic of caste society in which the non-observance of caste norms would have otherwise resulted in ostracism and low status. Given this basic premise, anything short of overthrowing the structure of caste society made it necessary to legitimize the breaking of rules by seeking the identity of a religious sect and if possible also by building an institutional base to counteract the charge of losing status. The former was by far the easiest way out and was resorted to, times without number. The building of an institutional base required the patronage of the wealthy. This weakened the thrust of dissent and diverted it into the formation of a parallel society rather than strengthening a confrontation with the existing system. The parallel society not only legitimized the breaking of caste rules but also provided a mechanism for caste orthodoxy to accommodate this dissent, since the parallel system impinged but did not disrupt the society. (1979:193)

A major question that arises here, suggested by Thapar, is to what extent could a dissenting group, caught up in the politics of patronage, constitute an effective form of resistance to hegemony? Thapar suggests that dissent on the part of the Buddhists was blunted by their very success at becoming institutionally established. Certain Marxist thinkers, such as Williams, cast doubt on the effectiveness of any alternative social movements in challenging hegemony (with the exception of Marxist inspired proletarian revolution, of course), and suggests that they tend to be limited by the dominant order. Williams argued that

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and severe discipline, both mental and physical, sought extra-sensory power, there were many others who renounced their social obligations, joined an order and far from propagating a life-negating principle, sought to establish an alternate or parallel society. They combined in themselves the charisma of the renouncer as well the concerns of social and occasionally political dissent. They were neither revolutionaries nor radical reformers; they can perhaps best be described.... as the makers of a counter-culture." (1979:179)

> the major theoretical problem, with immediate effect on methods of analysis, is to distinguish between alternative and oppositional initiatives and contributions which are made within or against a specific hegemony (which then sets certain limits to them or which can succeed in neutralizing, changing or actually incorporating them) and other kinds of initiative and contribution which are irreducible to the terms of the original or adaptive hegemony, and are in that sense independent. It can be persuasively argued that all or nearly all initiatives and contributions, even when they take on manifestly alternative or oppositional forms, are in practice tied to the hegemonic: that dominant culture, so to say, at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture. (1977:114)

The Marxists here may have put too much power in the hands of the hegemons, and overestimated the power of hegemony to contain and limit oppositional forces. For no matter how great the power of a hegemon, it is never coextensive with the society as a whole, and thus does not give rise to all elements of a society, nor can it contain them. It can and has been argued that the very success of alternative social groups at establishing themselves as a viable alternative is a sign of effective resistance. Eco wrote that

> Counter-culture is thus the active critique or transformation of the existing social, scientific or aesthetic paradigm. It is religious reform. It is the heresy of whoever confers a license upon himself and prefigures another church. It is the only cultural manifestation that a dominant culture is unable to acknowledge and accept. The dominant culture tolerates parasitic counter-cultures as more or less innocuous deviations, but it cannot accept critical manifestations which call it into question. Counter-culture comes about when those who transform the culture in which they live become critically conscious of what they are doing and elaborate a theory of their deviation from the dominant model, *offering a model capable of sustaining itself.* (1995:168)

The question of whether or not Buddhism constituted an effective resistance to the dominance of the *varṇa*-ideology in India is a complex one, several facets of which will be explored in the rest of this section.

There have been several scholars who argued that Buddhists, rather than constituting, in part, a social reform movement in resistance to the Brahmanical ideology of social stratification, actually implicitly supported this ideology. Krishan, for example, following Weber,[70] contends that "the Buddha by his teaching unwittingly strengthened the

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[70] Krishan does not mention Weber in his article, but his argument that the doctrine of *karma* provided an ideological anchor for the caste system and is an integral, inextricable aspect of the caste system follows Weber's characterization in his influential work *The Religion of India*. See Weber 1958, pp. 118-123. While Weber is correct in pointing out that the *karma* can have explanatory power with regard to social injustice, his characterization of *karma*, at least in the Buddhist context, is quite narrow and of limited value.

caste system by explaining it in terms of the doctrine of karma." (1986:71) This is an idea which will have to be examined closely, for while it is true that the doctrine of *karma* can be used as a justification for social inequality, it is not clear that this is *necessarily* the case. This is a complicated issue because the doctrine of *karma* can, superficially, appear as deterministic, and thus employed it would indeed deny agency and thus support the totalistic ideology of *varṇa*. For the Buddhists, however, this would be nothing more than an unconscious approach to *karma*, for, since all experience is the consequence of one's actions, none but oneself is responsible for one's fate. Taken as an ethic of individual *self-determination*, *karma* theory does not *necessarily* imply a social hierarchy, and in fact is not particularly compatible with it, as Heesterman has forcefully pointed out as follows:

> Far from forming a coherent whole, caste and karma are at opposite ends and mutually disruptive. The point is that karma refers to the individual's fate; caste and its svadharma, however, refer to the collectivity. As we saw, it is the caste-bound collectivity that determines the individual's karma and thereby prevents him from working out his own salvation. Only when man realizes his individuality to the full extent and steps out of the collectivistic society, will he be able to stop the inexorable karma mechanism. This, rather than an organistic theodicy, is the actual message of the karma doctrine. It breaks away from the collectivistic world toward individual salvation. Here the organicist restraints of caste are in conflict with the rationalistic karma doctrine. The juxtaposition of caste and karma, then, is indeed a volatile mixture. For the consequence of the karma doctrine is no less than a call to deconstruct the world. (1985:198-99)

In Buddhist discourse, *karma* is taken not as a justification for remaining in one's alotted place, but rather, as a justification for renouncing the world, and thereby taking control of one's fate. The renunciation, if not the deconstruction, of the social world is a fundamental aspect of Buddhist monasticism, and this rejection of the "caste-bound" social order is not unrelated to the doctrine of individual, ethical responsibility or *karma* propounded openly by the Buddhists, unlike the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (3.2.13), in which *karma* is portrayed as a secret doctrine unfit for public dissemination, which perhaps suggests Brahmanical discomfort with the idea.[71]

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[71] See Olivelle 1996, pp. 37-38. One could argue, for example, that in the classical Hindu formulation the doctrine of *karma* as an theory of ethical consequences for one's actions is largely blunted in order to accommodate theism. In the *Bhagavad-Gita*, for example, Kriṣṇa is portrayed as the ultimate agent in the world, responsible for the division of humans into the four classes, and it is also claims that those who

It is probably correct to say that reforming social inequalities was not a major concern of the Buddhists, and it is also correct that the Buddhist theory of *karma* was deployed as an explanation, if not a justification, for the status quo. In Buddhist texts, however, *karma* is typically deployed to argue for the necessity of ethical behavior and mindfulness in one's everyday life,[72] and it is this aspect of the *karma* theory which to this day continues to be stressed by Buddhist teachers;[73] it is causality, not fate, that is emphasized. On the other hand, it is very possible that the Buddhist ethic of individual responsibility would inhibit social protest.[74]

Perhaps a more significant question is the persistence of castes among Buddhist societies such as in Sri Lanka and Nepal, the two regions in the sub-Himalayan subcontinent where Buddhism has persisted, and where the societies are organized into castes, albeit in distinct ways. Both examples suggest that Buddhists did not actively seek to undermine caste distinctions within the context of *lay* society.

That caste persisted in Sri Lanka, where the dominant ethnic majority is Buddhist,[75] is interesting, but perhaps in an unexpected way. Sinhalese society is divided into castes,

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understand this are freed from the consequences of their actions. See *Bhagavadgita* 4.13-15, trans. in Miller 1986, p. 51.

[72] With regard to the classical literature, an important example the *Mahākammabibhanga Sutta* (*Majjhima Nikāya* 136, trans. in trans. in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, pp. 1058-65.

[73] Tambiah reports that a contemporary Thai Buddhist teacher, Maha Boowa, in his preaching and pamphlets, emphasizes that one "should be *mindful* of everything he does – whether he is sweeping the floor or picking up a cup . He must keep his mind in the present and seek after wisdom *(paññā)*. He must comprehend the laws of *karma* as evidenced in everyday acts: If you place a pot in the middle of the floor, it will get knocked down. External circumstances have internal repercussions and correspondences." (1984:148)

[74] This was suggested by Thapar, who noted that the Buddhist doctrine of *karma* focused on individual responsibility for one's actions, and which saw not only one's social station, but one's entire condition as the product of past actions. She argued that "the sting of social protest was numbed by insisting that there was no tangible agency responsible for social injustice, or even an abstract deity against whom man could complain, but that the responsibility belonged to man himself. This in turn curbed non-conformity in behavior for fear of the consequences in the next life." (1975:126)

[75] The complex issues surrounding the interrelationships and conflict between the Sinhala majority and Tamil minority in Sri Lanka is beyond the scope of this work. Concerning the complex relationship between ethnic and religious identity in the late medieval and early colonial periods see Holt 1996. Tambiah in recent years has written extensively on the relationship between religion and ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. See Tambiah 1991, 1992 and 1997.

but in a way quite different than in India, as there are no brahmins, and the dominant caste, the *goyigama* cultivators, is also the most numerous, and there are several numerically much smaller groups.[76] These groups are not obviously or outwardly distinguished, and distinctions are observed mainly in the arena of marriage.[77] By the dawn of the colonial era, however, ordination of monks[78] was limited to members of the *goyigama* caste, which of course runs counter to the *vinaya.*[79] This restriction, according to Gothóni, was made as a response to the repeated invasions by the Tamils and later the European powers; the leading monasteries were located in the highlands, which were dominated by the *goyigama,* and in response to the political turmoil the monks largely restricted ordination to family members, a practice which gradually became institutionalized.[80] With this in mind, Gothóni concluded that

> monastic life cannot be approached per se, but must always be viewed in relation to the immediate surrounding culture and society of which it forms a part....most of the social patterns observable within monastic life tend to be reflections of patterns prevailing in the surrounding society.[81]

Clearly, insofar as monasteries were replicating social class distinctions they cannot be understood to be resisting them. Were such patterns found universally throughout the Buddhist world one could safely conclude that Buddhism's resistance never translated from ideology into practice.

This, however, is not quite the case. As discussed above, Ray has argued at length in his recent book that the Buddhist *saṃgha* was never simplistically organized into a two-fold lay versus monastic pattern. He argues instead for a threefold model involving the

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[76] See Gombrich 1971, pp. 345 ff.

[77] See Gothóni 1986, pp. 20-21.

[78] The order of nuns was extinct in Sri Lanka by this time; according to Gunawardene, last mention of the order of nuns occurs during the reign of Mahinda IV (956-972 CE), and the order most likely died out during the Chola occupation of Sri Lanka that soon followed. (1979:39)

[79] See Gombrich 1971, pp. 357 ff.

[80] See Gothóni 1986, p. 20.

[81] Gothóni 1986:24. This same point is made by Yalman in his 1967 monograph.

laity, the settled monks and the forest renunciants.[82] The vast majority of monks and nuns came to adopt the settled lifestyle, but the forest renunciants, despite their smaller number, continue to this day to have great influence in Buddhist polities. They are particularly revered by the laity, for whom they are imbued with great charisma as a result of their meditative lifestyles. And while the monasteries were often patronized by the kings and their governments, it was to the forest renunciates that they turned when there was perceived to be a need for renewal and reform of the monastic institutions, which were periodically viewed as being corrupted by their involvement in worldly affairs.[83] The forest renunciants thus tended to be the locus of both innovation and critique within Buddhist communities. As Ray pointed out,

> forest renunciants, with their faithful laity, owing to their relatively lesser institutionalization and their meditative focus, can better tolerate and even encourage innovation and nonconformity. When new developments occur within Buddhism, they often come from the solitary and remote locales of forest renunciants. This certainly seems to have been the case with many of the grand developments within Indian Buddhism (the rise of Buddhism itself, the early Mahāyāna, the Vajrayāna). Forest renunciants live on the periphery of the Buddhist establishment, but it is precisely this position that enables them to see the shortcomings of the establishment, to mount critiques, to have the spiritual authority to make those critiques stick, and to give birth to new developments. In economic, social, and political matters, the forest renunciant often tends....to look with a sympathetic eye on the neglected, the poor, and the downtrodden and to become a rallying point for their aspirations.[84]

As a result, the encrustation of the *nikāyas* (schools of Buddhism) in Sri Lanka did not go unchallenged; by the end of the eighteenth century, a protest movement developed which culminated in the formation of another school, the Amarapura Nikāya, which was open to the lower caste men excluded by the other schools.[85] It thus appears that, in Sri Lanka at least, Buddhism retained its ideological opposition to the caste system, but that this

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[82] See Ray 1994, esp. pp. 433-47.

[83] This paradigm of the interrelations between different aspects of Buddhist polities has been sketched out at length by Tambiah in his 1984 book. See especially pp. 53-77.

[84] Ray 1994, p. 439; Ray here draws on Tambiah 1984, esp. pp. 72-79 and 293-320.

[85] See Gombrich 1971, p. 360.

opposition was not directed to the larger society, but toward the monasteries, within which caste-based distinctions were not readily tolerated.

Another example often given for the "degeneration" of Buddhism is that of the Nevāri Buddhists in Nepal, who practice a form of Mahāyāna Buddhism highly Tantric in character, and amongst whom the institution of celibate monasticism disappeared. The monasteries of Nepal were evidently dependent upon royal patronage, with a large number of the most important monasteries built by Licchavi kings. They were also invested with large estates, and were given secular responsibility over them identical to that bestowed upon village councils.[86] Eventually, however, the practice of celibate monasticism disappeared in Nepal. It is not known exactly why or when this happened, but some popular accounts lay blame on the Hindu king Sthiti Malla (1382-95 CE). According to legendary accounts, he forced the laicization of the monks as well as introduced (or re-introduced) the caste system.[87] As a result, the lay Nevāri Buddhist saṃgha became "encapsulated" as a distinct group of castes within the larger Hindu Nevāri polity, a process which also occurred around dissenting communities in India such as the Viraśaivas.[88] They were never fully assimilated into the caste system, in which they continue to hold an ambiguous position.[89]

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[86] Concerning the early history of Buddhism in Nepal see Riccardi 1980, esp. pp. 270-73.

[87] See Gellner 1992, pp. 86-87.

[88] For a general introduction to the Viraśaivas or Liṅgāyats see McCormack 1973. According to Chekki, their founder, Basava (1106-11868 CE) actively opposed the caste system and sought to found an alternative community in which caste distinctions would not be observed. (1997:47-52) According to Ishwaran, Basava was particularly critical of social inequalities based on birth or tied to the concepts of purity and pollution. (1992:92-93) Over time, however, they transformed into a caste by virtue of their exclusion by the surrounding community, and they also gradually developed caste-like distinctions within their community (Chekki 1997:59-60).

[89] Most specifically, the purported descendants of the laicized monks go by the surname Śākya. Gellner describes the dilemma facing the Śākyas as follows: "they form a caste but have no place in the scheme of the four *varṇas*; they are monks but recruit only sons by pure mothers as members. These contradictions are partly, but only partly, overcome by the doctrine of levels which explains monasticism as the lowest and most exoteric identity of the Śākyas. It is significant that the Vajrācāryas seem to have less of a problem than the Śākyas over this....Vajrācāryas....escape this dilemma to some extent by their close association with the Vajrayāna: their primary identity is as Tantric priests who must be married." (1992:166)

Evidently Nevāri Buddhist feelings concerning the caste system were ambiguous as well. According to Gellner, they remained aware of the Buddhist critique of *varṇa*, but accepted seemingly intractable social realities. "When caste was supported by the force of law, Buddhists accepted it in practice while retaining reservations about it in myth and ideology." (1992:166) Now that the caste system is no longer forcibly maintained, there have been some attempts to reform Nevāri monasticism, along with a general modernization of Buddhist institutions in Nepal.[90]

Through an examination of Buddhist polities, it is clear that while Buddhism ideologically opposes the caste system, Buddhists were pragmatic and typically did not actively oppose it in societies where it was accepted. The Buddhists, however, did not support it either through their belief in *karma* or their use of any other form of discourse, which is shown by the fact that in other civilizations in which Buddhism was adopted the *varṇa* ideology was not adopted, and its concomitant patterns of social organization were not reproduced.[91] Buddhism seems to have in fact acted as a buffer in preventing the adoption of the caste system, as research among Himalayan societies has shown.[92] Locke seems to have been quite reasonable in concluding that

> Buddhism was a revolt against caste to the extent that it denied that 'salvation' was open only to the brahman or the high caste and that it admitted all comers into the saṅgha. However, throughout its history in India, Buddhism existed in a caste society. The monk could withdraw from that society to his *vihāra*, but the lay Buddhist remained very much a part of Hindu society and lived according to its traditions, making use of the brahmans to perform the usual rituals and initiate his sons into their caste. By becoming a Buddhist a man chose a different way to salvation; he did not opt out of (Hindu) society. What a study of Newar Buddhist

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[90] See Gellner 1992, pp. 166-67.

[91] Of course, other Buddhist civilizations such as the Tibetan contain social classes, but they were not articulated in the manner prescribed in the *dharmaśāstras*, nor were they as central and controversial as was caste in India. See Ortner 1973a, p. 51, and also Goldstein 1971.

[92] See for example Srivastava, who in a 1966 article showed how a Himalayan tribe, the Bhotias of Kumaon, maintained a Buddhist identity which was supported by their frequent contact with Tibetans in conducting the salt trade between Tibet and India. Following, however, the loss of contact with Tibetans subsequent to the Chinese invasion of Tibet, the Bhotias Buddhist identity began to wane, and they began to tentatively engage in haggling over caste status in Hindu society, which necessitated, among other things, their forswearing of beef and beer. At the time Srivastava conducted his research, however, concensus on these matters had not been reached.

> society then presents us with is not so much a corrupt form of Buddhism as some inkling of the way Buddhism functioned in India as a part of the Indian (Hindu) scene. (1989:109)

In short, the caste system prescribes one of many ways to hierarchically organize a society; in India, it was a compelling way, and for Hindus, authoritative. For the Buddhists it was not authoritative, but it was compelling for them when surrounded by a larger society for which it is authoritative.

Even in India, despite its extinction in most parts of the country, Buddhism evidently has retained at least its ideological resistance to *varṇa* discourse. This is suggested by Ambedkar's ultimate decision to embrace Buddhism as a means of combating the stigma of untouchability, which he concluded could not be accomplished within the sphere of discourse and practice of Hinduism, resulting in the conversion of three hundred Mahars to Buddhism by 1961.[93] Many Izhavas in Kerala also converted to Buddhism, after having failed in an attempt to combat *varṇa* based discrimination within Hinduism, via Śaṃkara's *advaita* philosophy and the establishment of alternate temple complexes open to all castes.[94]

It seems reasonable to conclude that while Buddhists were not engaged in protest against the *varṇa*-ideology or other aspects of Indian social and political life per se, the very fact that they embodied a well organized alternative to the lifestyle enjoined in the Brahmanical system, i.e., the *varṇāśrama* system, itself constituted a serious threat to that system, and was taken as such by its adherents. This is suggested by the hostile depictions of the Buddha in the *Purāṇas*, in which he is depicted as an avatar of Viṣṇu who incarnates

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[93] This figure derives from the 1961 Indian census; see Gokhale 1976, pp. 20-23. See also Fisk 1972.

[94] Pullapilly argues that the Izhavas were most likely Buddhists who "under the socio-cultural and religious milieu of a resurgent Brahmanism....gradually lost their identity....[and] were also relegated to an outcast status and by and large they also lost their property and civil rights." (1976:31). The attempt to boost their status within Hinduism was initiated in the nineteenth century by the Izhava saint Śrī Nārāyana Guru. However, "the Guru's *advaita* (nondual) philosophy found no acceptance among caste Hindus, and his establishment of Izhava temples only helped to ghettoize them from the mainstream of Hindu life, thus in a way magnifying their distress. Thus they found themselves in a situation where they were totally disillusioned with Hinduism itself." (1976:41) As a result, many Izhavas converted to other religions, mainly Christianity and Buddhism.

in order to trick the "demons" by teaching them *adharma.* In the *Śiva Purāṇa,* for example, this "*adharma*" included the doctrines of nonviolence, and the criticism of Vedic sacrifice and caste, both of which are violent from the Buddhist point of view.[95] These myths attempt to dodge, rather than rebut, Buddhist criticism by portraying them as aspects of a divine deception. That such myths were composed suggest that the Buddhist (and Jain) critiques were trenchant, and did not escape the notice of the brahmins toward whom these critiques were directed.

The very creation of an alternative institution in which caste distinctions are not recognized should probably be considered an act of resistance. Tambiah argued that

> One thing is clear from the early texts of *both* Buddhism and Brahmanism. While Brahmanism came to accept the śramaṇa as an individual renouncer and recluse, it was antagonistic to monastic Buddhism and Jainism, because it appreciated the fact that renouncers, organized as a community and as a fraternity, were a major threat to the Brahman's beliefs and supremacy. Taking early Buddhism as our exemplar, we have seen how monastic communities subject to a disciplinary code of conduct (vinaya) and teacher-disciple as well as fraternal relationships, were not only ideal for the transmission of philosophical wisdom and the practice of an ascetic mode of life, but also for making a 'missionary" appeal to the lay public. We would miss much of the appeal of early Buddhism (and the other heterodox sects) if we did not appreciate that the very existence of the renouncer assumed the necessary presence of the lay householder (and the lay social community at large devoted to economic and political pursuits), upon whom he was materially dependent and for whom he was to serve as an edifying example. The early Buddhist protest was consciously directed at weaning the layman from Brahmanical ritualism, and divine dependence, and substitute for them a sober life in this world chastened by a morality of dāna and awakened intentionality. (1981b:317-18)

A similar argument is put forward by Thapar,[96] and both Thapar and Tambiah have pointed out that the success of the Buddhist monastic model is confirmed by its eventual adoption by a resurgent Hinduism under the leadership of Śaṃkarācārya.[97]

It thus appears that while Buddhism in India was not a political movement per se, it would also be inaccurate to represent Buddhism as a completely apolitical and otherworldly

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[95] See O'Flaherty 1976, p. 186.

[96] See Thapar 1981, esp. pp. 296-97.

[97] See Thapar 1981, p. 297 and Tambiah 1981, p. 318.

religion, as did Weber in his otherwise admirable study of Indian religions.[98] These "otherworldly" Buddhists, were in fact engaged in an unprecedented, continent-wide campaign of institution building. This campaign was based upon a pattern which developed in classical times and continues to this day in Buddhist countries. That is, the pattern in which the Buddhists depend on the rulers for patronage, who in turn are legitimated by the spiritual authority provided by the Buddhists. Thapar noted that

> the advantage to political authority of such a relationship, quite apart from the theory that patronage bestowed merit on the patron, was that such institutions could become centres of loyalty and support in far flung areas. Here they acted as avenues of social acculturation and political legitimization." (1979:189)

This relationship was exemplified by the *mahādāna* rite, but was replicated on a smaller scale by the interactions between the monks and the laity, both of whom profited from merit-generating acts of generosity.

Monastic Buddhism depended upon patronage, and here the Buddhists appear to have been eminently practical; they did involve themselves in the world, but generally sought to avoid conflict with secular authorities, as their goal was to maintain the viability of their alternative order, which need not be in fundamental conflict with secular society, even as it challenged the claims of certain groups within it, such as the brahmins. And while the claims of brahmins were sometimes ridiculed in Buddhist scriptures, in reality the Buddhist critique was far tamer. It is significant that large numbers of brahmins became Buddhists, and it probably would have been unwise for Buddhists to actively aggravate such an influential segment of Indian society.[99] On the other hand, it appears that Buddhists did at times challenge caste ideology.[100] The ambiguity of the Buddhist position

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[98] See Weber 1958, p. 206-7.

[99] Gokhale has argued that "accommodation between the Brahmanas and the Early Buddhists far outweighed rivalry, antipathy, or hostility between the two." (1994:38) Gorkhale in fact argues that this rivalry became much more pronounced later on, after the 3rd century BCE, when social changes led to the formation brahman class interests that ran counter to the Buddhists. (1994:39).

[100] An interesting example is related by Rosser, who, in his discussion of the Newar caste system, described the case of a Tibetan Lama called Yangtse who settled in Kathmandu near to the Swayambhu stūpa and began teaching in 1923. He quickly developed a following of Newaris of all different castes, whom he taught without consideration of their social status. When news of this reached the Rana Mahārāja

was noted by Alberuni, the Persian scholar journeyed in Western India in the wake of Mahmud of Ghazni's (998-1030 CE) conquests, who observed that "the so-called Shamaniyya (Buddhists), though they cordially hate the Brahmans, still are nearer akin to them than others". (1910:21) It is not clear what "others" Alberuni had in mind here, but his ascription to the Buddhists of "cordial" hostility to the brahmins is quite interesting.

Overall, the Buddhist approach to politics appears to have been quite ambivalent. For example, while Buddhist texts sometimes glorify the institution of righteous kingship *(dharmarāja)* of which Aśoka was an ideal model, his reign is depicted in less than rosy terms in some Buddhist texts.[101] Some Buddhist texts even advocated revolt as the best method to deal with unrighteous kings.[102] In short, Buddhists saw politics as a necessary compromise, a metaphorical fall from a higher state of harmony as narrated in the Buddhist counter-cosmogony. Buddhists did view some political and social systems as superior to others, and at times acted to effect those which they deemed more advantageous, both for the support of their institutions as well as the greater good of their societies. And while, as Eisenstadt pointed out, the Buddhist *saṃgha* was "usually a politically compliant group, [it] sometimes became a kind of moral conscience of the community, calling rulers to a measure of accountability."[103] In so doing they were at times successful, and at times unsuccessful, as is to be expected.

Chandra Shamsher, he exiled the Tibetan lama and his celibate disciples, and required that his other students undergo a lengthy purification process. Rosser concludes that his reaction was so extreme because he saw the Lama's activities as running directly counter to the caste order which the Mahārāja sought to uphold. See Rosser 1966, pp. 105-6.

[101] See Strong 1983, ch. 2, pp. 38-70.

[102] The *Jataka* literature narrates several stories in which the subjects of an oppressive king revolt and banish or kill him (See Thapar 1979, p. 190) There are no known cases of a Buddhist inspired or led revolt in India, although such revolt was evidently a perennial concern in China. See Overmeyer 1976 and Haar 1992.

[103] Eisenstadt 1984, p. 7, insert mine.

3.2 The Practice of Dissent
1. Heresies

There have been some recent attempts to conceive of the reoccurring pattern of dissent and protest in Indian religious history as deriving from tensions present within Hinduism.[104] Overall, these attempts seem to be well conceived. It is probably not possible to reduce these tensions to a single factor, but one might argue that much dissent is derived from dissatisfaction with the *varṇāśrama* ideology.

There is a strong basis, in fact, to take acceptance of this ideology as the defining hallmark of orthodoxy in Hinduism. Śaṃkara defined the heretic, *pāṣaṇḍa,*[105] as "one who contradicts the Vedas" *(vedavirodha).*[106] Authors such as Vijñāneśvara extend heresy to the failure to conduct oneself in the manner prescribed in the Vedas.[107] The *Manu Smṛti* upholds adherence to the Vedas as the sign of orthodoxy, declaring:

> "All traditions *(smṛtis)* and misperceived philosophies *(kudṛṣṭis)* which are outside of [the authority of] the Veda produce no reward after death, for they are founded on darkness, it is said." (12.95) Elsewhere in the text we read that the *śruti* (i.e., the Veda) is *amīmāṃsā*, "unquestionable," and those who persist in challenging its dictates are to be scorned and avoided (2.10-11); their doctrines are *anṛta*, "untrue" or "disordered" (12.96). (Smith 1987:42-43)

With the support of many of these sorts of textual passages, Smith defines Hinduism as "the religion of those humans who create, perpetuate, and transform traditions with legitimizing reference to the authority of the Veda." (1987:40) In constructing this definition, Smith sought to avoid too broad a definition, which would include clearly excluded groups such as the Buddhists, as well as to account for the reality of change within Hinduism, change that is justified with reference to the Veda, even as the actual

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[104] Particularly important is the (1984) book edited by Eisenstadt, Kahane and Shulman.

[105] Thapar has pointed out that the term *pāṣaṇḍa* originally, i.e., in Aśokan times, meant simply a sect, and only came to develop a pejorative sense in later Brahmanical texts. See Thapar 1979, pp. 187-88.

[106] In his commentary on the *Taittiriya Upaniṣad.* See Smith 1987, p. 43.

[107] In his *Mitākṣarā* (1.130), a commentary on the *Yajñavalkya Smṛti.* See O'Flaherty 1971, p. 272.

content of the Veda, the *śrauta* sacrifice, was increasingly marginalized. This strategy, which seems to have developed during the Mauryan imperial period and came to fruition in the post-imperial period, had the effect of highlighting the upholding of the Vedic *varṇāśrama* as the hallmark of orthodoxy, which strengthened the position of the brahmans by whom this ideology was created and whose interests it served.

This definition would exclude from the fold of Hinduism those groups that denied the verity of the Vedas, such as the Buddhists and Jains, whom were repeatedly castigated as heretical, as O'Flaherty has shown.[108] It also has the effect of excluding some of the unconventional groups such as the Kāpālikas who were evidently responsible for the development of much of what is considered "Tantric Hinduism", which is an interesting consequence which will have to be explored here.

Until recently very little was known about the Kāpālikas ; most data concerning them was contained in the hostile depictions of orthodox Hindu authors. They are often grouped together with Buddhists and Jains and denounced as heretics. For example, the *Kürma Purāṇa* (2.21.32-33) lists the following as heretics: Buddhists, Nirgranthas, Pañcarātras, Kāpālikas and Pāśupatas.[109] According to Rāmānuja, the Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas are opposed to the Vedas *(vedavirodha).*[110] The Kāpālikas were noted for engaging in trangressive activities such as ritual sex and the consumption of intoxicants, and were also portrayed as being hostile to caste ideology. In Ānandagiri's *Śaṃkaravijaya,* the Kāpālika Unmattabhairava is portrayed as rejecting the brahmanic claims to superiority, and claiming instead that "there are only two real castes, the male-caste and the female-caste....promiscuity is the proper rule of conduct between them since the joy *(ānanda)* of sexual union is the true form of Bhairava, and the attainment of that joy at death is salvation

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[108] See O'Flaherty 1971 and 1983.

[109] See O'Flaherty 1971, p. 273.

[110] He makes this claim in his *Śribhāṣya* 2.2.35-37, which is translated in Lorenzen 1972, p.2.

(mokṣa)."[111] They often were often depicted in dramatic literature as well, where they are depicted either as nefarious warlocks or comical buffoons.[112]

Unsympathetic sources such as these may not be the best source of information concerning the Kāpālikas ; the negative portrayals by their opponents and parodies of the playwrights are in agreement, however, in portraying the Kāpālikas as engaging in transgressive and, in particular, sexual practices.[113] The extant sources have been reviewed by Lorenzen, who believes that the Kāpālikas are not traceable much earlier than the 5th century of the common era, although they may have much older antecedents.

There is little doubt that Śaiva renunciants have an ancient history. Patañjali refers in his *Mahābhāṣya* to the *Śivabhāgavata* who carried iron lances (*ayaḥśūlika*), staves, and hides (*daṇḍājina*).[114] There are also references in the Pāli canon which suggest the presence of such figures at least by the time when this canon was put down into writing, i.e., around the beginning of the common era.[115] For example, the Buddha condemns in the *Cūḷadhammasamādāna Sūtra* non-Buddhist recluses who engage in sexual union. He stated that "there are certain recluses and brahmins whose doctrine and view is this: 'There is no harm in sensual pleasures.' They take to gulping down sensual pleasures and divert themselves with women wanderers who wear their hair bound in a topknot."[116] Interestingly, this points not only to the early existence of renunciants in general, but to the presence of female "ascetics" who are described as wearing their hair in the same manner as the yoginis are depicted much later, that is, with hair bound up in a topknot. This

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[111] Lorenzen 1972, p. 47.

[112] There are at least a dozen plays which depict the Kāpālika in such ways. For a discussion of these sources see Lorenzen 1972, pp. 48-71.

[113] See Lorenzen 1972 and Barthakuria 1984 for a survey of these sources.

[114] Jash 1972:156, op. cit. Hartzell p. 170-171.

[115] See Collins 1990 pp. 95-6, concerning the development of the Pāli canon; it is usually thought that the canon was put down into written form during the first century BCE, although Collins argues that the process of canonization was not completed until the 5th century.

[116] *Majjhima Nikaya* 45, trans. in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, p. 405.

condemnation, however, probably reflects the attitude of its monastic authors, and not necessarily that of the forest renunciants, who were more likely to have had frequent contact with renunciants from other traditions.

Other early descriptions reported by Lorenzen include the *Gāthā-saptaśati*, of a period from the first to fifth century CE, describes a "female Kāpālikā who incessantly besmears herself with the ashes from the funeral pyre of her lover" (1972:13), while a Buddhist text of the same era, the *Lalitavistara*, "mentions certain 'fools' who seek purification by smearing their bodies with ashes, wearing red garments (*kaṣāya*), shaving their heads, and carrying a triple-staff (*tridaṇḍa*), a pot, a skull, and a *khaṭvāṅga*." (Lorenzen 1972:14).

It is commonly accepted that the precursors of the Kāpālikas were the Pāśupatas, to whom is attributed the use of sexuality as a means toward liberation. They appear in Indian literature around the turn of the millenium, and can be dated to roughly 150 BCE to 150 CE.[117] Their transgressive behavior is discussed by Ingalls in his 1962 article. In this tradition, behavior normally considered sinful was considered liberating simply because it was conduct routinely performed by Śiva in his *Paśupati* form. The aspirant seeks to become Śiva by imitating him, which may represent a crude, perhaps early form of an important Tantric concept.[118] Ingalls wrote concerning the Pāśupatas that "a goodly portion of the methods for seeking dishonor are reducible to an original intention of imitating the beast.....The aspirant hoped to transform himself first into the Lord's beast and finally into the Lord of Beasts himself." (1962:295)

Although later sources such as Kauṇḍinya's commentary on the *Pāśupata Sūtras* downplay the transgressive elements, Ingalls points out, correctly it seems, that the early Pāśupatas did engage in quite extreme transgressive behavior, here no doubt following the

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[117] Based on references to them in the *Mahābhārata*. See Ingalls 1962, p.283.

[118] For example, there is in the Buddhist tradition the idea that one becomes a Buddha by taking the 'fruit' as the 'path', i.e., Buddhahood as one's practice rather than one's goal. This concept is discussed at length in chapter two above.

ample examples from Śaivite mythology. For example, Pāśupatas evidently commonly made vows to imitate animal behavior, such as the 'bull-vow', *govrata,* regarding which Ingalls notes "The Jaiminiya Brāhmaṇa specifies that the enactor of the bull-vow should have sexual congress in defiance of all human laws, that is, indiscriminately with forbidden members of his family as well as with others." (1962:295)

The heirs to the Pāśupatas were the Kāpālika yogis, who appear to have inherited, in undiluted form, the Pāśupata preoccupation with sex and added an intense fascination with death, manifesting primarily in the charnel ground cult for which they were infamous. They were an influential movement in India by the seventh century, for Xuan-zang mentions them repeatedly in his *Records.*[119] Xuan-zang is reported by his disciple Hui-li as describing them in the following colorful manner: "The Kāpālikas adorn their heads and necks with garlands of skulls, and their awkward appearance resembles the Yakṣas that haunt cemeteries." (Li 1959:156) They are characterized even more vividly by David White, who writes that the "Kāpālikas, fornicators with menstruating women, cremation-ground consumers of human flesh, worshippers of the female sexual organ, brahman murderers, were the Hell's Angels of medieval India." (1996a:306)

The Kāpālikas would represent simply a colorful footnote in Indian religious history were it not for the fact that they evidently played a central role in the development of Tantric traditions, both Hindu and Buddhist. Their centrality has been argued by Sanderson, who has identified a group of early Śaiva scriptures preserved in Nepal as of Kāpālika provenance. They are notable for their transgressive character, and are also closely related to Buddhist Yoginītantras, especially the Cakrasaṃvara.[120]

The relationship between the Kapalikas and Buddhists is particularly enigmatic. There is no doubt that they worshipped the Hindu deity Bhairava, but so do the Tantric

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[119] See, for example, Beal 1884, p. 55.

[120] See Sanderson 1988 and 1994a. His claims will be evaluated in section 6.2.2 below.

Buddhists, as Visuvalingam pointed out.[121] Buddhists may have adopted aspects of Kāpālika praxis, as suggested by the myth of Heruka's subdual of Bhairava, which will be discussed in section 6.3.1 below. However, the process through which the Buddhists appropriated the worship of this deity may very well be more complex than a superficial interpretation of this myth might suggest. For the identity of the Kāpālikas is not entirely clear, and given the constant refrain of condemnation found in Sanskritic literature, and their being classed with the Buddhists as heretics, there may have been considerable commensuality between the two groups. The Kāpālika also approached the renunciant strain of Buddhism in renouncing the world, adopting the śramanic lifestyle, and rejecting the authority of the Vedas.

The development of the Kāpālika and Buddhist Yoginī Tantra traditions may have involved far more cooperation than we might at first assume, with the result that Buddhists carried on their legacy to a greater extent than Hindus. Lorenzen noted, correctly, that "Vajrayāna literature also refers to ritual paraphernalia typical of Kāpālika worship – such as bones, blood, flesh, and skulls – more often than Hindu Tantras do." (1972:4) This may have led to the eventual blurring of the distinctions between the two, such that Kāṇha, to whom is attributed a large body of Buddhistic literature on the Yoginī Tantras, can also declare himself a Kāpālika in his *caryā* songs.[122] It may be, however, that by the time of the composition of these songs, which are generally thought to have been composed between the ninth and twelfth centuries,[123] the persona of the *Kāpālika* was not so much a

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[121] See Elizabeth Chalier-Visuvalingam 1989, esp. pp. 208-210.

[122] An oft quoted song is *caryā* 18, edited and translated in Kvaerne as follows: / I dispelled the three worlds by means of amorous play, having fallen asleep in the sport of sexual union *(mahāsukha)*. // How, oh Ḍombī, is your coquetry? The noble-born is outside, the kāpālika inside. // By you, oh Ḍombī, everything has been disturbed; for no purpose the Moon has been agitated. // Some there are who speak ill of you, but the discerning do not remove you from their neck. // Kāṇha sings of the amorous Caṇḍālī; there is no greater harlot than the Ḍombī. (1977:150, emended by me); see also *caryā* 10, which contains the assertions, "Ho Ḍombī! I shall make love with you, Kāṇha, a kāpāli-yogin, shameless and naked", and "Ho! You are a Ḍombī, I a kāpāli. For your sake I have put on the garland of bones." (1977:113, emended by me). But see also *caryā* 13, which is replete with Buddhist terminology (1977:127 ff.)

[123] See Kvaerne 1977, pp. 5-7.

sectarian identity but rather a symbol, and perhaps by then a stereotyped one, for an extreme form of renunciation, a way of life despised and feared by mainstream society. This was suggested by Gupta, who wrote:

> To show the different dimensions of the Tantric's personal world from the normal social life of attachment and self-consciousness in society, the image of an utterly indifferent person lay to hand. The unnatural and much distrusted *Kāpālika* and his natural habitat, the cremation ground, figure often in Tantric poets' songs. (Goudriaan and Gupta 1981:176)

Evidence such as this does not conclusively establish anything, but strongly suggests that the sectarian lines drawn in the scholarly literature may be lines drawn on what unfortunately remains the shifting sands of a desert of historical lacunae.

The majority of evidence concerning the Kāpālikas, like the Buddhist and Hindu *siddhas*, is literary, and thus provides a partial view, i.e., the view of the literate elite. With the Kāpālikas, however, it seems safe to conclude that they existed in a manner not too different than described in the texts. This is because the literary sources that describe them are varied, and while any one text or group of texts taken alone may not be accurate, it is a safe methodology to hypothesize that those features that are common to a broad range of texts are most likely accurate representations.

In the case of the Kāpālikas, who cannot with any certainty be labeled as "Hindu" or "Buddhist", we can zero in on them through a process of triangulation. Our three sources are the hostile literary Sanskrit sources, the Tantras which are partial toward them, and the presumably indifferent pilgrims such as Xuan-zang. All three of these sources, despite their wildly different judgments concerning the Kāpālikas, are in agreement in portraying them as rather extreme renunciates, who haunted charnel grounds and wore clothing and ornaments made from items attained there. This evidence is further supported by archaeological finds that support the literary data, as well as the presence of modern groups,[124] such as the Aghoris, who exhibit qualities similar to those ascribed to the

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[124] Donaldson, for example, has described a Kāpālika shrine in the Mārkaṇḍeyeśvara Temple complex in Orissa, which dates to the eighth century. See Donaldson 1986, pp. 137 ff.

Kāpālikas.[125] Like the Aghoris, the Kāpālikas and their ilk were probably a tiny minority vis-à-vis the population of India as a whole, but in the history of religions it is not uncommon that groups such as these have a cultural influence that far exceeds their numerical presence in society. Thus, it will be assumed in the next two sections that the descriptions of the Kāpālika in these sources probably did not err in describing their charnel ground-centered mode of renunciation, although the stress placed on their transgressive behavior may very well be exaggerated, if not stereotyped. This, hopefully, will provide a conceptual space from which a hypothesis concerning the milieu of Tantras and their practitioners might be constructed.

3.2.2 Renunciation and Liminality

1. Liminal Persons

Turner, following van Gennep's influential (1960) monograph on the stages of initiation rituals, devised a theory of the "ritual process", in which there is a central phase of "liminality" or "anti-structure" through which an initiate passes, as a transition from one structured way of life to another.[126] Turner extended this idea of a *ritual* stage into a more general social theory, arguing that there were persons who, vis-à-vis their larger societies, could be characterized as liminal. He described these persons as follows:

> The attributes of liminality or of liminal *personae* ("threshold people") are necessarily ambiguous, since this condition and these persons elude or slip through the network of classifications that normally locate states and positions in cultural space. Liminal entities are neither here no there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremonial....Liminal entities, such as neophytes in initiation or puberty rites, may be represented as possessing nothing. They may be disguised as monsters, wear only a strip of clothing, or even go naked, to demonstrate that as liminal beings

[125] The Aghoris, who will be discussed further below, were the subject of Parry's research and described in his 1982 and 1985 articles and in his 1994 book.

[126] This theory is developed in his 1969 monograph, and further advanced in his 1975 work.

> they have no status, property, insignia, secular clothing indicating rank or role, position in a kinship system – in short, nothing that may distinguish them from their fellow neophytes or initiands....Among themselves, neophytes tend to develop an intense comradeship and egalitarianism. Secular distinctions of rank and status disappear or are homogenized. (1969:95)

Turner's description definitely evokes the *śramaṇa* type of renunciant, who cut all ties to society and who often adopted strikingly alternative modes of dress and behavior. These range from nudity, in the case of the Digambara Jains, to saffron or red robes on the part of Buddhist monks, to the more "monstrous" appearance of the Kāpālika and Kāpālika-like ascetics, who sported a crest of dreadlocks topped by skulls, a skull garland, bone ornaments, and a skull staff *(khatvāṅga),* and who are described as follows in chapter two of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*: "His hair is marked with a skull, his limbs are smeared with ash. His body is decorated with ornaments, and has a bone rosary. His hair has a seamless skull, hung with a bone garland. A skull staff placed in the hand, he becomes Śrī Heruka."[127] It appears that such figures would be liminal in virtually any social context, and perhaps such renunciants, if they existed, could possibly be characterized as "permanently liminal", an expression Turner applied to renunciants such as Saint Francis, whose renunciation was an uncompromising rejection of normative lifestyles.

Turner further hypothesized that liminal figures exist in a state of structural opposition to the social order in regard to which they are marginalized. Their "anti-structural" tendencies socially manifest in a relative state of egalitarianism which they generate amongst themselves, refusing to reproduce the structured relationships which they have renounced. Turner wrote that "communitas is a nonstructured relationship, or, better, a spontaneously structured relationship which often develops among liminaries, individuals in passage between social statuses and cultural states that have been cognitively defined, logically articulated, and endowed with jural rights and obligations." (1975:22, 23) Their comradeship is characterized by the formation of

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[127] CST ch. 2, vv. 5-6: kapālakṛtamūrdhajā bhasmānuliptāṅgasambhavān / mātrair vibhuṣitagātra asthimālāsaṃsthitaś ca // ekakhaṇḍīmūrdhajaḥ asthimālāvalambī ca // khaṭvāṅgakarasaṃsthitaḥ atmānaṃ śriherukaṃ kṛtvā // See my edition in appendix A below.

> a generalized social bond that has ceased to be and has simultaneously yet to be fragmented into a multiplicity of structural ties. These are the ties organized either in caste, class, or rank hierarchies or of segmentary oppositions in the stateless societies beloved of political anthropologists. It is as though there are two major "models" for human interrelatedness, juxtaposed and alternating. The first is of society as a structured, differentiated, and often hierarchical system of politico-legal-economic positions with many types of evaluation, separating men in terms of "more" or "less." The second, which emerges recognizably in the liminal period, is of society as an unstructured or rudimentarily structured and relatively undifferentiated *comitatus*, community, or even communion of equal individuals who submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders. (1969:96)

It would probably be naive to argue that *any* group in India, or anywhere else for that matter, exists in an *absolutely* liminal state, or have achieved an *absolute* state of communitas. Indeed, there is good reason to believe that the negation of structure is always conditional, and always involve an alternative or counter-structure, as Turner seems to have recognized; while the adepts might be equal, they nonetheless "submit together to the general authority of the ritual elders", implying that hierarchy is not eliminated, although it may be simplified or redefined.

Likewise, liminality is always relative. Buddhist monasticism was a liminal or alternative institution in Indian society, and perhaps, in India, it can be considered an institutionalized form of liminality. This is an idea developed by Gilhus, who argued that "liminality may be institutionalized in societies with a high degree of specialization and complexity and develop a dialectic relationship with the surrounding structured society." (1984:108) While institutionalization may appear antithetical to the experience of *communitas*, again, it is only so relative to the larger Indian society, in which the Buddhist creation of an inter-monastic hierarchy based on seniority rather than birth was relatively egalitarian. According to Gilhus,

> Basically, a *communitas* always confronts a structured society, be it in the liminal transition of primitive religions or as a permanent institution in other religions. Therefore communitas always has two directions: opposition to the existing structure – an anti-structure, and maintenance of the communion on which it is built. (1984:119)

Buddhists appear to have been in opposition to the caste-based social structure, but were also involved in the maintenance and propagation of an alternative structure, embodied in

the institution of monasticism. But resistance and alterity are always relative; in the Tibetan context monasticism became a normative pattern of social organization, and probably cannot be considered liminal there.

Within Buddhism, the forest renunciants occupied a liminal position vis-à-vis the far more numerous monastic and lay communities. Buddhist communities often distinguished the forest renunciants *(arannavasi)* and monastics *(gamavasi)*. Silber has noted that the forest renunciants typically occupy an ambiguous position in Buddhist societies, and are both revered and feared:

> Forest-dwellers were not necessarily hermits, but whether individually or in groups, they lived a more secluded life than did the *gamavasi*, devoting most of their time to meditation and keeping their contact with lay life to a minimum. Such forest dwellers, however, were always a marginal and somewhat deviant minority vis-à-vis the dominant majority of monks opting for greater involvement in lay society. (1984:99)

Such renunciants were often respected, particularly on the basis of the charismatic authority and power that they were thought to attain by virtue of their meditative practices. Such charisma has been studied by Weber, who noted that

> Charismatic authority is thus specifically outside the realm of every-day routine and the profane sphere. In this respect, it is sharply opposed both to rational, and particularly bureaucratic, authority, and to traditional authority, whether in its patriarchal, patrimonial, or any other form. (1968:51)

On the other hand, renunciants, by virtue of their willful rejection of worldly roles, occupied a marginal position which, as Douglas has shown, was potentially both dangerous and powerful.[128] This dynamic appears to have been particularly strong in India with its highly structured society, making the deliberate violation of the caste and purity regulations a source of both great power and danger, as Sanderson argued in an important (1985) article.

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[128] See Douglas 1966, esp. pp. 94-99, 121.

The locus of Tantric practice in early medieval India appears to have been the siddha movement,[129] about which little is known, although it was clearly underway by the seventh century and continued well into the period of the transmission of the tradition to Tibet, i.e., in the tenth to thirteenth centuries.[130] It appears to have developed in association with the forest renunciant tradition, independent of the monasteries, which is suggested by the numerous stories of siddhas who did live in the monasteries being expelled on account of their antinomian behavior.[131] Their liminal status seems to be confirmed by the confusion concerning their sectarian identities, as evidenced by the considerable overlap in Buddhist and Śaiva lists of the siddhas.[132] This overlap is so strong that one cannot differentiate the Buddhist and Śaiva Tāntrikas at the level of origin; they can, however, be differentiated via lineage, as what latter came to be called "sects" are basically distinct formations of lineages often deriving from common ancestors. The rhetoric of lineage seems to have been a much more valid way of distinguishing Tantric traditions. This was noted by Gupta, who wrote:

> But for classifying Tantrics it is important to know the particular *parampará* or group to which they belong. To determine the *paramparā,* it is further necessary to know its traditional line of teachers, the special etiquette applicable to the tradition followed, the complicated variations in ritual performances arising from the theological and metaphysical background of the *paramparā,* and the personal attitude and idiosyncrasies of eminent teachers in that line. These factors are responsible for the incredible number of divergences in Tantric ritual activities. (Goudriaan, Gupta and Hoens 1979: 122)

They also appear to have lived a liminal lifestyle with regard to mainstream Indian society, which would frown upon, for example, their attendance of *gaṇacakra* rites, in which

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[129] Tāranātha, the famous Tibetan historian who lived in the late 16th-early 17th centuries was of this opinion, having written that "it is clearly well-known that the tradition of teachings coming down in preceptor-disciple succession began from the time of Saraha and Nāgārjuna 'the father and son' [i.e. Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva] up to *siddha* Śabari-pa. Before this, no *ācārya* is known to have entered the tradition of transmitting *anuttara guhya-mantra.*" (Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya 1970:151-52)

[130] Concerning these dates see section 5.1 below.

[131] See for example the account of the siddha Virūpa (Dowman 1985, pp. 43-52) and also Maitrīpa (discussed in Tatz 1988).

[132] A great deal of work has been done concerning the comparison of siddha lists (see for example Tucci 1930 and White 1996a,b), but at this point it is impossible to make such an identification, based simply on lineage lists and hagiographies. As Snellgrove suggests, it may be inappropriate to assume that these adepts possessed strong sectarian identities. (1987:157)

transgressive substances (alcohol, various types of meat and bodily fluids) are consumed and transgressive (intercaste) sexual acts performed.

This may account for the secrecy which is constantly called for in Tantric texts. The major traditions all enjoin secrecy, and we know that the living adherents such as the Tibetans generally take these enjoinders seriously. It may be, as was the case in Tibet, that Tantric praxis was an "open secret", but even among Tibetans the specific details of the practice of specific traditions are considered quite secret, and are imparted only to initiates who are committed to secrecy.[133] This is justified by the argument that the specific details of a course of Tantric practice *(sādhana)* cannot be learned from a book, and are potentially dangerous if practiced without qualified guidance.[134] There are numerous warnings to this effect in Buddhist Tantras; a particularly interesting one occurs in the *Mahāmudrātilaka Tantra*, as follows:

> First, as soon as the student has received the initiations, he then becomes a suitable vessel for the explanation of the great secret. If there is no initiation then there will be no success, just as oil cannot be pressed from sand. If someone out of pride clarifies the Tantric precepts for the uninitiated, then both teacher and student will go to hell as soon as they die, even if they are spiritually accomplished. Therefore, earnestly request of the master the initiations.[135]

This idea appears to be current within Hindu Tantric discourse as well.[136]

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[133] This notion of that Tantric practice was, in Tibet, in general an open secret but in its specifics a closed secret maintained within each lineage of oral instruction, was explained to me by H. H. The Dalai Lama Tenzin Gyatso in a private conversation that took place on April 24, 1998.

[134] Geshe Kelsang Gyatso advises the readers of one of his books that study of the book alone is not a sufficient basis for the practice of the meditations described therein, and claims that "successful practice depends to a large extent upon the blessings and inspiration of the Spiritual Guides". (Kelsang 1982: 9)

[135] MT ch. 2: / dang po re zhig slob ma la // dbang rnams lan cig bskur ba yis // de tshe gsang chen bshad pa yi // nges par snod du gyur pa'o // dbang med na ni dngos grub med // bye ma btsir yang mar med ltar // gang zhig rgyud lung nga rgyal gyis // dbang bskur med la gsal byed pa // slob dpon slob ma shi ma thag // dngos grub thob kyang dmyal bar 'gro // de bas 'bad pa thams cad kyis // bla ma la ni dbang don zhu / (DK fol. 66b)

[136] Brooks wrote that "the notion of initiation is also crucial to our understanding of Tantric 'secrecy' *(rahasya)*. Tantric texts, teachings, and practices are called 'secret' not simply because they are restricted and limited both in transmission and in accessibility to outsiders....rather, they are secret because without initiation one is not fully empowered to use or comprehend them....Tantrics stress that it is the guru who empowers these resources and the guru who provides the instructions necessary for the adept to accomplish his or her aims. Tantrics understand the guru as the vital link to the ultimately inherent power that pervades the universe and resides in the individual. No aspect of Tantric *sādhana* can be properly learned from a book alone, and Tantrics stress the necessity of 'protecting' the unqualified." (1990:64-65)

Given the fact that these practices were more politically charged in India than in Tibet, it may be that this secrecy was closely maintained in the former context. This is suggested by the traditional account of the life of the mahāsiddha Saraha, one of the founders of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition in India. His life is described in particularly lively way by the Tibetan 'Jam-mgon A-myes-zhab Ngag-dbang-kun-dga'-bsod-nams (1597-c. 1662), a Sa-skya scholar who drew together disparate sources concerning the siddhas and wrote a critical account of their lives, as follows:

> Saraha's class was brahmin, and [he lived] in the town of Roli in Rāḍha[137] in Eastern India. His mother was a ḍākinī. Although the master was a brahmin, Saraha had faith in the Buddhadharma, so he maintained the vows of both a Buddhist and a brahmin. By day he was a practicing brahmin, and by night a practicing Buddhist. He frequented the *gaṇacakra* and also imbibed beer. When the brahmins got wind of this they decided to dispel Saraha. The brahmins gathered together and requested this of King Ratnapāla,[138] saying "Is it not your duty as king to uphold the customs in your country? This Saraha, the master of the brahmins, of the village Roli of fifteen thousand, by drinking alcohol has fallen from his caste, so let him be exiled!"
>
> The king thought that since he is the master of a village of fifteen thousand, it would not be appropriate to exile him. He went to see Saraha and said, "As you are a brahmin, it is not good that you drink beer."
>
> He replied, "I do not drink beer, but if you do not believe me, assemble all the people and brahmins and I'll swear an oath." The king assembled everyone, and Saraha said, "If I drink beer may my mouth burn!" He drank down boiling oil, but his mouth didn't burn.
>
> The king asked, "Is he not truthful?"
>
> The Brahmins replied, "He drinks."
>
> Once again, he drank molten copper but was not burned, but the brahmins still insisted that he drank beer. So he said, "Let us be thrown into a lake; whoever does not sink does not drink, but whoever sinks is a drinker." Saraha was thrown into the water but did not sink and quickly returned. Still they insisted that he was a drinker. Saraha said, "Place me on a scale. If I am heavier than whatever else [you place on it] then I am no drinker." Saraha became heavy, saying "I do not drink". They placed on it a piece of iron that weighed as much as three men, but Saraha was heavier, and they placed on it a lump of iron weighing as much as six men, but Saraha was still heavier.

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[137] The text has *radhi*, presumably for Rāḍha, a region in Bengal west of the Gaṅgā.

[138] This may refer to the king Ratnapāla who ruled in Assam from 1000-1030 CE. There is not enough evidence, however, to confirm or deny this possible identification. See Kvaerne 1977, p. 6.

> The king said, "If he has power like this, it's okay if he drinks." Even the brahmins had faith and bowed down to him, and converted from their own customs they all became Buddhists."[139]

While it is impossible to take such a legendary account as "historical", and one might question the veracity of the conversion of the recalcitrant brahmins, who were not otherwise impressed by his truth ordeals. On the other hand, these ancient stories at the very least reflect tensions felt within the tradition.

It is interesting that both Buddhist and Hindu Tantras enjoin that the adept leads a double life, concealing his identity as a Tantric adept. This may not be unrelated to the fact that Tantric siddhas are depicted as coming from all walks of life, male and female, brahmins and outcasts, kings and beggars.[140] Evidently, there was not necessarily any conventional markers that designated one a Tantric practitioner. The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* enjoins that its practitioners lead a double life of sorts. Chapter twenty-seven requires that the adept *(sādhaka)* keeps on his person certain insignia similar to those mentioned in the passage from chapter two quoted above.[141] The text particularly requires that "they should

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[139] *grub thob brgyas cu rtsa bzhi'i rnam thar: //* slob dpon sa ra ha pa'i lo rgyus ni / rigs bram ze / yul shar phyogs kyi grong khyer ra dhi zhes bya ba / bye brag pa rol li pa yin la / yum mkha' 'gro ma / slob dpon bram ze yin yang / sa ra ha rang nang pa sangs rgyas pa'i chos la dad nas nang pa dang bram ze gnyi ga'i sdom pa bsrung zhing / nyin mo bram ze'i chos lugs dang / mtshan mo sangs rgyas pa'i chos lugs byas / tshogs kyi 'khor lo bskor zhing / chang yang gsol bas / bram ze kun gyis tshor nas sa ra ha bskrad par brtsams te / bram ze thams cad 'dus nas rgyal po ratna ba la zhus pa / khyer rgyal po yin na yul du chos lugs 'chol bar byed du 'jug pa'i lugs yod dam / sa ra ha 'di yul pa ro li'i grong khyer khri tsho phyed dang gnyis kyi bram ze rnams kyi gtso bo yin pa la / da chang 'thungs nas rigs nyams 'dug pas skrod par rigs so byas pas / rgyal po'i bsam pa grong khyer khri tsho phyed dang gnyis kyi gtso bo yin pas skrod par mi rung snyam nas / sa ra ha'i gnas su byon nas smras pa / khyed bram ze yin pa la chang 'thung ba de ma legs byas pas / ngas chang ma 'thungs zer / 'on kyang yin mi ches na mna' 'dor ba yin pas / bram ze kun dang mi thams cad bsdus shig zer nas / rgyal pos thams cad bsdus pa dang / sa ra has smras pa / ngas chang 'thungs na kha tshig cig zer te / mar khu bskol na 'thungs pas ma tshig pa dang / rgyal pos 'di bden nam byas pas / bram ze kun na re / 'thung zer / yang zangs kyi zhun ma 'thungs pas kyang ma tshig pa la / gzhan rnams kyis chang 'thung zer / 'o na mtsho'i steng du 'dug nas ma nub na 'thungs pa yin la / nub na 'thungs pa yin no zhes smras te / chur zhugs pas sa ra ha ma nub par myur du thon kyang / yang 'thung zer / yang srang la bkar nas gang lji bas ma 'thungs pa yin la / yang bdes 'thungs pa yin no zhes smras pas / sa ra ha lji ba byung ste / ngas ma 'thungs zer / de bzhin du mi gsum gyi ljid dang mnyam pa'i lcags kyi rdo dang bteg pas kyang / sa ra ha lji dang / yang drug dang mnyam pa'i lcags kyi rdo dang bteg pas kyang sa ra ha lji ste / rgyal po na re / 'di lta bu'i nus pa yod na chang 'thung yang rung gi zer bas / bram ze rnams kyang dad nas phyag byas te / rang gi chos lugs bsgyur nas thams cad sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa la zhugs so / (fol. 12a-b).

[140] See the lives of the 84 siddhas translated in Dowman 1985.

[141] These insignia are discussed at length in section 6.2.2 below.

be on [one's person] at all times, always displayed at night, and hidden during the day."[142] This same idea is also found in Tantric Hindu traditions. Brooks reports that Śrīvidyā adepts often hold that one "should remain like Vaiṣṇavas for worldly purposes, like Śaivas in outward appearance and like Śāktas inwardly." (1990:90)

Tantric traditions often stress that, at least within the circle of adepts, egalitarianism should be observed. There are numerous passages that could be selected to make this point, but a few drawn from diverse sources will be sufficient here. Tantric authors, quite in line with their avowed doctrine of nonduality, seem to condemn the drawing not just of social distinctions, but of distinctions in general, as such distinction making is characteristic of the dualistic conceptualization *(vikalpa)* that is to be renounced. Lakṣmīṃkarā, for example, wrote the following in her *Advayasiddhi:*

> One who knows mantra should generate no disgust for anything, for Vajrasattva himself exists as whatever form is before one's eye. The well-equipoised *mantrin* should not conceptualize where one should go or not go, what one should eat or not eat, and likewise drink or not drink....nor should he have disgust for a woman born of any class *(varṇa)*, as she is the Blessed Lady Wisdom *(bhagavati prajñā)* dwelling in a conventional form.[143]

Tantric authors do seem to focus, however, on the distinctions related to social class and, in particular, on the non-commensality which is a root bulwark of the caste system. Indrabhūti, in his *Sarvabuddhasamayogagaṇavidhi,* wrote "Eat, [you] who are adorned with the ornaments of a yogin. Here there is no discrimination. The brahmin, the dog and the Caṇḍāla, since they share the same nature, should eat together."[144] The context of this command is the *gaṇacakra* rite; however, the reasoning applied goes beyond it, attacking the *varṇa* ideology at its root. By juxtaposing the brahmin, the dog and the Caṇḍāla, the

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[142] CST ch. 27, v. 18b-c: / dus kun tu ni rnam par gnas // mtshan mo rtag par gsal bya zhing // nyin par gsang ba nyid du bya / (DT fol. 232a).

[143] (20) jugupsāṃ naiva kurvita sarvavastuṣu mantravit / vajrasattvaḥ svayaṃ tatra sākṣād rūpeṇa saṃsthitaḥ // (21) gamyāgamya vikalpaṃ tu bhakṣyābhakṣyaṃ tathaiva ca / peyāpeyaṃ tathā mantrī kuryān naiva samāhitaḥ // (23) sarvavarṇasamudbhūtā jugupsā naiva yoṣitaḥ / saiva bhagavatī prajñā saṃvṛtyā rūpam āśritā // (Samdhong et al. 1987:163)

[144] / ltos shig rnal 'byor rgyan mdzed rnams // 'di la rnam rtog yod ma yin // bram ze khyi dang gdol ba rnams // rang bzhin gcig pas lhan cig bza' / (DT fol. 196b).

allegedly most pure with the most impure, Indrabhūti here employs a subtly deconstructive rhetoric, implying these beings are in fact equal and pure by their very nature.

There seems to have been a notion that not making such distinctions was actually a commitment that Tantric adepts had to undertake as a part of their initiation, their *samaya*. This is suggested by a brief text called the *The Practice of Vajraśekharayoga which is the Method of the Vairocana-samādhi* (金剛頂經瑜伽修習毘盧遮 那三摩地法), which claims that

> Things are originally unborn, and by their very nature inexpressible, pure, free of defilement, and devoid of causality and so forth. Through repeated reflection in meditation, words express reality (*tattva*, 真實). Although from the beginning they differ, for one who is awakened all things converge. Not rejecting, that is the commitment (*samaya*, 三昧).[145] Abiding in unconditioned compassion, those of universal vow who have passion are no different than I.[146]

The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* enjoins upon its adepts the "commitment" *(samaya)* of not heeding either the ordinary distinctions of the larger social world, i.e., the *varṇa* classes, or the extraordinary distinctions observed by members of various yogin renunciant communities. Among the commitments listed in chapter twenty-seven is the commitment to "disregard social distinctions; renounce tying up [one's hair] on the crown".[147]

Tsongkhapa comments here that:

> Disregard social class, be they the higher classes such as the brahmin, or the classless outcasts. One should renounce the habit of recognizing those. One should renounce as well the other worldly habits such as [wearing] crowns, ashes, dreadlocks, or tying up one's hair in a topknot.[148]

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[145] The text here is ambigious in reading 三昧 , which is an abbreviation which can be legitimately read as 三昧耶 *(samaya)* or 三昧地 *(samādhi)*. I chose the former reading because it seems to make more sense in the context of the passage, but I cannot exclude the possibility that the latter reading might be the correct one.

[146] 諸法本不生。自 性離言說。淸淨無垢染。因業等虛空。旋復諦思惟。字字語真實。初後雖差別。所証皆歸一。不捨是三昧。兼住無緣悲。普願諸有情。如我無有異。 (T 876 p. 331a).

[147] v. 20.b,c: / rigs dang rigs min ngor mi blta // spyi gtsug la sogs bcing ba spang /, DK fol. 232a.

[148] KS, TL fol. 149b: / bram ze la sogs pa'i rigs bzang po dang rigs min pa mthar skyes kyi rigs kyi ngor mi lta ba ste / de dag gi ngo srung gi spyod pa spong ba dang / yang yang gtsug phud bcings ba dang / la sogs pas cod pan dang thal ba dang ral pa la sogs pa 'jig rten pa'i spyod pa gzhan dag kyang spangs pa yin no /.

The Buddhists were not alone in condemning such distinction making. Rather, such condemnations appear to be the hallmark of liminal dissent groups, such as, for example, the Bāuls, who, according to Openshaw, exist on the boundaries of different and competing religious groups, i.e. Hindus and Muslims, and who appropriate the rhetoric of both, using that of one against the other (1997:307). Their songs often express anti-caste sentiments, including the following which would be right at home within a Buddhist text: "As long as you judge in terms of high and low you are deluded. All are the same (to one who) knows reality".[149]

Similar statements occur in Hindu Tantras such as the *Kulārṇava-tantra,* which contains the following passage: "In this *cakra* (circle of worship) there is no division into castes. Everyone (in it) is declared equal with Śiva,"[150] and also "Gone is the Śūdra-hood of the Śūdra and the Brāhmaṇa-hood of the Brāhmaṇa *(vipra);* there is no division into castes for one who is consecrated by initiation."[151] Goudriaan and also Lorenzen have argued that such statements are limited to the context of Tantric *cakrapūjā,* and are not understood to be applicable outside of the ritual context. Lorenzen claims that "in most tantric works the denial of caste occurs only in ritual situations. In day-to-day affairs, caste distinctions are still maintained," (1972:7) although he gives no evidence to support this claim.

There appears to be only one Tantra which explicitly makes this assertion. As Goudriaan pointed out, this is the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* (3.92),[152] but it, as McDaniel has shown, is a bowdlerized text which attempts to mitigate the more transgressive aspects of the Śākta tradition, within which it is a rather late text.[153] Derrett has in fact argued that it

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[149] yābat ucca nic bicār kara tābat brānti tomar tattva jñāne sab ekākar; ed. and trans. in Openshaw 1997, p. 303.

[150] ch. 8 v. 101, trans. in Lorenzen 1972, p. 7.

[151] ch. 14 v. 91, trans. in Lorenzen 1972, p. 6.

[152] See Goudrian and Gupta 1981, p. 100.

[153] See McDaniel 1989, pp. 103-6.

was most likely composed during the late eighteenth century by a Bengali familar with British colonial law, for the text contains lengthy discussions of legal issues reflecting the changes in the colonial legal system that occurred between 1773 and 1782.[154] Regarding actual practitioners who might adhere to this interpretation, neither Lorenzen nor Goudriaan specify who these might be, although if they are practitioners of the *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra* they would not be typical by any stretch of the imagination.[155] According to Brooks, in the south Indian communities where he conducted research it is not the case that Tantric rites, with their breaches of orthopraxy, are considered acceptable in the ritual context. On the contrary, the *smārta* brahmins, the arbiters of orthodoxy in these communities, "condemn *all* such behavior, in ritual or non-ritual contexts", (1992:431) which is in fact a far more consistent response.

Assertions that one should not make caste distinctions, and share food and even bodily fluids with others without regard to caste restrictions on commensality, *are* subversive, even if only held relevant within a ritual context, for the simple reason that they enjoin commensality where, according to the *varṇa* ideology, none should be observed. Since the caste system is upheld in practice by the observance of rules of ritual avoidance,[156] Tantric prescriptions of the non-observance of these rules cuts to the heart of the caste system, in theory *and* in practice. That the caste system was not undermined by this discourse is probably a sign that it never gained widespread acceptance and was largely restricted to a sub-culture which never amounted to more than a small and elite minority.

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[154] See Derrett 1977, and also Urban 1995b.

[155] As Urban notes with regard to *Mahānirvāṇa Tantra*, "this text is extremely unusual and unlike virtually any other known *tantra* in many basic respects – in its conception of absolute reality, in its description of tantric ritual, in its attitude toward caste, and in its attitude toward social issues, such as marriage, women and property rights." (1995b:55).

[156] Since many peoples in Nepal are currently undergoing the process of "Hinduization" and adopting the caste-system, Nepal offers a particularly interesting perspective on caste in both theory and practice. Rosser noted, with regard to communities who undergo this process, that "turning Hindu in this way is associated with a general tightening up of observances of rules of ritual avoidance – a stricter application of the concepts of pollution, greater care and punctiliousness in following the prescriptions of commensality and the restrictions associated with food, and equally with the requirements of caste endogamy." (1966:95)

Nor do is there reason to believe that Tantric practitioners sought a widespread and potentially socially destabilizing dissemination of this discourse, given the tremendous emphasis placed on secrecy by the traditions.

In theory, however, such egalitarian discourse cannot be dismissed as inconsequential. As Kapferer noted, "religious ideas and practices comprise an element of the symbolic discourse of class and status, and variations and changes in religious ritual are produced in this dialectic of class and religion." (1983:321) That this is so is indicated by the fact that the brahmins, who were quite cognizant of cogent threats to their status and authority, were often quite hostile toward the Tantric traditions, which may account for the far poorer state of preservation of Tantric texts and traditions in India,[157] and many that have survived are quite bowdlerized. This has been noted by Brooks, who has observed that many Hindus view the "Tantric" in an extremely negative light, and as being the antithesis of a good Hindu.[158] Brooks has noted that Tantric discourse, when not bowdlerized but taken to its logical conclusion, presents a serious threat to Vaidika brahmins. He wrote that

> By their advocacy of 'radical' esotericism Tantrics not only subvert the intellectual authority of brahmans but bring into question their moral and religious privileges as the arbiters of the Veda. Tantrics may also gain access to a patronage from ruling powers and thereby threaten the political as well as religious prerogatives of non-Tantric brahmans. It is little wonder that Tantrism's most strident opponents are those with the most to lose: non-Tantric Vaidika brahmans whose authority and status is thrown into question by the Tantrics' claims to religious and moral superiority. Tantric theory and practice, taken to its fullest extent, would rend the social and moral fabric of Vaidika conventionality obsolete by altering standards of behavior and reordering Dharma. The concepts of purity and impurity upon which the society is ordered and the ritual practices established for the sake of binding the actions of castes to mutually beneficial, reciprocally determined human aims, the Tantric renders moot and reinterprets to suit a new, more complex set of worldly circumstances. At stake for the non-Tantric Vaidika is not only his own personal status, which we should not underestimate, but his understanding of the entire order of existence, structured by a hierarchical

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[157] Most of the important Hindu Tantric manuscript finds have been in Nepal, which appears to have been much more open to Tantric traditions, perhaps in part because Nepali polities were less dominated by brahmins, and maintained Buddhism as a viable alternative to the present day.

[158] See Brooks 1992, pp. 407-411.

> socioreligious system that shapes his own picture of the Hindu cosmos. (1990:23-24)

Tantric adepts may have been liminal vis-à-vis normative Indian society, but it is probably incorrect to idealize them as permanently enjoying a state of communitas, which one might visualize as an almost otherworldly non-concern with the world and its politics. Quite to the contrary, Tantric Buddhists at least have demonstrated a concern with the world, a concern which is justifiable on the basis on the doctrine of nonduality. In India, at least, Tantric texts do seem to reflect an intense concern with the liminal, both liminal persons and liminal places.

For example, a highly noticeable tendency in Tantric discourse is the valorization of women, and the command that adepts refrain from scorning women, which is in fact one of the vows that an adept takes when initiated into a Buddhist Tantric tradition.[159] This notably contrasts with a large body of earlier Buddhist texts which disparage women, although there was a trend in the Mahāyāna which ran counter to these texts,[160] and this was a trend which the Tantric Buddhists evidently followed.

One might argue that the Tantric Buddhist valorization of women is a sign of the liminal context in which these texts were composed. Here one could turn to Turner, who suggested that women are, for many cultures, liminal figures.[161] Bynum has criticized his position, arguing in a (1984) article that this is only the case from the androcentric perspective. She is of course correct, but when dealing with medieval traditions that is generally the perspective with which we are left. Tantric texts overwhelmingly reflect an androcentric bias, which is evidenced even in the enjoinder that the adept should not disparage women, an enjoinder which is evidently directed toward a male audience.

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[159] See Kelsang Gyatso 1994, p. 67.

[160] Depictions of women in Mahāyāna Buddhist texts are by no means unequivocally positive, and some Mahāyāna texts repeat the disparagement promulgated in earlier Buddhist texts, but many Mahāyāna texts, such as the *Vimalakirti-nirdeśa* and the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra* portray women in a less negative and more sophisticated light. See Paul 1979 for a survey of these texts and the trends discernible within them.

[161] See Turner 1969, pp. 99-104.

Here an interesting problem is encountered. Yoginītantras emphasize the feminine, which is seen in the fact that the majority of deities in their maṇḍala are goddesses. Numerous Tantras and commentaries also recommend that male adepts revere and serve women, who are understood to embody the goddess Prajñāpāramitā, wisdom incarnate. Anaṅgavajra, for example, wrote in his *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* that

> Those who desire liberation should in every way serve Prajñāpāramitā, who is ultimately pure and yet manifests in the feminine form. She abides everywhere taking on the form of an alluring woman *(lalanā)*, and is commended by the Adamantine Lord as one who arises for the sake of other's aims. Success will come easily for the adept who, through union with reality *(tattvayoga)*, loves the consort who appears in clans such as those of the brahmin, etc., or is born as an outcast, or is an undisciplined wife of another, or one maimed or crippled, or likewise [one's] mother or mother-in-law, one's own daughter or sister.[162]

Significantly, this reverence and worship must be unconditional, performed without regard to social class, physical appearance, or one's relationship with the woman. This is emphasized by Lakṣmiṃkarā, who, in her *Advayasiddhi*, wrote that

> One who understands yoga should always worship his mother, sister, daughter and niece by means of the wisdom art, and, through mediation on the Adamantine Intuition, should continually worship women even if she is missing a limb, of lower class or a dog eater.[163]

On the level of practice, Tantras contain numerous statements to the effect that the adept needs to find and please a female partner *(dūti)* in order to succeed in Tantric practice, such

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[162] Ch. 5. vv. 22-25: prajñāpāramitā sevyā sarvathā muktikāṅkṣibhiḥ / paramārthe sthitā śuddhā saṃvṛtyā tanudhāriṇi // lalanārūpam āsthāya sarvatraiva vyavasthitā / ato 'rthaṃ vajranathena proktā bāhyārthasaṃbhavā // brāhmaṇādikulotpannāṃ mudrāṃ vai antyajodbhavām / duḥśilāṃ parabhāryāṃ ca vikṛtāṃ vikalāṃ tathā // janayitriṃ svasāraṃ ca svaputriṃ bhāgineyikāṃ / kāmayan tattvayogena laghu sidhyeta sādhakaḥ // (Samdhong and Dwivedi 1988:93); / thams cad du ni thar 'dod pas // shes rab pha rol phyin bsten bya // dam pa'i don du gang gnas pa // kun rdzob dag pa'i lus bzung nas // bud med mdzes pa'i gzugs kyis ni // thams cad du ni kun tu gnas // de bas phyi rol don las byung // rdo rje mkhan pos don de gsungs // bram ze'i rigs sogs las 'byung dang // mtha' yas skyes dang phyag rgya dang // gzhan gyi chung ma tshul nyams dang // dman dang cha lugs mi sdug dang // skye ma dang ni sgyug mo dang // rang gi bu mo sring mo dang // de nyid sbyor bas 'dod spyod na // sgrub po myur du 'grub par 'gyur / (1988:137)

[163] v. 5,6: janani bhaginiścaiva duhitṛbhāgineyikān / prajñopāyavidhānena pūjayed yogavit sadā // ekāṅgavikalāṃ hīnāṃ śilpiniṃ śvapaciṃ tathā / yoṣitāṃ pūjayen nityaṃ jñānavajraprabhāvanaiḥ // ((Samdhong et al. 1987:161); / ma dang sring mo bu mo dang // de bzhin tsha mo nyid dang ni // shes rab thabs su bya ba ste // rnal 'byor pas ni rtag tu mchod // yan lag gcig med rigs ngan dang // bzo bo khyi sha can sogs kyi // bu mo rtag tu mchod par bya // ye shes rdo rje sgom pa che / (Samdhong et al. 1987:147-48)

as the previously mentioned passage in chapter twenty-seven of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, which discusses the *dūtī* as follows:

> Having understood [their] characteristics, there will be rapid engagement with the powers *(siddhi)*. Going from town to town, the form of the *dūtī* is revealed. The *dūtī* is like the sharp edge of a sword. She purifies and augments one's merit. Therefore, being well acquainted with the *dūtī*, the adept will rapidly attain success *(siddhi)*.[164]

The idea that a man *requires* the assistance of a woman to achieve Awakening is stated even more strongly in chapter ten, entitled "In Praise of Women" *(strīstotra)*, of the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, as follows:

> Then the Blessed Lady asked, "Is it possible or not possible, Lord, for the adept to achieve the state of *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa* without a woman?" The Blessed Lord replied, "It is not possible, Devī." The Blessed Lady asked, "Why is it impossible without the experience of pleasure?" The Blessed Lord replied, "While ultimate awakening is obtained only through the experience of bliss, it arises by means of particular sort of bliss, and not otherwise."[165]

This is a quite different than the discourse in early strata of Buddhist discourse, where the key question was whether or not women could attain Awakening, and not whether or not men needed to rely on them to achieve it. Shaw, in her 1994 work, has surveyed a relatively wide range of Tantric texts and argued that

> Tantric texts encourage a sense of reliance upon women as a source of spiritual power. They express a sense of esteem and respect for women....and evince a genuine concern for finding and showing the proper deference towards religiously advanced, spiritually powerful women. (1994:11)

It appears that Shaw is correct in arguing that Tantric texts portray women in a genuinely respectful and often reverential manner. On the other hand, these and other texts betray an androcentric focus in that they appear to be written by and for men. This is exemplified in

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[164] CST ch. 27 vv. 1c-3b: / mtshan nyid dbye ba shes byas nas // dngos grub myur du 'jug byed ni // grong dang grong du de song nas // pho nya'i gzugs ni mtshon par bya // pho nya ral gri'i so 'dra zhing // dag byed bsod nams 'phel byed yin // de bzhin pho nya legs 'grogs pas // sgrub pa po yis dngos grub 'thob / DK fol. 231b). For Tsongkhapa's interpretation of these verses see section 2.3.2.1 above.

[165] / de nas bcom ldan 'das mas gsol pa / ci ste bcom ldan sgrub pa pos / khri chen gtum po'i go 'phang ni // bud med dang bral bsgrub nus sam // 'on te bsgrub par nus ma yin // bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa // lha mo bsgrub par nus pa ma yin no // bcom ldan 'das mas gsol pa / bcom ldan 'das ci'i phyir na bde ba ster pa med pa mi nus // bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa // e ma bde ba skyes tsam gyis // byang chub mchog ni thob byed pa'i // bde ba khyad 'phags 'byung ba las // de nyid 'thob kyis de gzhan min / (DK fol. 318a,b)

particular in the rites of initiation as described in the *Cakrasaṃvara* and other Tantras; the initiation rite described in chapter three of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is that by which male adepts are initiated; a female consort *(mudrā)* is intimately involved, but the text is silent on how a female adept should be initiated.[166] While there may have been corresponding rites for the initiation of women, these are not described in the texts which have been preserved and transmitted down to the present day. Likewise, the text is filled with admonitions for the male *sādhaka* to find and serve respectfully a female partner *(dūti);* many chapters are spent enumerating and describing the different types of female partners, how they are to be found and won over, and what sorts of secret signs and codes should be known when encountering them. Again, however, the text is silent concerning the path women should take; they are portrayed as essential figures in the *sādhaka*'s spiritual quest, rather than the subjects of their own quests.[167]

This has been noted by previous scholars. Snellgrove has observed that

> Since all these tantric texts now under consideration have clearly been produced primarily for the benefit of male practitioners, the transference of the whole sexual symbolism to the human body is regularly described in terms of the male, although in theory it should also be applicable to the female. In the descriptions of the [*anuttarayogatantra* initiations]....the feminine partner known as the "wisdom maiden" *(prajñā)* and supposedly embodying this great perfection of wisdom, is in effect used as a means to an end, which is experienced by the yogin himself. Moreover, once he has mastered the requisite yoga techniques he has no need of a feminine partner, for the whole process is reenacted within his own body. The reverse situation is scarcely suggested, namely that a woman requires a male partner in order to experience the Four Joys and that having mastered the technique she can do it alone. Thus despite the eulogies of woman in these tantras and her high symbolic status, the whole theory and practice is given for the benefit of males.[168]

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[166] See the discussion of these initiations in section 2.3.2.2 above. For an excellent introduction to the rites of initiation and their relation to the subtle body yogas see Kvaerne 1975. The relevant chapter is ch. 3, edited and translated, and commented upon in appendices A, B and C below.

[167] Here I refer to the Tantras and their commentaries and associated ritual texts. The hagiographies do, of course, describe the lives and spiritual quests of the female siddhas, but the more technical aspects of the literature are silent on the specifics of the ritual and yogic technologies appropriate for women.

[168] Snellgrove 1987, p. 284. Insert mine.

Shaw has criticized Snellgrove and other scholars[169] for making misogynistic interpretations of the texts, and her criticism is apt, in that Snellgrove's implication that women were merely used by men and discarded, and that the eulogies of women in the text are hypocritical, is completely unfounded through a reading of the texts themselves, which do genuinely seem to revere women. On the other hand, there seems to be no escaping the fact that the texts themselves represent an androcentric perspective; it is important to point out here that just because a text was written by men does not mean that it is misogynist, but it does mean that it is far more likely to reflect the needs and aspirations of the male authors and their intended male audience. This was noted by Cabezón, who warned that when we are "examining the textual traditions we are for the most part examining culture as seen through the eyes *of men.*" (1992:189) Gross corroborates this observation, writing that in the Buddhist Tantric traditions "most texts and *sadhana*-s *are* written from the male point of view and *do* treat the woman as if she were an instrument rather than a partner." (1993:105) This Gross attributes not to a lack of female Tantric practitioners, but to the fact that their experiences "have been silenced by generations of androcentric record-keeping and patriarchal social norms." (1993:91) The degree to which these experiences are recoverable, however, is not at all clear.

Shaw's response to this problem was to try to recover the feminine voices which, while not represented in the texts themselves, she posits are present behind the scene, so to speak. Shaw accepts that the vast majority of Tantric texts were composed by men, but argues that

> since these texts were not created by men in isolation from women, they do not express exclusively male views. These views grew out of communal exploration and practice and proceed from the insights *of both women and men.* Indeed, many of the insights contained in Tantric writings can only find their source in the practices done by men and women together. The text openly presents Tantra as a religious path on which the lives of men and women are closely intertwined. I contend that the extensive descriptions of the interactions and shared practices of men and women are in themselves sufficient evidence that the *yogini-tantras* are the products of circles consisting of both women and men. Therefore, I include

[169] See Shaw 1994, p. 36.

> women among the creators of the *tantras* and conclude that the texts reflect the views and interests of women as well as those of men. (1995:36-37)

It may very well be that Shaw's hypothesis is correct, although it should be pointed out that her hypothesis has yet to be proven, and what Shaw takes as "sufficient evidence" is simply a conjecture based on the reading of a highly ambiguous body of texts, and her conclusion is thus based upon a somewhat circular reasoning, in that a conjectural reading is taken as proof of the hypothesis on which the reading is based. This problem has been noted by Wilson, who pointed out that Shaw "overplays her hand in claiming that she has succeeded where other scholars have failed to recover the experiences, voices, and historical agency of the women of Tantric Buddhism." (1996b:64) And while Shaw's feminist ideology is preferable to that of the relatively misogynist scholars whom she criticizes, it is not clear that either position is demonstrable from the texts themselves.

Shaw's methodology was to try and read between the lines of male authored texts to discern the subjectivity of women. She felt that "passages on women can be examined for potential evidence of how women viewed and experienced their own lives." (1995:37) In making this claim she seems to be following Bynum, who claimed that by "reading between the lines" (1984:77) of androcentric texts one is able to discern the intentions of the females portrayed in those texts; invoking Dilthey's discredited *verstehen* hermeneutic does, not, however, seem to provide the best methodology for interpreting these texts.[170] Tantric texts, even when there is no question concerning authorship, are difficult to read and interpret, but scholarship requires exactly this sort of close reading. While it is easy to sympathize with the plight of the scholar who seeks to recover lost voices, a hermeneutic divorced from close reading can be dangerous[171] – a hermeneutic such as the *verstehen*

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[170] Both studies, in claiming to be able to discern the experience and intentions of women via some sort of intuitive hermeneutic, seems to place themselves in the tradition going back to Schleiermacher's Christian apologetic which was expanded by Dilthey into the "*verstehen*" hermeneutic, which has been thoroughly discredited and abandoned by serious historians and hermeneutic philosophers from the 1930s onward. For a trenchant critique of this method see Gadamer 1975, pp. 174-231, and also Proudfoot 1985, pp. 41-60.

[171] This was pointed out by Paul de Man, whose 1986 book, *The Resistance to Theory*, explores this issue in depth. While a good hermeneutics obviously must involve a textual component, in that "one has to have 'read' the text in terms of poetics to arrive at a hermeneutic conclusion," (1986:56) nonetheless there has

method seeks above all to avoid 'inconvenient' readings, which often turn out to be total avoidance. Such methodology tells us little about anything except the usually unacknowledged ideology of the authors who wield it.

An interesting approach is that of Haydn White, who suggested that historians draw on the methods of literary criticism and develop a 'poetics of history,'[172] a consistent approach to the study of texts, which would serve as a foundation for the subsequent historical interpretation. While some historians have relied on simplistic definitions of history to fend off such an approach, claiming that history is 'factual', while literature is 'fictional,' both are in fact textual, and need to be analyzed at the textual level.[173] That the study of history needs to develop such a method has been forcefully argued by de Man, who discussed the epistemological complexity of the historian's task, noting that the historian's claim to knowledge

> is not available as an actual presence and therefore requires a labor of interpretation or of reading prior even to determining whether it can even be reached. We have come to expect this degree of hermeneutic intricacy from any philosophical or psychological analysis, but, surprisingly enough, a similar subtlety is rarely demanded from historians....this surprise is in fact not surprising at all, since this reluctance is itself the symptom of an anxiety of not-knowing that may reach further than pragmatic historians may wish to know." (1986:59)

The anxiety of not-knowing is particularly acute in the field of Tantric studies, given the fact that very few of the texts have been edited and reliably studied at the philological level. This is not to say that Tantric texts are useless as sources of historical knowledge. Precisely because they have not been adequately studied on a textual level, they have been

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been, for complex reasons, significant resistance to deconstructionist critical methodologies, no doubt because these are "powerful tool[s] for unmasking ideological aberrations, as well as a determining factor in accounting for their occurrence. Those who reproach literary theory for being oblivious to social and historical (that is to say ideological) reality are merely stating their fear at having their own ideological mystifications exposed by the tool they are trying to discredit." (1986:11)

[172] White's approach, outlined in his 1973 book, is very helpful, though preliminary; it is flawed only in that he draws upon a somewhat simplistic theory, namely Norton Frye's "historical criticism" based on genre analysis (See Frye 1957, pp. 33-67).

[173] It is important to note that no texts are intrinsically "factual" (they may be false), but they simply represent themselves as such, via mimesis. While this issue is too complex to delve into here, for a thoroughgoing deconstruction of mimesis see Michael Riffaterre's (1978) *Semiotics of Poetry*. (Indiana University Press).

taken as tabula rasa into which various agendas have been read. On the other hand, they may well prove to be excellent sources once the preliminary work has been done, but this is a task in which very much work remains to be done, so it is probably premature to draw any historical conclusions on the basis of Tantric texts alone.

Shaw is on stronger ground in addressing the texts attributed to female Tantric siddhas such as Lakṣmiṃkarā.[174] Shaw does not question the traditional attribution, but there does not appear to be any compelling reason to do so. Scholars have cast doubt on the attribution of texts such as the *Therigatha* to women,[175] but Winternitz rightly pointed out that given the misogyny of the monks who preserved the texts it is highly unlikely that the monks would have falsely attributed any work to a woman. Winternitz wrote that

> There can be no doubt that the great majority of the 'Songs of the Lady Elders' were composed by women. First of all, the monks never had so much sympathy with the female members of the community, as to warrant our crediting them with having composed these songs sung from the very hearts of women....it would have never occurred to the monks to ascribe songs to the women, if an incontestable tradition had not pointed at this direction.[176]

The Tantric texts attributed to female authors were also transmitted for about a thousand years by a male dominated monastic tradition, so for the same reason it is unlikely that the texts are falsely attributed.

It is possible to inquire about the *representations* of women in Tantric texts; here there is a tremendous shift, away from the overtly misogynist bias of the texts of earlier schools of Buddhism.[177] Within the context of Indian society as well as Buddhism taken as a whole, one of the most striking aspects of Tantric discourse is its reversal of the tendency in earlier Buddhist literatures to portray women negatively, to disparage women, to portray them as mere obstacles to men's awakening. Here they are portrayed as essential to men's

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[174] See Shaw 1987 and also 1994, pp. 110 ff.

[175] See Norman 1971, p. xix, *op. cit.* Murcott 1991, p. 8.

[176] Winternitz 1933, p. 100, *op. cit.* Murcott 1991, p. 9.

[177] See Wilson 1996a for a discussion of the negative representations of women in early Buddhist texts.

awakening, and men are repeatedly warned that misogyny is a grave spiritual danger. Even if, as seems to be the case, the texts are written by and for men, this reversal in the portrayal of women is very interesting, and possibly indicative of a significant social change. There is no doubt that the representations of women in Tantric texts is overall much more positive and powerful, a conclusion which Ray reached following a survey of the literature.[178]

Within Tantric Buddhist discourse, there is also a tendency to use representations of women as an aspect of the rhetoric of liminality that pervades the Yoginitantras and their related literature. More often than not, women as portrayed in the Yoginitantras and the legends of the siddhas are not typical, but are female renunciants such as *yoginis*, and often are outcasts such as the Ḍombi. While Bynum is correct that women are only liminal in the eyes of men, the portrayals of women in these texts were composed by men. And as India was a patriarchal society, women *were* liminal in it in the sense that their needs were not central concerns in the dominant modes of discourse.

This certainly includes their spiritual needs, which are downplayed in "normative" texts such as Tryambakayajvam's *Stridharmapaddhati*, in which, as Leslie has shown, women are denied even the possibility of spiritual renunciation, and are prescribed the duty of serving their husbands.[179] Gupta argued that "an unmarried woman is a social anomaly" and thus dangerous, which is mirrored in the depictions of goddesses, who are relatively benign when accompanied by a spouse, but dangerous and potentially destructive when

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[178] Ray concluded that "the Vajrayana very strongly defines itself as a tradition for both women and men, even though, in sheer numbers, men practitioners and *siddhas* always outnumbered female practitioners and *siddhas*. Much of the Vajrayana's openness to women may be due to its complex and sophisticated psychology, which sees the human traits defined by other traditions and cultures as 'masculine' and 'feminine' as part of both men and women's psychological makeup. Therefore, women and men have the same inherent obstacles to overcome and the same inherent potential for spiritual discipline and enlightenment. All in all, the image of women *siddhas* presented in the traditional literature is highly positive; they are depicted as insightful, dignified, courageous, independent, powerful, and creative – the same qualities that are displayed by male *siddhas*." (1989:199)

[179] See Leslie 1989, esp. pp. 318-21. While authors such as Tryambakayajvam did not approve of female renunciation, it nevertheless occurred, even if it remained a relatively marginal phenomenon. See Denton 1991 for an overview of female renunciation, as well as McDaniel, who, her 1995 work (esp. ch. 5), provides a compelling account of modern Bengali female renunciants.

alone,[180] Gupta went on to suggest that, at both the mundane and divine levels, "the need to control the female permeates the ritual life of the Hindu woman." (1990:51)

Women were also liminal vis-à-vis institutionalized Buddhism. This was the case figuratively, as nuns are portrayed as heretical in some early Buddhist sources,[181] and also literally, since, as Falk has shown, the women's order declined during the Gupta era, that is, from the fourth to seventh centuries, and they became almost invisible in the archaeological and literary record, including the records of the Chinese pilgrims, who either did not encounter many nuns, although in the latter case it is not known whether the problem is a lack of nuns or lack of interest on the part of the pilgrims.[182] Yi-jing did describe nuns he encountered in China, as follows:

> Nuns in India are very different from those of China. They support themselves by begging, and live a poor and simple life....The benefit and supply to the female members of the order are very small, and monasteries of many a place have no special supply of food for them.[183]

This picture strongly contrasts with the situation of the great monastic universities built for the monks, such as Nālandā, which evidently suffered no poverty or dearth of patronage.

It is not certain to what extent the positive depiction of women in Tantric literature, coupled as it was on the Buddhist side with a real, i.e., institutionalized, decline in their

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[180] Chalier-Visuvalingam argued that "the 'original' Goddess was wild *(ugra)* in every sense of the term before her reign in South Asia was usurped by the patriarchal Brahmanical tradition and its pantheon of Vedic gods. The impure Amazon was first suppressed, then gradually domesticated, before she was finally reinstated as the benign *(saumya)* Mother of the Universe. The bloodthirsty virgin of the pre-Aryan tribes became the submissive Hindu bride bound in wedlock to one or another of the classical trinity. It is above all in folk religion and in the radical Tantric practices that she reverts back – at least temporarily – to her pristine form, the incarnation of unbridled violence and sexuality. Even then, she has to suffer the ignominy of being accompanied by a chaperon, none other than her consort Śiva disguised specially for the occasion as the terrible Bhairava, to whom her countless other guardians and consorts are generally assimilated. The Hindu tradition ultimately derives even her 'seats of power' *(śāktapiṭha)* from the inert body of the hapless wife, who still immolates herself in the combined fire of her father's sense of honour and her husband's indifference. Nevertheless, the solitary goddess is still everywhere to be found on the margins of caste-society and just beyond, whether in the cremation grounds of Tamilnadu or the jungles of Orissa." Bracketing the issue of origins (Chalier-Visuvalingam fortunately places scare-quotes around the term "original"), the goddess in her solitary forms appears to be more associated with ferocity and transgression than in her role as a wife or consort.

[181] See Schopen 1996, p. 583.

[182] See Falk 1989, pp. 156-57.

[183] Takakusu 1896, p. 81, *op. cit.* Falk 1989, p. 157.

opportunities for living a spiritual life, actually reflect a change in their overall status in society. Thapar concluded that during the classical Gupta and post-Gupta period, i.e., fourth through seventh centuries, "women were idealized in literature and art but in practice they had a distinctly subordinate position." (1966:151) On the other hand, given the subordination of women in mainstream society, renunciation may have continued to hold a strong appeal for some. Thapar also noted that "the only categories of women who had a large measure of freedom were those who chose to opt out of what were regarded by law books as the 'normal' activities of a woman, and became either Buddhist nuns or joined the theatrical profession or became courtesans and prostitutes." (1966:152) And as female monasticism in India declined, it may be that increasing numbers of women took to the less conventional modes of renunciation, such as the lifestyle of the *yogini.*

It is thus quite possible that the liminal representations of women in the Buddhist Yoginitantras reflect an actual social reality, for the renunciant lifestyle of the wandering *yogini* may have been one of the few spiritual paths open to women by the time these texts were composed, i.e., circa the seventh century. At the same time, these representations fit into the general rhetorical strategy of these texts of valorizing the liminal, which perhaps represents both a form of social dissent as well as a glorification of the renunciant lifestyle which the authors of these texts evidently undertook.

3.2.2.2 Liminal Places: The Cult of the Charnel Ground

While the evidence concerning the religious history of early medieval India is sparse, there is evidence which suggests that Tantric traditions did indeed arise in a relatively liminal, non-sectarian milieu, a milieu which is symbolized in the texts by the charnel ground, the site par excellence for Unexcelled Yogatantra practice. It is a site

which, by its extremely inauspicious association with death, represents a rejection or violation of the normative social order. This was noticed by Berger, who wrote:

> The marginal situation *par excellence,* however, is death. Witnessing the death of others (notably, of course, of significant others) and anticipating his own death, the individual is strongly propelled to question the *ad hoc* cognitive and normative operating procedures of his "normal" life in society. Death presents society with a formidable problem not only because of its obvious threat to the continuity of human relationships, but because it threatens the basic assumptions of order on which society rests. (1967:23-24)

In appears that in India, the charnel ground was not only a site representing a threat to social order, but also was the site for the constitution of an alternative order. An examination of this symbolism, then, may shed some light on the ideology of the Tantric practitioners, who cannot be characterized as purely in resistance to the dominant social ideology, but who also had their own ideology which was not without social and political significance.

Tsuda coined the term "cult of the cemetery", which here is modified to "cult of the charnel ground",[184] to designate a religious phenomenon which he described as

> a diabolical cult of Bhairava, a demonic form of the Great God Śiva, and his consort which was prevalent among the lowest strata of the rural, matriarchal community of the time; it is thought to have been a cult usually performed in a cemetery *(śmasāna)* by secret societies of the lower class women of rural communities who were regarded as or called themselves *yoginis* or *ḍākinis.* (Tsuda 1990:96)

Tsuda's highly speculative theory of origins aside, it is interesting that the charnel ground became a site par excellence for Tantric practice in both Śaiva and Buddhist Tantras, and, in the case of the latter, primarily in the Yoginitantra*s* which are also exemplary in their focus on the feminine and on transgressive practices.

The charnel grounds were also the premier liminal sites due to their association with the polluting and inauspicious power of death. They were also liminal vis-à-vis society, in

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[184] Tsuda uses this phrase in his 1978 article. Cemetery, however, is not the best translation for *śmaśāna,* as cemetery (derived from the euphemistic Greek term *koimeterion,* "dormitory", see Brown 1993, vol. 1 p. 360 col. 1, a term which probably derives from Christian eschatology) is specifically a site for the internment of the dead, while a *śmaśāna* is a site for the cremation of the dead for those who could afford it, while for everyone else it is site where the dead are abandoned; charnel ground is thus a better translation.

that they were almost invariably located on the edges of major towns and cities, just beyond the city walls, and they were associated with outcast peoples such as the Ḍoms who performed essential but polluting tasks involving the handling of the dead.[185]

It is clear that the fierce forms of Śiva, the deities Rudra and Bhairava, were associated with death and the charnel ground. Rudra was a fear-inspiring deity; the hymns directed to him in the *Ṛg Veda* seem mainly concerned with diverting his wrath.[186] This wrath is depicted in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* as resulting from Rudra's conception in a transgressive act, the incestuous union of Prajāpati and Vāc, which leads to Rudra's slaying of his father, Prajāpati.[187] He was also associated with the sin of murder in the sacrifice, as well as with its dangerous remnants.[188] He was also connected with death in general, and charnel grounds in particular, and with ashes,[189] the final remnant of both the sacrifice and the process of cremation, which is comparable to the sacrifice, according to Parry.[190]

These associations continue in the Epic and Purāṇic literature; in the *Mahābhārata* Śiva himself is described by the none too friendly Dakṣa as follows:

> He roams about in dreadful cemeteries, attended by hosts of goblins and spirits, like a mad man, naked, with disheveled hair, laughing, weeping, bathed in the ashes of funeral pyres, wearing a garland of skulls and ornaments of human bones, insane, beloved of the insane, the lord of beings whose nature is essentially darkness. (Briggs 1938:153)

The deity of the *Kāpālikas* was Bhairava, who was associated with the most reprehensible of sins (from the perspective of brahmins), brahmanicide, a crime which automatically

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[185] See Parry 1981 and 1994 for a discussion of the charnel grounds in Kāśi, which is however untypical in that the sites of cremation, the burning ghāts, are located in the middle of the city rather than on the periphery, and they are not properly speaking charnel grounds in that the Gaṅgā serves as the recepticle for the corpses of families who cannot afford cremation. However, as Parry shows, Kāśi is a remarkable case, the exception that proves the rule.

[186] 1.114, 2.33; see O'Flahery 1981:221-5.

[187] See Long 1970 pp. 76 ff., and also Parpola 1992, pp. 283-85.

[188] See Chalier-Visuvalingam 1994.

[189] See Arbman 1922, esp. ch. 7, pp. 254-79, and also Long 1970, pp. 50-57.

[190] See Parry 1994, pp. 188 ff.

excluded and ostracized him. His penance, wandering with the skull of Brahmā affixed to his hand, became the Great Observance *(mahāvrata)* of the Kāpālikas , as Lorenzen has shown.[191]

Somadeva, in his eleventh century work, the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā,* describes the charnel ground as being a virtual incarnation of Bhairava, as follows:

> It was obscured by a dense and terrible pall of darkness. and its aspect was rendered awful by the ghastly flames from the burning of the funeral pyres, and it produced horror by the bones, skeletons and skulls of men that appeared in it. In it were present formidable Bhūtas and Vetālas, joyfully engaged in their horrible activity, and it was alive with the loud yells of jackals so that it seemed like a mysterious and tremendous form of Bhairava.[192]

Śaiva renunciates were not the only ones haunting the charnel grounds. The very horror of the *śmasāna* was believed to make it an ideal site for the more heroic renunciants, who sought to completely cut through all attachments to the world. Included among these renunciants were in fact the Buddhists.

The association of Buddhists with charnel grounds is evidently quite ancient. Archaeological excavations have shown that Buddhist monasteries were often built near charnel complexes, as Schopen has shown.[193] Buddhists, in taking the reliquary mound *(stūpa)* as one of its holiest objects, implicitly rejected the brahmanic notions of the impurity deriving from death. The Buddhist association with sites connected with death was not without social implications, for in so doing, they deliberately placed themselves in a liminal position within larger Indian society, a position which implied an rejection of Brahmanical notions of purity and pollution. That this was recognized as such is suggested by Gellner's account of Nepal, where Buddhists and brahmins still live in close proximity.

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[191] See Lorenzen 1972, and also Visuvalingam 1989.

[192] This passage is from the frame story that begins the *Vetālapañcaviṃśatikā* in Somadeva's retelling, which is in turn inserted within his much larger *Kathāsaritsāgara.* It describes the *śmasāna* entered at night by King Trivikramasena. Trans. in Penzer 1968, vol. 6, p. 167.

[193] Schopen wrote that "Alexander Cunningham, as early as 1854, published the results of his cursory excavations of the central Indian monastic sites around Sāñcī. Here already was clear evidence that indicated the existence of an extensive "cemetery" associated with the Buddhist monastic site at Bhojpur before the common era; here too at Sāñci itself and at Sonari and Ander was clear evidence for the elaborate housing and worshiping of the remains of the monastic dead." (Schopen 1991: 13,4)

Gellner reports that brahmins will never enter Nevāri Buddhist compounds such as Kwā Bāhāḥ by the front door, because, as a brahmin stated, "when you go in the main door you have to go underneath a *caitya,* and *caitya*s contain impure *(aśuddha)* things such as bones." Gellner concludes that "what is holy relic (bones in a *caitya*) to the Buddhist is impure to the Brahman." (1992:97)

Most importantly, the charnel ground was a site for a certain sort of meditation, the "mediation on impurity" *(aśubhabhāvanā).* This practice, which La Vallée Poussin rightly took to be related to the development of Tantrism, is described by him as follows: "the ascetic, often 'a dweller in the cemeteries,' 'purifies his bones' – *i.e.* fancies that his flesh is rotten and falls, and sees only the bones behind, until the whole world appears to him full of skeletons – and thus succeeds in crushing desire." (1922:194).

Meditation in charnel grounds for the purpose of contemplating death and impermanence is an ancient Buddhist practice, which is justified by the legend that one of the four sights which inspired Siddhārtha Gautama to undertake the spiritual journey which would culminate with his achievement of Awakening was the sight of a corpse.[194] There is ample evidence that some Buddhists were preoccupied with charnel ground from an early date. Both the *Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta*[195] and the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*[196] describe the Nine Charnel Ground Contemplations or "Meditations on Impurity" *(aśubhabhāvanā)* as recommended by the Buddha, which involve the contemplation of corpses in their various stages of disintegration. Interest in this sort of meditation if anything increased with time, as evidenced by the theorists' varying analyses of corpses into nine or ten types.[197] Such

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[194] The classic rendition of these events occurs in *Buddhacarita*, canto 3, edited and translated in Johnson 1936.

[195] *Dīgha Nikāya* 22, trans. in Walshe 1987 pp. 338-39.

[196] *Majjhima Nikāya* 10, trans. in Ñāṇamoli et al. 1995, pp. 148,9.

[197] A list of ten types of corpses occurs in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* (sections 263 and 264, see C.A.F. Rhys Davids (1923) pp. 69-70). The standard list of nine occurs in the Sanskrit *Mahāvyutpatti* as follows: (1) a discolored *(vinīlaka),* (2) a festering corpse *(vidhūtika),* (3) a worm-eaten corpse *(vipaḍumaka, rnam par 'bus gshig pa),* (4) a bloated corpse *(vyādhmātaka),* (5) a bloody corpse *(vilohitaka),* (6) a devoured corpse *(vikhāditaka),* (7) a dismembered, scattered corpse *(vikṣiptaka),* (8) a burned corpse *(vidagdhaka),* and (9)

meditations were believed to serve as antidotes for attachment to the body or sensual pleasures.

Elsewhere in the *Majjhima Nikāya* the Buddha recommends charnel grounds as meditation sites,[198] and described his austerities as a Bodhisattva thus: "I would make my bed in a charnel ground with bones of the dead for a pillow."[199] Charnel grounds thus seem to have an ancient history in India as sites for meditation. Dwelling in charnel grounds had become an acceptable vocation for Buddhist renunciates by at least the beginning of the common era, by which time they were designated as *śmāsānika* (Pāli *sosānika).* The *Vimuttimagga,* a text composed by Upatissa in Pāli in the first or second century CE, describes the benefits of this practice as including an understanding of death and impermanence, overcoming of fear, and gaining the reverence of supernatural beings.[200] With some justification Bapat argues that with this sort of practice "lies the beginning of the life of Siddhas in later Vajrayāna Buddhism, where we find the Buddhist monks claiming super-human powers, and leading abnormal lives such as wandering through the cemeteries to be in communion with divine spirits" for the sake of the acquisition of supernatural powers. (1964:xxv).

There is no doubt that Tantras such as the *Cakrasaṃvara* see the charnel ground as the ideal site for practice. This Tantra prescribes the following sites for drawing its maṇḍala: "On mountains, in thickets, in groves, on riverbanks, or in the primordially established charnel ground, there one should draw the maṇḍala."[201] Chapter two, which

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bones *(asthi).* (Dayal 1932:94). This practice is described in more detail in chapter 6 of the the *Visuddhimagga.*

[198] See for example the *Mahāssapura Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya* 39, trans. in Ñāṇamoli et al. 1995:366.

[199] *Mahāsihanāda Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya* 12, trans. in Ñāṇamoli et al. 1995 p. 175.

[200] This text was originally composed in Pāli, and was translated into Tibetan; this translation was edited and translated into English by Bapat (1964), the passage concerning the advantages of charnel ground mediation occur on pp. 54-55 of that text. See also Ray 1994, pp. 298-302.

[201] CST ch. 1 v. 16: girigahvarakuñjeṣu mahodadhitaṭeṣu vā // ādisiddhaśmaśāne ca tatra maṇḍalaṃ ālikhet /; / ri bo tshang tshing sman ljongs sam // chu bo che rnams ngogs dag dang // gdong nas grub pa'i dur khrod du // der ni dkyil 'khor bri bar bya /. See my edition in appendix A below.

describes how the maṇḍala is to be drawn, makes it clear that the charnel ground is the premier place for so doing, if for no other reason than the fact that it is to be drawn with substances found in this locale:

> The maṇḍala ground should be anointed there with unfallen cow products, with charnel ground ash together with the five ambrosias. Anointing thus the ground, there the maṇḍala should be undertaken. One should practice in the charnel ground. One well endowed with a master's qualities should draw the divine maṇḍala with charnel char powder and with charnel ground brick.[202]

Perhaps not coincidentally, the death process receives great attention in Tantric meditation, in some traditions of which the death process is rehearsed; these can thus be considered, as Thurman put it, "extraordinary preparations" for death.[203]

From a certain perspective, Buddhist Tantric practices can be seen as an interiorization of the classical Hindu funerary rites, particular, the rite of *sapiṇḍikaraṇa*, a ten day ceremony which is intended to transform the ghost *(preta)* of the deceased into an ancestor *(pitṛ)*, and which involves the offering of rice balls *(piṇḍa)*.[204] The rite is understood to effect a transformation in the deceased. Over nine days, the *preta* receives *piṇḍa* mortuary offerings, which are understood to create a divine body, resulting in a perfected body *(niṣpannadeha)* on the tenth day, as described in the *Garuḍa Purāṇa Sāroddhāra* 1.49: "The *preta* should obtain a *piṇḍa*, rice ball, for nine days and nights. The being, whose body had been perfected *(niṣpannadeha)*, will attain strength on the tenth."[205] Parry also finds this rite to have cosmic ramification, based upon the analogy of the microcosm and the macrocosm. He wrote that "since the body is the cosmos the last

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[202] CST ch. 2 vv. 1-3: tatrāpātagomayena maṇḍalabhūmiṃ pralepayet / śmaśānabhasmanāyuktaṃ pañcāmṛtasamanvitaṃ // upalipya tato bhūmiṃ tatra maṇḍalaṃ ārabhet / śmaśānaṃ tu samācaret // cityāṅgāracūrṇena śmaśāneṣṭakasaṃyuktaṃ / ālikhen maṇḍalaṃ divyaṃ ācāryaśubhalakṣaṇaḥ //; / der ni lci ba ma lhung bas // dkyil 'khor sa ni nye bar byug / dur khrod thal bar ldan pa dang // bdud rtsi lnga dang bcas pa yis // dkyil 'khor sa ni nyer byugs te // der ni dkyil 'khor yang dag brtsam // dur khrod du ni kun tu brtag // ro bsregs sol ba'i phye ma dang // dur khrod so phag ldan pa yis // dkyil 'khor bzang po bri bar bya // slob dpon dge ba'i mtshan nyid can /. See my edition in appendix A below.

[203] See Thurman 1994, esp. pp. 41-81.

[204] For a description of the classical *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* see Knipe 1977, its contemporary practice in Benaras is desribed by Parry (1994:191-225).

[205] ahorātraiś ca navabhiḥ pretaḥ piṇḍam avāpnuyāt / jantur niṣpannadehaś daśame balam āpnuyāt // (Nihom 1994:121 n. 336, trans. emended by me).

rites become the symbolic equivalent of the destruction *and rejuvenation* of the universe. Creation is cosmogony; and an individual death is assimilated to the process of cosmic regeneration." (1994:31)

Nāgārjuna's classical exposition of the Creation and Perfection stages uses terminology evoking these rites, i.e. his *piṇḍīkṛtasādhana.*[206] which describes the creation of the divine body, and his "perfection stage" *niṣpannakrama* wherein it is perfected.[207] The differences between the two is profound. While the Hindu employs the service of brahmins to ritually construct a heavenly destiny for his or her deceased kin, the Buddhist yogin seeks to employ yogic techniques to construct a perfected body, the site for Awakening, for him or herself. This is, ideally, effected in this life but otherwise in the *antarābhava,* the "between state" linking death and life, which is structurally the same as the state of the *preta* on whose behalf the Hindu mortuary rituals are thought to function.

There may be little more than a terminological similarity between the Hindu *sapiṇḍikaraṇa* and the Tantric Buddhist stages of meditation as described by Nāgārjuna. This slight similarity might reflect a common locus, however. For the Hindu funerary rites take place, in part, at the charnel ground where the body is cremated, which would have, no doubt, also have been the haunt of the yogins and yoginis who were instrumental in developing Tantric meditation techniques.

It appears that the Buddhists preoccupied with charnel ground mediations were of the forest renunciant type. Dwelling in charnel grounds is one of the *dhutaguṇas*, the renunciant practices that went beyond the requirements of normative monastic traditions, and were in fact discouraged by them.[208] Hirakawa has shown in an important (1963) article that the Mahāyāna developed in part from an alternative, liminal order of non-

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[206] This text, Tōh. 1796, is an extremely influential and early *sādhana* in the *Guhyasāmaja* tradition, and is believed to be Nāgārjuna's principle text on the Creation Stage.

[207] This is presented in Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama,* the Sanskrit and Tibetan of which is edited by Mimaki and Tomabechi (1994).

[208] Sources such as Buddhaghoṣa's *Visuddhimagga,* the *Parivāra* and the *Milindapañha* all deemphasize and attempt to limit the practice of the *dhutaguṇas.* See Ray 1994, pp. 303-7.

monastic communities, composed not of monks and nuns but aspiring bodhisattvas, men and women *(kulaputra, kuladuhitṛ)* associated with the cults of stūpa worship. His insight was advanced by Ray (1994) and also Prebish (1995), who have found extensive textual evidence to support this idea.

The lives of the early renunciants and the later siddhas are often quite similar as reported in the hagiographies, which suggests that the *siddhas* could be considered simply an extension of an older tradition. In accounts of the life of Upagupta, a contemporary of King Aśoka (c. third century BCE), Upagupta had a guru who was the forest renunciant Śāṇakavāsin, who is depicted living a lifestyle which evokes the lives of the siddha who lived a thousand years later. He was described as one who "rejoices at the contemplative life and sings of his meditations on rocky peaks and in deep ravines which keep him warm despite his wearing but a single garment of hemp." (Strong 1992:71)

This suggests that the radical discontinuity claimed to exist between earlier and later forms of Buddhism may be overstated. This was argued by Ray, as follows:

> The portrait of Upagupta as guru for his disciples as presented in the *Aśokarājāvadāna*... is... particularly rich in its themes of the priority of inner realization over external forms of the dharma; the sometimes implicit, sometimes explicit critique of the conventional values of settled monasticism; the requirement of unconditional commitment of disciple to master; the master's flexibility and unconventionality in training methods and skill in guiding disciples advanced in meditation; the beliefs that the guru has power over the phenomenal world and is ultimately behind the visions and meditation experiences of the disciples; the intense devotion of disciple for master; and so on. All of these illustrate common assumptions and expectations of what a teacher is in forest Buddhism and how such a person works. Modern buddhology, of course, is not unfamiliar with such images of the guru, but it generally has seen them as characteristic of Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet and not of the earlier, more "conservative" traditions.[209] The particular conformation of the Tantric guru is, in turn, often explained as the result of non-Buddhist influences.[210] It must come as a surprise, then, that here, in the heart of the lineage of the patriarchs of Northwestern Buddhism is to be found an image of the Buddhist teacher that in many of its essential characteristics mirrors that found in the Vajrayāna. This discrepancy is to be explained, of course, by the fact that buddhology has derived its understanding of the teacher in earlier Buddhism from monastic models, whereas the teacher in the Vajrayāna is essentially a forest figure. When forest images of the teacher in earlier

[209] See for example Conze 1951 p. 180.

[210] See Conze 1962, p. 270.

> Buddhism are compared with the forest images in the Vajrayāna, then, as we have seen, there is a much closer correspondence." (1994:140)

Interestingly, like the Vajrayāna,[211] many Mahāyāna sources depict Mahāyāna traditions as being initially disseminated secretly. Ray suggests that

> the theme of secrecy that stands at the heart of the Mahāyāna story of origins simply reflects the actual situation of the earliest tradition. These texts certainly suggest that the Mahāyāna, for some indeterminate period of time, was a tradition in which the central teachings were confined to restricted circles, chiefly those of forest meditators. Only later, when the Mahāyāna became monasticized, was it spread widely abroad and able to become available to much larger groups. (1994:410)

It seems highly probable that the Vajrayāna underwent a similar process of development among select and marginal groups of meditators and yogins/yoginīs, and then achieved widespread acceptance only once it became monasticized. It will be argued in section 5.2 below that this process was underway by the seventh century, involving important monastic sites such as Nālandā, but most likely many smaller sites as well.

The liminality of the renunciants may have resulted in their seeking to establish an alternate source of authority. An important term here is *kula,* which in the Mahāyāna developed the sense of an alternative lineage, one deriving not from one's biological family, but from one's spiritual life. Mahāyāna Buddhism developed the notion of what Thurman (1994:272) calls a "spiritual gene", *(gotra),* the Buddha-nature or innate potential for Awakening which all beings possess and which places them within the lineage of the Buddha *(buddhavaṃsa).*[212] Dayal noted that *gotra* "originally meant 'family', and was then used to denote the group of persons descended in the male line from a common sage." (1932:51) He then speculated that

> early Buddhism used an old term in a new sense, and declared that all Buddhists belonged to the family or clan of Gautama Buddha, as they were his spiritual sons and heirs. Such a notion of democratic equality and spiritual kinship probably led to the adoption of the Brahmanic word *gotra* by the Buddhists. (1932:51-52)

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[211] Tāranātha claimed that the Tantras were transmitted secretly for three hundred years before being disseminated by the siddhas. (See Wayman 1973, p. 15.) This claim, of course, is by its very nature unverifiable, since lack of evidence would constitute its proof.

[212] Concerning the history of these ideas see Ruegg 1976 and 1989b.

This discourse was very much taken up by the Tantric Buddhist traditions, and probably Tantric Hindu traditions as well.[213] The former elaborated increasingly large numbers of clans into which one could be initiated, the initiation being a process of the discovery of the adepts clan and the revealing to him (and possibly, her) the secrets of that clan, a process enacted by the casting of the flower on the maṇḍala. As the third chapter of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* prescribes, "Then the flower in the palm should be cast above the maṇḍala, and wherever that flower falls one is assigned to that clan."[214]

There are seven "clans" in the Cakrasaṃvara Tradition, into which are organized the deities and the different types of yoginis. Kambala, in commenting on chapter sixteen which discusses the yogini clans, correlates them to various Indian social groups, as follows:

> The brahmin [class] is said to [correspond to] Vairocana, the Ratna [clan] to the sweepers *(caṇḍāla)*, Lord Amitābha to the dancers *(narttaka)*, Amoghasiddhi to the dyers *(raṅgakāra)*, and Akṣobya to the muscians *(ḍombi)*. The sixth [clan] of Vajrasattva should be understood as corresponding to the kshatriya, and the seventh, the Universal Clan, of Heruka to the shudra.[215]

Orzech has argued that such employment of the rhetoric of lineage was politically motivated, arguing that "in India the language of 'lineage' implies some innate and substantive distinction among beings. It appears to have been adopted by Buddhists as a strategy for endowing low-caste Hindu converts with a lineage parallel to that asserted by the three higher castes." (1998:91) Kambala does appear here to negate the logic of caste differentiation by associating the castes to Buddha-clans which are ultimately all equal. Yet

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[213] Here I refer to the concept of *kula*, which was taken up as a key idea in Tantric Hinduism, giving rise to its important *kaula* tradition, which Goudriian suggests was adopted from the Buddhists. See Goudriaan and Gupta 1981, p. 18.

[214] CST Ch. 3 v. 6: puṣpāñjalin tataḥ kṣipet maṇḍalasyopari yasmai / patati tat puṣpa kulaṃ tatra vinirdiśet //; / thal mo'i me tog de nas dor // dkyil 'khor steng du dor bar bya // gang du me tog de lhung ba /. See my edition in appendix A below.

[215] SN ch. 16: / bram ze rnam snang bshad pa ste // rin chen tsaṇḍa ri zhes bya // gar mkhan dpag med mgon po ste // tsho mkhan don yod rdo rje can // mi bskyod pa yi ḍoṃ bi ste // drug pa rdo rje sems dpa' yi // rgyal rigs su ni shes par bya // bdun pa he ru ka yi ni // sna tshogs rigs byung dmangs rigs so / (DT fol. 35a); see also the list of castes given in EC ch. 8, edited and translated in George 1974.

since Heruka is the central deity of this tradition, his clan is considered superior; he is associated here with the Shudra, who are neither the highest or lowest of the groups mentioned.

It appears that the relationship between Tantric traditions can be characterized as existing in a state of what shall be termed here a state of "hostile interdependency". When dealing with renunciants, from which both Buddhist and Hindu traditions arose, it is important to stress their interdependency. There is no evidence to suggest that renunciant groups were highly sectarian. Rather, being liminal they were also non-localized, and existed in a state of transit through which new ideas and yogic and ritual technologies easily and quickly disseminated. That this is so is suggested by the fact, as mentioned above, that both Hindu and Buddhist lineages often trace back to the same mysterious siddha founders. The ethic of equality that pervades the discourse of these traditions also suggests that interdependency was the norm.

Hostility comes into play when distinct traditions formed and became institutionalized. This process appears to have occurred when a well-known master attracted large numbers of followers and also patronage, which typically leads to the development of institutions. Some legends suggest that certain siddhas settled in isolated areas; and some of these, perhaps with royal patronage, came to serve as teaching centers, which fits a pattern Tambiah observed concerning the forest renunciants in modern Thailand.[216] Tāranātha reported that the king of Campā[217] supplied the siddha Carpaṭipa with two rock carved temples, one of which he occupied with his wife and child, and the other by three hundred disciples.[218]

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[216] See Tambiah 1984.

[217] An ancient city in Bengal on the site of the modern town Bhagalpur, which was an important port city through the Gupta age, when it was gradually eclipsed in importance by Tāmralipti. After the fall of the Guptas, its fortunes declined while Tāmralipti's continued to rise. See Thaukur 1981, pp. 287-94.

[218] See Templeman 1983, p. 77.

Later, during the eleventh century, the accounts of Tibetan pilgrims relate that the siddha Nāropa had a forest retreat called Phullahari, where he was surrounded by disciples. Phullahari was located north of Nālandā, where Nāropa had lived as a scholar before undertaking Tantric practice;[219] it might have served as a hermitage of sorts loosely associated with the monastic university. This may be a venerable pattern. Hodge has studied the flora mentioned in the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, a majority of which are evidently native to the Eastern Himalayas. Given the connection between this text and masters from Nālandā, Hodge hypothesized that it might have been composed in a forest retreat associated with Nālandā located to the north in the Himalayan foothills.[220] While his conclusion is highly speculative, it does not seem unreasonable, as it appears to accord with what little is known about Indian Buddhist communities during this period.

It is when patronage and the control of institutional resources are at stake that rivalry becomes the norm. Rivalry occurred both between Tantric Buddhists and both Hindus and other Buddhist groups. Regarding the former, Hui Li's biography of the Chinese pilgrim Xuan-zang, who traveled in India during the first half of the seventh century, contains a remarkable passage recording the complaint made by a group of Hināyāna monks from Orissa concerning the monks at Nālandā to King Harṣa Śilāditya. It occurs as follows:

> The king....came to Orissa. The priests of this country all study the Little Vehicle, and do not believe in the Great Vehicle. They say it is a system of the "sky-flower"[221] heretics, and was not delivered by Buddha. When they saw the king after his arrival, they entered into conversation and said: "We hear that the king has built by the side of Nālandā a Vihāra of brass, a work magnificent and admirable. But why did not your majesty construct a Kāpālika temple or some other building of that sort?
> The king answered: "What do you mean by these words of reproach?"
>
> In reply they said: "The Monastery of Nālandā and its 'sky-flower' doctrine is not different from the Kāpālika sect: this is our meaning." (Beal 1911:159)

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[219] See Roerich 1959, p. 85, and also Trungpa 1982, esp. p. xxix.

[220] See Hodge 1994, pp. 72-74.

[221] The "sky-flower" is a metaphor often found in Mahāyāna texts for the unreality of objective phenomena.

It is quite interesting that the monks of Nālandā would appear to a rival Buddhist group as in sympathy with the Kāpālikas. Of course, this is hostile rhetoric, but the comparison itself is quite interesting, and suggests that Tantric practice may have been taken up in Nālandā during even the first half of the seventh century.

Several centuries later, similar conflicts were reported to the Tibetans by their Indian teachers. The master Buddhaśrījñāna, for example, was an eighth century author of many Tantric texts, some of which, as shown in section 2.3.2.2, were quite risqué. He evidently

> was violently vilipended by the monks *saindhava* of Odantapuri, according to Tāranātha, by the adepts of the Hināyāna according to Sum-pa mkhan-po. It was claimed that Buddhajñāna's conduct did not conform to the discipline, that he was not worthy to assume the duties of abbot, and his detractors used to speak of the *tantra* in insulting terms. (Naudou 1980, p. 81)

The large monastic universities such as Nālandā in North India eventually became centers for Buddhist Tantric traditions, including the Cakrasaṃvara.[222] However, some other Buddhist centers, such as the Vajrāsana complex at Bodhgaya, were occupied by monks of other traditions that were hostile to Tantric traditions. According to Tāranātha,

> In the temple of Vajrāsana there was a large silver image of Heruka and many treatises on Tantra. Some of the *saindhava* and *siṅgala* śrāvakas said that these were composed by Māra. So they burnt these [texts] and smashed the image into pieces and used the pieces as ordinary money.[223]

Sindhu and Sri Lanka were both well known as being strongholds of the earlier Nikāya schools of Buddhism, which were hostile to the Mahāyāna and, most likely, to its Tantric form in particular. The association of Siṅgala monks with the Vajrāsana complex in Bodhgaya is confirmed by Dharmasvāmin, a Tibetan pilgrim who traveled there during the

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[222] This was confirmed by the Tibetan pilgrim Dharmasvāmin, whose biography reports that Dharmasvāmin's Tibetan guru Chag locāna dGra-bcom travelled to India during the late twelfth century. He reported that there Saṃvara temple at Nālandā. See Roerich 1959, p. 48.

[223] Trans. in Roerich 1970, p. 279, but emended by me. Roerich misunderstood the term *saindhava*, believing it to be derived from *siddha*, but it clearly is a vṛddhi derivative from *sindhu*, referring to monks from that region.

thirteenth century and still found it to be dominated by Siṅgala monks, despite the depredations of the Turks.[224]

With regard to hostility between Buddhist and Hindu groups, Buddhist histories and narratives are filled with accounts of debates between Buddhists and non-Buddhists; at issue in these debates was typically the control of important institutions such as the Nālandā monastic university.[225] Often the debates were doctrinal, but sometimes involved displays of magical powers.[226] There are similar accounts of debates in Śaiva sources, as Yocum has pointed out.[227] Typically, these sources, Buddhist and Śaiva, always depict their own tradition as victorious, although they commonly depict their protagonists as being on the verge of losing the debate, but manage to win with divine aid.[228]

There is in fact an interesting "spell" related in chapter thirteen of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* for effecting victory over one's rivals in debate. It occurs as follows:

> Call to mind the Māhendra maṇḍala (i.e., the earth element maṇḍala) and place within it the clan of the Fierce Ones *(krodhakula)*. Visualize his (one's opponent's) head being trampled by a foot [marked with] the *karmavajra* (i.e., the *viśva* or double vajra). This is the concentration *(samādhi)* called "The Vajra which Arrests the Speech of All Heretics".[229]

Placing another's foot on one's head is the classical Indian sign of submission, and to have one's head trampled would indicate one's subjugation. This is iconographically depicted in

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[224] See Roerich 1959:73.

[225] See Guenther 1986, pp. 20-22.

[226] The mahāsiddha Tilopa was supposedly a master of magical contests; see Torricelli and Naga 1995, esp. pp. 48-49.

[227] See Yocum 1980, pp. 144-55.

[228] An interesting example occurs in the biography of Āryadeva, who was recalled to Nālandā to debate the unconquerable brahmin ascetic Mātṛceta. Āryadeva perceived that his powers in debate was due to his possession by Śiva, and conspired to pollute the debating ground such that Śiva could not enter it, thus defeating and converting him. See Dowman 1985, pp. 136-37.

[229] Ch. 13 v. 66: māhendramaṇḍalaṃ dhyātvā madhye khrodhakulaṃ nyaset / karmavajrapadākrāntaṃ mūrdhni tasya vibhāvayet / ity āha ca sarvatīrthapravādistambhanavajro nāma samādhiḥ / (Matsunaga 1978:50); Fremantle's edition here is defective, cf. Freemantle 1971 p. 278.

the images of many Buddhist deities, such a Trailokyavijaya, Vajrapāṇi and Heruka, who are depicted as standing on the head of a defeated rival, usually some form of Śiva.[230]

These debates centered around rivalry over scarce resources, typically patronage, as in the case of the debates reported by Xuan-zang in the presence of King Harṣa, or control of institutions such as Nālandā, which is depicted in Buddhist sources as being repeatedly challenged by rival groups in debate. There is a legend involving the *mahāsiddha* Kāṇha which centers around the magical subjugation of one tradition's deity by another. The story relates that there was a disciple of Kāṇha named Kuśalanātha who was a minister of King Lalitacandra, who ruled during the late seventh to early eighth centuries.[231] Kuśalanātha was instructed by Kāṇha in the worship of Śrīheruka, and meditated before an image of Heruka trampling upon Maheśvara and Umā. This came to the attention of the king, who worshipped Śiva and took affront at this image. He suggested that Kuśalanātha and he engage in a contest to see which deity was most powerful. The king and the minister each set up an image of his own deity trampling the rival's deity, and each proceeded to worship his image for eight days, each praying that his deity would display a sign of His superiority on the eighth day. Kāṇha's biography relates that Kuśulanātha, full of doubts, went to the charnel ground to seek his master's help:

> The ācārya said to him, "You have little confidence! For this purpose I don't have to show my power at all, for how can Bhagavan Śrī Heruka, Lord of Creatures, be trampled on by a mere cattle-herder?"[232] So the ācārya stayed in the cemeteries, dancing and singing and engaging in various other diversions. Then on the eighth day, both the King and the minister, together with their Buddhist and Tirthika supporters went all together into the temple and they simultaneously displayed their two paintings. The....image of Śrī Heruka had grown larger than before and was gloriously effulgent and the painting which the King had set up had changed of its own accord and Maheśvara and the goddess Umā had been transformed into Śrī Heruka, who had indeed crushed them. (Templeman 1989:35-36)

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[230] See section 6.3.2 below for a discussion of some of these depictions.

[231] See Majumdar 1983, p. 10.

[232] The text here makes upon on the word *paśupati*, one of Śiva's names.

In the usual fashion, the text claims that the King and all of the brahmins and householders converted to Buddhism, and to the teachings of the Master Kāṇha in particular. This fantastic claim aside, the story is interesting for its portrayal of the rivalries over royal patronage. It is intriguing that Kāṇha maintains a peripheral role, refusing to leave the charnel ground and get directly enmeshed in the political rivalry. Nevertheless, the text portrays Kāṇha as the driving force behind the miracle, and makes it clear that it is he, not the minister, who deserves and receives the devotion and patronage of the king.

It is thus appears that Tantric saints such as Kāṇha occupied an ambivalent role in Indian society. They existed on the periphery in an extremely unconventional lifestyle, and clearly were associated with a counter-cultural, egalitarian ethic, even though they were clearly not social reformers. This pattern has been confirmed by Parry, who has noticed a similar ambiguity concerning the Aghori ascetics, who are an extreme sect that perhaps most closely follows the example set by the Kāpālikas .[233]

Liminal groups often resist or criticize the dominant social order, but this does not mean that they exist in a state of ideal harmony or pure *communitas*, free of involvement in politics. This was noticed by Comaroff, who wrote that the South African Zionist church

> strives to achieve what Turner has called "permanent liminality" (1969:145), associated by him with the desire for *communitas* (p. 96) . Unlike Turner, however, I do not envisage such liminality as an instance of a universal state of formless communion which would, in all societies, be the antithesis of structure, being lock with it in a perpetual dialectic of mutual reinforcement (cf. Turner 1969:96ff.). Zionist liminality exists, it is true, in dialectical opposition to the social order which spawned it, but as "counter-" rather than "anti-structure" (cf. Williams 1977:114). Furthermore, this liminality is not formless; its deconstruction of established sociocultural arrangements entails a reconstruction

[233] Parry wrote that "if, however, obliquely, Aghori doctrine poses questions about the ultimate legitimacy of the social order, there is a rather different way in which their practices reinforces this message of doubt. In orthodox caste society, polluting contacts between castes must be eliminated in order to preserve the boundaries of the group, for which – as Douglas (1966) argues – the boundaries of the body often serve as metaphor. The Aghori's inversion of the same symbols of body margins implies exactly the opposite message. With the destruction of boundaries entailed by the consumption of flesh, excrement and so on, goes an affirmation of the irrelevance of caste boundaries. Coming at the issue in a more general way suggested by Turner (1969), we might also note the relationship which exists between liminal states, the suspension of the hierarchical structure of everyday life, and a stress on a vision of an unhierarchised and undifferentiated humanity. By contrast with the initiand in tribal society, the Aghori's liminality is permanent – and it is also of a somewhat extreme character. It is hardly surprising then, that he should represent something of the equality which is generally associated with those liminal to the routinely ordered structure." (1982:99)

> which both subverts and seeks permanent transformation of a historically specific system." (Comaroff 1985:231)

The same is true of Tantric Buddhism, which did not merely produce counter-hegemonic discourse, but also produced discourse calling for an alternative order, one which in challenging the old order sought to put into effect a new order, one which would privilege the authority figures of the Buddhists. The final section of this chapter will explore this vision of authority.

3.3 Cosmic Mastery: Visions of Authority Within and Beyond the World

1. Cosmology and Awakening:

Just as the brahmins naturalized their vision of the social structure, making it appear an inevitable by-product of the very structure of the cosmos, the Tantric Buddhist vision of the ideal society is also inextricably linked to its vision of the cosmos, both of which can be symbolized by the maṇḍala. Maṇḍalas, schematic diagrams which represent the divine abode of the deity, are the loci *par excellence* of Tantric Buddhism; it is the site of initiation, and it is visualized as a divinized vision of reality wherein is situated the adept *qua* deity in meditation practice. The *maṇḍala* presumes a certain view of the cosmos, and it is structured in relationship to that cosmos. Particularly relevant is one aspect of Buddhist cosmology, the *cakravāḍa* world-system, which is the cosmic foundation, so to speak, of the Buddhist maṇḍala.

The *cakravāḍa* world system is a hierarchically organized vision of the cosmos, in which the hierarchy is articulated along both the vertical and horizontal axes, with the high privileged over the low, the center over the periphery. This "world" is conceived as resting upon three concentric elemental layers, which become increasing smaller, much like the

layers of a wedding cake.[234] The first and most primal of the layers consists of a disk composed of the element air, or rather wind, for its motion gives rise to the next layer which rests upon it, a disk of water. From the churning of the waters by the wind a smaller disk of golden earth congeals upon the surface of the water; this is the foundation for the world on which humans live.

Indeed, it is a foundation, for the actual surface of the earth rests upon this disk. The surface world is concentrically organized around a central point, which is a pillar. This is Mount Sumeru, which is fantastically high; its roots go down to the golden earth, its summit is home to one of the classes of gods, and it is said to tower eighty thousand *yojana* above the surface, a *yojana* being the distance traversed by a team of *yoked* oxen in one day, which is typically estimated to be about eight miles.[235]

Sumeru is surrounded by seven concentric rings of mountains, between each of which is an ocean. The distance separating Sumeru from the first range, called Yugandhara, is also 80,000 yojana. Each subsequent range is half the height of the one before it, and is separated by a distance half as wide. Hence the Yugandhara mountain range is 40,000 yojana high, and separated by the subsequent range, Īṣādhāra, by a distance of 40,000 yojanas, and so forth, until we reach the seventh range, Nimindhara, which is only 1,250 yojana high.[236]

These concentric mountain ranges are in turn surrounded by a vast ocean *(mahāsamudra),* in which are located four continents in the four directions; the southern continent, *jambudvipa,* triangular in shape, is the continent inhabited by humans, and is more or less identified with the Indian subcontinent, at least in its central region, *madhyadeśa.* At the center of Jambudvīpa is the *vajrāsana* in Bodhgaya, the seat of

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[234] The metaphor of the "wedding cake" was related to me by Dr. Ryuichi Abé. The following information occurs in chapter three of Vasubandu's *Abhidharmakośa,* see La Vallée Poussin 1988 vol. 2, pp. 451-95.

[235] See Apte 1965, p. 789.3.

[236] A concise description of the *cakravāḍa* with excellent graphic depictions can be found in Sadakata (1997), pp. 25-40.

enlightenment at which all the Buddhas of the past, present and future attain complete awakening. This ocean is finally bounded by the *cakravāḍa*, a wall of iron mountains, which constitute the outer limit of the world on the horizontal axis.

This *cakravāḍa* is hierarchically organized along the vertical axis of Mt. Sumeru; the surface world on which humans are located is only one of many realms in which beings exist. This vertical hierarchy is based upon a division between two distinct realms, the desire realm *(kāmadhātu)* and form realm *(rūpadhātu)*. The desire realm is characterized by the passionate nature of its inhabitants, and their relative poverty of mental and sensory powers. The form realm consists of deities who, though they still possess bodies of sorts, are not afflicted by coarse passions and possess greater mental and sense powers.[237]

The desire realm consists of a so-called "triple world" *(triloka)* which is organized around Sumeru, consisting of the underworld, the surface world and the heavens. The underworld is positioned below Sumeru within the earth and includes the various hell realms, as well as the locations of other evil destinies *(durgati)* such as the realm of the hungry spirits *(preta)* and the animals. The human realm exists on the surface itself, while upon Sumeru itself there are a series of hierarchically arranged abodes of different types of gods. The lowest class are the deities of the Four Great Kings, the *cāturmahārājakāyika*, who inhabit the terraces on the sides of Sumeru. The summit itself is occupied by the Thirty Three Gods *(trāyastriṃśa)* governed by Indra. The deities of the higher heavens all inhabit aerial abodes *(vimāna)*. In the desire realm these include the gods of the Yāma, Tuṣita, Nirmāṇarati and Paranirmitavaśavartin heavens.

An essential feature of the Buddhist cosmology is that different levels of the cosmic hierarchy are associated with different mental or meditative states. The three *dhātu* or "realms" correspond both to places or states of some sort as well as mental states which are

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[237] There is also a third realm, the formless realm *(ārūpyadhātu)*, but it is understood to be outside of the *cakravāḍa* world-system, and it is explicitly stated that it in fact "not a place", meaning that it does not occupy a location (*Abhidharmakośa*, 2.3a; see La Vallée Poussin 1988, vol. 2 p. 366. It will not be discussed further here as it does not play a significant role in the cosmology of the Tantras.

not only characteristic of them, but preconditions for rebirth in them; the term resonates so strongly with both cosmological and psychological associations that Griffiths translates the term in this context as "psycho-cosmic realms".[238] From the soteriological point of view, it is the middle of the three realms, the Form Realm *(rūpadhātu)*, which receives the most attention in Buddhist literature. The Desire Realm *(kāmadhātu)* receive attention insofar as it is the locus of human life, but the coarse, passionate mentality which corresponds to it is not in and of itself conducive to awakening.[239] The Formless Realm *(arūpadhātu)*, on the other hand, is considered a sort of extended detour on the path to liberation best avoided by the aspiring Awakening Hero *(bodhisattva)*.[240]

The Form Realm is divided into four categories, correlated to the four contemplations *(dhyāna)*, meditative states through which the Buddha passed on the eve of his Complete Awakening. There are sixteen heavens divided among the four categories. Here it is not necessary to enumerate these;[241] it is sufficient to simply note that they are hierarchically arranged, and this hierarchy is expressed by the fact that as one ascends through the heavens the deities who reside there have increasingly long life-spans, until one reaches *Akaniṣṭha*, the highest heaven and the pinnacle of the world system. The form

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[238] Griffiths explains that the term *dhātu* "in Buddhist theory refers both to psychological realms–altered states of consciousness–and to cosmological realms, places in which the practitioner can exist or be reborn. To attain to a particular altered state is to (temporarily) exist in the corresponding cosmological realm and (if other things are equal) to be reborn in that realm. There is thus an intimate link between the psychological and cosmological." (1986:183, n. 50)

[239] The human state, however, which blends an even mix of happiness and suffering, without the extremes of either experienced in the heavens and hells respectively, is considered to be particularly conducive to awakening. This awakening occurs, however in spite of (or, in Tantra, by means of the skill use of) the desire which characterizes human life.

[240] The beings of the four formless realms lead extremely long-life spans which are not soteriologically fruitful as it is supposedly not possible to attain awakening there. These four states correspond to the four formless equipoised states *(arūpasamāpatti)*, meditative states which Śakyamuni Buddha studied under non-Buddhist teachers before attaining Awakening, and which he later rejected as not conducive to liberation. See Lamotte 1988a pp. 16, 32-33.

[241] For a complete list see the chart in Gethin 1997 p. 194 or Sadakata pp. 58-59.

realm, and Akaniṣṭha in particular, was understood to be the site of awakening; this seems to have been an ancient idea developed in the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna.[242]

The association of the Form Realm with awakening is by virtue of its correlation with the four contemplations *(dhyāna)*. The fourth and highest *dhyāna* corresponds to the first six of the Form Realm heavens, while the next three each correspond to three each of the remaining nine heavens. Kloetzli has argued that in the *cakravāḍa* model of the cosmos these heavens were understood to constitute a sort of cosmic ladder, which one would ascend while passing through the four contemplations.[243] From a very early period then Buddhists have envisioned the "path" of awakening in cosmic terms.

Rupert Gethin, in an important (1997) article, has demonstrated the important degree to which cosmology underpins Buddhist thought, and, one might add, practice as well. The central idea is that the different hierarchically arranged levels of the cosmos are not rigidly fixed, and that it is possible to penetrate from one level to another by means of the cultivation of the mental state appropriate to each level; the cosmos then is equated to meditative states, and the barriers between them are fixed by nothing more then the mentalities and modes of perception of the different classes of beings who reside within them. However, as mental processes are conditioned by karmic and evolutionary factors, even from the Buddhist perspective, the strength of the divisions should not be

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[242] Akaniṣṭha gradually gained significance as a site for awakening *par excellence*. Originally considered to be the point of exit for the Buddha from the cosmos following his physical death, in the Mahāyāna it was understood to be the place where the tenth level bodhisattva attained awakening. This idea occurs in the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, which states "The Buddha awakens not in the desire nor in the formless realms; he awakens in the form realm amidst the Akaniṣṭhas who are free of passion." kāmadhātau tathārūpye na vai buddho vibudhyate / rūpadhātvakaniṣṭheṣu vītarageṣu budhyate //. (LS 10.774, Vaidya 1963:158; cf. Gethin 1997:207 and Suzuki 1932:284). Likewise, Śāntarakṣita in his *Tattvasaṃgraha* holds that Akaniṣṭha is the actual site for a Buddha's awakening, while the life of the historical Buddha is simply a cosmic drama enacted by one of his emanations. "In the lovely city of Akaniṣṭha, free from all impure abodes – there Buddhas awaken; but here [in this world] creations awaken." *Tattvasaṃgraha* v. 3550: akaniṣṭhe pure ramye 'śuddhvāsavivarjite / budhyante tatra sambuddhā nirmāṇaṃ tu tathā matam. (Dwarkidas 1968, vol. 2, p. 1107), translated in Gethin 1997 p. 206. As we shall see, Akaniṣṭha is privileged as premier site in the Tantras as well.

[243] See Kloetzli 1983 ch. 2.

underestimated. All beings, however, at least have the potential to achieve higher mental/cosmic states, if not in the current life then in a future life.[244]

This potential for transformation is possible precisely because of the doctrine of selflessness; were there any sort of intrinsic, unchanging aspect to the personality or mind, then such transformation would be impossible. From another perspective, all beings could be understood to have the potential for awakening, the *tathāgatagarbha,* in the sense that being empty of intrinsic reality, they thus have the potential for awakening. Gethin is probably right in seeing the *cakravāḍa* cosmology as a foundation for this idea.

In Buddhist thought space does not seem to be quite as firm a category as in Western thought, as different levels or regions of space can be penetrated by developing the mental or meditative state appropriate to them.[245] This view definitely challenges the realist/materialist view of the cosmos, but it does not necessarily reduce to the idealist position that reality (rather than our perception of it) is entirely dependent upon the mind or mental states. It is true that Buddhist texts did establish correspondences between the different levels of reality and different meditative states. However, to interpret Buddhist cosmology in a purely psychological fashion, with the implication that the cosmology itself is at best only symbolically valid, would be a misrepresentation of the Buddhist position.[246]

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[244] An important point made by Gethin is that the Mahāyāna idea that all beings possess a "Buddha-nature" or innate potential for enlightenment is foreshadowed, so to speak in the ancient *cakravāḍa* cosmology. He begins his discussion with the account of beings fall from a pure state in the *Aggaññasutta* (Dīgha Nikāya 27, Walshe 1987:407-16), which actually describes their fall from the pure fourth *dhyāna* form realm heavens back into the newly created lower states in the kalpa of creation, in which the world is recreated following one of the cosmic cataclysms. Gethin writes: "The view handed down by Buddhaghosa, which he has no doubt received from the Sinhala *aṭṭakathā* sources he had before him, seems concerned to emphasize that no being in *saṃsāra* is without the necessary *kamma* to enable a skillful rebirth in the *kāmadhātu* as a basis for subsequent rebirth in the realms corresponding to the fourth *jhāna;* and that there is no being in *saṃsāra* without experience of the realms of the fourth *jhāna* – of the states which give close access to the liberating insight of *bodhi.* In other words, all beings have the capacity to become awakened and indeed all have somewhere in them an experience of a state of mind that is in certain respects "close" to the awakening state of mind." (1997:204)

[245] This idea is explicit in the *Kevaddhasutta* (Walshe 1987:175-80), in which a monk is described as ascending the cosmos, from the Four Great Kings Heaven in the *kāmadhātu* up to Brahmā's heaven in the *rūpadhātu* by cultivating the mental concentration or state appropriate to each realm.

[246] Taking recourse to psychology in order to explain away the cosmological aspects of Buddhist texts is a relatively common strategy taken by authors attempting to present them in a form palatable to Western audiences. Here the misrepresentation is not a matter of fabrication, as there are Buddhist texts which do

Neither perspective is dispensable, but rather constitute two distinct ways of looking at reality.

Masefield, in an important (1983) article, argued that the references in the Pāli *Nikāyas* both to a cosmic hierarchy of beings (humans, *devas* and *brahmās)* and to a psychological hierarchy of mental states (levels of *jhāna)*" roughly parallel "the Upaniṣadic categories of 'with reference to the gods' *(adhidaivatam)* and 'with reference to the self' *(adhyātmam).* These constitute two distinct but inseparable perspectives; "that is, 'reality' may be viewed either from the perspective of an exterior world *(brahman)* or from the perspective of an interior world *(ātman)* that are in *some* sense – though, in the case of Buddhist thought, *not* an absolute metaphysical one – the same."[247]

While these Upaniṣadic categories do not correlate exactly to the Buddhist position, they approximate the inner versus outer distinction common in Buddhist texts. In either case the underlying assumption appears to be the same: that there is a definite and real correspondence between the universe, the *macrocosm,* and the individual's body-mind complex, the *microcosm,* which evidently is quite an ancient idea, not limited to Indian religions.[248]

The *cakravāḍa* is the basic unit of the Buddhist cosmology, and while it may have originally been conceived as constituting the limits of the universe, the Buddhist cosmos rapidly expanded by means of a proliferation of numerous *cakravāḍa.* Early sources multiply them by a factor of one thousand, the so-called "chilocosm". These in turn were

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explain the cosmos in a psychological manner, but of emphasis; the fact that this was the concept of reality held by a majority of Buddhists is ignored. An recent example of this sort of "explanation" occurs in the introduction of Freemantle and Chögyam Trungpa's translation of the "Tibetan Book of the Dead". A critique of this work occurs in Lopez 1998, pp. 76-78.

[247] I quote here Gethin 1997 p. 192, who summarizes Masefields arguments. See Masefield 1983 pp. 69-75.

[248] See for example Eliade 1964 ch. 8, esp. 259-266. Especially important is Eliade's discussion of the way in which a cosmology such as the archaic *axis mundi* of which the *cakravāḍa* is clearly a complex elaboration can also serve as a spiritual path for the adept. He wrote "what for the rest of the community remains a cosmological ideogram, for the shamans (and the heroes, etc.) becomes a mystical itinerary. For the former, the 'Center of the World' is a site that permits them to send their prayers and offerings to the celestial gods, whereas for the latter it is the place for beginning a flight in the strictest sense of the word. Only for the latter is *real communication* among the three cosmic zones a possibility." (p. 265).

multiplied to yield the "great chiliocosm" consisting of one billion *cakravāḍa* world systems.[249] It is not necessary to go into great detail here about this expansion of the cosmos, and much has been written on it elsewhere.[250] What should be noted here is the expansion of the universe to inconceivable proportions. A typical example of this process as it occurs in Mahāyāna sūtras is the following passage from the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra,* in which billion world universes are themselves made of small units in an infinite universe:

> On whirlwinds rests the Fragrant Ocean, which carries an infinite number of world-germs *(lokabija)*; from it there issue lotuses infinite in number – very far removed, indeed, from each other. From each of these lotuses is born a universe (great chiliocosm), above which (separated by whirlwinds) there are three, then five, and so on up to the twentieth tier, where there are thirty-nine great chiliocosms... The *Sahālokadhātu* forms part of the thirteenth stage, and constitutes the 'field' of the Buddha Vairochana...and, on the same level at the same stage, in the extreme west, is the blessed universe of the Buddha Amitābha, the *Sukhāvatī,* where a *kalpa* of our universe is equal to a day and a night.[251]

In the cosmology of the Mahāyāna the field of liberation has changed. No longer are we bereft of the Buddha, who was previously believed to be in a state of total extinction *(parinirvāna)* following his death. Instead, our "Tolerable" World *(sahālokadhātu)* was believed to be itself the pure land of Śākyamuni qua Vairocana, and to be surrounded by the pure lands of innumerable other Buddhas, who were referred to as the "Buddhas of Ten Directions" *(daśadigbuddha).* Since these purelands were the creation of aspiring buddhas *(bodhisattva),* the universe was theoretically unlimited, open to the world creating activities of other Awakening Heros.

The development of the concept of the bodhisattva and their pure lands led to new developments in Buddhist soteriology. Particularly important is the idea that Amitābha, the Buddha of the West, produced a pure land, *Sukhāvati,* on the basis of his vow as a bodhisattva not to achieve Buddhahood until all beings could be born in his pure land simply on the basis of the recitation of his name. This idea and vivid description of his

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[249] See La Vallée Poussin 1914 p. 137.

[250] Of particular importance is Kloetzli 1983. See as well Orzech 1998 pp. 13-63.

[251] Translated in La Vallée Poussin 1914 pp. 137-38, and is quoted as well in Kloetzli 1983 p. 52.

pure land, which was to be visualized by those who desired rebirth there, are found in a body of texts which became extremely popular amongst Mahāyāna Buddhist.[252] The *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra* in particular prescribes a detailed meditation on *Sukhāvati* as the basis for rebirth there, which seems to be in agreement with the general assumption in Buddhism that a change in mental state can be productive of a change in one's position of the cosmos. This aspect, however, came to be de-emphasized in the later development of the Pure Land schools of Buddhism; instead, the compassionate power of Amitābha to effect one's rebirth was emphasized, thus prescribing dependence on the power of another (*paratantra,* 他力) to effect one's salvation.

It appears that this formula of dependence upon a superior being for one's salvation was most likely the most popular and widespread trend in Mahāyāna Buddhism, even in Tibet, despite the importance there of Tantric Buddhism.[253] Buddhists, however, did not completely renounce the heroic path of the bodhisattva who vows to achieve liberation for the sake of all beings in dependence upon his or her own power (*svatantra,* 自力), a path that was believed to take an inconceivably long time to accomplish (three incalculable eons, *asaṃkhyeyakalpa*). Such a long time was needed because this path required the complete transformation of one's mind and body and one's environment. In order to achieve the complete awakening of a bodhisattva, one's body is transformed into the perfected body of a Buddha, and one's environment into a perfected pure land.[254] It is effected by means of compassionate activity, which is understood to involve an intentional mastery of the world and destiny-creating capacity of *karma,* efficacious action. Just as the worlds arise due to the karma of their respective beings, who experience there the suffering and pleasure

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[252] See for example the Max Muller's translations of the Larger and Smaller *Sukhāvativyūha* and J. Takakusu's translation of the *Amitāyurdhyānasūtra* in Cowell 1894, part II pp. 1-108, 159-203.

[253] The presence of millenarianism in Tibet in general has been surveyed by Brauen-Dolma (1985). For a discussion popularity in contemporary Tibet of the Powa *('pho ba)* or "Transferance" practice, a distinctly Tibetan means of achieving rebirth in a pure land, see Kapstein 1998.

[254] This distinction is based upon an ancient division of the world into two aspects, the "World of Beings" *(sattvaloka)* consisting of all living beings and the "Vessel World" *(bhājanaloka)* which constitutes their respective environments. See La Vallée Poussin 1914 p. 130.

resulting from their past actions, the Mahāyāna posits the possibility that a single being, by virtue of her or his mastery of causality, can bring into existence a pure world completely conducive to the awakening of beings born therein.

Concerning the Buddhist view of the relation between the beings and the worlds in which they dwell, La Valleé Poussin wrote that

> actions bear a 'fruit of mastery' *(adhipatiphala)*, that is, they create or organize the material things necessary to their reward. A being is to be reborn as a god – the Sun god for instance – of such a size, of such a physical beauty and strength, destined to live so many ages of men. All of these advantages are the fruit....of the good deeds of this being. But this god must have an abode, a celestial palace – the moving chariot, fifty miles in diameter that we call the Sun – this palace is the 'fruit of mastery'. In the same way, at the beginning of the cosmic period, the whole material universe is created by the 'mastering' energy of the mass of ancient acts that are to be enjoyed by its future inhabitants. The 'receptacle world' *(bhājanaloka)* is the 'fruit of mastery' of the mass of acts of the 'world of living beings' *(sattvaloka)*. (1917:101)

La Valleé Poussin here follows Vasubandhu, who in his *Abhidharmakośa* understood that the world comes into existence as the "fruit of mastery" or product of the collective *karma* of the beings destined to be born into it.[255] For most persons and worlds, this process occurs mechanically and unconsciously.

The Mahāyāna tradition, however, posited that these forces could be mastered by an Awakened being be virtue of his or her knowledge of reality. Asaṅga, in his *Mahāyānasaṃgraha*, wrote that "the Blessed Buddhas have as their nature mastery over all things because they have acquired unobstructed clairvoyant discernment over all world realms"[256] This mastery manifests in the ability to create a Buddhaland via a method which Asaṅga wrote "is characterized by masterful and well-purified conscious construction",[257]

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[255] Vasubandhu wrote the following in this work: "The great chiliocosm is arranged as we shall explain. At its bottom there arises, through the force of the predominant actions of beings *(adhipatiphala)* a circle of wind which rests on space" (La Valleé Poussin 1988:vol. II p. 451). The text continues with the standard description of the *cakravāḍa* cosmos discussed above.

[256] Trans. in Griffiths et al. 1989, p. 198; / 'jig rten gyi khams thams cad du thogs pa med pa'i mngon par shes pa brnyes pa'i phyir sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das rnams ni chos thams cad la dbang sgyur ba'i ngang can no / (DT fol. 40b, ed. in Griffiths et al. 1989, pp. 347-48.

[257] Trans. in Griffiths et al. 1989, p. 213; / dbang sgyur ba'i rnam par rig pa shin tu rnam par dag pa'i mtshan nyid / (DT fol. 41a, ed. in Griffiths et al. 1989, p. 354)

which evidently implies that a Buddha's power of creation is linked to his or her creative cognitive capacity. This is confirmed by Asvabhāva, who in his *Mahāyānasaṃgrahopanibandhana* commented that a Buddha's creation of a Buddhaland "is completely masterful because it does not attend to [external] conditions but depends solely upon [the Buddha's] mental creation."[258] Likewise, Asaṅga wrote in his *Triśatikā-prajñāpāramitākārikāsaptati* that "the Pureland cannot be apprehended because it is simply a representation *(vijñāpti)* flowing from knowledge. Its array is held to be a non-array because it is formless and foremost."[259]

The concept of the Buddha and his potential powers of creation vis-à-vis the Buddhaland were of great influence in the development of Tantric Buddhist traditions. The maṇḍala, as a sacred space for an Awakened Being and his retinue, is in many ways akin to the Buddhaland, and the practitioner of maṇḍala meditation seeks to cultivate this same power of creative mastery over the imaginative process of world creation.

3.3.2 The Collapse of Time and Space in the Maṇḍala

Intimately related to the Buddhist cosmos is the notion of time, and in particular, a circular pattern of time related to the expansion and contraction of space in the universe. The basic unit of time here is the eon *(kalpa)*, of which, according to Vasubandu, there are several types.[260] The first is the kalpa of creation *(vivartakalpa)*, in which the movement of

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[258] Trans. in Griffiths et al. 1989, p. 222, emended by me; / shin tu dbang sgyur ba can te can te / sems bskyed pa tsam la rag las pas rkyen la mi ltos pa'i phyir ro / (Griffiths et al. 1989, p. 360)

[259] v. 20: jñānanisyandavijñaptimātratvāt kṣetranodgrahaḥ / avigrahatvād agratvād avyūhaṃ vyūhatā matā //; / ye shes rgyu mthun rnam rig tsam // yin pas zhing du 'dzin pa med // lus med phyir mchog gi phyir // bkod pa med pa bkod par bzhed /; 智流唯識 性。國土非所執。無形故勝故。非嚴許嚴性。 Edited in Tucci 1956, part 1, p. 63.

[260] The following section is based upon the description in the *Abhidharmakośa*. See La Vallée Poussin 1988 vol. 2 pp. 475-95. Alternately, La Vallée Poussin summarizes Vasubandu's description in his (1913b) "Ages of the World (Buddhist)".

the primordial wind (*prāgvāyu*) gives rise to the disk of wind from which is created the *cakravāḍa* as described above. After the vessel world is created, living beings, living in the higher indestructible form realm heavens or in another world altogether, are born back into the world. This eon ceases when beings are born into the hells, the lowest of the cosmic realms.

This is followed with a series of twenty intermediate *eons (antarakalpa)*, which together are equal in length to the eon of creation; these alternate between eons of increase, when the life span of humans reach a peak of eighty thousand years, and eons of decrease, when the human life span sinks to as low as ten years. After twenty of these periods pass, the kalpa of disappearance *(saṃvartakalpa)* begins with the emptying out of the world of beings. Starting with the hell realms, beings are no longer born in the lower realms, and are instead born in one of the higher heavens, by virtue of attaining the corresponding *dhyāna* mental state, or into another world. When beings are gone from the world, then the vessel world itself is destroyed.

The succession of the eon of creation, intermediate eons, the eon of disappearance and finally the eon of nothingness *(saṃvartasthāyikalpa)* together compose a great eon *(mahākalpa)*. There are three ways in which the world is destroyed at the end of an eon. The first is destruction by fire, in which the entire desire realm and the first three form realm heavens (corresponding to the first *dhyāna)* are completely destroyed; the beings who dwelled therein would have already attained the three higher *dhyāna* states and thus escape the conflagration. After the world has been destroyed seven times by fire, it is next destroyed (at the end of the eighth *mahākalpa* in the series) by water. This cosmic deluge destroys the world up to and including the second *dhyāna* heavens of the form realm; the beings dwelling therein escape it by attaining the third and fourth *dhyāna* states. Finally, after seven destructions by water, at the end of the sixty fourth great eon, the world is

destroyed by wind up to the third *dhyāna* heavens; all beings thus attain the fourth *dhyāna* and dwell in the seven highest form realm heavens. After this, the cycle repeats anew.[261]

Vasubandhu mentions one other type of eon, which is an incalculable eon *(asaṃkhyeyakalpa)*. He first states that it takes three of these to achieve the state of Buddhahood. He then defines it as equal to a series of great eons, the number of which is equal to ten raised to the power of either fifty one or fifty nine, which would truly be an incalculable number, trillions upon trillions of an already immense span of time.[262] Asaṅga, however, argues that this eon is incalculable precisely because it is cannot be measured by normal means of reckoning.[263] Traditionally, it was believed that a bodhisattva needed such an inconceivable amount of time to acquire the merit needed to achieve the perfected body of a Buddha, one of the requisites of complete awakening.

One might object here that cosmological speculation of this sort is irrelevant to Buddhist soteriology, aside from the issue of the hyperbolically extended training of the bodhisattva. One might, as many have, refer to the *Cūḷamālunkyasutta*, in which the Buddha refuses to answer cosmological questions, insisting that they are irrelevant to the holy life.[264] Were it demonstrable and true that the Buddhists wholeheartedly engaged in such speculation this a criticism would be apt. However, it seems far more likely that these sorts of descriptions of the universe as inconceivably vast and eons as incalculably long were not meant to be taken as literal, mechanical descriptions of reality but are rather

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[261] Excellent charts illustrating this cycle occur in Sadakata 1997 pp. 102-3 and 106-7.

[262] La Vallée Poussin 1988 vol. 2 pp. 479-80; the calculation of an *asaṃkhyeyakalpa* is discussed at length in Kloetzli 1983, pp. 113-124.

[263] He writes in his *Yogācārabhūmau Bodhisattvabhūmi* (pt. 2 ch.4) that "It is said that a 'great eon' is incalculable through measurement of time by means of the reckoning of fortnights which are collections of days and nights. Since in the calculation by means of the reckoning of the great eons it exceeds all reckoning, it is thus incalculable." The Sanskrit occurs in Dutt's (1966) edition as follows: yo 'pi mahākalpaḥ so 'pi rātrindivasamāsārdhamāsagaṇanāyogena kālāprameyatvād asaṃkhyeya ity ucyate / yāpi teṣām eva mahākalpānāṃ gaṇanāyogena sarvagaṇanā samatikrāntā saṃkhyā so 'py asaṃkhyeya / (p. 242, 243).

[264] Majjhima Nikāya 64, Ñāṇamoli 1995 pp. 537-541. Cosmological speculations are also included amongst the 62 kinds of wrong views listed in the *Brahmajālasutta* (Dīgha Nikāya 1, see Walshe 1987, pp. 73-89). See also La Vallée Poussin 1913c.

intended for an entirely different purpose. Indeed, these sorts of descriptions are so vivid and so elaborate in Mahāyāna sūtras such as the *Vimalakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra,* the *Saddharmapuṇḍarika Sūtra* and the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*[265] that we might suspect that this is really more a type of rhetoric designed to evoke a certain response within the reader. Indeed, this response may very well be, in the rhetoric of *Vimalakirti,* the "tolerance of inconceivability," which is described by Thurman as follows:

> As we hear Vimalakirti's exhortation to strive for tolerance of inconceivability and the inconceivable liberation and as our rigid boundaries for exclusion of possibilities soften and give way before ever expanding frames of reference, our contemplation of the message of Vimalakirti through opening our mental horizons on the ever widening scope of infinitude will enhance our enjoyment and appreciation of the beauty and splendor of the miraculous displays effected by the Buddha and Vimalakirti. Similarly, our imaginative visualization of the mental pictures created by the descriptions of the buddha-fields and by the distortions of dimensions, distances, times, and spaces will contribute to our sensitivity to the profound and subtle implications of Vimalakirti's eloquent teaching, that we may be so fortunate to come to hear the great lion's roar of his profound silence. (1976:9)

This sort of rhetoric may constitute a subtle assault on the discriminating aspect of mentation which, as has been discussed in section 2.1 above, is associated with bondage and suffering. For in the Buddhist analysis attachment to the limited sense powers possessed by humans, and to empirical, discursive thought patterns based upon them, is not the basis for liberation; liberation requires the expansion of one's imagination and awareness beyond the bounds of the conceivable. This conclusion is shared by Kloetzli, who ended his investigation of Buddhist cosmology with the following reflection:

> The implications of the "*asaṃkhyeya* cosmology" are such that it too constitutes a critique of the discriminating powers of the mind with regard to its apprehension of space. The mind is capable of analyzing reality down to the level of the infinitesimal and aggregating it up to the level of the infinite. But the infinite and the infinitesimal are not realities in and of themselves. Rather, they constitute the limits of the mind's ability to know. Everything between the two limits constitutes a universe....but this is not to say these limits exhaust reality. Nor is this knowledge based on discrimination, the knowledge which results in salvation. Thus, it appears that all of the symbolism of these mathematical cosmologies is intended to point out the ultimate emptiness of the cosmos. The cosmos is the stage for salvation. However, salvation only occurs when the

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[265] For good quality English translations of these works see, respectively, Thurman (1976), Hurvitz (1976) and Cleary (1993).

> cosmos is correctly apprehended, and its correct apprehension is devoid of any meaning which the mind brings to it using the power of discrimination. (1983:139)

In Tantric Buddhism the cosmos, viewed in a manner not far removed from the *cakravāḍa* model, is the stage for Awakening, and a proper apprehension or understanding which is non-conceptual *(nirvikalpajñāna)* is required for this transformation to occur. It is a transformation of both self and environment, both of which are understood to be empty of intrinsic reality, into the Awakened world of the maṇḍala. Awakening in turn is characterized by a mastery over the cosmos, a mastery which combines mundane and spiritual power.

Tantric Buddhism, following the general trend in Mahāyāna Buddhism, was very much concerned with the bodhisattva path to complete awakening. This path was traditionally divided into ten or more stages (*bhūmi*) or stations *(vihāra)* through which the aspiring bodhisattva must pass.[266] In his *Yogācārabhūmau Bodhisattvabhūmi*, Asaṅga explains how the bodhisattva progresses through these stations over the course of the three incalculable eons:

> Passing through the station of aspirational practice *(adhimukticaryāvihāra)*,[267] over the course of an incalculable great eon, he attains the station of joy *(pramuditavihāra)*. [Here] he strives but does not strive firmly. Over the course of the second incalculable great eon he passes through the stations from the station of joy up to the contrived station of the unconditioned *(sābhoganirnimittavihāra)*, and attains the spontaneous station of the unconditioned (*anābhoganirnimittavihāra*). He is thus constant.[268] The bodhisattva who has a pure disposition strives constantly. Then he passes through the spontaneous station of the unconditioned and the station of detailed

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[266] The classical sources for the bodhisattva path is the *Daśabhūmikasūtra* and Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmau Bodhisattvabhūmi*. Har Dayal's (1932) *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* remains the most important English language exploration of this topic. See also Panda 1996.

[267] This station is preliminary to the actual bodhisattva path, and precedes the first *bhūmi*. See Dayal (1932) pp. 53-54.

[268] The *pramudita vihāra* corresponds to the first *bhūmi* which has the same name. The *sābhoganirnimittavihāra* corresponds to the seventh *bhūmi*, and the *anābhoganirnimittavihāra* to the eighth *bhūmi*, whereon the bodhisattva achieves the state of non-retrogression (see Dayal 1932 pp. 281-82). Concerning the translations of these two stations, the term *ābhoga* here seems to have the meaning of effort or contrivance. Concerning the translation of *anābhoga* (Tib. *lhun grub*) as 'spontaneous' in this context see Ruegg 1989b p. 164.

understanding *(pratisaṃvidvihāra)* and attains the supreme bodhisattva station[269] over the course of the third incalculable eon.[270]

Complex structures or schemas such as this map of the bodhisattva's path, however, are inseparable from their own negation, or, in Turner's terminology, anti-structure. Hence it should be of no surprise that there arose the idea that it is possible to violate this structure by radically leaping over or through the stages. Saṃgharakṣa, as mentioned in section 2.1 above, discussed a "practice of leaping" *(vyutkrāntaka-caryā;* 超行) which he described as follows: "Through the "practice of leaping," by merely giving rise to the aspiration of the [bodhisattva's] path one attains the [state of] irreversibility from which, once generated, there is no retrogression."[271] That is, it allows one to leap all the way to the eighth stage at the first generation of the spirit of awakening.

This idea was taken up by Buddhist Tantric traditions, which claim to provide actual techniques to effect this "leaping", which seems to have remained largely theoretical in the classical Mahāyāna.[272] Śubhakarasiṃha and Yi-xing, in their commentary to the *Mahāvairocana-abhisaṃbodhi Sūtra,* comment upon the "three incalculable eons" which are needed to become a Buddha, and in doing so empties them of any intrinsic temporal

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[269] The *pratisaṃvidvihāra* corresponds to the tenth *bhūmi,* and the supreme station *(paramavihāra)* corresponds to the tenth *bhūmi,* which is usually considered to be the last stage before the attainment of buddhahood.

[270] The sanskrit occurs in Dutt's (1966) edition as follows: mahākalpāsaṃkheyenādhimukticaryāvihāraṃ samatikramya pramuditavihāro labhyate / tac ca vyāyacchamāno dhrauvyeṇa nāvyāyacchamānaḥ / dvitiyena mahākalpāsaṃkhyeyena pramuditavihāraṃ yāvat sābhogaṃ nirnimittaṃ vihāram atikramyānābhogaṃ nirnimittaṃ pratilabhate / tac ca niyatam eva / tathā hi sa śuddhāśayo bodhisattvo niyataṃ vyāyacchate / tṛtīyena mahākalpāsaṃkhyeyenānābhogaṃ ca nirnimittaṃ pratisaṃvidvihāraṃ ca samatikramya paraṃ bodhisattvavihāraṃ pratilabhate / (p. 242).

[271] 何謂超行適發道意。至不退轉無所從生 ' (T 606 p.228.3)

[272] Faure, however, notes that "As early as the 4th century, Chinese Buddhists attempted to demonstrate that it was possible to reach deliverance in this very life, relying for that purpose on Mahāyāna scriptures such as the Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra." (1991:33). This suggests that Tantric Buddhism represents only one attempt to resolve the tension produced by the inconceivable time span needed to achieve awakening; it appears that Chan represents a more or less independent Chinese attempt based upon the same body of Mahāyāna doctrines; it is not clear, however, to what extent Chan was influenced by the seventh and eighth century influx of Tantric texts and practices into China. Several articles have been written suggesting the influence of esoteric Buddhism on early Chan traditions, see esp. Eastman 1983 and Lai 1983. It is not inconceivable, however, that this idea might have developed independently in China, as Faure seems to suggest.

reality, by arguing that as a measure of time it is, like all such measures, relative, and that this evolution can be accelerated by virtue of the efficacy of Tantric practice:

> The Sanskrit term *kalpa* has two meanings. The first is a measure of time, the second is delusive attachment. If one relies upon the explanation of the ordinary methods, one passes through three incalculable eons and attains true awakening. If one [relies upon] the esoteric explanation, then by means of yogic practice one leaps over the first eon, and one remedies the one hundred and sixty mentalities and so forth which comprise the coarse [level of] delusive attachment. This is called the first incalculable eon. One leaps over the second eon through yogic practice, again by remedying the one hundred and sixty mentalities, etc., which comprise the subtle [level of] misknowledge. This is called the second incalculable eon. The adept of the mantra gate leaps over yet another eon by again remedying the one hundred and sixty mentalities, etc., the extremely subtle misknowledge of the one hundred and sixty minds, etc., which comprise the extremely subtle [level of] misknowledge, and is able to reach the original mind of the Buddha's intuition *(buddhajñāna)*. Thus it is said that buddhahood is achieved in three incalculable eons. If, however, one could pass through the three levels of misknowledge in one lifetime and thus achieve buddhahood in one life, what need is there to speak of a measure of time?[273]

Tantric Buddhism thus claims to speed up the spiritual evolution of the aspiring bodhisattva. This is achieved by both a deconstructive critique of time, as well as the constructive claim to superiority in praxis, for it is on the basis of their allegedly superior methodology that Tantric practitioners claim to be able to speed up this otherwise agonizingly drawn-out process of cutting through misknowledge and building up the store of merit needed to reconstitute oneself as a completely awakened Buddha. This idea also collapses space, in that over the course of the three incalculable eons the bodhisattva would transmigrate throughout the cosmos, serving many different Buddhas in many different Buddhalands, as Vimalakīrti is described as having done. Using characteristically hyperbolic rhetoric the *Samāyoga* claims: "That which was not achieved by all of the Buddhas in incalculable millions of eons will be achieved by means of the rites of the

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[273] 梵云劫跛有二義。一者時分。二者妄執。若依常途解釋。
度三阿僧祇劫得成正覺。若秘密釋。超一劫瑜祇行。即度　　百六十心等一重　粗妄執。
名一阿僧祇劫。超二劫瑜祇行。又度一　　百六十心等一重細妄執。名二阿僧祇劫
。真言門行者。復超一劫。更度　　百六十心等一重極細妄執。得至佛慧初心。
故云三阿僧祇劫成佛也。若一生度此三妄執。則一生成佛。何論時分耶。　　(T 1796, p. 600 col. 3)

mudrā in this very life."[274] The texts claims that this evolutionary leap is made possible by an advancement in meditative or ritual technology, in this case the latter. Tantric practice thus claims to condense an inconceivably long time into a period as short as one lifetime, and an inconceivably vast space into the space occupied by a body and its immediate environments.

Although time and space are deconstructed in esoteric Buddhism, both still function as relative markers of status in the hierarchy of beings measured by the length of their life spans and their vertical position in the cosmos. Akaniṣṭha, the pinnacle of the *cakravāḍa* cosmos, is privileged both as the top of the hierarchy and as the site of the longest living beings, whose life spans reach sixteen thousand great eons.[275] It is also associated with the highest, most comprehensive form of knowledge, omniscience *(sarvajñajñāna).*[276] Akaniṣṭha is the site of the coronation or initiation *(abhiṣeka)* of a tenth stage bodhisattva;[277] it is also the mythical site of many Tantric maṇḍalas. As will be discussed below, the association of the maṇḍala with the trappings of kingship as well as its mythic placement at the top of the cosmic hierarchy makes a very strong claim to authority which is not devoid of social and political significance.

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[274] JS kalpa 1: / bskal pa bye ba grangs med par // sangs rgyas thams cad ma thob pa // phyag rgya'i cho ga gang dag gis // tshe 'di nyid kyis thob 'gyur ba / (DK fol. 152a). There are many other Tantras in which similar claims are made. Another well known passage occurs in the *Saṃpuṭa Tantra* as follows: "With sublime bliss you will attain in this very life that Buddhood which was attained in millions of incalculable eons,." kalpa 1 ch. 4: buddhatvaṃ nānyair yat prāptaṃ kalpāsaṃkhyeyakoṭibhir yāvat / asminnapi janmani tvaṃ prāpnoti satsukhenaiva // (Elder 1978:97); bskal pa bye ba grangs med pas // ji ltar sangs rgyas gang thob pa // gang gis dam pa'i bde bas khyod // skyes ba 'dir ni thob par 'gyur / (Elder 1978:148); cf. Elder's trans. (1978:184).

[275] This excludes the beings of the formless realms, which properly speaking are not a part of nor located within the *cakravāḍa.*

[276] Ruegg points out that "In his autocommentary Candrakirti has explained that, once he achieved Awakening in the Akaniṣṭha-sphere (see *Madhyamakāvatāra* xii.1), Bhagavat attained the Gnosis of the Omniscient *(thams cad mkhyen pa ye shes)* in one instant." (1989b:161) The *Laṅkāvatāra* also associates Akaniṣṭha with the form of gnosis conducive to awakening, *nirvikalpajñāna:* "Those who always have non-dichotomous thought patterns, and who have renounced mind and mental factors are in the divine palace of Akaniṣṭha where all sins are cast away." akaniṣṭhabhavane divye sarvapāpavivarjite / nirvikalpāḥ sadā yuktāś cittacaittavivarjitāḥ // (LS 10.38, Vaidya 1963:109; cf. Suzuki 1932:229).

[277] See Dayal 1932 p. 291.

The focus of the maṇḍala is its palace, which is depicted as sitting atop the cosmos. The palace, a symbol of royalty, is also typically the central feature of the Buddhalands as depicted in Mahāyāna texts. Therein, Asaṅga writes, "the Blessed Lord's magnificent palace is radiantly arrayed with the seven types of precious gem,[278] from which arise light rays which completely fill immeasurable worlds."[279] In the *Mañjuśrimūlakalpa*, the Buddha Ratnaketu in his maṇḍala palace is compared to the ideal king, the *cakravartin*. "[Ratnaketu] the great *cakravartin*-chief is to be placed at the centre. He has the colour of saffron and is like the rising-sun. He holds a great wheel which is turning. Thus painstakingly should one draw him. He is like a great king with his palace."[280]

The maṇḍala palace occupies a central position in the maṇḍala, which itself occupies a dominant position in the cosmic hierarchy, as is clear in Nāgabodhi's description in his *Samājasādhanavyavasthāna* which begins not with the creation of the cosmos from the bottom up, but with the creation of the maṇḍala at it peak in Akaniṣṭha:

> Then, in the midst of space...generate the palace from [the syllable] *bhuṃ*, and with reverence place there all of the deity wheels such as Akṣobhya's. After that, Mahāvajradhara is generated by means of the process of *yoga*, *anuyoga*, *atiyoga* and *mahāyoga*. The deities of the maṇḍala arise through the union of the two organs. It is said that this is the invitation [for them] to come through visualization and recitation, or, in short, [just] visualization.[281]

Only after one has generated oneself as the deity in the maṇḍala does the generation of the cosmos below it commence, first with the elemental disks:

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[278] The typical list of the *saptaratna* include the following: gold *(suvarṇa)*, silver *(rūpya)*, blue beryl *(vaidūryā)*, crystal *(spāṭika)*, pearl *(muktā)*, red precious stone *(lohitikā)*, and coral *(musāragalva)*. See Liu 1994, pp. 93-94. Vasubandhu's *Mahāyānasaṃgrahabhāṣya* diverges from this list by omitting *muktā* and *lohitikā* and adding *rohitamukti* (red pearl, ruby, red beads) and *aśmagarbha* (amber, diamond or emerald). See Griffiths et al. 1989, pp. 209, 352.

[279] *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* ch. 10: / bcom ldan 'das gzhal med khang chen po rin po che sna bdun mchog tu 'bar bkod pa / 'jig rten gyi khams dpag tu med pa rgyal par 'gengs pa'i 'od zer chen po shin tu 'byung ba / (DT fol. 41a). Griffith's (1989) edition is defective here.

[280] From chapter 14, trans. in Snellgrove 1959b, pp. 206-7.

[281] / de nas nam mkha'i dbyings kyi dbus gnas par / .... / de steng du bhuṃ las gzhal yas khang bskyed la / der mi skyod pa la sogs pa'i lha'i 'khor lo thams cad lhag par mos pas dgod par bya'o // de'i 'og rnal 'byor dang / rjes su rnal 'byor dang / shin tu rnal 'byor dang / rnal 'byor chen po'i rim pas rdo rje 'chang chen po'i bdag nyid du skyed de / dbang po gnyis mnyam par sbyar ba las dkyil 'khor gyis lha rnams byung ste // bsgom pa dang bzlas pa bya nas gshegs su gsol ba 'di bsgom pa bsdus te bstan pa'o / (VS p. 7.4)

> Then, through the power of adhesion, winds gradually begin to move, and these winds increase, to a depth of 1.6 million leagues (*yojana*). This wind disk, which is measureless in extent, sits atop space. From this wind disk falls streams of rain as wide as a wagon wheel, which forms a disk of water. Regarding its size, it is 1,120,000 leagues deep. Moreover, the wind churns the water, forming golden earth atop the water, 320,000 leagues in size. A disk of fire also exists within these.[282]

This description is very close to Vasubandu's in the *Adbhidharmakośa,* which very well may have been the source for this account.[283] He continues with a description of the creation of the vessel world as follows:

> Then, due to thorough agitation by the winds which arise on account of the power of sentient beings' karma, there emerges mountains such as Sumeru etc., complete with stores of gold and so forth, the palaces of the gods, and the continent as far as the ring of iron mountains *(cakravāḍa)*, on which appear trees, creepers, shoots and so forth....Then, the Lord of Consciousness Mahāvajradhara who creates sentient beings, after creating the vessel world, emanates the realm of sentient beings.[284]

Nāgabodhi, in this type of meditation, places the meditator qua Mahāvajradhara in the role of creator of the universe. This is not a form of theism, for the emphasis is placed upon the creative imagination of the meditator, who exercises his power in the imaginal realm which is not, according to this tradition, completely divorced from reality, but which rather interpenetrates it, making him or her one who, by virtue of mastering his or her inner world, gains power and mastery in the outer world as well.

This mastery was traditionally thought to be manifested in the development of supernatural powers, *(ṛddhi, siddhi).* The cultivation of such powers is a central concern of a number of Tantras, including the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, but despite the

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[282] / de nas yang rten cing 'brel bar 'byung ba'i rgyan gyi stobs las khad kyi khad kyis rlung rnams g.yos te / rlung de rnams 'phel bar gyur pa ni / rngams su ni dpag tshad 'bum phrag bcu drug go / rgyar grang med pa'i rlung gi dkyil 'khor de nam mkha'i steng du chags par gyur nas rlung gi dkyil 'khor de las byung ba shing rta'i phang lo tsam gyi char gyi rgyun bab par gyur te / de las chu'i dkyil 'khor du gyur to / de'i tshad ni rnams su 'bum phrag bcu gcig (p. 7.5) dang stong phrag nyi shu'o // de yang slar chu la rlung gi bsrubs pas gser gyi rang bzhin gyi sa gzhi chu'i steng du chags te / de'i tshad ni 'bum phrag gsum dang stong phrag nyi shu'o // me'i dkyil 'khor yang de dag gi nang nyid du gnas so / (VS p. 7.4-7.5)

[283] Compare with La Vallée Poussin 1988 vol. 2 pp. 451-56.

[284] / de ltar sems can rnams kyi las kyi dbang gis yang dag par byung ba'i rlung rnams kyis yang dag par bsrubs pas gser la sogs pa'i tshogs kyis byas pa'i ri rab la sogs pa'i ri dang / lha'i gzhal yas khang dang / gling lcags ris bskor ba tshun chad du shing dang ljon pa dang lcugs ma la sogs pa 'byung bar 'gyur ro...de nas rnam par shes pa'i bdag po rdo rje 'chang chen po sems can skyed par mdzad pa pos snod kyi 'jig rten bskyed kyi 'og tu sems can gyi khams nges par sprul bar mdzad de / (VS p. 7.5)

misrepresentations made by advocates of the myth of degeneration of Buddhism, it appears also in the earliest of Buddhist sources. Gethin wrote that

> According to the *Visuddhimagga* the *bhikkhu* who wishes to develop the eightfold *iddhi* must have complete mastery and control of the four *jhāna*s and four formless attainments.... in general, the *iddhi-pāda*s are seen as concerned with the development of facility and mastery in *samādhi* or 'meditative' concentration. More particularly, this facility and mastery is directly linked to the development of the various 'miraculous' *iddhi*s. Precisely the same facility and mastery is also linked to furthering the *bhikkhu*'s progress along the path to awakening. There is understood to be no opposition between the development of *iddhi* and the development of *samatha* and *vipassanā* conducive to the final goal. (1992:102)

Early Buddhist texts assume that supernatural powers are a natural consequence of the mastery attained in meditation, and typically proscribe only the unseemly and self-aggrandizing display of such powers. The Buddha himself is said to have performed several miracles, which no doubt put pressure upon the prohibition.[285] This perhaps accounts for the fact that the penalty for its violation is quite strong. The monk Piṇḍola who violated this rule was exiled from Jambudvipa and condemned not to attain liberation until the arrival of the next Buddha, Maitreya. Despite or perhaps because of this fact, Piṇḍola became a revered figure who makes an appearance in the *Aśokāvadāna.*[286]

Magic has and continues to be of interest to many persons throughout the world, including Buddhists, despite their portrayal by past generations of scholars as being *ideally* uninterested with such pursuits. Tambiah wrote that

> rather than viewing the exorcist and exorcism as un-Buddhist deviations or antitheses to Buddhism, we shall increase our understanding by placing them in relation to it. The classical Buddhist distinction is between the true *arhat* who renounces the use of his mystic powers for worldly ends and transports himself to a higher plane, and the ascetic who does not; the Tantric distinction is between the mystic who employs them ethically and the one who does not. Similar distinctions occur in Burma at the level of exorcists who are also Buddhist laymen. The lay exorcist's powers are derived from Buddhist techniques and words, as are the monk's, but are used for different purposes. (1970:325)

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[285] Most notably, the miracle at Śrāvastī. See Lamotte 1988, p. 20.

[286] See Strong 1983 p. 83-86.

While in Theravāda Buddhism the use of supernatural power is frowned upon, in Mahāyāna, however, the use of supernatural powers could be justified as an application of liberative art, provided they were used for the sake of others. Tantra, assuming this justification, merely elaborates the means whereby such powers may be achieved.

Buddhist Tantric texts typically break down the powers (*siddhi*) attainable through their correct practice into two types. First, there is the ultimate or transcendent type which is perfect, complete awakening (*samyaksaṃbodhi*), and which is the putative goal of all Buddhist practice. Some Tantric texts, including the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* seem more concerned with the second type, the worldly (*laukika*) powers, simply because of the massive amount of space they dedicate to the description of such powers and their means of attainment.[287]

One might be tempted to adapt Spiro's classification of orientations of Burmese Buddhism to the context of Tantric Buddhism,[288] and posit that there is a dual orientation toward, on the one hand, *bodhi,* awakening, which is the supramundane *(lokottara)* goal, and *siddhi,* the powers which permit mastery in the world, which would be a mundane *(laukika)* goal. The problem with such a scheme, however, is precisely the polysemy of the term *siddhi,* which can refer as well to the attainment of *bodhi.* Hence, it may not be wise to insist upon too strong a distinction here, since the tradition itself seems content to maintain this ambiguity which preserves both orientations in a state of tension. A result of this is that it is often stated that a given practice is productive of both the worldly and

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[287] The mundane *siddhi* are typically listed as eight in number, although the list sometimes gets much longer. A list typical to Buddhist Tantras is as follows: 1) Invincibility with the sword; 2) Dominion over the treasure of the underworld; 3) Invisibility; 4) The elixir of youth; 5) The ability to shape oneself into a tiny ball; 6) The ability to walk in the sky; 7) Swiftness of foot; 8. Magical eye ointment. See Beyer 1978 p. 246. Beyer's work contains an extensive discussion of these powers (pp. 245-57), as well as of the ritual means for their attainment. Hindu texts give a different account of the eight which is also listed in Beyer's work (1978:246). The Buddhist list does, however, occur in Hindu texts strongly influenced by Buddhism, such as the *Kālikāpurāṇa* (ch. 58 v. 55,6; see van Kooij 1972 pp. 24,5). A list similar to the one given above occurs in ch. 3 of the CST, edited and trans. in appendices A and B below.

[288] Spiro's (1970) schema included what he called "Nibbanic Buddhism" which is characterized by a radical, individual effort to achieve liberation from the world, "Kammatic Buddhism" which is concerned with achieving a better state in the world, in particular rebirth in a state conducive to spiritual practice, and "Apotropaic Buddhism" which is concerned with the largely magical protection from spiritual dangers and hostile spirits.

transcendent aims, depending upon the orientation of the practitioner. As Orzech pointed out,

> When *siddhi* is considered from the perspective of ultimate enlightenment, *anuttarasaṃyaksambodhi*, then one refers to it simply as *siddhi* or more specifically as *lokottara siddhi* (出世成就 , or 出世悉地). When this attainment is channeled toward action in the conditioned universe through images, maṇḍalas, and mantras it is referred to as mundane *siddhi* (*laukika siddhi*, 世間成就) and is manifested through application of supernormal powers used to aid in the salvation of beings. Though the purpose of any given ritual might be predominantly *lokottara* or *laukika*, all rites assume both goals. (1996:219-20)

This follows from the doctrine of non-duality which rejects any ultimate distinction between the ultimate realm of liberation, *nirvāṇa*, and the mundane world of cyclic existence, *saṃsāra*. Tantric Buddhism thus practices are empowering in both realms; not only are they conducive to liberation, but they enable the practitioner to act in the world in a manner which may be termed miraculous, in order to help sentient beings.

In short, Tantric Buddhism claims that its practices are capable of achieving a realization which is efficacious in both this world and all others, and the Buddhist vision of the cosmos is structured in such a way so as to allow the cosmic mastery of those who have achieved inner mastery; the relation between the self and the cosmos, and the different levels of the cosmos themselves, are understood to be relational and transformable for one who has achieved a proper understanding of the self and its relationship to the cosmos as a whole.

3.3.3 Mastery in and of the World

1. The Guru, the King and the Maṇḍala

Buddhist "thought" is not readily distinguished from meditation, which is of course a form of practice. In Buddhist Tantras, however, we find a form of meditation which is also a form of ritual practice par excellence, that is, the meditations and rites surrounding

the maṇḍala. It is also here that we can illustrate most clearly Tambiah's claim that "there is a close connection between cosmology and ritual. Cosmological and supernatural categories are embedded in the rituals....they chart the geography and define the architecture of sacred space and are expressed in the material symbols that are manipulated in rituals. In the rituals we see cosmology in action." (1970:35)

The maṇḍala is the sacred space par excellence in Tantric Buddhism; it is the site of initiation, and also the creatively visualized site wherein the adept subsequently visualizes him or herself. It is also a model of the universe; according to Tucci, the maṇḍala represents "the whole universe in its essential plan, in its process of emanation and reabsorption". (1961:23) In visualizing it the adept visualizes him or herself as embodying both the inhabitants and the habitat of the maṇḍala; it thus puts into practice the Buddhist goal of achieving the realization of identity with the Buddha, which, as was discussed above, is a central, defining feature of Tantric discourse.[289] According to Thurman,

> The path of tantra begins in the creative meditation that harnesses the imagination to "assume the buddha-form." It transforms the self and the universe into the experience and realm of enlightenment. It uses imagination to simulate buddhahood and buddhaverse in order to accelerate the actual transformations and fulfill the bodhisattva vow without waiting for the flow of history in ordinary time. (1998:129)

The ways in which maṇḍala meditation functions as a Buddhist soteriological tool have been admirably discussed elsewhere.[290] Of interest here is the way in which the Buddhist discourse on maṇḍala sheds light on the Buddhist "counter-hegemonic" discourse, for it is in terms of the maṇḍala that the Buddhist social thought is often articulated. This section will explore the maṇḍala as a Buddhist model of authority, expressing a vision of how the ideal Buddhist society should be organized. As such it provides an alternative to the *varṇa* ideology discussed above, but it also establishes an alternative hierarchy, making it very much an ideology in and of itself.

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[289] See section 1.2 above.

[290] See in particular Thurman 1998 and also Tucci 1961.

In arguing that the Buddhist discourse on maṇḍalas is an ideology, there is no intention here to downplay or deny the "spiritual" aspects of this discourse, or to impugn the claims for transformation made in this discourse, concerning which an open-minded scholar should remain agnostic. However, insofar as maṇḍala discourse sets forth "a set of prescriptions for taking a position in the present world of social praxis and acting upon it", it constitutes an ideology according to the definition made above.[291]

One might understand maṇḍala meditations as producing an alternative view of reality, and as such they could be characterized, in Bloch's words, as "alter-cosmogonic because what is being built up is not just a view of the cosmos but an alternate view of the cosmos: a new, purer, more ordered, order where everybody is in his place and where those in power are in authority. Ideology has been constructed." (1989:128) Maṇḍalas do establish an alternate model of authority, as will be shown below.

Maṇḍala discourse should not be rejected as socially or historically irrelevant since it is "religious". Rather, maṇḍala discourse was originally political, and remained so even once it had been appropriated and transformed by Buddhists. And since they are typically legitimatized on the basis of a civilization's greatest authorities, religious ideologies often are tremendously influential. Lincoln has argued that

> unlike secular ideologies – which they resemble in many ways – religious ideologies regularly offer analyses of the fundamental nature of humanity and of the cosmos itself. But like other modes of ideology, religious ideologies also devote careful attention to the nature and proper order of a third entity intermediate to the microcosm of the individual and the macrocosm of the universe: that is, the meso-cosm of human society. And one cannot, in my opinion, study myth, ritual, and/or religion in pristine isolation: rather, we must take careful account of the society in which these are rooted, a society whose structures and organization they continually re-present in accurate and/or mystified terms, and which they usually – but not always – help to perpetuate.[292]

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[291] This is Haydn White's definition (1983:22) quoted in section 3.1.1 above.

[292] Lincoln 1991:173. One might compare this with Geerzt's well-known definition of religion, which is: "A system of symbols which acts to establish powerful, pervasive, and long-lasting moods and motivation in men by forming conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem uniquely realistic." (1973:90) This definition seems too broad in that it seems applicable to ideology in general, including ideologies that we would not typically consider religious, such as the "secular" ideology of individualism in America today. Compare Geertz's definition with Berger and Luckmann's (1967) theory of the process through which humans generate social concepts which are objectified and internalized to create a continuing dialectic in which

It will thus be a useful exercise to explore here the social ramifications of the maṇḍala discourse.

Just as society occupies an intermediate position between the individual and the cosmos, so too does the maṇḍala. One could say that the maṇḍala is, in Levy's terms, "an essential middle world, a *mesocosm*, situated between the individual microcosm and the wider universe." (1990:32) Levy, following Mus (1935), defines mesocosm as "an organized meaningful world intermediate to the microcosmic worlds of individuals and the culturally conceived macrocosm, the universe." (1990:2) From the inner, visionary perspective, the maṇḍala is a product of what Corbin (1969) called the "creative imagination", and is a manifestation of what Conze (1974) called the "intermediary world". This is the imaginal realm corresponding to the visionary aspect of a Buddha, the Beatific Body *(saṃbhogakāya)* which mediates between the Buddha as an individual being *(nirmāṇakāya)* and as the totality of all existent realities *(dharmakāya)*.[293]

In the outer world, the maṇḍala cannot be apprehended as a physical object, even though it can be mapped out with chalk or other substances. As Wayman has argued, "there is no revelation of the *maṇḍala* just by exhibiting it, or by the disciple's mere seeing it." (1973:59) As both a symbol and site for Awakening, it is supposed to possess consecratory power, but this power is dependent upon one's realization of the underlying principle of Tantric Buddhism, the identification of the mundane, alienated individual with the transcendent goal, the Awakened state of a Buddha. Kūkai, for example, wrote in a text for consecration ceremony of Mount Kōya, a ceremony that was to transform Mount Kōya into exactly such a transforming site, that

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social ideologies, themselves human products, reflect an external "objectified" understanding of reality, but also condition the perception of reality for those naturalized to them. As Berger succinctly put it, "It is through externalization that society is a human product. It is through objectification that society becomes a reality *sui generis*. It is through internalization that man is a product of society." (1967:4).

[293] See Conze 1974, p. 24.

> All beings possessing form or mind necessarily have the Buddha-nature. Buddha-nature and Essence pervade the entire realm of Essence and are not separate...Those who awaken to this truth may enjoy themselves eternally on the calyx of the five wisdoms, while those who fail to recognize this will be submerged for a long time by the mud of the three worlds.[294]

Maṇḍalas are "mapped" onto the outer world, and as such function to sacralize it. Gellner noted that "the mandala model applies equally to the universe as a whole, to the country....to each city, to each temple and shrine, and Tantrically, to the worshipper's own body. The realization of one's own identity with these larger designs is the attainment of salvation." (1992:191.)

This is certainly true of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala, which is conceived as being manifest globally (or sub-continentally) through the network of twenty-four *piṭha*, sacred sites scattered across India and Tibet and centered on Mount Kailash.[295] And this maṇḍala is also active internally, in the practitioner's own body. In the ninth chapter of the *Saṃvarodaya Tantra,* following a description of the sacred sites, it is written that

> The external *piṭha* is understood thus: the internal is said to be the body. It is well known that the channels in one's own body are called *piṭha*. Their form is the shape of the deities, which is why it is agreed they are the internal (*piṭha*). Since the body is a mass made of them, it is thus equal to those of all Buddhas.[296]

In a similar vein, Hūṃkāravajra, in his *Śrisarvabuddhasamayoga-maṇḍalasādhanakrama,* suggested that one, "through the yoga of universal purification, meditate on the perfection of the maṇḍala within your own body."[297] The maṇḍala is thus understood to pervade and thereby purify and render divine both the outer and inner worlds, and this realization is one of the purposes of maṇḍala meditation practice.

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[294] Trans. by Grapard 1982, p. 203. Edited in *Shōryōshū.* S. Watanabe and Y. Miyasaka, eds. Tokyo: Iwanami, 1965, p. 408.

[295] These *piṭha* sites will be discussed in greater depth in section 6.3.2 below.

[296] SV ch. 9 vv. 20-21: bāhyapiṭhan tathā khyātam adhyātmaṃ deham ucyate / svadehe nāḍikārūpaṃ piṭhanāmeti kirtitam // tadrūpaṃ devatākāraṃ tenādhyātmavyavasthitiḥ / tena tatpiṇḍamayaṃ deham sarvabuddhasamo hy asau // (Tsuda 1974:105). My trans., cf. Tsuda 1974, p. 272.

[297] / de dag ni thams cad dag pa'i sbyor bas bdag nyid lus la dkyil 'khor rdzogs par sgom pa'o / (QT p. 29.1)

The maṇḍala is also a hierarchically organized structure, organized, as discussed above, along both horizontal and vertical axes, with the central deity occupying the highest and most central position. As such it can perhaps be compared to Bourdieu's *habitus*,[298] and its *practice* would thus tend to reproduce this hierarchy. While the deities within the maṇḍala are hierarchically arranged along these axes, the crucial relationship is that between the adept and the central deity who initially, i.e., before initiation occurs, occupy the lowest and highest positions respectively, since before initiation the adept is outside of the maṇḍala entirely. Ultimately, the adept is to visualize him or herself as identical with the deity, but this relationship is politically relevant because during initiation the guru qua *vajrācārya* embodies the central deity, and thus occupies a mediating position vis-à-vis the initiate and the Awakened deity.

This role of mediator and initiator gives the guru tremendous power. It is often stressed that achieving the perfected state of the Awakened deity requires that one views the guru as perfected in just this sort of manner.[299] This doctrine can be justified within the logic of Tantric Buddhism on the ground that the disciple needs an example to follow in order to mimetically approximate the awakened state. Given the power that this gives the guru, quite a bit of attention was given to the qualifications of the guru.[300] The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* sums these up in one verse: "He has the proper knowledge,

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[298] In this context the following definition may be helpful: "The habitus, the durably installed generative principle of regulated improvisations, produces practices which tend to reproduce the regularities immanent in the objective conditions of the production of their generative principle". (Bourdieu 1977:178).

[299] Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, a modern *vajrācārya*, wrote that "whether or not we receive the Buddha's blessings through our spiritual guide depends on how we view him or her. If we view our Spiritual Guide as a Buddha we shall receive the blessings of a Buddha, if we view him as a Bodhisattva we shall receive the blessings of a Bodhisattva, and if we see him as an ordinary being we shall receive no blessings....whether or not our spiritual guide is precious depends on our own view and not upon the Spiritual Guide's qualities. It does not matter whether or not our Spiritual Guide is an actual Buddha." (Kelsang Gyatso 1996:82)

[300] A very thorough description occurs in Jagaddarpaṇa's *Ācāryakriyāsamuccaya*, which quite interestingly gives a lengthy list of negative qualities which a guru should not have. Some of these are tempermental qualities, i.e., he should not be wicked or ignorant. Some, however, are physical; he should not be obese or have a goitre, for example. See Shukla 1975, p. 129.

understands Tantra and Śrī Heruka's mantra. He is not angry, is pure and competent, understands yoga and is perfected in knowledge."[301]

Since the maṇḍala is structured and mediated by an authority figure, its is not open to all or to free movement within it. Quite often there are prohibitions surrounding approach and entry into it. In the *Āryavajrapāṇyabhiṣeka-mahātantra,* Vajrapāṇi limits entry into the maṇḍala to those who have already generated the Spirit of Awakening, as follows:

> Mañjuśrī, the master should guide the disciple in accordance with the ritual procedures; the maṇḍala and mudrā should be shown to one who has succeeded in the meditation on the Spirit of Awakening. Others should not enter it, or even see the [corresponding] text. Mañjuśrī, were one to show the maṇḍala or mudrā to sentient beings who do not understand the commitment of bodhisattvas to practice bodhisattva deeds through the way of mantra, then one deceives the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, [which is equivalent to] performing the five immeasurable sins.[302]

Entry into the maṇḍala is not automatic. It has to be paid for, by means of symbolic submission to the Vajrācārya, and by time and effort expended in serving him. Yi-jing reported that he was denied entry to the maṇḍala at Nālandā on the basis of his "insufficient merit",[303] which evidently means that he was judged unsuitable by the authority figure who controlled access to that maṇḍala. The maṇḍala is a hierarchically organized structure which was reproduced in social space as well, in which, in Bourdieu's words, "what exists is a *space of relations* which is just as real as a geographical space, in which movements have to be paid for by labor, by effort and especially by time". (1991:232) The labor and effort is measured by rules of respect and service, and the time necessary to complete it is

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[301] CST ch. 2 v. 4: samyagjñānatantrajñaḥ śriherukamantrajñaḥ / akrodhaś ca śucir dakṣaḥ yogajño jñānapāragaḥ //. See my edition in appendix A below.

[302] The five immeasurable sins *(pañcānantariya)* are: killing one's father, mother or an arhat, drawing the blood of a buddha, or causing a schism in the saṃgha. / 'jam dpal de nas slob dpon gyis cho ga snga ma dzhin du slob ma yongs su gzung bar bya ste / byang chub kyi sems bsgom pa grub pa la dkyil 'khor 'di dang phyag rgya bstan par bya'o // de ma yin pa gzhan pa la ni glegs bam yang bltar gzhug par mi bya'o // 'jam dpal gal te byang chub sems dpa'i spyad pa gsang sngags kyi sgo spyod pa'i byang chub sems dpa' dam tshig mi shes pa'i sems can la dkyil 'khor bstan tam phyag rgya bstan na / des sangs rgyas dang byang chub sems dpa' rnams bslus bar 'gyur ro // mtshams med pa lnga yang byed par 'gyur ro / (fol. 149a).

[303] See section 5.2 below.

an indefinite period consisting of many months and years, as is carefully delineated in the Chinese translation of the *Vajragarbhatantra.* The following interesting passage from this text depicts Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva, the Vajrācārya extraordinaire, relating to a host of monks and laypeople the proper code of respectful conduct that should be shown to the Vajrācārya, as follows:

> Then the Bodhisattva saw the assembly consisting of śramaṇa, brahmins, kshatriyas, vaishyas, shudras and so forth. Thereupon he told them, "Listen carefully, you students! Each and every one of you has attained realization in the Vajra-Mahāyāna, and have gained the Vajra-Mahāyāna Dharma. You should know that after the nirvāṇa of the Buddha, the Vajrācāryas are your masters. It was thus throughout innumerable eons in days of yore. When *Sūryavimalaprabhāsa Tathāgata (日 清 淨 光 明 如 來) appeared in the world, in the *Mahāsugandha Buddhaland (彼 大 妙 香 佛 剎), there was the King *Viryadatta (精 進 授 王). I spoke then as I do now on the rules for showing respect to the Vajrācārya. Now I again will speak to the disciples regarding the rules for respecting the Vajrācārya. There are eight rules of respect. Indrabhūti asked Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva, "What are the eight rules of respect?" Vajrapāṇi replied, "First, one must not call one's master by his name. Second, always consider oneself comparable to the master's feet. Third, carry shoes for the master. Fourth, sweep and sprinkle the floor of his chamber. Fifth, prepare the master's bed and seat. Sixth, make prostrations [to him] with all five limbs [extended]. Seven, do not impinge upon the master. Eight, have faith in [the master's] commands. These are the eight rules for the disciple respecting the Vajrācārya. The ācārya should examine the disciple with regard to these eight matters. If, as the days and months amass succeeding to years, the disciple is [able to adhere] to these eight rules single-mindedly, without backsliding or retrogression, then he or she is one who can be entrusted with the ācārya's [teaching].[304]

It is interesting that this text depicts the Vajrācārya as deserving the same respect that would be shown to a Buddha, which is understandable given the fact that in the abhiṣeka ceremony the vajrācārya functions in the Buddha's stead. It is also interesting that the text depicts this code as having an ancient precedent, which is actually a tried and true way to introduce an innovation.

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[304] 爾時菩薩觀會眾沙門婆羅門剎帝利毘舍首陀等已。即復告言汝等學眾諦聽。汝已各各於金剛大乘悉得證悟。皆是得金剛大乘法者。汝等當知佛涅槃後金剛阿闍梨是汝等師。亦如往昔無量劫前。日清淨光明如來出世之時。彼大妙香佛剎中。有王名精貊授。彼時我亦如是說承事金剛阿闍梨軌則。今亦復說弟子承事金剛阿闍梨軌則。承事之則乃有八種。印捺囉部帝白金剛手菩薩言。云何名為八種承事之則。金剛手言。一者不得呼師名子。二者常自稱師足。三者與師執持鞋履。四者掃灑房地。五者為師敷置床座。六者五體作禮。七者不侵害師。八者指授稟信。是名弟子承事金剛阿闍梨八法。彼阿闍梨以此八事觀察弟子。以日累月積月成歲。若彼第子於此八事無有違背專心不退。阿闍梨然付攝受。 (T 1128 p. 546.3-547.1); cf. Bagchi 1944, pp. 49-50.

The hierarchical structure of the maṇḍala plays out in the articulation of disciples with regard to the Vajrācārya, who as the central figure is the locus from which authority radiates. In Reinder's terminology, the guru is an "embodiment of authority", contact with whom is rule-governed, particularly in the ritual arena. Reinders wrote, with regard to Chinese monastic institutions, that

> The physical presence of the Abbot, the Master, or the Teacher in the medieval Chinese monastery signals to the new monk that a multitude of ritual stipulations are in force, and from this perspective we may speak of these high-ranking figures as "embodiments of authority". So too, the approach to the throne is rule governed, and a wide array of injunctions and prohibitions becomes relevant due to physical proximity to the emperor's body. (1997:263)

Similar stipulations apply to the guru as well, and particularly so in the context of the maṇḍala. Disciples need to know the code for showing him proper respect, although this code might vary somewhat depending on the closeness of a disciple's relationship to the guru, which itself positions the disciple within the maṇḍalic hierarchy surrounding him.

Interestingly, the maṇḍala was originally a term primarily political in its import. The *maṇḍala* theory, originally developed in Kautilya's *Arthaśātra*, articulated the relationship between an imperial center and a periphery occupied, ideally, by subject states.[305] Inden has shown, in a 1981 article, that both the royal court and the larger sphere of India itself were conceived as maṇḍalas in which the king's objective was to position himself as the central figure, the king of kings, who, as "the higher 'englobes' or 'encompasses' the lower... The king of kings included within his persona as his domain the kingship of all the lesser kings" (Inden 1981:115). Their submission, which was simultaneously their encompassment within a greater whole symbolized by the central dominating figure of the king of kings, was mapped out in their appearance in his court, which was strictly hierarchically arranged as is the Buddhist maṇḍala, in which the central deity is surrounded by a "court" of subsidiary deities.

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[305] See Tambiah 1976, pp. 29-30, and Basham 1954, pp. 128-29.

Like the Buddhist maṇḍala, which was modeled on cosmic palaces such as that in Akaniṣṭha or Mount Sumeru and were thus imagined as occupying a position of cosmic mastery, so too was the king's maṇḍala. Inden wrote that

> Because Bhāratavarṣa was a replica of Jambudvīpa and its centre a model representation of the whole of India, a true cakravartin had to demonstrate that he had made the centre of his kingdom into this middle country, that his kingdom and Bhāratavarṣa were indeed one and the same. He had to show that he was in a relationship [to] Bhāratavarṣa that resembled the relationship of Brahmā, in his palace on Mount Meru, to the cosmos. He had to persuade people that his palace at the centre of his capital was a homologue of the palace of Brahmā, [and] that those of the other kings of India, built around the periphery of his own, resembled the palaces of the guardian deities of the quarters. (1981:118, inserts mine)

Buddhist Tantras undoubtedly drew upon royal symbolism in constructing the maṇḍala as the site of a Buddha's cosmic mastery, and thus were assimilating royal power with the spiritual authority that was a consequence of Awakening.

It is perhaps not coincidental then that Tantric texts seem drawn toward the king and his court as a site for the production of maṇḍalas and the performance of the *abhiṣeka* rite. Another passage from the *Vajragarbhatantra* depicts the respectful treatment due to a Vajrācārya, and also articulates a hierarchy of disciples with regard to the degree of access and order in which they may approach him, as follows:

> When the Bodhisattva arrived at the palace, King *Viryadatta (精進授王) offered the seven-jeweled Lion Throne. He bade the Bodhisattva to sit upon it, and reverentially offered up to him all sorts of gold, silver, and precious gems, as well as offering vessels filled to the brim with sublimely scented water. He made five kinds of offerings to the Bodhisattva. In addition, a numerous bhikṣusaṃgha came in order listen to the Dharma bearing incense and flowers to present to the Bodhisattva. Then Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattva, in accordance with the method he learned from the Buddha, entered into the mahāmaṇḍala and consecrated *(abhiṣikta,* 灌頂) the King with vajra-purified water. King Viryadatta thus attained consecration. Thereupon the bhikṣusaṃgha, the kshatriya, brahmins, vaishya, shudras and so forth all arrived at the royal palace and came before the Bodhisattva, desiring to listen to the Dharma. Giving rise to the Spirit of Awakening, they entered the Mahāyāna.[306]

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[306] 菩薩既至宮已。精進授王復設七寶師子座。請菩薩座奉種種金銀珍寶。及以寶瓶盛滿閼伽上妙香水。及以五種供養奉上菩薩。復有眾多苾芻尼之眾。為欲聞法亦持香華來獻菩薩。時金剛手菩薩。即如從佛所聞法式入大曼拏羅。以金剛淨水與王灌頂。精進授王得灌頂已。復有諸苾芻眾及諸剎帝利婆羅門吠舍首陀等。皆悉來詣王宮至菩薩所。為欲聞法發菩提心入金剛乘。 (T 1128 p. 543.3); cf. Bagchi 1944, p. 39.

This text portrays a clear hierarchy of participants which is, as in the royal court *qua* maṇḍala, articulated via proximity to the center, with the center usurped by the guru, who is then served by the king, the most privileged of disciples, who is followed in the hierarchy by the monks, and last of all by the laity.

The guru here is depicted as assuming the position of the brahmin,[307] the *purohita* or royal preceptor to be precise, and the *vajrācārya* in the Nevāri context is understood to be exactly that: "family priests *(purohita)* for hereditary patrons *(jajmān, jaymā).*" (Gellner 1991:161) This synthesis is achieved perhaps even more smoothly than in the Brahmanical tradition itself, which, because of its intense concern with purity and pollution, could not help but see the assumption of mundane power as a compromise, and thus came to view the role of the *purohita* with ambivalence.[308] The nondualistic Tantric perspective, however, rejects the relevance of the purity-pollution distinction, opening the way for the spiritually realized *guru* to assume power as well as authority.

This allows for the assimilation of the guru to the king. The guru by virtue of his cosmic mastery attains power, *śakti,* a power which, as Marglin has shown, was associated with both the feminine and the king, and exists outside of realm of the purity-pollution discourse.[309] Tantric theory and practice allows the guru to embody power, *śakti,* but also

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[307] In the Nevāri context, in which the Buddhists have been constituted as a "caste" within the context of the larger Hindu society, the Vajrācārya as a profession has evidently been assimilated with the brahmin, serving, in Greenwold's (1974) terms, as a "Buddhist brahmin". Probably what has most permitted this assimilation is the transmission of vajrācārya status through birth lineage, which is contradistinction to the Tibetans, for whom the spiritual lineage only is transmitted. See section 3.4.2.2 below.

[308] This "conundrum" has been explored in depth by Heesterman, who has argued that renunciatory ideology became the key for the brahmin to maintain his purity while engaged in guarded involvement with the world. See Heesterman 1985, p. 43. See also Malamoud 1981, pp. 49 ff.

[309] Marglin argued that "the power of the king, which I have identified with the power of śakti, is outside of the domain of the pure and the impure and is governed by the principle of the auspicious and the inauspicious. The king's link to status is through his link to the Brahman which is a subordinate/superordinate one; a link which parallels that of wife to her husband." (1981:179) The king-brahmin relationship, however, may not have always been as clear cut as Marglin suggested. Clearly Buddhist and Jain sources contend that the Kshatriya is superior to the Brahmin, and ambiguity concerning their roles occur as well in Brahmanical sources, such as *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* 1.4.11 (trans. in Olivelle 1996, p. 16), which claims that the *kṣatra* is the highest power, but that *brahman* is its origin. Interestingly, Mayer, in a 1981 article, both confirms and undermines portions of Marglin's argument. In this article Mayer interviewed a former Mahārāja, Shahaji Chhatrapati who ruled the state of Dewas in the Malwa region from 1934 until 1949. Shahaji describes a king as being a "husband" whose "wife" is the *gaddi,* the dynastic seat whence arises his power *(śakti).* (1981:141-42) Interestingly, Shahaji also "saw

opens up the "highest" spiritual teachings and technologies to the king, who was excluded from full education in the Vedas. This is in sharp distinction to the Brahmanical theory of kingship, in which, as Heesterman pointed out, the

> king and brahmin were definitely separated and made into two mutually exclusive categories. But this meant that the king's access to esoteric knowledge and the authority based on it was irrevocably cut off... the brahmin, though equally in need of the king's favors for his subsistence, was not allowed to serve the king and lend him his own authority, but had to keep himself free from worldly entanglements and especially from being entangled in the king's affairs. Royal power and brahmanic authority were irredeemably divorced. (1985:126-27)

The king is not exactly replaced by the guru, however, but becomes, by virtue of his submission, the disciple *par excellence*. The vajrācārya, in the maṇḍala, becomes the king, receiving the treatment due to a king of kings from the king himself, who is privileged in receiving greatest access to the figure of the guru. In some Tantric texts the figures of the king and the guru are assimilated. Indrabhūti himself was included in the list of *mahāsiddhas,*[310] without losing his role of king. A later text, the *Tattvapradipa*, attempts to resolve this issue by depicting Indrabhūti as an incarnation of Vajrapāṇi, the vajrācārya extraordinare, and Vajrapāṇi as a king. The text describes its origin as follows:

> The Goddess asked, "Who brought to light and explained this extremely secret Tantra?"
>
> The Blessed Lord replied, "In the north, at the *vajrapiṭha* Oḍḍiyāna, the king called Indrabhūti brought it to light, and explained and clarified it for sentient beings."
>
> The Goddess asked, "Hey Blessed Lord, tell me, how many [bodhisattva] stages *(bhūmi)* has this 'Great King Indrabhūti' mastered?"
>
> The Blessed Lord replied, "That very King is Vajrapāṇi, concerning whom I taught in the *Jñānatilaka-tantrarāja,*[311] and he has mastered the tenth stage with

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his power as flowing from and legitimised by, not the Brahman at the abhiṣeka, but rather the ascension of the gaddi for the first time and and at later darbārs at which the Brahmans played no part". (1981:152)

[310] See Dowman 1985, pp. 229-34.

[311] The text refers to the *Jñānatilaka-yoginītantrarāja-paramamahādbhuta*, a Tantra which focuses on Vajrapaṇi.

> his Emanation Body *(nirmāṇakāya)* as Indrabhūti, and has mastered the fourteenth stage with his Intuition Body form *(jñānakāya)*."[312]

The king often appears to be the object of Tantric discourse. For example, the king is the ideal candidate for initiation in the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, as indicated by the fee *(dakṣiṇā)* required of the candidate. The relevant verses occur in chapter three as follows:

> Saluting the maṇḍala for the guru in accordance with the rite, then give to the guru, paying the fees spoken by the Tathāgata: A hundred thousand gold, and a variety of treasures; also one hundred pairs of clothing, and even elephants, horses and territory, as well as earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and an excellent ring. A golden sacrificial thread, and also one's wife and daughters, servants and maids, or even one's sister, should be offered bowing. The intelligent one should give himself with all of [his] things to the guru, [saying] "Henceforward I am given over to you as a servant." Doing thus the ritual procedure, [things] are well settled by the adept.[313]

Descriptions of the *dakṣiṇā* are often quite elaborate, but the inclusion of items such as elephants, horses and especially territory *(rāṣṭra)* seems to indicate that kings are the ideal recipients of *abhiṣeka*, which should be of no surprise, since the *abhiṣeka* is a Buddhist rite adapted from the ancient Indian consecration rite, the *rājasūya*.[314] The Buddhist adoption of royal ritual technologies probably began during the period of imperial patronage, i.e., from the period extending from the Mauryan and through the Kuṣāṇa. Buddhists were in fact aware of the similarity between their rite of consecration and that used in the royal consecration ceremony, but they were also aware of the differences.[315]

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[312] *Tattvapradīpa-nāma-mahāyoginitantrarāja*: / lha mos gsol ba / gsang ba chen po'i rgyud 'di ni // shes pa dang ni bshad pa su // bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa / byang phyogs su dpal rdo rje'i gnas au ḍyan du rgyal po indra bhū ti zhes bya bas shes pa dang bshad pa dang / sems can la gsal bar byed do // lha mos gsol pa / kye bcom ldan 'das rgyal po chen po indra bhū ti shes bya ba de sa du'i dbang phyug lags / bka' stsol cig / bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa / dpal ye shes thig le'i rgyud kyi rgyal po las gang zhig ngas bstan pa'i phyag na rdo rje'i rgyal po de nyid indra bhū ti sprul pa'i skus sa bcu'i dbang phyug ye shes kyi skus sa bcu bzhi'i dbang phyug go / (DK fol. 142b)

[313] CST ch. 3 vv. 11-17: maṇḍalaṃ gurave praṇipatya yathā vidhiḥ / tatas tu gurave dadyāt tathāgatoktadakṣiṇān niryātya // suvarṇaśatasahasraṃ ratnāni vividhāni ca / vastrayugma śataṃ caiva gaja vāji rāṣṭam eva ca // karṇābharaṇa kaṭākaṃ ca kaṇṭhikāṅgurikāṃś ca samuttamām // yajñopavita sauvarṇaṃ svabhāryān duhitām api / dāsa dāsī bhagnim vāpi praṇipatya nivedayet // ātmānaṃ sarvabhāvena nivedayed buddhimān guroḥ // adya prabhṛti dāso 'haṃ samarpitam mayā tava / evam vidhis tataḥ kṛtvā sādhakena suniścitaḥ // See my edition in appendix A below.

[314] Concerning the *rājasūya* ceremony see Heesterman 1957.

[315] Śubhakarasiṃha, in his *Commentary on the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (T 1796), described the royal *abhiṣeka* and contrasted it to the Buddhist rite, which empowers one to attain an alternative lineage, "to attain birth in the family of the Tathāgatas and succeed to the throne of the Buddhas". See Abé 1999, pp. 135-36.

The *dakṣiṇā* as described in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* definitely evokes the *mahādāna* ceremonies described in Buddhist literature. Aśoka is described, in the *Aśokāvadāna*, as giving away not only his wealth but also, in his words, "my kingship, my harem, my state officials, my self, and [my son] Kunāla."[316] At the end of his reign, he added his entire kingdom *(rāṣṭra)* to the list of things he, literally or symbolically, donated to the Buddhist community.[317] Xuan-zang reported that king Harṣa Śilāditya, in a similar *mahādāna* ceremony, would hand over his "lion throne" to a distinguished monk from which the latter would preach,[318] as did King Vīryadatta in the *Vajragarbha Tantra* passage quoted above. King Harṣa is also depicted, in a fit of generosity, as giving away his personal effects such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets and so forth,[319] which perhaps might account for the presence of these items in the *dakṣiṇā* list quoted above. Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty, who ruled from 502-549 CE in China, is also depicted as donating himself to the Buddhist community several times, after which he was presumably ransomed by his ministers, resulting in a massive donation.[320]

The king appears to be a primary object of Tantric discourse, who can at times reclaim his central position. Sometimes the king and the vajrācārya appear to merge, with the king taking the central position within the Tantric maṇḍala as well, following his consecration by the guru. Jñānamitra, in his *Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatikā-ṭikā*, describes the Vajrācārya Kukkura's maṇḍala meditation instructions to King Indrabhūti, which evidently involved he and his court acting out an elaborate ritual, rather than the usual internalized meditation. The relevant passage occurs as follows:

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[316] Strong 1983, p. 265.

[317] See Strong 1983, p. 291.

[318] See Beal 1884, book 1 p. 214.

[319] See Beal 1911, p. 187.

[320] See Ch'en 1964, pp. 124-25.

> Having received the instructions of Vajrasattva, the king and his retinue were commanded to meditate in the manner of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala, with the king himself in the center, his four holy queens positioned as his consorts, his four ministers positioned as the four clans *(kula)*, his four daughters positioned as the inner goddesses, his four concubines positioned as the outer goddesses, and the lesser officers positioned as the four gate keepers and the virtuous bodhisattvas. As a result the king thought that he along with his retinue had achieved the state of the *vidyādhara.*[321]

Such rites evidently were carried out in the courts of actual kings. Tibetan histories and hagiographies depict the mahāsiddha Padmasambhava as giving consecrations to King Trisongdetsen (r. 756-797 CE) and his court.[322] The *History of the Yuan Dynasty* (元史) relates that rites involving a large group of participants were enacted in the court of the Shun-di Emperor (r. 1333-1367 CE) under the instruction of a Tibetan Master named "Ka Lin-chen", *Karma Rinchen.[323] The Buddhist rite of Abhiṣeka was also, as Abé has shown, adapted and incorporated within the Japanese imperial coronation ceremony.[324] As such, there is little doubt that in the East Asian context, Tantric discourse, in Abé's words,

> legitimized the emperor's authority by characterizing him as the ideal Buddhist ruler, the cakravartin, while the emperor affirmed the authenticity of the Eight Schools of exoteric and esoteric disciplines as the orthodoxy of the state... This state of affairs suggests that the symbiosis between emperor and clergy... was in fact constructed in the language of Esoteric Buddhism. (1999:384-85)

Tantric discourse was not fixed or productive of only certain cultural forms, be they forms that are compliant with hegemony, resistant to it, or productive of an alternative hegemonic ideology. Rather, Tantric discourse appears to have interacted with different cultural contexts to produce different "structures of conjuncture", which Sahlins defines as "a set of historical relationships that at once reproduce the traditional cultural categories and give

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[321] The section translated here is part of a longer passage translated in section 6.2.1 below. / rdo rje sems dpas lung bstan nas rgyal po 'khor dang bcas pa rnams rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor ltar sgom du stsal te dbus su rgyal po nyid / btsun mo dam pa bzhi yum gyi sar bkod / blon po bzhi rigs bzhi'i sar bkod / sras mo rnams nang gi lha mo'i sar bkod / btsun mo phal pa rnams phyi'i lha mo'i sar bkod / blon po phal pa rnams sgo srung bzhi dang / bskal pa bzang po'i byang chub sems dpa' ltar bkod pa dang / rgyal pos bsams pa bdag cag 'khor dang bcas pa rig 'dzin gyi gnas su grub pa'i phyir (DT fol. 273b).

[322] See Dudjom 1991, p. 516, and Dowman 1984, pp. 21 ff.

[323] For a translation of the relevant passage see van Gulik 1961, p. 260. See also van der Kuijp 1991, pp. 305-306, n. 35.

[324] See Abé 1999 pp. 359 ff.

them new values out of the pragmatic context, (1985:125) and which can be characterized as "a situational set of relations, crystallized from the operative cultural categories and the actors' interests."[325]

The somewhat different way in which Tantric discourse was put to use in Tibet will be discussed in the following section. With regard to India, there seems little doubt that while Tantric discourse can be understood to have constituted a form of resistance to the dominant *varṇa* ideology, it also constituted an alternative ideology, one focused on the figure of the guru as a symbol of authority.

Tantric discourse provides a case in point concerning the need for contextualization in the study of discourse. Through a study of texts alone one might get the impression that Tantric traditions were egalitarian. But study of the social context reveals a somewhat richer picture. Parry has noted, concerning the Aghori guru Baba Bhagvan Ram, that egalitarianism is a central aspect of his teaching, and that "amongst his circle of followers inter-caste marriage is positively encouraged. But what might also be said is that within the egalitarian order which he would have his disciples realize, a position of unquestioned privilege is nonetheless preserved for the guru." (1982:98)

The same is the case with modern Tibetan gurus (Tib. "lama", *bla-ma*); while giving teaching they often stress the equality of all beings insofar as all, without exception, possess the potential to achieve complete awakening. Nonetheless, in the Tibetan context the guru, does receive "unquestioned privilege" and is the center from which authority emanates, and around which disciples are hierarchically arranged in a maṇḍala-like pattern, a pattern replicated whenever a major teacher gives teachings. Gurus, through the rite of initiation, replicate around themselves the hierarchy structurally represented by the maṇḍala. On the one hand, the act of prostration to the guru, enjoined in the texts, establishes through body positioning the simple hierarchy of guru and disciple along a vertical axis. The rite of initiation also replicates the inside-outside hierarchy contained in the maṇḍala, with

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[325] Sahlins 1985, p. 125 note 11.

preferred or closer disciples seated closer to the gurus, with patrons also gaining preferential access. Monks and nuns are also more closely centered than the laity, which repeats the pattern indicated in the *Vajragarbha Tantra* passage quoted above. This seems to be a Tantric Buddhist cultural pattern that was thoroughly adopted in the Tibetan cultural context, and which is currently being transferred to the West.

In the case of consecrations in particular, power is at stake, and following Greenblatt, "we may add that the power of which we are speaking is in effect an allocation method – a way of distributing resources to some and denying them to others, critical resources ... that prolong life, or, in their absence, extinguish it." (1981:51) In Tantric discourse, the guru is established as a locus of power in exactly this sense, a recipient of resources who in turn becomes the nexus whence they are redistributed.

That Tantric discourse in India functioned as an alternative ideology, seeking to construct an alternative locus of power and authority centering on the guru, who may at times have been closely associated or even identical with the king. The legacy of this ideology in India appears to have been active not only in the Aghoris, but also in another historical group, the Kartābhajās, a sect founded in Bengal during the late eighteenth century by Āulcānd. According to Urban, they adopted a similar strategy that Tantric practitioners appear to have adopted vis-à-vis mainstream society:

> In their strategic attempt to forge a new tradition, occupying a unique and marginal status in society, the Kartābhajās developed a remarkable kind of 'Janus-faced' attitude or double-norm. The Kartābhajā initiate is enjoined to lead a 'double life', on the one hand maintaining a perfectly orthodox and acceptable identity in the mainstream social order and caste system, while on the other hand, cultivating a secret inner self, which is radically autonomous, spiritually powerful and free from all social norms. (Urban 1996:19)

The Kartābhajās, in fact, employed the night and day imagery found in both Hindu and Buddhist Tantras, as discussed above in section 3.2.2.1 above. Such a passage occurs in Miśra's *Bhāver Gita Vyākhyā,* a commentary on a Kartābhajā scripture, as follows:

> The Sahaja remains like one blind in daylight, his eyes opened in the night... In the daytime he has to do conventional things, to observe the rules of caste and pay respect to the Mallik, the Missionary and the Brahman... he becomes the

> true man at night in the secret societies... There they pay no heed to the rules of caste and social relations.[326]

One would be mistaken, however, if one interpreted this strategy as a muting of social criticism. As is also the case in the Tantras however, this double-life rhetoric is undercut by egalitarian rhetoric elsewhere, making it clear that this is only a strategy and not an ideal. The *Bhāver Gita* claims that "there is no division between human beings... the infinite forms in every land, all the activities of human beings... all things subsist within Sahaja, in the true Self nature."[327] The 'secret life' rhetoric did not protect the Kartābhajās from attack by orthodox Brahmin critics, who took issue not only with their "secret" life, but also their flouting of caste rules at public festivals, at which inter-caste commensality was openly practiced.[328]

The Kartābhajās likewise had their own political agenda, and like the Tantrikas they were a guru-centric group. This agenda was articulated during the mid- to late-nineteenth century in the formation of large economic estates controlled by the most important gurus, particularly in the destabilized district of Nadia, a region wracked with revolt during the mid-nineteenth century.[329]

Tantric discourse, both in theory and practice, does not take a fixed ideological stance, but contains a number of tendencies. Its resistance to the *varṇa*-ideology can probably be traced back both to trends in early Buddhism and dissenting groups in general, which by virtue of their liminal status in Indian society were inclined toward a critical perspective. The assimilation of the guru to the king, in the Buddhist context at least, is understandable in light of the Buddhist dependence on royal patronage. The guru model of

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[326] op. cit. Urban 1996, p. 19.

[327] op. cit. Urban 1996, p. 17.

[328] See Urban 1996, p. 18.

[329] See Urban 1996, pp. 29-30.

authority, however, was by no means limited to Buddhism, so in the next section it will be explored from the perspective of an alternative model of the transmission of authority.

3.3.3.2 Lineage and the Transmission of Alternative Models of Authority

The importance placed on gurus, or, in other words, on a lineage through which the teachings are transmitted, a *parampará*, appears to have been a part of a larger trend during the period when Tantric traditions enter, so to speak, the historical scene. This period is the early medieval period, which, according to Gold,

> was signaled by the downfall of Harṣa's kingdom in the middle of the seventh century and the subsequent disappearance of large-scale Indian empire. Political power became widely diffused, in the hands of feudal potentates who fought incessantly and were liable to fall. The new political structures that emerged – sometimes styled "feudal" – no doubt contributed to the popular acceptance of holy men as bases of faith that had flourished during the period: if political power is visible and close at hand, demanding loyalty to individuals, then why not spiritual power, too? Cross cultural comparisons seem to confirm the power of this socio-religious logic, for throughout the history of religions the emergence of a decentralized political structure seems to go hand in hand with the efflorescence of holy men as bases of faith for large number of people. (1988:39)

The issue of whether or not early medieval India can be justly labeled "feudal" aside,[330] the relatively decentralized political structure of early medieval India may have been a factor in the development and proliferation of alternative loci of authority, which charismatic figures such as the siddhas appear to have embodied.

There are several of what might be called "alternative" modes of change during the early medieval period that might help to account for this development in Indian religious

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[330] Both sides of this issue are argued in the (1995) collection of essays edited by Kulke, as well as some alternative models, such as Stein's theory of the South Indian "segmentary state". There does appear to be some basis for the comparison of early medieval India and Europe, but the basis does not appear to me to be so great as to permit the wholesale importation of the European model into the Indian context. I tend to agree with Chattopadhyaya, who argued that "the historiography on the transition to what is considered the feudal phase has been ever-shifting and essentially dependent on the directions of European historiography; it therefore suffers from internal inconsistencies. Unless this historiography reconciles itself to certain empirically validated major societal processes in Indian history, the current construct of Indian feudalism will continue with its Eurocentric orientation, from a persistent refusal to consider alternative modes of change." (1994:36-37)

history. The first concerns the economic changes. Archaeological evidence has shown that beginning in Gupta times and continuing beyond it, there was a general decline in trade and monetary economy, indicated by an increasing paucity in coinage, and a decline in North Indian urban centers.[331] This clearly had a powerful effect on Buddhism, which had long been associated with urban centers and the patronage of the merchant class in particular. Heitzman has shown that there was a tremendous growth in Buddhist monastic institutions from about 300 BCE to 300 CE, and that these sites were generally located in the vicinity of urban areas or along the trade routes that connected them. (1984:124) This growth was tied to the patronage received from urban communities in general, which were in turn made possible through the process of state formation. The first spurt in growth, starting in 300 BCE, was in the middle Gangetic basin, the heartland of the Mauryan dynasty. At the beginning of the common era, there was a significant rise in monastic and urban development in Northwest India, associated with the Kuṣaṇas, and Central India, associated with the Sātavāhana and Ikṣvākus. With the fall of the these dynasties around 300 BCE many of these sites were subsequently deserted, perhaps as a consequence of a decline in trade and patronage.[332] Heitzman concluded that

> from one standpoint, Buddhist diffusion was closely dependent on the patronage of urban elites; Buddhist monasticism appears as an appendage to centralized organizations in the early historical period. On the other hand, the simultaneous spread of religious establishments alongside political and mercantile organizations suggests the necessity for the symbolic ordering performed by Buddhism in the successful operation of early South Asian urban institutions. (1984:133)

Kosambi has suggested that the Buddhist monasteries served as a civilizing influence,[333] and that the monasteries located along the trade routes may have played an important economic role in this trade.[334] With the decline of these urban centers and trade circuits,

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[331] See Chattopadhyaya 1994, pp. 130 ff.

[332] See Heitzman pp. 131-32.

[333] See Kosambi 1955b, p. 229.

[334] See Kosambi 1965 pp. 182-85.

there was a corresponding decline in the fortunes of Buddhist monasticism in general, as was noted by Xuan-zang in his travels during the mid-seventh century.[335] Kulke and Rothermund have argued that following the death of Harṣa Indian polity was politically divided into competing regional centers,[336] and that this process was accelerated by the twin factors of decline in trade and the cash economy. They wrote that "the recession in international trade and reduced circulation of coins made it necessary for officers of to be paid by the assignment of the revenue of some villages or of whole districts which they held as prebends." (1986:122) These landed officers were called *sāmanta*, and there were actually different grades, i.e., *mahāsāmanta, adhisāmanta*, etc., depending on how many villages they controlled.[337] The court of a king, his *maṇḍala*, was also known as a *sāmantacakra*, for they *sāmanta* subject to a king were supposed to appear at his court. The problem is that this trend tended toward fragmentation, a process Kulke and Rothermund call "samantisation", which is caused by the fact that each *sāmanta* was a potential rival, each of whom might aspire to shifting the balance power in order to position himself at the center of a *sāmantacakra* articulated around himself.[338]

These political developments no doubt had religious consequences as well. Amstutz has argued that the *bhakti* movements were much better suited to the increasingly decentralized Indian polities of this time period, and, by contrast, "Buddhism had no means of responding to later premodern Indian society's increasing need for social authority and caste articulation which was as effectively synthetic as bhakti." He qualifies this claim, however, with the recognition that "Buddhism's strongest gambit was the tantric guru-based traditions". (1998:85)

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[335] See Beal 1884, 1911.

[336] See Kulke and Rothermund 1986, pp. 105 ff.

[337] See Inden 1981, p. 112.

[338] See Kulke and Rothermund 1986, pp. 122-23.

Chattopadhyaya has suggested that during the early medieval period, political authority was particularly articulated through the rhetoric of lineage, and that this model emerges most noticeably in the seventh century.[339] The statement of genealogy, regardless of whether 'true' or 'fabricated', can be seen as a creative affirmation, a placement of one's self vis-à-vis tradition. It is also a double-visioned emplacement, one that simultaneously places one in relation to both the transcendent and the mundane worlds, to 'true reality', however conceived, and its local manifestations in the social realm. White argued that "through their systematic genealogies, the tāntrikas at once located themselves within a cosmic chain of being and within a network of socioreligious institutions." (1996a:79). And to a certain extent traditions are themselves a product of such verbal acts, of a successful assertion of lineage, one which has been socially accepted and adorned with the resulting intellectual and material accoutrements.

The lineage-model also seems to proliferate in decentralized political situations, for lineage by its very nature is a model for the organization of relatively small groups, at the level of the clan *(kula),* so its coming to the fore may suggest the breakdown of larger, centralized authority. The development of lineage-centered religious traditions in early medieval India may have been a result of that period's political decentralization. Likewise, the rapid proliferation of these traditions in Tibet may have been aided by Tibet's political decentralization.

Buddhist Tantric traditions are transmitted not so much as a part of a monastic curriculum, but as a lineage imparted by a vajrācārya who embodies it; these lineages are not necessarily restricted to any sectarian or institutional basis. This had the virtue of being a decentralized mode of transmission, not requiring the presence of a sizable monastic

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[339] Chattopadhyaya noted that "inscriptions from the seventh century alone, from differing regions of India, begin to produce elaborate genealogies, either aligning the alleged local roots of ruling lineages with a mythical tradition or by tracing their descent from mythical heroic lineages. The emergence of genealogy has been taken as a shift from 'yajña to vaṃśa', indicating a change in the nature of kingship, but in the totality of its geographical distribution, the genealogical evidence has a more significant implication: the proliferation of actual ruling lineages defining the domain of political power." (1994:204-5) This observation has also been made by Sircar, who describes out in great detail a number of the lineage claims made during this period. See Sircar 1983, pp. 73-94.

community. In the case of Tantric Buddhism, there were in fact multiple lineages, which evidently led to the formation of a decentralized community while imparting, as Gold noted, "some obvious coherence to the larger community". (1987:197)

In the Indian context there were in fact two types of lineage descents recognized, the spiritual and the biological, the "*nād paramparā* and *bindu paramparā:* succession through the sound *(nād)* of *mantra* and succession through physical seed; spiritual and biological lineage." (Gold 1987:48) In contradistinction to the brahmins, who saw the transmission of their authority as occurring solely through biological channels, the Buddhists from the very start sought to create an alternative lineage. As Reinders argued,

> the monk's disengagement from the family was simultaneous to his placement in a new pseudo-family, in a pseudo-genetic vertical lineage with ancestors, patriarchs, and sibling-like generations of disciples. This distinction involves time differences and transmission through a lineage. (1997:257)

Tantric initiation likewise entailed one's entry into an alternative community, *a kula* or clan based not on genetic descent but rather spiritual inclination, hierarchically ranked vis-à-vis the guru who serves as one's father, the source of the spiritual "seed" transmitted to one during the process of initiation and subsequent instruction concerning the details of the theory and practice of the tradition.

This process of transmission came to be represented using the symbols and *substances* of biological transmission in the rites of initiation in the *anuttarayogatantra* traditions, as was discussed in section 2.3.2.2 above. This use of biological imagery and materials to construct an alternative community and represent the transmission of authority therein is perhaps quite understandable. Weber noted that charisma could be conceived as an entity transmissible in certain ritual contexts, as follows:

> charisma may be transmitted by ritual means from one bearer to another or may be created in a new person. The concept was originally magical. It involves a dissociation of charisma from a particular individual, making it an objective, transferable entity. In particular, it may become the charisma of office. In this case the belief in legitimacy is no longer directed to the individual, but to the acquired qualities and to the effectiveness of the ritual acts. The most important example is the transmission of priestly charisma by anointing, consecration, or the laying on of hands. (1968:57)

Semen and blood, particularly menstrual blood, are clearly what could be called, following Marriott, "coded substances", substances which are both transmissible and potentially transformative. Marriott argues that

> persons–single actors–are not thought in South Asia to be "individual," that is, indivisible, bounded units, as they are in much of Western social and psychological theory as well as in common sense. Instead, it appears that persons are generally thought by South Asians to be "dividual" or divisible. To exist, dividual persons absorb heterogeneous material influences. They must also give out from themselves particles of their own codes substances–essences, residues, or other active influences–that may then reproduce in others something of the nature of the persons in whom they have originated. (1976:111)

This concept of personhood appears to be active in the Tantric context, where the transmission of these substances in initiation may have been conceived to do more than just *symbolize* the entry of the disciple into the vajrācārya's lineage, but to actually have effected a transformation in the adept's person. This has in fact been argued by Ray, who, quoting Mus, wrote that

> "in ancient India, one does not inherit from one's father, one inherits one's father. One inherits his person." What applies between father and son holds equally for master and disciple. Mus continues, "To say that the disciples of the Buddha are the inheritors of the *dharma*, and to attribute to the Buddha a *dharmakāya*, a body of *dharma*, is one and the same affirmation. This affirmation [derives from]....the desire to specify the relationship which the disciples have with him....This has to do with an identity of persons." Mus then remarks on the functional character of this notion: "This is not an ontology, it is a theory of transmission....For to initiate a disciple is to engender him, and to engender is to transmit one's person."[340]

In the Tibetan cultural context this notion of lineage is quite influential. However, the Tibetans do not appear to have had a notion of "coded substances" that exactly corresponds to the Indian, which may account for the fact that Tibetans were content to symbolize this process of transmission, replacing the highly charged generative substances, semen and blood, with neutral substances such as curds.[341]

This transformation was possibly also related to factors specific to the Tibetan cultural and political context into which these ritual technologies were transmitted beginning

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[340] Ray 1994:61, quoting from Mus 1935, p. 124.

[341] See section 2.3.2.2 above.

in the tenth century. Lineage was an extremely important concept in Tibet at that time; following the fall of the Tibetan empire in the wake of the assassination of King gLang Dar-ma in 841 CE, Tibet had divided into a large number of what Wylie (1964) has termed "local hegemons",[342] typically powerful clans who traced their lineage back either to the royal or the powerful ministerial clans of the imperial period who dominated relatively small regions of Tibet.

Beginning in the tenth century, Tibetans resumed travel to India and Nepal for the purpose of acquiring spiritual lineages. Undoubtedly, most were motivated by a sincere desire to acquire teachings not yet available in Tibet, and to journey to the source, so to speak, of the *buddhadharma.* Evidently large quantities of gold were needed in order to pay the *dakṣiṇā* and receive the complete transmission of the teachings of a tradition. Marpa, for example, is depicted in his biography as traveling to India with a relatively small amount of gold. On the way he met a fellow Tibetan traveler, Nyö, and telling him he did not have much gold, Nyö replied, "You can't go anywhere like that. If you go to India without lots of gold, searching for dharma will be like trying to drink water from an empty gourd." (Trungpa 1982:9) Later in Nepal he met and received teachings from two Nevāri disciples of Nāropa, who told him: "Since you don't have much gold, you should go to the paṇḍita Lord Nāropa. He is the only guru who will teach you without demanding gold." (Trungpa 1982:11)

Marpa did in fact bring a significant quantity of gold, evidently expecting that this investment would pay off; after his first journey to India, he returned to Tibet and gathered more gold by serving as a guru himself, and returned to India once again to gain more teachings. Once both he and a Kashmiri paṇḍit named Ākarasiddhi received from Nāropa the complete transmission of the *Guhyasamāja.* After receiving the teachings, Ākarasiddhi announced that he was leaving on a pilgrimage to Mount Wu Tai in China via Tibet.

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[342] For a summary of the political events leading up to and following gLang Dar-ma's assassination see Beckwith 1987 pp. 168 ff.

Hearing this, Marpa is supposed to have thought, "After this learned paṇḍita goes through Tibet, it may be that fewer people will request the *Guhyasamāja* and other teachings from me." (Trungpa 1982:64)

Evidently, successful *vajrācāryas*, upon their return to Tibet, were figures of great authority who, like Marpa, were able to amass significant holdings of property and other forms of wealth.[343] Other successful pilgrims were monks, but they too tended to become associated with the local hegemonic rulers, who served as their patrons. As Wylie noted,

> The ever increasing influence of Buddhism over the people was not ignored by the local rulers. Those who were able to survive the extreme fluctuations of power inherent in the anarchistic society sought prestige and loyalty either by wearing monastic robes themselves or supporting those who did. Perhaps the most illustrious of the former group was the 'Khon Dkon-mchog-rgyal-po (founder of the Sa-skya sect), who traced his ancestry to 'Khon Dpal-po-chem a *Nang-blon* (Internal Minister) of King Khri-srong-lde-btsan. The latter group boasted such important families as the Mgar, who were associated with the Tshal-pa, and the Rlang, whose secular members held temporal power while the clerics passed the monastic heritage of the Phag-mo-gru down from uncle to nephew. (1964:280-81)

Evidently, in the decentralized, fragmented political world of tenth through thirteenth century Tibet,[344] there were numerous patrons who sought to increase their prestige by founding and supporting religious institutions, and there were also numerous Tibetans, and some Indians as well, who were willing to receive this patronage.

These early patrons often attempted to combine the secular and spiritual lineages within their clans, no doubt to bolster their authority, if not their power. A famous example of this phenomenon is the Sa-skya school's formation from within the 'Khon family of gTsang, who themselves "claimed genealogies stretching back to the times of the early kings and to mountain-god ancestors," (Samuel 1993:460) the major sources of legitimation during the imperial and post-imperial periods. Cassinelli and Ekvall argued that "the history of the Sa sKya is in effect the history of the 'Khon" (1969:6-7), but this is but one side of the story, for while one can trace the lineage of the Sa-skya Khri chens back

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[343] Concerning Marpa's position as a local hegemon in Tibet see Wylie 1964, pp. 281 ff.

[344] Concerning the decentralized political structure of the period see Samuel 1982.

through the 'Khon family lineage into the hoary realm of Tibetan legend, one could also trace their spiritual lineage back to the Mahāsiddhas of India. For the Sa-skyas combine within one descent group both types of lineage, the royal and the spiritual.

Lineage claims thus can have tremendous power and consequences, which are not dependent upon the verity of those claims, which require only a certain amount of verisimilitude. And their power can be subtle. That it was Sakya Paṇḍita Kun-dga' rGyal-mtshan who Godan, second son of Ögödei Khan, summoned in 1244 to instruct him in Buddhism, rather than any other Tibetan lama, shows that the position of authority in which his lineage placed him was taken seriously, either accepted or contested, by a significant number of Tibetans.[345] And it was his high standing among Tibetans that interested the Mongols, for whom the subtle details of authenticity were probably irrelevant.[346]

Interestingly, Sa-skya Paṇḍita, in a letter to the Tibetans following his meeting with Godan Khan, articulated his newly forged relationship with the Mongolian leader as that between what has usually been termed a "priest" and a "patron".[347] The terms he used, however, indicate that he conceived of their relationship in terms of the *guru*-centric ideology of the Tantras. "Priest" is a loose translation of *yon-gnas* (Skt. *dakṣiṇiya),* i.e., the recipient of the *dakṣiṇā* or fee to be given at Tantric initiation. The "patron" is the one who bestows this fee in exchange for instruction, the *yon-bdag* (Skt. *dānapati* or **dakṣiṇāpati).*[348] Here patronage took on institutional forms as well; not only did Godan build Buddhist monasteries at his capital near Lan-zhou,[349] but from among his Sa-skya

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[345] According to Rerikh, before summoning Sa-skya Paṇḍita to the Mongol court in Lan-zhou, Godan dispatched reconnaissance troops under the command of Dorda-darkhan into Tibet to access the state of the country. His conclusion that Sa-skya Monastery was of greatest influence. His report led to Godan's invititation to Sa-skya Paṇḍita. See Rerikh 1973, pp.43-45.

[346] See Petech, who stresses regarding Sakya Paṇḍita that "the Tibetans had not elected or conferred a mandate on him. The Mongols simply wanted an influential monk to employ for their own purposes in Tibet." (1983:180,1)

[347] See Ruegg 1991, p. 443. This letter is translated in Tucci 1949, p. 10.

[348] Concerning the translation of these terms see Ruegg 1991, pp. 446-47.

[349] See Rerikh 1973, p. 46.

successors were appointed the Imperial Preceptors (帝 師) who played an important role in the Mongol administration of Tibet.[350]

It has been argued above that hostility between Tantric groups was a result of institutionalization, which tends to lead to rivalry over the limited resources of patronage. This is also born out in the case of Tibet, where the formation of competing sects was *not* a product of the presence of spiritual lineages per se, but rather the association of actual vajrācāryas, who typically held many lineages but did not monopolize any of them, with distinct regional powers; sects arose from the concentration of patronage and thus resources around these figures, and from the development of institutions to maintain and protect not only the lineages, which were typically available in other regions as well, but the resources assembled around them. Wylie noted that during this period of the "local hegemons", which lasted until the Mongols came onto the scene, the architectural difference between monasteries and fortresses were minimal,[351] suggesting that the newly developing religious institutions were overlaid upon older patterns of regional rivalries. Not only did they not suppress these rivalries, but they may have been modes of their manifestation, as the local hegemons turned to religion as a mode of competition..

This pattern of the alliance of vajrācāryas with regional powers, with the former legitimizing the latter and the latter patronizing the former, is a natural if not inevitable consequence of the guru-centricity of Tantric discourse. The fact that, as in the case of the Sa-skya, the spiritual and royal lineages were merged is also perhaps understandable given the ambiguity between the figures of the guru and the king in Tantric discourse. There are, however, other possible outcomes of the Tantric ideology, another of which is exhibited in Tibet.

The alliance of spiritual lineages with royal lineages was not without problems. The Sa-skya suffered the usual problem of succession caused by multiple, competing

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[350] See Petech 1990b.

[351] See Wylie 1964, p. 281.

branches of the descent group, conflict between whom contributed to their downfall.[352] It may be that the other schools adopted the reincarnation method of succession to avoid the usurpation of spiritual lineages by the nobility. Tibetans were not unaware of this fact. The Tibetan "madman-saint", gTsang-smyon Heruka (1452-1505 CE), who lived during the turbulent years following the downfall of Sa-skya-Mongol hegemony in Tibet, authored two of the best known Tibetan hagiographies, that of Marpa and his disciple Milarepa. These two figures, a spiritual father and son, together were the founders of the spiritual traditions that later developed into the four major bKa'-brgyud schools. In these biographies,[353] gTsang-smyon depicts Marpa, who was a married layman, as hoping to pass on his spiritual and material heritage to his son, but his hopes are crushed when his son dies, and his biological lineage extinguished. His spiritual lineage, however, lives on through his disciple Milarepa, who is unmarried and devoid of living relatives. Through Milarepa, however, Marpa's spiritual lineage flourishes, and ends up being transmitted throughout Tibet and beyond. In these texts, As Paul has pointed out,

> biological reproduction is denigrated, and asexual reproduction through teaching is held up as the higher value. The triumph of Milarepa, and of Buddhism in general, is nothing less than the triumph of culture over nature; and Milarepa's own succession, which shifts from succession through sexuality to succession through transmitted symbolic code, is illustrative of just that cultural turning point, when the saint supersedes the hero as the ideal cultural type. (1982:240)

This "triumph" manifested in a social institution unique to Tibet, which is the transmission of institutional and spiritual authority via reincarnation rather than by biological progeniture.

This mode of transmission is first known to have occurred among the Karmapa, the heads of the Karma bKa'-brgyud pa school. The first Karmapa to have been so identified was evidently Rang-'byung rDor-rje (1284-1339 CE), who was retrospectively considered to have been the third in the series. The first Karmapa was Dus-gsum mKhyen-pa (1110-

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[352] In late 1323 or early 1324 the Sa-skya estate was partitioned four-fold among the sons of the Sa-skya hierarch bZang-po-dpal. According to Petech, this shattered the unity of the Sa-skya *see* and led to the collapse of both Sa-skya authority and Mongol suzerainity in Tibet. See Petech 1990a, pp. 80-82.

[353] These are translated, respectively, in Trungpa 1982 and Lhalungpa 1985.

1193 CE), who was thought to have been reborn as Karma Pakshi (1204-1283 CE). Wylie has suggested that Rang-'byung rDor-rje's identification as Karma Pakshi's reincarnation was made in an attempt to secure Mongol patronage, since Karma Pakshi was well known at the Yuan court.[354] This may not be the case, as Karma Paksi was disgraced at court and exiled to Yunnan, and died shortly after returning to Tibet.[355] In either case, the justification for the reincarnation model is clearly the general Mahāyāna conception of a bodhisattva, who, out of compassion, repeatedly chooses rebirth in the world, as well as the Tantric Buddhist notions of the subtle body, and the yogas of sleep, dream and death which seek to empower the practitioner in the death and in-between *(antarābhava)* states.[356]

This model had a tremendous impact on Tibetan politics. As Michael noted,

> The new political role of the incarnations marked a decisive shift of power away from the ruling houses, and from now on, the incarnations were installed by the monks of a sect and monastery, who assumed the authority to determine the successor of the new religious leadership, who found the candidates in families of humble, common, background. (1982:38-39)

It is the case that important spiritual leaders such as the Dalai Lamas were often discovered among common families, as was the case with the current Dalai Lama, although there were exceptions, such as the "discovery" that the third Dalai Lama had been reborn as Altan Khan's great-grandson, thus assuring Mongol support for the Gelukpas, whose aid the Fifth Dalai Lama invoked to secure his position power in Central Tibet. So while it cannot be said that this model eliminated politics, it is certainly unique in its elimination of the biological model of the transmission. It replaces it, of course, with the spiritual model, a "meritocracy", not in the Western sense, but in the purely Buddhistic sense in which those with the greatest merit *(puṇya)*, i.e., the bodhisattvas dedicated to the practice of compassion, are thought to be endowed with the authority to exercise both spiritual and secular rule. This belief system might make little sense in most cultural contexts, but it

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[354] See Wylie 1978.

[355] See Petech 1990a, p. 16.

[356] See Samuel 1993, p. 494. Concerning these yogas see Thurman 1994, and also Mullin 1996 and 1997.

makes perfect sense in the context of Tantric Buddhist ideology. For these reincarnated figures are believed to have developed this authority as a consequence of serving as a vajrācārya, in whom the mundane and the transcendental powers achieve a harmonious fusion, at least in the idealized world of Tantric discourse.

This power and authority, it appears, is not merely legitimized in the ritualized, hierarchical environment of the maṇḍala, but is actually *produced* therein, created and recreated within its highly structured environment. As Bell suggested, "ritual activity is not the 'instrument' of more basic purposes, such as power, politics, or social control, which are usually seen as existing before or outside the activities of the rite... ritual practices are themselves the very production and negotiation of power relations." (1992:196) The typical translation of *abhiṣeka* as "empowerment" in the Tibetan context is not inappropriate,[357] but the question that remains is exactly whom is empowered, and in what way. This is a complex question beyond the scope of this essay, but there seems little doubt that in the Tantric context the maṇḍala "as a strategic mode of practice produces nuanced relationships of power, relationships characterized by acceptance and resistance, negotiated appropriation, and redemptive reinterpretation of the hegemonic order." (Bell 1992:196)

[357] The Tibetan translations for *abhiṣeka* are *dbang* and *dbang bskur*, which literally mean "power" and to "bestow power".

Chapter Four

Revelation and Taxonomy: Categorizing Tantric Literature

Although the initial inspiration for Tantric traditions may have come from a liminal, non-institutionalized milieu, Buddhist Tantric *texts* and their *traditions* of exegesis and practice come down to us through the monastic scholarly institutions that preserved them and probably more often than not provided the context for their production as literary texts, as well as the elaboration of the textual, commentatorial traditions that surround them. The purpose of this chapter is to contextualize the Cakrasaṃvara tradition through an exploration of its place within the larger field of Tantric Buddhist literature.

The literature of a popular Tantric Buddhist tradition such as the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is immense and multiform, but can generally be classified into several broad categories. Some attention will be paid to the ways in which the Buddhists have understood and organized their scriptures, although they have been studied in depth elsewhere.[1] Generally speaking, "scripture" is understood in the Buddhist context as being "that which was spoken by the Buddha" *(buddhavacana)*. From a very early point, however, Buddhists understood authenticity to be a matter of rational judgment and not to be established by authoritarian decree.[2] Buddhist traditions effectively extended the range of what could be considered *buddhavacana* by developing a criteria that effectively was

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[1] Relevant studies include Thurman's (1978) pioneering article "Buddhist Hermeneutics", and book of the same name edited ten years later by Lopez, in which the articles by Lamotte, Lopez, Kapstein and Thurman are particularly useful. Buswell's *Chinese Buddhist Apocrypha* (1990) deals with the issue of canonicity in the Chinese context, though Davidson's article therein is an excellent general introduction to the topic. See the articles of Collins (1990, 1992) for information concerning Pāli canonicity.

[2] The classic statement to this effect is the "four reliances" *(catuḥpratisaraṇa)*, which are discussed at length by Lamotte (1988), and which were evidently formulated by the Sarvāstivādin-Vaibhāṣika school. The first of these, for example, "Rely on Teaching, not the Teacher", shifts authority away from the authoritative person to the teaching itself which is to be established through philosophically reasoning. It "alerts us to the fact that the Buddha's Dharma claims to stand on its own philosophic cogency, not requiring a personal authoritarianism for its legitimation. We are reminded of the famous goldsmith verse: 'O monks – Sages accept my teaching after a thorough examination and not from (mere) devotion; just like a goldsmith accepts gold only after burning, cutting and polishing'." (Thurman 1978:25, translating Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasaṃgraha*, v. 3587: tāpāc chedāc ca nikaṣāt suvarṇam iva paṇḍitaiḥ / parikṣaya bhikṣavo grāhyaṃ madvaco na tu gauravāt //)

based on judgment of the philosophic content of the text rather than plausible historic authenticity. The classic statement to this effect is contained in the *Ādhyāśayasaṃcodana Sūtra,* as follows:

> Furthermore, O Maitreya, by four qualities all inspired speech may be known as 'spoken by the Buddha'. By which four? Here, O Maitreya, it is (a matter of) inspired speech which has sense and is not nonsense, which accords with the doctrine and does not contradict it, which destroys the addictions and does not cause their increase, which shows forth the good points and advantages of *nirvāṇa* and does not cause increase of the evils of *saṃsāra.* If it is endowed with these four qualities, O Maitreya, all inspired speech may be known as 'spoken by the Buddha'. When the inspired speech, Maitreya, of any monk or nun, any religious layman or laywoman whomsoever, becomes manifest with these four qualities, then believing and daughters will be induced to conceive an idea of the Buddha in that (teaching); when an idea of the Teacher has been produced, the holy doctrine is bound to be heard. For what reason is that? It is because, O Maitreya, whatever is well-spoken is spoken by the Buddha.[3]

This passage propounds a criteria for canonicity which is quite ahistorical. To be considered *buddhavacana* a text need not have a bona fide pedigree as an actual utterance *(vacana)* of the *buddha* Śākyamuni. The pretense of such origins is usually maintained almost as a formality with the usual nidāna verse, "Thus have I heard: at one time..." *(evaṃ mayā śrutaṃ ekasmin samaye...)*, although even this was sometimes dropped in Buddhist Tantric scriptures. Authenticity rather depended upon the content of the scripture, and so long as it met the fourfold criteria for authenticity it could make a claim for *buddhavacana* status, and thus be considered "well-spoken". The importance of this famous definition, "whatever is well spoken is spoken by the Buddha" *(yat kiṃcin maitreya subhāṣitam sarvaṃ tad buddhabhāṣitam)*[4] should not be underestimated; it reflects a focus on textual

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[3] Snellgrove (1958: 46-47) edited the Tibetan version of this passage, and the Sanskrit as quoted by Śāntideva in his *Śikṣāsamuccaya;* his translation is reproduced here, although I emended his translation of *kleśa,* "molestation" to "addiction". Bodhiruci's translation of the *Mahāratnakūṭa Sūtra* contains the *Ādhyāśayasaṃcodana Sūtra,* and the section is quite similar to the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. It occurs as follows: 云何名為有四辯才一切諸佛之所宣說。所謂利益相應非不利益相應。與法相應非不與法相應。煩惱滅盡相應非與煩惱增長相應。涅槃功德相應非與生死過漏相應。彌勒。是為一切諸佛之所宣說四種辯才。彌勒。若比丘比丘尼優婆夷優婆夷欲說法者應當安住如是辯才。若善男子善女人等有信順心當於是人而生佛想。作教師想亦於是人聽受其法。何一以故。是人所說。當知皆是一切如來之所宣說一切諸佛誠實之語。 (T 310 p. 522.3)

[4] This definition is not purely a hallmark of the Mahāyāna traditions, who did not develop it per se but clearly did make use of it in their polemics (e.g. it is quoted not only by Śāntideva but also Prajñākaramati, see Vaidya 1960 p. 205). Lopez also points out (1995a, p. 44 n. 15) that this statement

content and analysis which no doubt accounts for the advanced level of philosophical speculation and textual analysis achieved by Buddhist scholars. This is in contradistinction to the Vedic tradition, which placed greater importance on preserving the phonetic form of their texts, and less on analyzing their content.[5]

The Buddhist tradition distinguishes between revelation and exegesis thereon, a distinction which parallels that made between *śruti* and *smṛti* in the Vedic tradition. The term which Snellgrove translated above as "inspired speech" is *pratibhāna,* derived from the verb *prati+ bhā,* meanings of which include "to shine, appear luminous, become manifest, to occur to, come into the mind of" (Apte 1965:651). It is thus not any sort of speech which can be considered *buddhabhāṣita,* but rather only that speech which is somehow the product of a process of illumination or revelation.

This illumination was in theory accessible to any dedicated Buddhist; the *Ādhyāśayasaṃcodana Sūtra* does not even limit it to the monastic saṃgha, but includes lay devotees, both male and female *(upāsaka, upāsikā).* Hence we learn in the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā Prajñāpāramitā* the following: "Venerable Śāriputra, whatever the disciples of the Blessed Lord say, teach, explain, utter, proclaim and declare, all those things should be understood to be the work of the Tathāgata."[6] Thus there are a number of texts included in various

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also occurs in the Pāli Canon; Collins discusses it in his 1990 article, quoting it as follows: yaṃ kiñci subhāsitaṃ sabban taṃ tassa bhagavato vacanaṃ (Collins 1990 p. 94, from *Aṅguttara Nikāya* A IV 162-66).

[5] The Vedic tradition held that the Vedas were eternal and hence had priority over their revealers, and emphasis in the tradition was placed on their preservation through memorization and recitation of the texts, rather than on their content. In the Buddhist tradition, however, emphasis was placed on the content of a text, from which its authority was believed to derive. Relevant here are Lamotte's observation that "the Buddhist scholars spared themselves no trouble in order to maintain the intact and correctly interpret the extremely varied teachings of Śākyamuni. They were not content with memorizing their letter *(vyañjana),* and they were intent on grasping the meaning *(artha)* through a rational approach. The distinction which they established between texts with a precise meaning *(nitārtha)* and texts with a meaning to be determined *(neyārtha)* is, more often than not, justified. Even while allowing faith and reflection their due place, they accepted the priority of undefiled prajñā, that direct knowledge which attains its object in all lucidity. We cannot, therefore, accept, as does a certain critic, that as from the first Buddhist Council 'a continual process of divergence from the original doctrine of the Teacher is evident'; on the contrary, we are of the opinion that Buddhist doctrine evolved along the lines which its discoverer had unconsciously traced for it." (1988b:24-25; Lamotte quotes J. C. Jennings' *The Vedantic Buddhism of the Buddha.* Oxford 1947). See also Davidson 1990, pp. 296-97.

[6] / tshe dang ldan pa sha' ri'i bu bcom ldan 'das kyi nyan thos rnams ni gang ci smra ba dang ston pa dang / nye bar ston pa dang / rjod par byed pa dang / gsal bar byad pa dang / yang dag par gsal bar byed pa de

canons which are not spoken by the Buddha, but by disciples or bodhisattvas, which include laymen and women. Examples in the Pāli canon include the *Sangiti Sutta* and *Dasttara Sutta*,[7] which relate sermons taught by Śāriputra. Particularly notable is the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta*, which preserves a teaching given by the nun Dhammadinnā, which is later declared to be *buddhavacana* by the Buddha himself.[8] Notable among the classic Mahāyāna sūtras are the *Prajñāpāramitā-hṛdaya*, featuring Avalokiteśvara, the *Vimalakirti-nirdeśa*, featuring the layman-bodhisattva of that name, and the *Śrimālādevisiṃhanāsa*, featuring the laywoman Śrīmālā who is both a bodhisattva and a queen.[9] Often the Buddha is reduced to a spectator who authorizes the discourse. "Revealed" teaching could be revealed not only directly, from the mouth of the Teacher, but indirectly, through his inspiration. In either case they could be considered to be *śāstuḥ śāsanam*, the "Teaching of the Teacher."[10]

This inspiration, theoretically at least, was limited to the contemporaries of the "Teacher"; the Mahāyāna tradition came to hold that the Buddha's passing into "complete cessation" *(parinirvāṇa)* was more apparent than real. the *Lotus Sūtra* reports Śākyamuni's admission that: "Yet even now, though in reality I am not to pass into extinction, yet I proclaim that I am about to accept extinction. By resort to these expedient devices the Thus Come One teaches and converts the beings."[11] It should hence not be

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dag thams cad ni de bzhin gshegs pa'i skyes bu'i mthu yin par rig par bya'o / (DK fol. 2a). The Sanskrit occurs as follows in P. L. Vaidya's (1960) edition: yat kiṃcid āyuṣman śāriputra bhagavataḥ śrāvakā bhāṣante deśayanti upadiśanti udīrayanti prakāśayanti samprakāśayanti sa sarvas tathāgatasya puruṣakāro veditavyaḥ (p. 2). cf. Conze 1973, p. 83 (His translation is incomplete).

[7] *Digha Nikāya* 33, 34; trans. in Walshe 1987, pp 479-521.

[8] *Majjihma Nikāya* 44, trans. in Ñāṇamoli and Bodhi 1995, pp. 396-404.

[9] See, respectively, Conze 1974 pp. 140-41, Thurman 1976 and Wayman and Wayman 1974.

[10] Davidson notes that "a person in the presence of the Buddha could be inspired *(pratibhāti)* by the power of the presence of the Buddha *(buddhānubhāvena)* to speak the Dharma in his own words. Usually a sūtra spoken thus by a third party concludes with phrases of approval by the Tathāgata." (1990:294).

[11] Translated by Hurvitz from Kumārajīva's translation (1976:239). The closest Sanskrit equivalent seems to be the following: nirvāṇabhūmim copadarśayāmi / vinayārtha sattvāna vadāmy upāyam / na cāpi nirvāmy ahu tasmin kāle / ihaiva co dharmu prakāśayāmi /. See Jaini 1958, p. 552.

surprising to learn of later Buddhist traditions which claim that the authenticating source of scripture, the Buddha(s), are not absent from the world but still present, if not directly and physically then indirectly, as a source of inspiration.

In both the Mahāyāna and the Tantric contexts, the source of a scripture need not be a mortal human; many were attributed to any one of what became a very large host of Buddhas and bodhisattvas. Here we are faced with the seeming paradox of a conservative tradition that insists upon a hallowed origin for its texts, linked to an ever accelerating proliferation of such origins. There are parallels for this sort of creative tension between tradition and innovation in Jewish mysticism. Gershem Scholem wrote that

> it should not be forgotten that the primary source was not always a mere mortal. Supernatural illumination also plays its part in the history of Kabbalism and innovations are made not only on the basis of new interpretations of ancient lore but as a result of fresh inspiration or revelation, or even of a dream. A sentence from Isaac Hacohen of Soria (about 1270) illustrates the twin sources recognized by Kabbalists as authoritative. "In our generation there are but a few, here and there, who have received *tradition* from the ancients...or have been vouchsafed the grace of divine *inspiration.*" Tradition and intuition are bound together and this would explain why Kabbalism could be deeply conservative and intensely revolutionary. Even 'traditionalists' do not shrink from innovations, sometimes far-reaching, which are confidently set forth as interpretations of the ancients or as revelation of a mystery which Providence had seen fit to conceal from previous generations. (Scholem 1946:120)

This same complex of tradition and innovation seems to be at work in Buddhism as well, and the resulting creative tension may have contributed to the amazing richness of the Buddhist canon, if a canon it can be called, being quite unbound.

The canons of Buddhist literature are both vast and complex, and thus are not easily reducible to facile categorization. Generally speaking, however, Buddhist literature falls into two general categories, that of "revealed" literature and the exegetical works based upon them. This is an *emic* distinction; the Tibetans divided their canon into two broad sections. This first is the "Translations of Authorative Word" *(bka'-'gyur)*, typically consisting of one hundred and eight volumes of translated sūtras, Tantras, stotras, and so forth. They are all works attributed to Śākyamuni or other Buddhas, although we might include in the category of revealed literature those works traditionally considered to be the

product of the inspiration of an historical figure by a supramundane figure, such as the famous five Maitreya texts composed attributed to Asaṅga, or the texts of the Treasure tradition of Tibet which are ultimately attributed to the inspiration of Padmasambhava.[12] The second section of Tibetan canon, the "Translations of the Treatises" *(bstan 'gyur),* which largely consists of exegetical works.

While scholars might not be willing to accept the origin claims implicit in this categorization, the status of these claims is not an issue that will be explored here. Rather, the distinction is meaningful as a literary category, precisely because the "revealed" texts differ stylistically from the commentatorial literature. Tending toward brevity and cryptic obscurity in the context of the Tantras, they seem to require the exegesis which inevitably follows, and which are stylistically opposite, as the commentaries usually spare no words in clarifying the import of the ur-texts.

It is not necessary for the scholar to accept unsubstantiated origin claims, although open-mindedness regarding things unknown is probably advisable. Origins are important for Buddhist traditions, however, both as a doxagraphic category and as a source of legitimization. Gyatso commented that "it is the nature of the source of a given tradition that becomes the basis for classifying the tradition.....the question of source is in fact crucial in Buddhism and has been at issue throughout its history." (1992:99)

In the following section I propose a series of categories that are applicable, at the very least, to Tantric Buddhist literature. The taxonomy is based upon the initial distinction between revealed and exegetical literature, developed through the observation that Tantric traditions tend to have a "core" text around which different layers of literature, both revealed and exegetical, were successively deposited. While the interrelations between

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[12] The Tibetans broadly divide their canon into two categories, the Kanjur, "Translations of Authoritative Speech", i.e. *vacana, (bka'-'gyur)* and the Tanjur, "Translations of the Treatises", i.e., *śāstra, (bstan-'gyur).* At first glance it would appear that a distinction is made here between revealed vs. exegetical literature, which is largely the case. However, their are texts attributed to the same celestial Bodhisattvas such as Avalokiteśvara Vajrapāṇi found in both divisions of the canon, which implies that it is stylistic differences rather than presumptions of origin which differentiate these works. Hence, verse scriptures attributed to them are preserved in the Kanjur, while the famous "bodhisattva commentaries" attributed to them are preserved with the other *śāstra,* in the Tanjur.

these texts are often complex, it is often possible to discern their historic interrelationships. Generally, most popular traditions appear to have at least three layers of development, although often it might be possible to discern more.

4.1 Modes of Tantric Discourse

1. Primary Revelation

There is a certain tendency in Buddhist Tantric literature, a tendency toward the focus on "core" text which is surrounded by successive layers of elaboration. This consists not only of exegesis, although often it does; sometimes it seems a Tantra was popular only perhaps for a generation or so. A commentary or two might be written on it, but quickly both text and commentary sank into obscurity, gathering dust on high but inaccessible shelves in monastic libraries. More popular traditions, such as the Cakrasaṃvara, received considerable commentatorial attention, and would often also inspire secondary revelations, resulting in texts that would eclipse in practice the older *mūlatantra*, and which would in turn be commented upon. An examination of these bodies of literature, which due to their concentric or polycentric structures sometime were mislabeled "cycles",[13]

> reveals that successive textual layers exist, amongst which we can often recognize a text or texts that seen to be intended to represent the revelatory teachings as such. We may consider these texts as the "visionary core" of the cycle. The are similar to the *mūla* or *kārikā* genres of Indic literature in that they are the referents of the commentaries and subsidiary rituals in the visionary system. Such visionary core texts are almost always anonymous. (Gyatso 1992:100)

The *ur-text* of any Tantric tradition is the *mūla-tantra*, which are usually discernible simply on the basis of the large numbers of commentaries based upon them. Often, however, in

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[13] Here I am refering to the Tibetan term *bskor*, derived from the transitive verb *skor*, to encircle to surround, but here it has a referential sense, so *bde mchog gi bskor* literally means "that which refers to the Cakrasaṃvara", which in a literary context, means precisely the whole body of Cakrasaṃvara literature. The term "literature" seems a better translation in this context than the awkward and archaic sounding "cycle".

the history of a tradition later revelatory texts came into existence which would become the basis of a sub-tradition. In the Cakrasaṃvara there are at least three of these, those attributed to the *mahāsiddha*s Lūipa, Kāṇhapa and Vajraghaṇṭapa. These will be discussed in more detail below.

The *mūlatantra* of the Cakrasaṃvara Tradition is the text sometimes called the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.* The text itself, however, does not use that name in reference to itself. The name which it uses in the colophons to each chapter is the *Śriherukābhidhāna,* "The Discourse of Śriheruka". The name with which the commentators usually refer to it is the *Laghusaṃvara,* the "Saṃvara Light", light in the sense that it is supposed to be a condensed version of a much larger work, also called the *Abhidhāna.* It is in fact a relatively short work; consisting of roughly seven hundred verses divided among fifty one chapters, some of which are only a few verses long. Much is indicated concerning the nature of the text by just its very first line, which begins "And now I will explain the secret, concisely, not extensively."[14] This line is extensively commented upon within the tradition, and by Tsongkhapa, whose commentary is translated below. According to the tradition, however, the first word of the Tantra "and then" *(athāto)* indicates that it was abbreviated from a far more extensive Root Tantra.

There was evidently, however, quite a bit of speculation and some controversy regarding the nature of this legendary text. Its size is debated; it is usually considered to be 100,000 verses in length, but some claim it was 300,000 verses long. The claim was even made that there existed two versions in these two lengths. None of the commentators actually appear to have read it; the speculation is based largely on some rather vague comments in the Explanatory Tantras, as well as the assertions of some of the Indian commentators. Tsongkhapa, in his commentary translated below, examined these claims

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[14] CST ch.1 v.1.a,b: athāto rahasyam vakṣye samāsān na tu vistarāt, / de nas gsang ba bshad par bya // mdor bsdud pa ste rgyas par min //. See appendix A below.

and counterclaims, and states that it is possible that both of these texts may have existed. He acknowledged, however, that at his time only the *Laghusaṃvara* was extant.

This admission is refreshing, for once one delves into the commentatorial literature one discovers that there were rumored to exist extensive versions of just about all of the major Tantras, from which shorter versions were produced, and soon afterwards the longer versions were lost. A mythic justification was developed to account for this. It holds that the Buddha or original speaker of the Tantra foresaw that the unfortunate beings of the latter era of the *kaliyuga*, would, due to shortened life spans and patience, be unable to make there way through the fabulously large text which he had just spoken. Out of compassion for these beings he then states an abbreviated version. The presumption is that the *kaliyuga* is already upon us, and as a consequence of declining lifespans beings have time to read only the *laghu* versions of the texts. These sorts of statements are found in many Tantras, some of which Tsongkhapa cites below. A succinct version occurs in the *Vajramālā Tantra,* which states that the abbreviated Teaching which it represents was given "so that future sentient beings in the time of the five degradations who have little industry and merit, and who have many mistaken views and short lives, might obtain the supreme state."[15] Beings with abbreviated life spans evidently require abbreviated texts. Since, in the Buddhist scheme of things, human life spans vary from ten to eighty thousand years, life spans which average well below one hundred years are evidently too brief for people to seriously consider reading, not to mention studying in depth or translating, texts of such expanse that their size is measured in units of one hundred thousand verses.

Legends of massive originary texts are not limited to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition. Most major Buddhist Tantric traditions appear to hold that there were one or more massive *ur-texts* in the tradition, from which its *mūlatantra* is derived. Evidently there was a tradition concerning the *Mahāvairocana Abhisambodhi (Dainichikyō,* 大日經, T. 848)

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[15] *Śrivajramālābhidhānamahāyogatantra-sarvatantrahṛdayarahasyavibhaṅga: /* snyigs ma lnga yi dus na ni // ma 'ongs pa yi sems can rnams // brtson 'grus chung zhing bsod nams chung // lta ba ngan pa mang po dang // tshe thung ba yi sems can rnams // go 'phang mchog ni thob phyir ro / (DK fol. 210b).

that there existed three versions of the text. Like the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, it was supposed to have not one but two legendary precursors. The details of this legend were related by Kūkai as follows in his *Introduction to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* (*Dainichikyō kaidai*, 大日經開題):

> Overall this Sūtra has three texts. The first, the eternal text which accords with the Truth (法爾常恒本), is the *dharma-maṇḍala* of all Buddhas. The second, the manifest extensive text (分流廣本). is the Sūtra of one hundred thousand stanzas disseminated by Nāgārjuna. The third is the abbreviated text (略本) of just over three thousand stanzas. While this sūtra has three thousand stanzas in seven fascicles, in its brevity, however, it remains true to the extensive [text], expressing much with few [words]. A single word contains infinite import, and a single dot encases principles as numerous as atoms. Why then could the hundred syllable wheel (*śatākṣaracakra*, 百字字輪) not completely express this sūtra? What principles are not manifest in its more than three thousand stanzas? The extensive and abbreviated [texts], though different, are of identical import.[16]

This interesting idea was not limited to the Buddhists. A number of Śaiva Āgama and Hindu Tantric traditions likewise claim massive *ur-texts* to be their ultimate sources. The *Mālinivijaya Tantra* claimed a source text of thirty million *śloka*, while the *Kāmikāgama* claims one of one *parārdha*, or one hundred thousand billion, *śloka*. (Goudriaan 1981:15). The is evidently an ancient precedent in India. The *Mahābharata* refers in several places to similar legendary origin of the *Dharmaśāstas*.[17]

While one might be inclined to doubt these legends on the basis of the fact that none of these texts is currently extant, or even extant over thousand years ago when the Tantras were translated into Chinese and Tibetan, such doubt evidently did not trouble the traditional historian. For while the traditions claim that these texts exist, they typically do not claim that they exist here and now in this world of Jambudvīpa. Just as the *Prajñāpāramitā* texts were hidden away, only coming to light when Nāgārjuna recovered

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[16] 此經總有三本。一法爾常恒本諸佛法曼荼羅是也。二分流廣本龍猛所誦傳十萬頌經是也。三略本有三千餘頌雖頌文三千經卷七軸。然猶以略攝廣以小持多。一字中含無邊義。一點內吞塵數理。何況　百字字輪具說此經。三千餘偈何理不顯。廣略雖殊理政是一。　(T 2211 p. 1.a,b; *Kōbō daishi zenshū* vol. 4 p. 2); cf. Tajima (Wayman and Tajima 1992), p. 236.

[17] See Goudriaan 1981, p. 15, and also Kane 1930, p. 308.

them from a sub-oceanic Nāga realm, so too might these texts exist elsewhere, such as in the celestial paradises of the Vidyādhara wizards and the "astronaut" Ḍākinī faeries.

The traditional scholar is warned not to assume that the Tantric texts available to him or her represent in any way a limit on the genre. Such warning is contained in popular narratives; for example, we learn in Atiśa's biography that his pride in his knowledge of Tantric literature was cured by a nocturnal visit by the ḍākinis, who escorted him to a celestial library containing innumerable Tantras and śāstras, none of which he recognized.[18]

Whatever their sources, the root texts as translated and transmitted to Tibet, China and Japan served as important nuclei around which not just texts, but traditions consisting of texts, written and oral, meditative and ritual practices and techniques connected with these practices, such as the arts of maṇḍala and icon fabrication. They also stimulated the further elaboration of these traditions by the commentators, whose work are almost a prerequisite for the understanding of the Root Texts.

4.1.2. Primary Exegesis

Kūkai, unable to fully comprehend the copy of the *Dainichikyō* he acquired in Japan, traveled to China in search of the commentary he needed.[19] The commentaries and the root texts are of equal importance, at least when it comes to the successful transmission of a tradition. They are themselves creative constituents of a tradition, adding to its development and often superseding in importance the often obscure texts which they

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[18] See Chattopadhyaya 1967:407. The mahāsiddha Nāropa is also depicted in his biography as suffering such pride, and requiring as well the intervention of a ḍākinī to shake him out of it. See Guenther 1963, pp. 24-27.

[19] For an excellent discussion of Kūkai's journey to China and his motivations for undertaking it see Abe 1999, pp. 105-127.

explain. The most important are often masterpieces, if not of art then of import, and sometimes excelling in both arenas.

It is important to note that in this Buddhist tradition there is not a rigid divide between theory and practice. For Tantric commentaries are preeminently concerned with practice, and the translation between the realms of text and practice. While some have characterized Tantric Buddhist societies as on the whole divided between "clerical" scholars and "shamanic" practitioners, this is misleading on several counts.[20] Few "scholars" of Tantric Buddhism are unconcerned with the practices that their texts are overwhelmingly preoccupied, and even a totally illiterate practitioner owes a debt to Tantric Buddhist scholasticism, for even if he did not use the meditation manuals and so forth which are found in abundance in all traditions of Tantric Buddhism, it is highly unlikely that his spiritual education was far removed from the textual tradition, at least in the Tibetan context.

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[20] Here I refer particularly to Samuel's *Civilized Shamans* (1993), as massive account of Tibet and Tibetan-influenced civilization, narrated from an anthropological perspective. While admirable on many counts, his work is fundamentally flawed by an analysis of Tibetan civilization and religions in terms of the interaction between two opposed cultural forces, that of the "shamanic" and the "clerical". Samuel defines the "shamanic" as a category of practices which he describes as "the regulation and transformation of human life and human society through the use (or purported use) of alternate states of consciousness by means of which specialist practitioners are held to communicate with a mode of reality alternative to, and more fundamental than, the world of everyday experience." (1993:8). His invocation of "alternate states of consciousness" is problematic, as Gibson has pointed out, if for no other reason that it is difficult to ascertain exactly what these states of consciousness are, leaving one to suspect that Samuel here might be guilty of cultural imposition in projecting Western categories onto the Tibetan cultural sphere. (Gibson 1997b:44). For his definition seems to imply an underlying structure of reality of which the "shamanic" and the "clerical" are modes. Here he appears unaware of the work of Katz (1978) and Proudfoot (1985), who have cogently argued one must not assume *a priori* that religious or mystical experience arises from an assumed ultimate source, but rather, they arise as conditioned phenomena dependent upon the cultural context in which they arise. Yet Samuel here certainly is not making use of the categories of Vajrayāna Buddhism, which he characterizes as "shamanic", but yet which was, ever since its introduction into Tibet, a textual tradition, yet one which was very much concerned with meditation and the attainment of supermundane states. While there no doubt were many individual who fell, roughly, under the rubric of the "shamanic" or the "clerical", the difference here was most likely one of emphasis rather than a difference of kind. The exceptions do not prove Samuel's rule, since there are so many. There were no doubt as many scholars of Tantric Buddhism who were far more concerned with meditation than with politics, nor were the illiterate "shamans" necessarily immune to concern with mundane matters. For in the Vajrayāna it is possible to be both a scholar and a mystic, and quite often the paragons of *either* rubric were successful in *both*. Nor is Tantric practice limited either to the mundane or alternative spheres, but ideally is efficacious in both. The polysemy of the term *siddhi*, discussed in section 3.3.2 above, is relevant here. We might also point out that Samuel's definition is so vague as to be almost meaningless. Ray commented that his "definition of 'shamanism,' referring to any tradition seeking to produce an alternative state of consciousness, is so broad that it includes virtually any system of spiritual practice and comes close to some general definitions of religion. In referring to Buddhism as 'shamanism' in this sense not much more is being said than Buddhism has a meditative dimension" (1995:96-97)

One might also question the dichotomy of scholar versus practitioner, if for no other reason than because the activities of the scholar constitute a practice, and one which has often been considered important and efficacious.[21] It is even a practice which, under the right conditions, can produce the experience of "altered states" normally associated with meditation or mysticism. mKhas-grub, in his biography of Tsongkhapa,[22] related an experience triggered by intense study of Dharmakīrti's *Pramāṇavārttika*, a difficult text on logic:

> Because of his insight into the section of the second chapter of the *Treatise* that expounds the arrangement of the path, he was swept up involuntarily by an intense and immeasurable faith in the scheme and method of reasoning of Dharmakīrti. And during his stay there that autumn, the mere sight of a volume of the *Treatise on Validating Cognition* would cause the hairs on the back of his neck to stand up with the intensity of his faith, and invariably he could not hold back his tears.[23]

This dichotomy also obscures the an important facet of the Buddhism, the fact that some of the most important exegetes of Buddhism are also portrayed as highly realized masters of meditation as well. It also ignores the fact that for Buddhists at least, cultivating a proper understanding of reality was an soteriological necessity, which required both intellectual and meditiative cultivation.[24] As such are portrayed important masters of Mahāyāna philosophy such as Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga. This trend is if anything exaggerated in the Tantric traditions, where the most important founders and authors of the seminal texts are also considered to be Mahāsiddhas, by definition exemplary meditation masters. In addition, the charismatic masters who transmitted Esoteric Buddhism, such as Atīśa to

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[21] Ray, *contra* Samuel, noted that "In Buddhism, at least, those activities which Samuel associates with the clerical – the cultivation of moral and ethical behavior, the study and explanation of sacred texts, formal debate, and even involvement in society and politics – are, with the right motivation, considered legitimate modes of spiritual transformation and can – like meditation practice itself – lead to 'alternate states of consciousness' in the Buddhist sense. In Samuel's characterization of the 'clerical' mode, the conventional, monastic side of Tibetan Buddhism is not really given its due." (1995:97)

[22] mKhas-grub's *Ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba'i rnam thar dad pa'i 'jug ngogs*. In *rJe yab sras gsung 'bum*, TL vol. ka.

[23] Trans. in Thurman 1984, p. 74.

[24] This was cogently argued by Thurman in his introduction to his 1984 book. See esp. pp. 89 ff.

Tibet, Amoghavajra to China and Kūkai to Japan were known both for their scholastic acumen and their meditative prowess; accounts of their lives are filled with miraculous tales which testify to their spiritual accomplishment, while the canons of their respective traditions contain numerous texts attributed to them, attesting to their scholarly achievements.

In short, this dichotomy is inappropriate in the context of Buddhist praxis. On the one hand, the Buddhist scholarly tradition has always privileged the cultivation of discerning wisdom *(prajñā).* "Having been prepared through faith and reflection, undefiled prajñā transcends them with its sharpness and attains its object directly. It constitutes the single and indispensable instrument of true exegesis." (Lamotte 1988b:24) *Prajñā,* however, was no mere intellectual tool, but was essential as well for negotiating the "altered states" encountered in the course of normative Buddhist meditation, as Bronkhorst has shown.[25] Buddhist paths to liberation typically required both the cultivation of powers of reasoning as well as powers of meditation, although, naturally, different traditions would place emphasis in different manners. Focus on one to the exclusion of the other, however, was usually considered to be misguided.

There are numerous passages in Buddhist texts which criticize shallow intellectualism, an early example of which is found in the *Alagaddūpama Sutta* as follows:

> Here, bhikkhus, some misguided men learn the Dhamma – discourses, stanzas, expositions, verses, exclamations, sayings, birth stories, marvels and answers to questions – but having learned the Dhamma, they do not examine the meaning of those teachings with wisdom. Not examining the meaning of those teachings with wisdom, they do not gain a reflective acceptance of them. Instead they learn the Dhamma only for the sake of criticizing others and for winning in debates, and they do not experience the good for the sake of which they learned the Dhamma. Those teachings, being wrongly grasped by them, conduce to their harm and suffering for a long time.[26]

To examine the meaning of the Teachings with wisdom *(dhammānaṃ paññāya attham upaparikkhanti)* is the goal; to mistake the letter *(vyañjana)* for the meaning *(artha)* is to

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[25] See Bronkhorst 1986 pp. 101-4.

[26] *Majjhima Nikāya* (I.133), trans. in Ñāṇamoli 1995, p. 227, cf. Lamotte 1988b, p. 14.

fail in the interpretive process as understood by the Buddhists. On the other hand, there are also found in Buddhist literature criticisms of engaging in one-pointed concentration *(ekāgra-samādhi)* devoid of insight. An amusing example is the account of *mahāsiddha* Saraha's sinking into *samādhi* for twelve years, just as his wife was preparing radish curry. As soon as he awoke from his twelve years of "meditation", the first thing he did was shout for his radish curry. Justly criticized by his wife, he decided to set out for the mountains for further meditation. His wife, who was undoubtedly realized herself, replied:

> Physical isolation is not real solitude....The best kind of solitude is complete escape from the preconceptions and prejudices of an inflexible and narrow mind, and, moreover, from all labels and concepts. If you awaken from a twelve year samādhi and are still clinging to a desire for your twelve year old curry, what is the point of going to the mountains? (Dowman 1985:68)

Ideally, one must integrate and harness both the faculties of critical reasoning and concentration. The failure to do so would result in failure to achieve the goal of complete awakening, regardless of whether this goal was approached from either a predominantly intellectual or predominantly meditative perspective. As Thurman argued,

> while contemplative, analytic wisdom is absolutely indispensable to attain a correct cognition of ultimate reality....it will not produce the experiential transformation called enlightenment unexcelled and perfect, unless it is combined with a systematically cultivated one-pointedness of mind. Ultimate reality eludes encompassment in any concept, no matter how hallowed, and hence the hermeneutician would betray his craft and avocation if he were to rest forever on the intellectual plane, no matter how refined his understanding. Thus, the Buddhist hermeneutical tradition is a tradition of realization, devoid of any intellect/intuition dichotomy. Authority here gives way to intellect, yet never lets intellect rest in itself, as it were, but pushes it beyond toward a culminating nondual experience. (Thurman 1978:35)

Here the Buddhist position is not unique, but is similar to other relatively decentralized, non-authoritarian religious traditions.[27] Idel's observation, based on the prophetic Kabbalic

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[27] It may be fruitful to compare the Esoteric Buddhist tradition of hermeneutics with the Kabbalic tradition, concerning which Idel wrote the following: "certain Kabbalists saw divine inspiration as a sine qua non for fathoming the sublime secrets with which the Bible is fraught; the notion that altered states of consciousness were a prerequisite for a more profound understanding of the sacred text attests to a new awareness that, in order to delve into the depths of the text, one must return, or at least attempt to return, the level of consciousness that characterized the person who received the inspiration or revelation that catalyzed the writing of this text. Mystical interpretation of a text was thus a function not only of its symbolic or esoteric nature but also of the spiritual state of the reader or exegete himself." (1988a:234) On the Buddhist side, we might note here that Tantric texts are filled with injunctions that the texts

tradition of which Abraham Abulafia was an exemplar, is equally trenchant here: "The less important the crystallized form of the canon, the more important the spiritual achievement of the interpreter". (1988a:236) The ideal Buddhist commentator would also be spiritually adept, and this is a goal universally found throughout Buddhist traditions, regardless the way in which this goal is articulated.

The commentary does not merely follow and passively construe the text; in an important sense it constructs the text, and constitutes the tradition which develops around it. The act of commentary is a creative act, although not one that is always fruitful. It is only successful insofar as it achieves the position of mediating an important text for a community interested in it. This position is never fixed, but is constantly being negotiated, as a tradition moves through time or space. As Harrison noted, "a religious tradition is never bound by its scriptures, but rather submits to them, reinterprets them, and ignores them in a unique and complex pattern." (1987:263) The history of a religious tradition is to an important extent the history of its production *and* reception of texts. They may reveal little or nothing of the origins of a tradition, but their examination then should be central to the task of exploring a tradition's elaboration through history.[28]

The bedrock of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition is not the Root Tantra per se, but rather the Root Tantra as construed and constructed by its numerous commentaries. There are over one dozen of these that were written in India and translated and preserved by the

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themselves are not to be revealed to those who have not been initiated into the tradition, and the fact that the initations themselves are clearly designed to invoke certain non-ordinary states of consciousness. These injunctions are still generally taken quite seriously by Tibetan practitioners, as any scholar of the Tantras who has studied (or has attempted to study) with them can attest.

[28] Smith argued that the task of the historian of religion is to "explore the creativity of... 'exegetical ingenuity' as a basic constituent of human culture. It is to gain an appreciation of the complex dynamics of tradition and its necessary dialectics of self-limitation and freedom. To do these things...is to give expression to what I believe is the central contribution that religious studies might make,...the realization that, in culture, there is no text, it is all commentary; that there is no primordium, it is all history; that all is application. The realization that...we are dealing with historical processes of reinterpretation, with tradition. That, for a given group at a given time to choose this or that way of interpreting their tradition is to opt for a particular way of relating themselves to their historical past and their social present." (1987:196).

Tibetans, which together take up more than two volumes of their canon.[29] These commentaries in turn were often associated with different sub-traditions, of which there are three in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition.[30] Many more commentaries were written by Tibetans in dependence upon one or more of the Indic commentaries, in all three of the major schools that privilege the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, the Sa-skya, bKa'-brgyud and dGe-lugs.

4.1.3. Secondary Revelation

This category includes those inspired, seminal texts which are considered subordinate to the *Root Tantras*, following them in time or precedence. Important here are those texts attributed not to an ahistorical revelation by the Buddhas, but to a historical yet realized figure. The most important of these figures in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition are the three great saints *(mahāsiddha)* who are considered the founders of the three sub-traditions, namely Lūipa, Kāṇha and Vajraghaṇṭa. Although numerous texts are attributed to them, included here are their most important texts which in turn inspired extensive

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[29] These include Kambala's *Sādhananidāna-śricakrasamvara-nāma-pañjikā*, Vajrapaṇi's *Lakṣābhidhānāduddhṛta Laghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa*, Bhavabhadra's *Śricakrasamvarapañjikā*, Durjayacandra's *Ratnagaṇa-nāma-pañjika*, Bhavyakīrti's *Śricakrasamvarapañjikā-śūramanojñā*, Laṅka Jayabhadra's *Śricakrasamvara-mūlatantra-pañjikā*, Devagupta's *Śricakrasamvara-sarvasādhanam-sanna-nāma-ṭikā*, Viravajra's *Samantaguṇaśālina-nāma-ṭika* and **Śrisaṃvaramūlatantraṭikā-padārthaprakāśa-nāma*, Śāśvatavajra's *Śritattvaviśada-nāma-śrisaṃvaravṛtti*, Tathāgataraksita's *Ubhayanibandha*, Sumatikīrti's *Laghusamvaratantrapaṭalābhisandhi*, and Indrabhūti's *Śricakrasaṃvaratantrarāja-saṃvarasamuccaya-nāma-vṛtti*. These texts vary greatly in size. Most constitute one hundred or more folios and comment, to some degree, on all fifty-one chapters of the Root Tantra. Vajrapaṇi's commentary deals only with the first chapter, but does so very extensively, and was considered an extremely important commentary by advocates of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, as it is more closely related to the exegetical tradition of that Tantra rather than those associated with the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*. Sumatikīrti's commentary, on the other hand, is only a few folios long, and briefly surveys the major import of the text. It was, however, very influential, and is quoted in its entirety by Tsongkhapa in his commentary, which is translated below.

[30] These subtraditions tended to become articulated as distinct lineages in Tibet, some of which were associated, but not exclusively the property of, distinct schools. For example, the Sa-skya school was particularly associated with the sub-tradition traced back to the *mahāsiddha* Kāṇha, to whom is attributed several important texts in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition. Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po thus appears to favor Durjayacandra's commentary, which is associated with this school. Tsongkhapa, following the polymath Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, quotes from the important texts of all three sub-traditions, but appears to favor the subtradition of the *mahāsiddha* Lūipa, and relies heavily on Kambala's commentary which is associated with that school.

commentary, such as Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya*, Kāṇha's *Vasantatilakā*, and Vajraghaṇṭa's *Śricakrasaṃvarapañcakrama.* Parallel texts in other traditions would include, for example, Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama* for the Ārya sub-tradition of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra.*[31]

Often these texts consist of meditation manuals that were believed to have originated in a revelatory experience; another example of a text of this type is the *Upadeśanaya (man ngag lugs),* an important text in the *lam-'bras* tradition of the Sa-skya school. It is described by Davidson as follows:

> The text is a concise, systematic presentation of the Guhyamantrayāna, emphasizing the internal yogic dimension....According to the hagiographical accounts, Virūpa received the cryptic program of the text from Vajrayogini through a mystic process involving the conservation of consecratory power – thus ensuring that the divinity of its origin was maintained. (1992:109)

Many traditions have extremely important, generally short and often cryptic texts which are attributed to historical authors and which became the basis of much subsequent study. They tend to deal with a specific topic, such as meditation, as opposed to the Root Tantras, which tend to cover a wide variety of topics, often in a sprawling, unclear manner. Their authors are considered to be highly realized, and to have access to the divine sources of legitimation of a tradition. Lūipa, for example, was considered to be the first human one of the two transmissions of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* having received it from the goddess Vajravārāhi, the central goddess of the tradition.[32]

Somewhat more ambiguous is the role played by the so-called "Explanatory Tantras" *(vyākhyātantra).* Their name implies that they should be understood as a sort of ur-primary exegesis; this may be their understood role in India, or at least the role later attributed to them. Many appear to take this role, and indeed refer to the Root Tantras they purportedly explain, proving that they were composed subsequently to the root text, as well

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[31] Buddhaśrījñāna's *Mukhāgama* serves a similar role for the Jñānapāda sub-tradition and of the same Tantra.

[32] See Appendix D for a list of the two lineages of transmission of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.

as in reference to it. An example of this type is the *Vajrapañjara Tantra* (DP), an Explanatory Tantra of the *Hevajra.* Since it frequently refers to the *Hevajra,* it can perhaps be understood to serve as a sort of primary elaboration of that initial revelation.

Other texts, however, such as the *Vajraḍāka* (VD) and the *Saṃvarodaya* (SV), typically understood to be Cakrasaṃvara Explanatory Tantras, are in appearance full fledged Tantras in their own right, more extensive and comprehensive in fact than the "Light" *(laghu)* Root Tantra, although one might surmise that this is due to their role in explaining the cryptic Root text. This has triggered much commentary, confusion and/or contention not only among modern scholars such as Tucci and Tsuda,[33] but also Tibetan scholars such as Bu-ston Rin-chen-grub, Tsongkhapa, and so forth. But while these texts do not specifically mention the *Laghusaṃvara* which they allegedly explain, there are other texts, such as the *Guhyavajra-tantrāja,* which do mention it, but which are not considered to be Explanatory Tantras.[34]

The decision of what is and is not an Explanatory Tantra seems to have been somewhat arbitrary, given the great diversity of texts so classified. Perhaps to address this taxonomic confusion Bu-ston gives a list of seven types of *Vyākhyātantra,* as follows:

> In regard to [those texts] taken to be Explanatory Tantras, it is claimed that they fall into seven types: those which clarify that which is unclear, those which complete the incomplete, those of different methodology, those which summarize the meaning [of a text], those which correspond to a portion [of a

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[33] Tucci (1949:263), misinterpreting Bu-ston, misidentified the Cakrasaṃvara *mūlatantra* as the *Saṃvarodaya,* as Tsuda pointed out (1974:28-29). Tsuda, in the introduction to his (1974) edition of the *Saṃvarodaya Tantra* (SV), justly takes issue with the traditional relegation of this work to the status of an Explanatory Tantra. This issue is further discussed in the notes to the translation of Tsongkhapa's discussion of this text. However, here we might acknowledge that the identification of the Explanatory Texts appears to have been somewhat arbitrary, and there appears to have been no concensus even to the number of Cakrasaṃvara Explanatory Tantras among the Indian commentators, who give numbers ranging from four to seven. Bu-ston's enumeration, which is also accpeted by Tsongkhapa accepts, is given below.

[34] The *Guhyavajra-tantrāja* mentions the *Cakrasaṃvara* in its first verse, which begins with the following request of Vajravārāhī to Heruka: "The *guhyacakra* is not explained in the *Śricakrasaṃvara.* Since I do not understand its profound import, please explain it to me." (/ dpal ldan 'khor lo sdom pa ru // gsang ba'i 'khor lo mi gsung ba // bdag gis zab mo'i don ma rtogs // de phyir khyed kyis bdag la gsungs / DK fol. 184b) It then claims to clearly present a subject unclear in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* the *guhyacakra.* It is one of the 32 *rali* Tantras which Bu-ston classifies as "controversial" Cakrasaṃvara Explanatory Tantras. (See RP 429 ff.) Tsongkhapa, however, rejects the validity of this classification in his analysis which is translated below.

> text], those which give rise to definitive understanding, and those which discern the word and meaning [of the text].[35]

In no other source known to me is such a list found; rather than a standard taxonomy it seems to be best understood as a list of different functions of this genre, all members of which would exhibit at least one of these functions, some more, but few if any exhibit all seven. Some, however, seem to be texts which parallel the root text in the sense that it has all the appearance of being a distinct text covering roughly the same range of material. Closely related and perhaps at one time competitive with the "Root Tantra," by historical accident it was subsumed into the tradition of the other as an "Explanatory Tantra".

The Tibetan tradition generally accepts nine Tantras as Explanatory Tantras of the Cakrasaṃvara. These are, to use the short-hand names commonly used by Tibetan scholars, the *Abhidhānottara* (AD),[36] *Vajraḍāka* (VD), *Ḍākārṇava* (DM), *Herukābhyudaya* (HA), *Yoginisaṃcārya* (YS), *Saṃvarodaya* (SV),[37] *Caturyoginisaṃpuṭa* (CS), *Vārāhyabisambodhi* (KV) and the *Saṃpuṭa* (SP).[38] All but the last of these texts are classified by Bu-ston as "Special" *(thun mong ma yin pa)* Explanatory Tantras, meaning that they solely belong to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition. The *Saṃpuṭa,* on the other hand, is a "common" *(thun mong ba)* Explanatory Tantra, meaning that it is shared by more than one tradition, in this case the *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra* traditions.[39]

While the textual history of these texts is usually far from clear, typically they do not simply comment upon the Root Text in the manner of the commentaries. And while

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[35] / bshad rgyud du 'gro ba la mi gsal ba gsal bar byed pa / ma tshang kha bskang ba / tshul mi 'dra ba / don bsdu ba / cha mthun pa / nges shes skyed pa / tshig dang don rnam par 'byed pa ste bdun gyi sgo nas bshad rgyud du 'gyur bar bzhed do / (DS pp. 47-48).

[36] This text is partially edited and translated in Kalff 1979.

[37] This text is partially edited and translated in Tsuda 1974.

[38] The first *kalpa* of this text is edited and translated in Elder 1978, and edited only in Skorupski 1996.

[39] Bu-ston provides a resume of the contents of these nine texts in his RP, describing each text at the following locations: AD, pp. 396-407; VD, pp. 407-11; DM, pp. 411-18; HA, pp. 418-20; YS, pp. 420-21; SV, pp. 421-23; CS, p. 423; KV, pp. 423-24; SP, pp. 424-29.

they sometimes refer to it or other texts, they are still Tantras which claim to be *buddhavacana,* the revelation of a Buddha. So while the difference in this case between a "primary" and "secondary" text may be sometimes arbitrary, this distinction does reflect the historical development of the traditions in India and Tibet, and the way in which these texts is understood by living Buddhist communities up to the present time.

4.1.4. Secondary Exegesis.

In this category we would include commentaries on the Explanatory Tantras; in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition each Explanatory Tantra has at least one Indic commentary, and more were written subsequently by Tibetans. Far more numerous, however, are the commentaries on root texts of sub-traditions. For example, the Tibet canon preserves over a dozen Indic commentaries on Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya*, and Tibetan exegetes wrote many more.

To this category also belongs the numerous minor commentatorial texts which make up the bulk of the texts in the Tantra Exegesis *(rgyud 'grel)* section of the Tibetan canon, in number if not in length. For unlike the larger commentaries, which often take up hundreds of folios, these texts are often very concise. Rather than explaining texts, however, they give instructions for the performance of rituals. This body of text includes the *sādhana, maṇḍalavidhi, homavidhi, balividhi, abhiśekaprakaraṇa* and meditation *upadeśa,* etc. For just about any significant ritual, including those mentioned in the Root Tantras and exhaustively explained in the commentaries, there are body of texts which function much like cookbooks, giving step-by-step instructions for their performance. For a popular tradition such as the Cakrasaṃvara alone there are hundreds of these sorts of texts. The proliferation of this ritual literature indicates the importance placed upon the proper performance of the rites such as maṇḍala construction, initiation, and so forth by Indian and

Tibetan communities of Tantric practitioners. These texts are secondary in that they appear to represent a later stage in the development of a tradition; once the revelations had already been made, and the Tantras commented upon, there still remained the task of describing the practices for the sake of later generations of disciples. These texts then presume the existence of the tradition, and are concerned only with its accurate preservation and dissemination as a body of both texts and practices.

In this class we would also include, for example, sub-commentaries on famous Indian commentaries, such as Tsongkhapa's *mchan 'grel chen mo*,[40] a sub-commentary on Candrakirti's *Pradipoddyotana*, a famous but challenging commentary on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra.* Here we might also include general introductions to important topics, which would include texts such as Āryadeva's *Cittāvaraṇaviśodhana,* Nāgabodhi's *Samājasādhanavyavasthāna* or Śraddhākaravarma's *Yogānuttaratantrārthāvatāra Saṃgraha.* On the Tibetan side, it would include monumental works such as Bu-ston's *General Introduction to the Tantras (rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa)* tomes or Tsongkhapa's *Great Mantric Process (sngags rim chen mo),* or shorter and more specific works such as Bu-ston's *bde mchog nyung ngu rgyud kyi spyi rnam don gsal,* a general introduction to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition.

4.2 Tantric Doxography

1. Compilations

Given the vast array of Tantric Buddhist texts, it should not be surprising that there were numerous attempts to categorize these texts through the development of comprehensive taxonomies. The first attempts at such categorization, however, involved not so much the development of a taxonomy than the grouping of literature into broad

[40] In *rJe yab sras gsung 'bum,* TL vol. nga.

classes. Here the model was most likely the doxography developed by earlier Buddhist traditions, which grouped together related texts under a common designation on the basis of shared qualities. Sometimes the defining quality might be nothing more than the size of the texts, as was the case with the *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāyas*. On the other hand, in the *Mahāyāna* tradition there was a tendency to group texts on the basis of a similarity of content, which appears to account for the *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Ratnakūṭa* scripture collections. Other collections, however, such as the *Vaipulya* texts, appear much more miscellaneous. Interestingly, many of the "proto-Tantric" texts were classified in this section of the canon; the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* identifies itself as a *vaipulyasūtra.*[41]

The second phase of exegesis involved the attempt to classify the literature on the basis of an analysis of their contents. This stage also has its precursors, such as the attempts in India to classify philosophical traditions, retrospectively placing the works of past masters into distinct categories.[42] A parallel attempt is the doctrinal classification (判教, *pan-jiao*) schemes developed in China during the fourth through seventh centuries.[43] Both of these attempts are notable for the controversies they created, for doctrinal taxonomies, which were almost always hierarchically organized, were often used as strategies for the legitimation of authority, as Gregory has pointed out in the context of the *pan-jiao* schemas.[44]

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[41] The relationship between the *vaipulya* sūtras and the Tantras is discussed at length by Lokesh Chandra in his 1993a article.

[42] This classification, groups thinkers into four basic categories such as the *sautrāntika, saibhāṣika, cittamātra* and *mādhyamika.* There are often further subdivisions such as *prāsaṅgika* and *svatantrika* schools of the *mādhyamika.* This classification occurs in Indic texts such as Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (ch. 9), and was wholeheartedly adopted by the Tibetans, who to this day continue to write and argue from within the confines of this taxonomy, although the exact definitions are still open to debate. A good introduction to the classic Gelukpa formulation occurs in Sopa 1976; for the more sophisticated treatments of Tsongkhapa or later Geluk masters see, respectively, Thurman 1984 and Hopkins 1983.

[43] For a good introduction to the *pan-jiao* formulations see Hurvitz 1962, esp. pp. 214 ff., and Thurman 1978.

[44] See Gregory 1988 pp. 207-8.

In regard to the former type, classification by means of compilation, the earliest known versions are the compilations of eighteen Tantras which were well known and well distributed during the eighth century. These points have been explored at length by Eastman, but as his important paper is unpublished, it is necessary here to provide a summary of his findings, certain points of which will be explored at length below.[45]

Two canons of eighteen Tantras are in fact known; the first is the *Vajraśekharayoga* (金剛頂瑜伽), which was only partially translated into Chinese in the early eighth century by Vajrabodhi, Amoghavajra and their disciples. The entire contents of this canon, however, were summarized by Amoghavajra in his *Index to the Vajraśekharayoga in Eighteen Sections* (金剛頂經瑜伽十八會指歸), parts of which are translated below. According to Amoghavajra it is the *Vajraśekhara Tantra* consisting of one hundred thousand verses in eighteen sections. He lists the eighteen texts, some of which can be identified with translations in the Chinese and Tibetan canons, as follows:[46]

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[45] This is his 1981 seminar paper, "The Eighteen Tantras of the Vajraśekhara/Māyājāla", presented at the 26th International Conference of Orientalists in Tōkyo, May 8, 1981. A summary of this paper is published in *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan* (Tokyo: The Tōhō Gakkai) vol. 24, 1981, pp. 95-96. It is unfortunate that this important paper was not published, but it is evidently well known among scholars of Buddhism, as it is quoted or referred to by authors such as Snellgrove (1987) and Germano (1994).

[46] T 869: 金剛頂經瑜伽有十萬偈十八會。 (p. 284.3). Amoghavajra lists the eighteen texts as reproduced here. The Sanskrit corresponds either to known texts, or my reconstructions from the Chinese, which are marked by asterix. The identifications with extant Taisho Chinese translations and Tibetan translations in the rDer-dge Kanjur are provided by Eastman (1981:10). Certain of these identifications are clear. Others are hypothetical, and these are preceded by an asterix; Eastman derives this information from an article by Sakai Shirō entitled "Mikkyōgaku e no oboegaki", in the journal *Mikkyōgakkaihō* (密教學會), no. 3, 1964, pp. 26-31. Not having access to this article I am in no position to evaluate these identifications, and thus can only consider them to be provisional.

	Chinese Title	Reconstructed Sanskrit	Taisho#	Tōh. #
1.	一切如來真實攝教王	*Sarvatathāgatatattva-saṃgraha Kalparāja*	882	479
2.	秘密三昧耶曼荼羅	**Guhyasamayamaṇḍala*		480*
3.	法曼荼羅	**Dharmamaṇḍala*		480*[47]
4.	羯磨曼荼羅	**Karmamaṇḍala*		482*[48]
5.	世間出世間金剛瑜伽			
6.	大安樂不空三昧耶真實瑜伽	**Mahāsukhāmoghasamaya tattvayoga*[49]	243	489
7.	普賢瑜伽	**Samantabhadrayoga*		490*[50]
8.	勝初瑜伽	*Śriparamādhya*	244	487
9.	一切佛集會拏吉尼戒網	*Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara*[51]		366
10.	大三昧耶瑜伽	**Mahāsamayayoga*		
11.	大乘現證 瑜伽	**Mahāyānābhisamayayoga*		
12.	三昧耶最勝瑜伽	**Samayavijayayoga*		
13.	大三昧耶真實瑜伽	**Mahāsamayatattvayoga*	883	
14.	如來三昧耶真實瑜伽	**Tathāgatasamayatattva-yoga*		
15.	秘密集會	*Guhyasamāja*	885	442,443
16.	無二平等瑜伽	*Advayasamatā*	887	452[52]
17.	如虛空瑜伽			
18.	金剛寶冠瑜伽			

Since only the *Prajñāpāramitānaya-ardhaśatikā* and an abridged version of the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* were translated during Amoghavajra's lifetime, clearly a good number of these texts were lost. Problems relating to the identification of these texts with extant Chinese and Tibetan translations are numerous and are discussed at length by Eastman. Relevant here is not the status of any particular text, but rather the existence of a tradition of a seminal compilation of eighteen Tantric texts.

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[47] Tōh. 480 is the Tibetan translation entitled *Vajraśekhara-mahāguhyayogatantra*, which by its very name alone one might surmise it has some connection of the *Vajraśekhara* as described by Amoghavajra. Perhaps this *dharmamaṇḍala* might have some relation to the maṇḍala described by Buddhyaguhya in his *Dharmamaṇḍalasūtra*.

[48] Tōh. 482 is the *Trailokyvijaya-mahākalparāja*.

[49] This text is the *Prajñāpāramitānaya-ardhaśatikā*; the title given here is that of the first of the seventeen maṇḍalas attributed to this text, at the center of which is the deity Mahāsukhāmoghasamayatattva Vajrasattva, according to Amoghavajra, who described this text in another work. See Tōh. 1004, p. 617.2.

[50] Tōh. 490 is the *Śrivajramaṇḍalālaṃkāra-nāma-mahātantrarāja*.

[51] This is the JS; the Chinese here has the equivalent to *samāja* rather than *samayoga*, and inverts *jāla* and *saṃvara*.

[52] Tōh. 452 is the *Ārya-advayasamatāvijayākhya-mahākalparāja*.

Were this the only such tradition of eighteen texts it might be disregarded as an anomaly. There, is however, another tradition, that of the "Eighteen Tantras of the Great Māyājāla Class" *(sgyu'phrul dra ba'i sde chen bco brgyad)*, which was preserved by the rNying-ma School in Tibet and which evidently derives from the first period of translation of Sanskrit texts, which also occurred in the eighth century. These texts are preserved in the rNying-ma Tantric canon known as the *rNying-ma rgyud 'bum*, generally in the "Mahāyoga" section of that canon.[53] While all of these texts are still extant, many of them are quite obscure, and have no counterpart outside of this canon. Three of them, however, definitely correspond to items on Amoghavajra's list. These are the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga,*[54] the *Guhyasamāja* and the *Śriparamādya.*

Another point of similarity between the two traditions is that they each contain a text (or group of texts) that is or are considered to be the central text(s) of the compilation. The text that is given this recognition differ in the two traditions; it is the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* in Amoghavajra's tradition, and the *Māyājāla* in the rNying-ma's. Eastman concludes that they represent alternatives, perhaps due to regional

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[53] Eastman presents a list of the *sgyu'phrul dra ba'i sde chen bco brgyad* as described by kLong-chen-pa in his *Chos-'byung rin-po-che gter mdzod,* vol. 2 pp. 150-51 (no publisher or date given), as follows: 1. *sang rgyas mnyam 'byor (Sarvabuddhasamayoga);* 2. *zla gsang thig le (Candraguhyatilaka);* 3. *gsang ba 'dus pa (Guhyasamāja);* 4. *dpal mchog dang po (Śriparamādya);* 5. *dpal 'phreng dkar ma;* 6. *he ru ka'i rol pa'i rgyud;* 7. *rta mchog rol pa;* 8. *rnying rje rol pa;* 9. *bdud rtsi rol pa;* 10. *phur pa phyi to rol pa;* 11. *ri bo rtsegs pa;* 12. *dam tshig bkod pa;* 13. *blang bo che rab 'bog;* 14. *rtsa rtsig bsdus pa;* 15. *klog ye shes 'khor lo;* 16. *thabs kyi zhags pa pad mo'i phreng;* 17. *rnam par snang mdzad sgyu 'phrul;* 18. *sgyu 'phrul dra ba (Māyājāla).* The last of these, the *Māyājāla,* is considered to consist of eight texts. (Eastman 1981:18)

[54] Eastman errs in stating that the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga* is contained only in the rNying-ma 'rgyud 'bum, and that only its *uttara* and *uttarottara* Tantras exist in the standard Tibetan canon. It is true that the former canon contains with the title *Śrisarvabuddhasamayoga-tantrarāja,* while the standard (i.e. sde-rge, etc.) canon contains a text with the title *Śrisarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasaṃvara-nāma-uttaratantra.* This two texts are however, identical. Both canons contain a text with the title *Sarvakalpasamuccaya-nāma-sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvara-uttarottaratantra,* which is clearly the *uttaratantra* to the above text. Eastman's failure to recognize the identity of these texts, following the Japanese scholars on whom much of his work depended, shows the danger of drawing conclusions about texts based only on titles in catalogues. Tantric texts often exhibit significant variation in their titles between different editions, or even within the same edition. The JS as it occurs in the rNying ma rgyud 'bum is only called the *Śrisarvabuddhasamayoga-tantrarāja* at the beginning of the text; at the end of each chapter it referrs to itself as the *Sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvara,* while in the colophon it is called the *Tantrarāja-śrisarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasaṃvara-mahāsukhamudrātantra.* This text is not unusual; the manuscripts of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* also use three different names in three different places in the text.

or historical variation. Thus it appears that by the mid-eighth century[55] there already were at least two, if not more, variants of this compilation extant in India, which may indicate that it was already by that time an established tradition.[56]

These compilations are significant in their historical ramifications, which will be explored in section 5.2 below. In the context of this section they are significant in that they represent an early and very well attested attempt at organizing what must have been by the turn of the seventh and eighth century a burgeoning abundance of Tantric literature.

4.2.2 Classification Schemes

Regarding the second type of classification, the discernment of categories based on content analysis, the most famous schema is that of the four classes of Tantra, the *kriyā, caryā, yoga,* and *anuttarayoga* Tantras. This system gained widespread acceptance among Tibetan scholars of all schools except the rNying-ma,[57] following Bu-ston's classic description of them in the fourteenth century.[58] There are however, a number of

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[55] Amoghavajra left China for India in 741 CE and returned in 746 CE, (see Chou 1945, pp. 290-92) bring back with him excerpts (at least) from this compilation; the transmission of the rNying-ma version probably began during the reign of king Khri-srong-lde-brtsan (756-797 CE). While the history of its transmission is unclear, the presence of Mahāyoga texts at Dunhuang strongly confirm their dynastic period transmission (See Eastman 1981).

[56] Another source concerning the the compilation of 18 Tantras is Jñānamitra's *Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatikā-ṭikā,* who describes a corpus of 18 Tantras with mention of precisely the three Tantras contained in both versions, namely, the JS, GT and PM. Matsunaga, contra Toganoo and Nagasawa, is of the opinion that this corpus is not that described by Amoghavajra but rather that transmitted to Tibet (see de Jong 1984, p. 103). Matsunaga, however, is incorrect here, as Jñānamitra's commentary makes it clear that the *Tattvasaṃgraha,* rather than the *Māyājāla,* was the central text in the tradition he describes. The relevant passage in Jñānamitra's commentary is translated in section 5.2 below.

[57] The rNying-ma had earlier on adopted a nine-fold doxographical schema, although during and after the "second dissemination" of the Dharma to Tibet, i.e., from the eleventh century onward, the fourfold schema often played a significant role in their polemical works. See for example the section on doxography in the *Translator and Scholar Precepts (lo pan bka'i thang yig),* a text "discovered" as part of the *bka' thang lde lnga* collection by Orgyan gLing-pa (1323-60), who lived during the height of the "second dissemination" period. See Orgyan gLing-pa's *bka' thang lde lnga,* Beijing edition (1990), pp. 359-66.

[58] See RP p. 54 ff.

misconceptions concerning this schema, and its overwhelming success has also obscured a number of earlier or competing schemas, some of which will be explored below.

Some scholars have claimed that the quadripartite schema of Tantras was a Tibetan innovation;[59] this however is not completely true. This formulation does occur in Indic texts, albeit later ones, and it never achieved in India the broad acceptance it received in Tibet. It was, however, the culmination of a long process of development in India.

Another misconception is that this schema was borrowed from non-Buddhist sources. Lokesh Chandra claimed that this fourfold classification system was a "misunderstanding" of the Śaiva Āgamas division of their teachings into four pādas, namely: vidyā/jñāna, kriyā, caryā and yoga.[60] In this case, however, it seems that the similarity between these two doxographical schemes are superficial. That there was interaction and influence between the Buddhists and the Śaivas is undeniable; exactly which group is the source of any particular development is, however, uncertain; the development of the Buddhist and Śaiva traditions were at times closely intertwined, making it difficult to discern direct influence amidst the pattern of interrelations and competing formulations, as Deshpande has shown regarding the grammatical tradition in his 1997 article.

The Indian Buddhist texts, however, indicate a gradual development of the four category concept through the intermediaries of three, two and possibly one class; there have also been, as will be shown below, attempts to expand beyond four classes, although usually this expansion occurs as subdivisions of the four, which seem to have been settled on for perhaps no other reason than the fact that Indic authors seem to particularly favor fourfold categorization, as Smith has exhaustively documented with regard to Vedic literature in his 1994 book. Since the Buddhists can be shown to have developed their categorization gradually and independently, it seems unlikely that they borrowed the

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[59] See for example Gibson 1997a, p. 39.

[60] See Chandra 1993a p. 19-20 and 1993b:394. Concerning the four *pāda* see also Fillozat's essay "The Śaiva Āgama" (1991:67-77).

schema from the Śaivas. It is thus unclear to what degree they were influenced by the Śaiva Āgamas, or vice versa.

The fourfold schema was the product of several centuries of development by Indian exegetes; it is a composite rather than an organic schema, and thus it is not without problems and inconsistencies. Strickmann has commented that

> this quadripartite schema has certain inherent ambiguities; in South Indian Śaivāgama tradition, for example, the members of an analogous fourfold plan were interpreted as complementary limbs of a single body of ritual and doctrine. Its most familiar Buddhist form, however, (in the fourteenth-century works of Bu-ston) clearly suggests that the four classes of Tantra represent successive stages in an historical development, with a consequent relegation of earlier works to the lower steps in a hierarchy of spiritual values. Thus, if we are to ascend back much beyond the Indian promulgators of Buddhist Tāntra in eleventh-century Tibet, the "orthodox" classification will have to be subjected to close critical examination. (1977b:140-41)

Strickman appears to be incorrect here on at least one count; Bu-ston, to my knowledge, does *not* portray the classes as representing "successive stages in an historical development", and there is in fact no evidence that they do. Some contemporary Tibetan scholars portray them as complementary, while still however placing greater emphasis on the "higher" Tantras, and portraying them as hierarchically arranged.[61] However, what can be shown is the historical development not of the *objects* of classification, the Tantras themselves, by the classification schemes themselves. The following close examination of Indian texts will show that this schema developed through a process of accretion of categories based upon a magnification of an original binary distinction. Moreover, the history of Tantric Buddhist doxography is filled with competing claims to ultimacy via jockeying for the privileged position in hierarchical taxonomies.

The various classificatory schemas of Tantric Buddhism are based, like most such schemas, on an initial dichotomy. This was, most basically, based on the outer-inner polarity, which developed into a contrast between outer ritual action *(kriyā)* and internal

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[61] See for example Kelsang Gyatso 1994, pp. 19-22. He follows the classical hermeneutic and portrays the Tantras of the four classes as taught for the sake of beings of different merit and intellectual capacity, and claims that the "lower" Tantras are primarily of heuristic rather than ultimate value, i.e. preparation for the practice of the "highest" Tantras.

body-mind techniques *(yoga)*. The schema was then elaborated by the addition of further classifications designed to resolve the initial dichotomy. For example, we find a three-fold classification in Buddhaguhya's eighth century commentary on the *Mahāvairocana Tantra*.[62] Buddhaguhya's formulation is as follows:

> The Blessed Lord, having originally discovered the omniscient intuition *(sarvajñajñāna)*, with which He saw that beings who are to be educated are twofold: those who mainly aspire to that which is comprehensible, and those who mainly aspire to the vast and profound. For those two types of students there are two types of practices: practice having entered into the gate of the Perfections *(pāramitā)*, and practice having entered into the Mantric gate. There are two types of practice connected with the Perfections' Gate, namely that which primarily aspires to the comprehensible, and that which primarily aspires to the vast and profound. The Vinaya, the sūtras, the abhidharma and likewise the Mahāyāna sūtras were taught to the householders and heroes and so forth for the sake of those students who practice the Perfections and who primarily aspire to the comprehensible. Vast and profound sūtras, such as the *Gaṇḍavyūha, Daśabhūmika,* and the *Samādhirāja*, were taught for the sake of those students who aspire to the vast and profound.
>
> Furthermore, there are also the same two types for those students who practice entering into the Mantric Gate. The *kriyātantras* such as the Noble *Susiddhi Tantra* and the *Vidyādharapiṭaka*[63] were taught for the sake of those who aspire primarily to the comprehensible. Likewise, the *Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra* was taught for those who train by means of the vast and profound. While it is not the case that those "who primarily aspire to the comprehensible" do not also aspire to and do not practice the vast and profound, the majority do in fact aspire to and practice the comprehensible. And while it is not the case that those who mainly aspire to the vast and profound do not also practice the comprehensible, they do largely practice the vast and profound. And while the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, etc., mainly teach inner yoga, they do not lack outer practices. Likewise, while the *kriyātantra* mainly teach outer practices, they also do not lack inner practices.
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> It is said that the *Vidyādharapiṭaka* etc. are fixated on the three doors of liberation,[64] and one should understand that this also applies to the practitioners of the Pāramitā Gate. While the *Vairocanābhisambodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhāna*

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[62] Buddhaguhya's exact dates are unknown, but he is known to be a contemporary of King Khri-srong-lde-brtsan, who ruled Tibet from 754 to 798, and who invited him to Tibet. Buddhaguhya's letter reply of reply, in which he declined the king's invitation, is preserved in the gTam-yig section of the Tanjur. For a survey of the data concerning Buddhaguhya's life and dates see Lo Bue 1988.

[63] The former text is the *Susiddhikara-mahātantra-sadhānopāyika-paṭala* (Tōh. 807). The *vidhyādharapiṭaka* does not appear to be an actual Tantra, but seems to designate a class or group of Tantras. Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po uses it as a synonym for *Mantrayāna;* here however it may designate a group of *kriyātantras*. This is confirmed by Yi-jing, who writing in the seventh century described it as a 100,000 verse compilation of texts; it may have been a predecessor to the 100,000 verse *Vajraśekhara* compilation described by Amoghavajra later. See section 4.1.2 below.

[64] These are the *trivimokṣamukha:* Voidness *(śūnyatā)*, Signlessness *(animittatā)*, and Wishlessness *(apraṇihitatā)*.

> *Tantra* is a *yogatantra* which focuses on discerning wisdom and liberative art, it teaches as well practices which accord with the *kriyātantra* for the sake of those students who aspire to action. Or, it is understood that it can be identified as a "dual Tantra" *(ubhayatantra).*[65]

This schema is based upon an initial distinction between the outer versus the inner, and thus follows an ancient tendency in Indian thought.[66] The *kriyā* or 'Ritual Action' Tantras are thus those which tend to focus more on outer ritual actions, while the Yoga Tantras are those which tend to focus more on inner visualization processes. That this distinction is problematic is indicated by Buddhaguhya's insistence that both types share both qualities; the difference is really one of emphasis, not presence or absence.

This neatly parallels the developments toward interiorization in the Vedic traditions. Heesterman, in his essay "Brahmin, Ritual, and Renouncer", discusses the interiorization of the Vedic ritual which is most noticeable in the Upaṇiṣads, but which he traces to the earlier literature as well. He comments:

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[65] / bcom ldan 'das kyis thog ma thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes brnyes nas / thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes des 'dul ba'i 'dro ba rnam pa gnyis su gzigs te / dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa dang / zab cing rgya che ba la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa'o // 'dul ba'i 'gro ba de rnams la yang spyod pa rnam pa gnyis te / pha rol tu phyin pa'i sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa dang / sngags kyi sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa'o // de la pha rol tu phyin pa'i sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa la yang rnam pa gnyis te / dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa dang / zab cing rgya che ba la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa ste / de la pha rol tu phyin pa'i sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa'i gdul ba'i 'gro ba dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa rnams kyi don du 'dul ba dang / mdo sde dang / mngon pa'i chos rnams dang / de bzhin du gzhan yang theg pa chen po'i mdo sde khyim bdag dpa' bo la gsogs pa bstan to // de bzhin du zab cing rgya che la mos pa'i 'dul ba'i 'gro ba rnams kyi don du zab cing rgya che ba'i mdo sde sdong bu bkod pa dang / sa bcu dang ting nge 'dzin gyi rgyal po la sogs pa rnams bstan to // de bzhin du sngags kyi sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa'i gdul ba'i 'gro ba rnams la yang rnam pa gnyis te / dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa dang / zab cing rgya che ba la mos pa gtso bor gyur ste / de la dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa rnams kyi don du / 'phags pa legs par grub pa'i rgyud dang / rig 'dzin gyi sde snod la sogs pa bya ba'i rgyud rnams bstan to // de bzhin du zab cing rgya che bas 'dul ba'i 'gro ba rnams kyi don du 'phags pa de kho na nyid bsdus pa'i rgyud la sogs pa bstan te / dmigs pa dang bcas pa la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa zhes pa yang zab cing rgya che ba la ma mos shing mi spyod pa ma yin mod kyi / dmigs pa dang bcas pa la spyod par mos pa'i shas che ba la bya'o // zab cing rgya che ba la mos pa gtso bor gyur pa rnams la yang dmigs pa dang bcas pa'i spyod pa ma yin mod kyi / zab cing rgya che ba la spyod pa'i shas che ba ste / de lta bu yin par ni gsal por 'phags pa de nyid bsdus pa la sogs pa nang gi rnal 'byor gtso bor gyur pa yin mod kyi / phyi'i spyod pa rnams kyang med pa ma yin no // de bzhin du bya ba'i rgyud rnams kyang phyi'i spyod pa gtso bor gyur pa yin mod kyi / nang gi spyod pa yang med pa ma yin te / rig 'dzin gyi sde snod la sogs par rnam pa thar pa'i sgo rnam pa gsum la gzhol ba la sogs pa gsungs pa dang / de bzhin du pha rol tu phyin pa'i sgo nas 'jug cing spyod pa rnams la yang ji ltar rigs par sbyar bar shes par bya'o // de bzhin du rnam par snang mdzad mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam par sprul ba byin gyis rlob pa'i rgyud 'di yang thabs dang shes rab gtso bor gyur pa rnal 'byor gyi rgyud yin mod kyi / bya ba la mos pa'i gdul bya'i 'gro ba rnams gzung ba'i phyir bya ba'i rgyud kyi rjes su mthun pa'i spyod pa dag kyang bstan pas bya ba'i rgyud dam / gnyis ka'i rgyud lta bur so sor brtags shing grags so // (MVV DT fol. 261a,b)

[66] See the discussion in section 3.3.1 above.

> By interiorization I do not mean to suggest a dichotomy between "external" and "internal" sacrifice or the replacement of the former by the latter. The ritual act is both, as is shown, e.g., by the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* 10.4.3.9, where the agnicayana ritual is both "internal" knowledge *(vidyā)* and "external" act. The differentiation arose as a result of the ritual's interiorization and could be valid only from the point of view of the individualized sacrifice. (1985:212 n. 72)

The Buddhists, like their *upaniṣadic* predecessors, no doubt were already engaged in a movement toward an interiorized understanding of their ritual practices when they formulated these schema. But while developing new yogic practices they did not forsake the ritual practices themselves. The "outer" and the "inner" interpretations thus co-existed in a state of creative tension, creative because the privileged "inner" perspective created an opening for innovation in the area of meditative techniques without requiring that one abandons the legitimate and legitimizing ritual practices in the context of which they developed. The persistence of the "outer" practices, however, led to one of the contradictions of this schema. That is, while the advocates of the *yogatantras* claimed superiority on the virtue of their *yogic* practices, these texts also maintained and if anything further elaborated the ritual arts *(kriyā)* to be mastered by their adepts. And the *kriyātantras* were not devoid of meditative techniques, and there was nothing to prevent their advocates from developing new ones.

That the Buddhists were not content with a dichotomous formulation is indicated by their development mediating terms, such as the *ubhaya* category which shares the qualities of both the *kriyā* and *yogatantras*.[67] The eighth century commentaries suggest that earliest classification may have been a distinction between *kriyā* and *yoga* Tantras; Buddhaguhya's comments here seem to have been based on the recognition that not all texts fall neatly into either of these binary categories, hence the creation of the category of *ubhayatantras* in

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[67] Variants of the terms *ubhayatantra* include *ubhayayoga, upayoga* and *upāyayoga.* These terms are found in a relatively small number of texts, namely early Indic texts, such as Buddhaguhya's from the eighth century, as well as texts of the rNying-ma school, which developed from a transmission of texts and practices to Tibet during the eighth century. Snellgrove holds that *upayoga* is most likely the original term, that and *ubhayayoga* and *upāyayoga* are later variants. This may be true, but clearly by the eighth century the term *ubhayayoga* refered to a category of texts which were considered intermediary between the *kriyā* and *yoga* Tantras, sharing the qualities of "both" *(ubhaya)* types. The term is more meaningful than the alternatives, in my opinion. See Snellgrove 1988 p. 1363.

which, as Buddhaguhya explains, one can place Tantras such as the *Vairocanābhisambodhi* which exhibit a roughly equal emphasis on outer and inner procedures. This category was later designated by the term *caryā*.

The Tibetan exegete Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po concisely described this trio of Tantra classes as follows:

> Regarding *kriyātantra*s such as the *Susiddhi*[68] and so forth, if you wonder why are they are classified as *kriyātantras*, it is because they mainly focus on outer activities of the body and speech, such as bathing, repetitions, etc. Hence, Ācārya Buddhaguhya states in his *Dhyānottara-ṭikā* that "this is principally outer activity."[69]
>
> Regarding *caryātantra*s such as the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi Tantra* etc. .... Why are they categorized as *caryātantra*s? They perform equally outer activities of body and speech and inner samādhi. Thus, Ācārya Buddhaguhya explained in his *Summary of the Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi Tantra* that "this ordinarily includes both outer and inner yoga."[70]
>
> Yogatantras include the *Ārya Tattvasaṁgraha Tantra* etc. If you ask why these are classified as Yogatantras, this is because they principally teach activities of the inner mind, divine samādhi. In that way, it says in the summary of Ācārya Ānandagarbha's *Tattvāloka* commentary, "since this tantra is principally meditative, its meditation does not involve numerous, exhausting repetitions."[71]

In Buddhism, it is most likely that these dual perspectives developed roughly simultaneously. Buddhism has, probably since its inception, exhibited a pronounced fascination with internal processes and the meditative arts which purport to influence them.

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[68] That is, the *Susiddhikaramahātantrasādhanopāyikapaṭala*. Tōh. 807.

[69] Buddhaguhya, as he usually does, begins the text of this commentary (Tōh. 2670) with a discussion of doxography, but not in the manner quoted here by Sachen.

[70] There is a discussion to this effect on fol. 3b of Buddhaguhya's *Vairocanābhisambodhi-tantra-piṇḍārtha*, but again not as quoted by Sachen.

[71] / de la bya ba'i rgyud ni legs par grub pa la sogs pa ste / de dag la ci'i phyir bya ba'i rgyud du bzhag ce na / khrus la sogs pa dang / bzlas pa la sogs pa phyi'i lus ngag gi bya ba gtso bor ston pa'i phyir ro // de ltar yin par yang slob dpon sangs rgyas gsang bas bsam gtan phyi ma'i 'grel par / 'di ni phyi'i bya ba gtso bor gyur pa yin no zhes bshad do // spyod pa'i rgyud ni rnam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa'i rgyud la sogs pa ste / .... / de dag la ci'i phyir spyod pa'i rgyud du bzhag ce na / spyad bya phyi lus ngag gi bya ba dang / nang ting nge 'dzin cha mnyam pa la spyod pa ste / de skad du / yang slob dpon sangs rgyas gsang bas rnam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa'i rgyud kyi bsdus don las / 'di phyi dang nang gi rnal 'byor gnyis ka thun mong du gyur pa yin no zhes bshad do // rnal 'byor gyi rgyud ni 'phags pa de kho na nyid bsdus pa'i rgyud la sogs pa ste / de dag la ci'i phyir rnal 'byor gyi rgyud du bzhag ce na / nang sems kyi bya ba lha'i ting nge 'dzin gtso bor ston pas rnal 'byor kyi rgyud de / de skad du yang slob dpon kun dga' snying pos / de kho na nyid snang bar byed pa'i 'grel pa'i bsdus don las / rgyud 'di ni bsgom pa gtso bor gyur pa yin pas / 'dir bsgom pa nyid la 'bad par bya'i grang kyi bzlas pa ni ma yin no zhes bshad do / (PG pp. 289.4-290.1)

Ritual was probably gradually developed by Buddhist communities, and with greatest acceleration during the periods of royal patronage of Buddhism, the classical age of which extended from the Mauryan up to the Gupta periods. It is during this period when Buddhist iconography developed,[72] and it is likely that the production of images was, without lengthy delay, accompanied by worship, ranging from consecration ceremonies to public worship of the consecrated images.[73] The interaction of the Buddhists with their royal patrons probably contributed to the development of the Bodhisattva cults, the innovations of which directly contributed to the development of what would become the paradigmatic Tantric rituals, such as the rite of consecration.[74]

Given the predilections of the Buddhists it is likely that this outer ritual action was quickly accompanied by interiorized meditations; this process of interiorization may have been accelerated by loss of patronage in the Gupta era or by the destruction of the monasteries and associated images by the Ephthalite Huns in the fifth and sixth centuries in Northwest India.[75] Whatever the reason for this development, early Tantras such as the *Mañjuśrimūlakalpa* are veritable encyclopedias of the lore and rituals arts associated with the cults of their respective bodhisattvas. Matsunaga, in his (1980) book *Mikkyō kyōten seiritsushi-ron*, proposed that early "proto-Tantric" texts are magical in nature, containing the ritual technologies that later characterized the Tantras, but presenting them in an

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[72] The issue of the development of Buddhist iconography has been the subject of extensive research and debate. It is generally agreed that it took place during the Kushan period, i.e., the first two centuries of the common era; at issue was whether it is an Indian or Graeco-Roman inspiration, and the related issue of whether the first images were made in Gandhāra or Mathurā. See Snellgrove 1987 pp. 47-57, and Stanley Abe 1995.

[73] The early Amitābha sūtras were written in the Kushan realm, during or just after the first century CE in the Gandhāri language in northwest India, and their translation into Chinese began during the second century. Amstutz suggests that "Pure Land myth had been integrated into early Indian Mahāyāna practice and cult organization by 200 CE" (1998:40-41), but he admits that much concerning the original cult of Amitābha is unclear. Concerning the closely related deity Avalokiteśvara, Schopen, in his 1987 article, argued that the cult of Avalokiteśvara arose in the milieu of fifth century Mathurā. For more information concerning the cult of Avalokiteśvara see de Mallmann 1948 and Holt 1991.

[74] Concerning the early Buddhist ritual "innovations", some of which are indebted to non-Buddhist sources (such as the *rājasūya* rite), see Snellgrove 1959b.

[75] See Basham 1954:68-69.

unsystematized fashion. In the Tantras of what Matsunaga characterizes as the middle period, which include the *Dainichikyō (Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi)* and the *Kongōchōkyō (Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha)*, however, these Tantric elements are systematized and integrated with Mahāyāna doctrines, a process which he calls the ritualization *(gikika)* of Mahāyāna doctrines.[76] This process is easily observed through the examination of texts such as the *Prajñāpāramitānaya (Rishukyō)*, which was translated into Chinese six times; the successive translations indicate a successive ritualization of the text.

It evidently did not take long, however, for this "ritualization" to become problematic. Later Tantras often take a more ambivalent view toward ritual, invoking what Faure calls, in the context of Chan Buddhism, the "rhetoric of immediacy".[77] The typical strategy of these texts is to explicitly reject or criticize the efficacy of ritual, and to claim that the only truly efficacious means to achieve awakening are yogic transformations, which are often conceived as interiorized versions of the rituals. Nonetheless, these texts continue to elaborate the central ritual arts such as maṇḍala construction, consecration therein, fire sacrifices and so forth, although they often contain caveats concerning the dangers of becoming overly attached to the ritual arts.[78]

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[76] See Matsunaga 1980 ch. 3, and also the de Jong's (1984) summary of this work, esp. p. 98.

[77] This idea is developed at length by Faure in his 1991 book of the same name. Faure points out that both Chan and esoteric Buddhism uphold the theory of "innate awakening" (本覺, *hongaku*), which appears in both cases to be the theoretical justification for the rejection of "skillful means", i.e., conventional, provisional teachings such as rites and folk traditions. The similarities between Tantric Buddhist discourse and Chan discourse in eighth century China are probably not coincidental. Both Chan and Tantric traditions based their rejection of ritual on the doctrine of innate Buddhahood, and from a certain perspective can probably seen as parallel (and roughly contemporaneous) Chinese and Indian attempts to wrestle with the same problem. In both cases as well we are dealing with what are by and large rhetorical strategies, since neither Chan nor Tantric traditions abandoned ritual, which a study of a limited range of textual sources might suggest. Faure notes, however, that this rhetoric was "traversed by multiple constraints", and that it, paradoxically, allowed esoteric traditions to assimilate local cults, a process notable both in the contexts of Tibet and Japan. See Faure 1991, pp. 60-61. This ambiguity was perhaps based on the fact that the very concept of "innate awakening" is itself based upon the idea of a "buddha nature" (佛性, *tathāgatagarbha)*, which is itself ambigious. This problem of ambiguity is discussed at length by Rawlinson (1983).

[78] See for example the passage in the *Vajraḍāka Tantra* translated in section 2.3.2.2 below.

Apparently, despite the critiques of outer ritual by adherents of inner yogic practice, the outer ritual was not supplanted by yogic practices, but was rather supplemented by them through a process of accretion. Hence, while the *anuttarayogatantras* emphasize the Creation and Perfection Stage yogic processes, their traditions still require that the student receive initiation in the maṇḍala before being instructed in the meditations,[79] and also continue to give instructions for the performance of a wide variety of rites.

Kāṇha, in his *Saṃvaravyākhyā,* advocates not so much the rejection of ritual but its internalization within the body. He describes as follows an internalized fire sacrifice, making it clear that other types of rites can be similarly internalized as well:

> Here there is no [visualization of a mantra] garland, no mantra recitation. The orgasmic exists in everything. Thus, without discursive thought energetically give rise to reverence, and always avoid fear and astonishment. The yogin should abide playfully. One who has this achieves in his body the recitations, fire sacrifices, worship, contemplations, the maṇḍala, the flasks, and the rites of colored powders and threads. Through the union of that which rubs and the rubbed, the fire of wisdom full blazes. It abides in the lotus of the navel, but when compelled by the winds of karma, smoke rises and it blazes, and illumines the orgasmic nature. When it arrives at the intuition wheel *(jñānacakra)*, the Buddhas are scorched, and it enters the beatific wheel *(saṃbhogacakra)*. Having worshipped the liberative art, it reaches the mind at the brow whorl *(ūrṇā)*. It proceeds from the essential gate called *Oḍḍiyāna* and reaches *Jalandhara.* Burning all of the Sugatas, if one has the force of mind of the goddess, one will not see conceptually. Entreating all of the Buddhas, the nectar is concocted and drips like a stream of milk. It arrived at the golden gate, and abides in the wheel of beatitude. It drips to the orifice of earth. Refreshing the mind like a water-pump, it nonetheless burns continuously and delights the Buddhas.[80]

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[79] Nāropa, for example, begins his *Karṇatantravajrapada,* an *upadeśa* on the subtle body yoga of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition with the following instruction: "Having relied from the start on the *Cakrasaṃvara,* bestow the four initiations in the maṇḍala of sixty-two [deities]." / thog mar 'khor lo sdom pa la brten nas // drug cu rtsa gnyis dkyil 'khor dbang bzhi bskur / (DT fol. 303a).

[80] / 'dir ni phreng med sngags bzlas med // lhan cig skyes pas thams cad gnas // de phyir mam rtog med pa yis // 'bad pas gus pa bskyed par bya // 'jigs dang ngo tsha rtag tu spang // rnal 'byor rol pas gnas par bya // 'di ldan bzlas brjod sbyin sreg dang // mchod sbyin bsam gtan dkyil 'khor sogs // bum pa rdul tshon thig cho ga / lus la lhan cig skyes grub pas // srub dang bsrub pa'i sbyor ba las // ye shes me ni shin tu 'bar // las kyi rlung gis bskul nas ni // lte ba'i padmar rnam par gnas // du ba 'thul ba 'bar ba dang // lhan cig skyes pa'i rang bzhin gsal // ye shes 'khor lor son pa yis // sang rgyas rnams ni bsregs nas ni // longs spyod rdzogs pa'i 'khor lor zhugs // thabs la mchod pa byas nas ni // mdzod spur yid ni zhugs gyur pas // aurdyana zhes ni bya ba yi // gnad kyi sgo nas 'thon nas kyang // dzālandharar rab tu zhugs // bde gshegs thams cad bsregs nas ni // lha mo yid kyi shugs ldan na // dmigs kyis mthong bar mi 'gyur ro // sangs rgyas thams cad bskul nas ni // bdud rtsi phung por byas nas kyang // 'o ma'i rgyun ltar 'dzag par 'gyur // gser gyi sgor ni zhugs par 'gyur // longs spyod 'khor lor gnas nas kyang // sa yi bu gar 'dzag par 'gyur // zo chun rgyun mo lta bu ni // sems kyi ngo bor ngal bso nas // rgyun mi 'chad par bsregs nas kyang // rgyal ba rnams ni mnyes par byed / (DT fol. 10b).

Represented here is the ideal of the yogin who is completely self-sufficient, taking his body as the sole site and requisite for the achievement of Awakening. He or she does not need the practice of outer ritual actions, some of which would presumably require the mobilization of resources that implies some sort of community, lay or monastic, or even a community of yogins and yoginis, using the materials of the charnel ground to construct maṇḍalas and so forth. This inner/outer dialectic is one which appears to pervade the history of Tantric Buddhism in India, and has interesting social implications, some of which will be discussed in the next chapter.

Generally speaking, later Tantric doxographical schemas are based on additions to the tripartite *kriyā-caryā/ubhaya-yoga* classification. Perhaps the earliest doxographic schema of Buddhist doctrines found in Tibet is the "Nine Vehicles" of the rNying-ma school.[81] A document listing these vehicles was found at Dunhuang, and is dated by Snellgrove to the late 10th century, which is quite early by Tibetan standards.[82] Six of the nine "vehicles" are different classes of Tantras. The first two are the *kriyā* and *ubhaya/upaya* classes; the other four are evidently derived from the *yoga*, as their names suggest, which follow: *yoga, anuyoga, atiyoga* and *mahāyoga.* Several Indic Tantras actually contain this list of four terms, where they appear to refer to different types of yogic processes, and not to categories of Tantras per se. The terms appear in a passage in the *Sarvatathāgatakāyavākcitta-kṛṣṇayamāri-nāma-tantra*, where they clearly designate four stages of a yogic process, as follows:

> The first meditation is *yoga*, the second *anuyoga*, the third *atiyoga*, and the fourth *mahāyoga. Yoga* is understood to be the perfection of Vajrasattva, and *anuyoga* is famed as the causally efficacious body of the deity. The perfection of all of the wheels is known to be *atiyoga. Mahāyoga* should be taken to be the Body, Speech and Mind [of the deity], the blessing of the divine eye *(divyacakṣus)*, etc.,

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[81] For a description of the "Nine Vehicles" see Dudjom Rinpoche (1991 pp. 223-318). Concerning the related nine vehicles of the Bon see Snellgrove 1967.

[82] See Snellgrove 1988 p. 1355.

> the entry of the Wisdom Wheel *(jñānacakra)*, the experience of ambrosia, worship *(pūjā)* and great praise *(mahāstotra).*[83]

The same list occurs in the *Sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvara* (JS), also evidently in the same hierarchical order, with *Mahāyoga* the ultimate stage.[84] A similar, but not identical, description also occurs in Kukurāja's *Śrivajrasattvaguhyārthadharavyūha,* as follows:

> The maṇḍala is perfected by means of the four types of yoga, and it is attained by means of the ritual observances. Being equipoised in intuition alone is called *yoga.* Worshipping and summoning by means of the play of feminine blessing is *anuyoga.* Creating, projecting and recollecting purified, perfected maṇḍalas is *atiyoga.* Perfection in the blessings *(adhisthāna)* and initiations *(abhiṣeka)* is *mahāyoga.*[85]

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[83] *Sarvatathāgatakāyavākcitta-kṛṣṇayamāri-nāma-tantra,* ch. 17: / dang por bsgom pa rnal 'byor te // gnyis pa rjes kyi rnal 'byor yin // gsum pa shin tu rnal 'byor te // bzhi pa rnal 'byor chen po'o // rdo rje sems dpa' rdzogs pa yin // rnal 'byor yin par 'di ltar 'dod // de ni rgyu mthun lha yi sku // rjes kyi rnal 'byor yin par grags // 'khor lo thams cad yongs rdzogs pa // shin tu rnal 'byor yin par grags // sku dang gsungs dang thugs rnams dang // lha yi mig sogs byin rlabs dang // ye shes 'khor lo gzhug pa dang // bdud rtsi myang ba dag dang ni // mchod dang bstod pa chen po dag / rnal 'byor chen po zhes bya'o / (DT fol. 150a). This passage is quoted by Tsongkhapa in his *sngags rim chen mo;* see Wayman 1977, p. 157.

[84] The JS introduces the terms *yoga, anuyoga, atiyoga* and *mahāyoga* in its second kalpa (DK fols. 153-54). Their import here is unclear, but they seem to refer to different yogic stages or processes. Śāntimitra's commentary on the JS, the *Sarvabuddhasamayogapañjikā* (Tōh. 1663), defines *yoga* as meditation on non-dual union with the deity. (DT fol. 66b). Regarding *anuyoga,* he states that "The practice of *anuyoga* is explained as 'Having abandoned a male form, one assumes the appearance of a goddess." (/ skyed pa'i gzugs spong nas lha mo'i ngo bor yongs su gyur pa'o // de yis zhes pa ni ji skad du bshad pa'i rje su sbyor ba byas pa'o / DT fol. 64b) This could be taken as referring to the body isolation practice of the Perfection Stage (if the practitioner is assumed to be male and the deity feminine); its reference to sexual transformation is somewhat unusual, but not necessarily out of place in a Yogini Tantra, and it no doubt refers to a visualized transformation . Regarding *atiyoga* he comments that "*ati* is the rapture of bliss, which is attained through the *atiyoga* which has the characteristic of complete union with all goddesses." (/ shin tu zhes pa ni bde ba'i rab tu dga' ba ste // lha mo thams cad dang yang dag par sbyor ba'i mtshan nyid can lhag pa'i sbyor ba'i bar yang 'thob par 'gyur ro / (DT 64a). Another passage seems to point toward *atiyoga* as being a Mind Isolation-type of Perfection Stage practice: "Through union *(yoga)* with Vajrasattva and the yoga termed *anuyoga,* there is *atiyoga* which is the total union with Vajrasattva. Its power is that it stabilizes, through which there is great bliss. By being sealed as the very actuality of Vajrasattva, there is the Mahāmudrā." (/ dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i sbyor ba dang / rjes su sbyor ba byas pa'i rnal 'byor bas shin tu sbyor ba ni dpal rdo rje sems dpa' kun tu sbyor ba'o // de yi mthu ni brtan par byas pa'o // des na bde chen po ste / rdo rje sems dpa'i ngo bo nyid du gyur pa'i rgyas btab pas na phyag rgya bde ba chen po'o / DT 65a). This is interesting for while the JS was one of the rNying-ma's 18 Mahāyoga Tantras, this formulation seems quite different than that which appears in classical rDzogs chen texts. On the other hand, it may just be an alternate formulation which was not as influential on the development of the rDzogs chen tradition as was, for example, those of the *Guhyagarba* tradition.

[85] Kukurāja's *Śrivajrasattvaguhyārthadharavyūha* is a commentary on the Vajrasattva section of the JS; / sbyor ba bzhi yi bye brag gis // dkyil 'khor rdzogs par byas nas ni // rje su 'gro ba'i las dag gis // dkyil 'khor bsgrub par bya ba yin // ye shes tsam la snyoms 'jug pa // sbyor ba zhes ni bya bar bshad // yum ldan byin brlabs rol pas mchod // gzhug pa rje su sbyor ba'o // dag mdzad dkyil 'khor rdzogs mdzad nas // 'phros 'du shin tu sbyor ba yin // byin brlabs dbang bskur las rdzogs pa // sbyor ba chen po zhes bya'o / (DT fol. 124b)

A similar but lengthier description is provided by brGya-byin sdang-po in his *Sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvaratantrārthodaraṭikā*, as follows:

> First, yoga, is worshipping oneself through union of oneself with the superior deity. The body of Mahāvajradhara produced through the five *abhisaṃbodhis*[86] is the superior deity, the essence of all Buddhas. One unites with the *mudrā* of his Body, Speech and Mind. One is initiated with the ornaments and costume, and receives the blessings, whereby one worships oneself. Regarding *anuyoga*, one worships through the further application *(anuyoga)* of the bliss of all yogas, and gives rise to a woman who accords with ones clan. For example, just as a shadow is produced when a shoot is illumined with light, when illumined by intuition *(jñāna)* an image which accords with reality *(dharmadhātu)* is produced. After undergoing the preliminaries of initiation *(abhiṣeka)* and blessing *(adhiṣṭhāna)*, she is exhorted with the signs and so forth, and then enjoyed. Abiding in blissful concentration for the sake of all yogas, the Victors are delighted and beings purified through the worship of *anuyoga*. Regarding *atiyoga*, when one takes pleasure in all things, then one is will succeed by means of *atiyoga*. Having purified the outer "sign" with lumious bliss, one creates the habitat and inhabitant maṇḍalas within the secret place. Regarding *mahāyoga*, this bliss which extracts the essence (*rasāyāna*) of all Buddhas achieves supreme bliss and the glorious life of Vajrasattva, youthful and free of disease.[87] Being initiated with the blessings of the six sense media *(āyatana)*, the blessings of the four elements,[88] the symbol of the crown and the vase of the goddess, and being purified, one attains the four glories through the bliss of *rasāyana*, which is the flow of *bodhicitta*.[89]

While there is no doubt a relation between these schemas, it is difficult to tell if they refer to an identical system of meditative processes. They are interesting, however, in that they

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[86] The five *abhisambodhis* are Creation Stage mediation techniques leading to Awakening, involving: 1) discernment of the sixteen voids; 2) creating the Spirit of Awakening; 3) contemplating the mind as adamant; 4) contemplating the voidness of the vajra-mind; and 5) contemplation of the equality of all Tathāgatas. See Rigzin 1986, p. 96.

[87] This is a quote from JS kalpa 2, fols. 153b. See section 2.3.1 above.

[88] Translating *gnas bzhi*, with assumption that *gnas* is an atypical translation of *bhūta*.

[89] / dang po sbyor ba ni / bdag nyid che ba'i lhar sbyor bas // bdag la bdag gis rab tu mchod // mngon par byang chub pa rnam pa lngas rgyu'i rdo rje 'chang chen po'i skur gyur pa ni che ba'i lha ste sangs rgyas kun gyi bdag nyid do // de nyid sku gsung thugs kyi phyag rgyar sbyor zhing / rgyan cha dang cha lugs dang dbang skur zhing byin gyis brlabs pas bdag la bdag gis mchod pa'o // rjes su sbyor ba ni / rnal 'byor thams cad bde ba yi // rjes su sbyor bas mchod byed cing // rigs dang mthun pa'i yum bskyed pa ni / dper na 'od kyi snang ba dand ldan pa'i dus su myu gu la grib ma skye ba bzhin ye shes kyi snang ba chos kyi dbying kyi rgyu mthun pa'i gzugs brnyan rnam par 'phrul te / dbang bskur ba dang byin gyis brlabs pa sngin du 'gro bas / brda la sogs pas bskul zhing rol par mdzad de / rnal 'byor thams cad kyi don la bde ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyis gnas shing / rjes su sbyor ba'i mchod pas rgyal ba mnyes pa dang 'gro ba dag par mdzad do // shin tu sbyor ba ni / kun la myong bar byed pas na // shin tu sbyor bas 'grub par 'gyur // 'od kyi bde bas phyi'i mtshan ma sbyangs nas gsang ba'i gnas su rten dang brten pa'i dkyil 'khor bskyed pa'o / sbyor ba chen po ni / sangs rgyas thams cad bdag nyid kyi // ra sa ya na'i bde ba yis // rdo rje sems dpa'i tshe 'grub cing // lang tsho nad med bde mchog 'grub // skye mched drug byin gyis brlab pa dang / gnas bzhi byin gyis brlab pa dang / dbu rgyan gyi mtshan ma dang / lha mo'i bum pas dbang bskur zhing khrus byas te / byang chub sems kyi rgyun ra sa ya na'i bde ba des dpal bzhi 'gyur 'grub pa'o / (DT fol. 274a,b)

suggest that the rNying-ma "nine vehicles" schema may have been derived from the transformation of what must have been a fairly well known system of meditation in four stages in the eighth century into a fourfold doxographic system. Significant perhaps as well is the fact that the JS was classified as one of the Mahāyoga Tantras by the rNying-ma, while the term *atiyoga* was applied to the rNying-ma's preeminent system of meditation, the *rdzogs-chen* or "Great Perfection".[90]

Yoga was also subject to a more common binary division, into *yoga* and *yogini* Tantras. This distinction is made along the pole of sex distinction; another parallel distinction was between *upāya* and *prajñā*, which were also thought to correspond to the masculine and feminine respectively; this distinction was made not only on the basis of the gender of the nouns in Sanskrit, but also, more generally, Buddhists considered liberative art or *upāya* to be a masculine quality, and wisdom or *prajñā* to be a feminine quality. Generally these associations are quite ancient; certainly *prajñā* came to be embodied as the goddess *Prajñāpāramitā* early in the first millennium.

This distinction was probably already made by the eighth century, for it occurs in the writing of Vilāsavajra who can be dated to this period, as will be discussed below. Another early occurrence of assignment of texts along gender polarity occurs in Jñānamitra's commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitānaya-sūtra.*[91] Commenting on the salutation that at the beginning of the *Prajñāpāramitā-naya*, "Homage to Bhagavati Prajñāpāramitā", he wrote:

[She] has conquered *(bhagna)* the four Māras and possesses the six virtues *(bhaga)*;[92] Prajñāpāramitā is the Mother whence arises all Tathāgatas, which here is known as the

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[90] The early history of the rdzog-chen school is discussed at length by Germano in his 1994 article. He does not discuss, however, these occurrences of the terms *atiyoga* etc. in these two Indic Tantras.

[91] This text is discussed at length by Eastman in his 1981 article. Jñānamitra was likely to have lived in the late ninth to early tenth century. According to the Blue Annals he taught at Vikramaśīla. He was a teacher of Balin ācārya who was a contemporary of Nāropa (Roerich 1949:372-73); Nāropa's dates have been calculated as being 956-1040 C.E. (See Wylie 1982). See also section 5.2 below.

[92] These represent the classic (folk) etymologies of *bhagavan* found in a wide array of Buddhist texts; see Tsongkhapa's analysis of the first chapter of the CST below for a discussion of this.

Śriparamādhyamālā. What then is the Father of the Tathāgatas? It is taught that the Father is the profound *mantrasūtra* known as the *Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra.*[93]

The *prajñā* or *yoginitantra*s were understood to stand in a certain relationship with the *Prajñāpāramitā* class of literature; it was a focus on wisdom, *prajñā,* that supposedly differentiated them from their "masculine" yoga counterparts. In particular, they were understood to represent a "method", *naya,* for the cultivation of this wisdom, providing the efficacious means that adherents of the Vajrayāna believed the *pāramitā* vehicle lacked. As such, the *Prajñāpāramitānaya* appears to occupy a crucial place in the genealogy of the Yoginitantras, an explicit link between the Prajñāpāramitā corpus and the Yoginitantras, which were known for their focus on sexual bliss; this link will be further explored in section 6.2.1 below.

The *Ḍākinivajrapañjara,* an Explanatory Tantra for the *Hevajra,* which is one of the most important Yoginitantras along with the *Cakrasaṃvara,* describes the Tantra classes as follows:

> The Method of the Perfection of Wisdom *(Prajñāpāramitānaya)* is called 'yoginī', who is served for the sake of union with the Mahāmudrā. The *Vajrapañjara* of the yoginī is called the 'Yoginī Tantra'. The art of all perfections is attained through contemplation *(dhyāna)* alone. The *Hevajra* maṇḍala, the *Sarvabuddha[samayoga],* the *Guhyagarbha,* the *Vajrāmṛta,* the *Cakrasaṃvara,* and the *[Vajra]pañjara*[94] are famed as the six Yoginītantra. The Yogatantras were taught for the sake of disciplining men. Yoginītantras were taught in order to assemble women. Kriyātantra [was taught] for the inferior, and the *caryā*[95] for everyone else. Yoga[tantras] are taught for superior beings, and Anuttarayoga for those who are even greater.[96]

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[93] Jñānamitra's *Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatikā-ṭīkā:* / gzhung las bcom ldan 'das ma shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la phyag 'tshal lo zhes byung ba ni / bdud bzhi bcom ste yon tan drug dang ldan pa de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad 'byung ba'i yum shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la dpal dam pa phreng ba zhes bya ba zhes bya ba 'di yin no // yum smos pa las na de bzhin gshegs pa'i yab kyang smos dgos te gang zhe na / yab ni tantra tattvasaṃgraha / zhes bya ba sngags kyi mdo sde zab mo yin par ston to / (DT fol. 274a).

[94] The six Tantras listed here appear to be: 1. *Hevajra Tantra* (HV), Tōh. 417; 2. *Sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvara* (JS), Tōh. 366; 3. *Guhyagarbha,* presumably the *Śriguhyagarbhatattvaviniścaya,* Tōh. 832; 4. *Vajrāmṛta,* Tōh. 435; 5. *Cakrasaṃvara* (CST), Tōh. 368; 6. *Vajrapañjara* (DP), Tōh. 419.

[95] Literally "that which is not *kriyā (bya min, akriyā);* see Gyurme and Kapstein 1991, vol. 2, note 256, p. 19.

[96] DP ch.13 / shes rab pha rol phyin pa'i thabs // rnal 'byor ma zhes mngon par brjod // phyag rgya chen po'i sbyor ba las // gang phyir de nyid bsten pa yi // rnal 'byor ma yi rdo rje gur // rnal 'byor ma yi rgyud

According to Devakulamahāmati, the classes of Tantra described here are based upon the initial distinction between outer actions and inner yogic transformations, and the various types of yoga-centric Tantras are seen as being hierarchically arranged, from the sublime to the even more sublime, with the most sublime, the *anuttarayogatantra*, involving a completely internal process of integration *(yuganaddha)*.[97]

Many distinctions in addition to those above have been drawn between the Yoga and Yogini Tantras in various Indian and Tibetan sources. Kāṇha, and important *mahāsiddha* and commentator on both the *Hevajra* and *Cakrasaṃvara Tantras* who lived in the late eighth and/or early ninth centuries,[98] relates the four classes of Tantra to the four degrees of intimacy exhibited by *kāmadhātu* deities, and distinguishes between *yoga* and *yogini* Tantras on the basis of their meditative specialty, as follows in his *Guhyatattvaprakāśa*:

> The four classes of Tantra are distinguished by the four ages of time,[99] which are laughing, looking, hand-holding and embracing. Likewise, there are four classes of Tantras. The *Guhyasamāja* also speaks of two aspects, the Creation

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ces bshad // pha rol phyin pa kun gyi thabs // bsam gtan tsam gyis 'grub par 'gyur // kye yi rdo rje dkyil 'khor sangs rgyas kun // gsang mdzod rdo rje bdud rtsi 'byung ba dang // 'khor lo sdom pa gur dang 'byung gnas ni // rnal 'byor ma rgyud drug tu rab tu grags // skyes bu rnams ni gdul ba'i phyir // rnal 'byor rgyud ni yang dag bshad // btsun mo rnams ni bsdu ba'i phyir // rnal 'byor ma yi rgyud bshad do // dman pa rnams la bya ba'i rgyud // bya min rnal 'byor de lhag la // sems can mchog la rnal 'byor mchog / rnal 'byor gong med de lhag la / (DT 54b)

[97] Devakulamahāmati wrote in his *ḍākinivajrajāla-tantrarāja-tattvapauṣṭikapañjika-nāma* that "*kriyātantra* involves the external visualization of the deity as food, etc., and the earnest practice of purification, silence and so forth. *kriyāyoga* (*=caryātantra)* involves visualization [of the deity] external to oneself. Yoga is the visualization of the experiental unity *(ekarasa)* of oneself and the wisdom [hero] who arises from one's own wheel (*cakra)*. Superior Yoga *(rnal 'byor bla ma)* is engaging in the great secret of supreme joy which arises from the embrace with one's consort *(vidyā)*. Unexcelled Yoga *(anuttarayoga)* involves the conception of the supreme bliss which arises from the union of vajra and lotus of oneself as the deity." / bya ba'i rgyud ces bya ba ni phyi rol du za ma la sogs pa'i lhar dmigs pa dang / gtsang sbra dang mi smra ba la sogs pa lhur spyod pa // bya ba'i sbyor ba zhes bya ba ni // bdag las phyi rol du dmigs pa'o // rnal 'byor zhes bya ba ni rang gi 'khor los sgyur ba'i ye shes dang bdag nyid ro gcig tu dmigs pa'o // rnal 'byor bla ma zhes bya ba ni rang gi rig pa dang 'khyud pa las byung ba'i dga' ba mchog gi gsang chen la spyod pa'o // rnal 'byor bla ma med pa zhes bya ba ni / rang gi lha'i rdo rje dang padma sbyor ba las skyes pa'i bde mchog la dmigs pa'o / (ch. 13 DT fol. 91a).

[98] This date is based on Tāranātha's claim that Kāṇha was a contemporary of King Devapāla (Chimpa & Chattopadhyaya 1970:268), who ascended the Pāla throne in 810 C.E. (see Hazra 1995 pp. 232-33). See also Snellgrove 1959 vol. 1, p. 14.

[99] That is, the four ages *(caturyuga)* with which the Tantra classes are sometimes associated. See section 4.3 below.

> and the Perfection stages. The Yoga [Tantras] teach the Creation [stage], and the Perfection [stage] is taught in the Yoginī [Tantras].[100]

Later in the same text he distinguishes the Yoga and Yoginī Tantras on the basis of their *nidāna* verses, saying that "The [statement] that 'the Blessed Lord resides in the vulva of the Adamantine Lady'[101] is well known in the Yoga Tantras; 'The Hero made of all ḍākinīs, Vajrasattva, Supreme Bliss, always abides in the secret supreme delighted, the Universal Self'[102] is taught elsewhere [in the Yoginītantras]."[103]

Kāṇha here used a different terminology than that used by the later Tibetans, who consider both "Father Tantras" such as the *Guhyasamāja* and the "Mother Tantras" such as the *Cakrasaṃvara* to be Unexcelled Yogatantras. However, differences such as these, and many others as well, were recognized by Tibetans as distinguishing the "Father/Mother", "Yoga/Yoginī" Tantras; Bu-ston lists many more in his commentaries,[104] but he particularly

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[100] TP ch. 1: / dus ni rnam par bzhi'i dbye ba yis // rgyud ni rnam pa bzhir 'gyur te // brgad pa dang ni bltas pa dang // de bzhin gzhan ni lag bcangs dang // gnyis gnyis sprod pa bzhi pa ste // de dag rgyud ni rnam pa bzhi // 'dus pa'ang rnam gnyis gsung te // bskyed dang rdzogs byung rim pa'o // rnal 'byor bskyed par bstan pa ste // rdzogs pa rnal 'byor ma ru brjod / (DT 349b).

[101] Kāṇha here refers to the infamous nidāna verse of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, which is discussed in section 5.1 below.

[102] Kāṇha here quotes the "Yoginītantra nidāna" as it occurs in the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra; similar versions occur in texts such as the VD, JS and SP. CST ch. 1 v. 2.c-3b: rahasye parame ramye sarvātmani sadā sthitaḥ // sarvaḍākinīmayaḥ sattvo vajrasattvaḥ paraṃ sukhaṃ //; / gsang ba mchog gi dgyes pa na // thams cad bdag nyid rtag tu bzhugs // mkha' 'gro kun dngos sems dpa' ni // rdo rje sems dpa' bde ba'i mchog / See appendix A below.

[103] TP ch. 1: / sku gsung thugs dang rdo rje zhes // btsun mo'i bha ga rnams la 'dir // bcom ldan 'das ni bzhugs su zhes // rnal 'byor rgyud las rab tu grags // gsang ba'i mchog gi dgyes pa ni // thams cad bdag nyid rtag tu bzhugs // mkha' 'gro kun dngos sems dpa' ni // rdo rje sems dpa' bde ba mchog / zhes bya ba yang gzhan du bstan / (DT 350b).

[104] Bu-ston, for example, lists in his DS commentary a large number of differences in a passage far to long to translate. Major points I will summarize instead as follows: Bu-ston comments that the Mother Tantras (MT) generally present a ferocity of a conduct and appearance of the deities which is generally not found in Father Tantras (FT); he qualifies this statement, however, pointing out that peaceful deities do occur in the MT, and fierce ones in the FT, which is certainly the case, given the fact the FT include the Tantras of fierce deities such as Yamāntaka and Vajrabhairava (DS p. 37) He likewise mentions the two different nidānas of the FT and MT, and states that generally the FT teach "liberative art extensively", while MT teach "wisdom profoundly". Switching terminology somewhat, he goes on to say that the *Upāyatantras* (UT) focus on the realities *(tattva)* of the Creation stage, and the *Prajñātantras* (PT) on the Perfection stage *tattvas* (DS p. 38). He goes on to discuss the different ways the maṇḍala is visualized, stating that in the UP the maṇḍala palace or adamantine earth is generated from the dissolution of the stacked-up elemental disks, but in the PT the palace is created on top of the disks. In the UP the divine couple has equal numbers of faces and arms, while in PT they are unequal (DS p. 39). He then gives an interesting comparison of the appearances of the central deities of the Tantras, which occurs as follow: "If [the central deity] sits on lion throne atop lion thrones or jeweled thrones, and if His ornaments are precious and his emblems largely wheels and jewels, and if the fiercely composed deities sit with their left legs extended,

stresses the predominance of the feminine in the Mother/Yoginī/Prajñā Tantras, claiming that in Mother Tantras goddesses predominate and often take the central roles of Teacher, interlocutor or compiler of the Tantra, and that they were taught primarily for the sake of women.[105]

Other cases of doxographic expansion appear to be simple cases of addition of a new class which is considered to be the ultimate, supreme class in order to legitimate the Tantras contained in that class. The fourfold categorization appears to have developed from the addition of an extra class over and above the *kriyā, caryā/ubhaya, yoga* trio. An early example is the category of *mahāyoga,* which, as Eastman has shown in his 1981 article, was originally a name for a compilation of eighteen Tantras which included texts which would later understood to be Father and Mother Tantras of the *Anuttarayoga Tantra* class. At some point, however, the term *mahāyoga* came to refer to the "highest class of Tantras". It is clearly used in this sense in the *Vajrajñānasamuccaya,* an Explanatory

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and the peacefully composed ones sit lifting their left sides, and have silk robes, it is an *Upāyatantra.* But it is a Mother Tantra if the seats are corpses, skulls, etc., and the ornaments bone ornaments and garlands of heads and human hands, and if the emblems are flaying knives, skulls, skull staves *(khatvāṅga),* and *ḍamaru,* etc., and if the deities sit with their right legs extended and their right sides elevated, and if the have robes of human or elephant hide, or are naked without robes. Also, if their are charnel grounds in the maṇḍala, it is a Mother Tantra; if there are none it is a Father Tantra. This is what the gurus say." (DS pp. 40-41). Buston continues (pp. 41-44) with a discussion of the differences in the meditation systems between the FT and MT, but these finer distinctions are beyond the scope of general comparison.

[105] Bu-ston argues in his DS comm. that "Father Tantras are taught by Vajradhara or Vajrasattva amidst a retinue which includes women. Mother Tantras are taught by Heruka or a goddess such as Ḍākinī...In Father Tantras, a Buddha, bodhisattva or male god of the retinue is the interlocutor of the Teacher Vajradhara; in Mother Tantras, when the Teacher is male the interlocutor is a goddess, or he is questioned concerning a goddess....The Compliers of Father Tantras are male, of Mother Tantras, female....Father Tantras are [taught] in order to train male disciples, Mother Tantras for the sake of training women....Father Tantras are [taught] so that persons of one's own class who have unerronous views can attain Awakening; Mother Tantras are [taught] in order to train outsiders who delight in killing and so forth, and who adhere to erronous views and spiritual paths." / btsun mo'i tshogs dang bcas pa'i 'khor gyi dbus su rdo rje 'chang ngam rdo rje sems dpa'i rnam pas gsungs pa ni pha rgyud / he ru ka'am mkha' 'gro'i lha mos gsungs pa ni ma rgyud de / (p. 42) .... ston pa po rdo rje 'chang la 'khor sangs rgyas byang sems sam lha pho zhus pa pha rgyud / ston pa po pha yin yang lha mos zhus pa'am / lha mo'i ched du zhus pa ma rgyud de /....lha phos bsdus pa ni pha rgyud / mos bsdus pa ni ma rgyud de /..../ yang rang gi sde pa'i rten gyi gang zag lta ba phyin ci ma log pa dang ldan pa de la byang chub sgrub par 'dod pa la pha rgyud / phyi rol pa'i gang zag srog gcod pa la sogs pa la dga' zhing / lta ba dang lam phyin ci log tu gyur pa rnams gdul ba'i phyir ma rgyud de / (p. 43)

Tantra of the *Guhyasamāja,* which for some time was considered to be the preeminent "Mahāyoga" Tantra.[106]

In India there evidently were competing systems of classification, and it is not at all clear that the fourfold system popularized later by Bu-ston was ever recognized there as the preeminent system. The idea that the categories were four in number appears, however, to have been quite popular, no doubt due to the ubiquity of the number four in Indian classification schemes, which allowed the correlation of the four classes with other fourfold sets such as the four ages *(caturyuga)* or the four castes *(caturvarṇa).*[107] There appear to have been two competing fourfold systems, each based on the previous triadic schema. One divided yoga along gender polarity, resulting in the *kriyā, caryā, yoga* and *yogini* system.

This added fourth category was understood by its advocates as superseding the other three; as in the case of the Chinese *Pan-jiao* classification schemas, these attempts at categorization sought "to impose a hierarchical structure on the various doctrines with the teachings of one's own school on top; and....to try to determine the highest teaching, namely, that which was closest to representing the Buddha's own enlightenment." (McMahon 1998:267) In Tantric Buddhist discourse, the "highest" teaching is always that which is most practically efficacious, meaning that its *praxis* is most conducive to the

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[106] The *Vajrajñānasamuccaya* gives the following list of Tantra classes, which are hierarchically arranged by the number of Tantras that each class is claimed to contain: "It is said that there are twelve thousand *mahāyogatantras,* but if broadly classified they are innumerable. There are six thousand *ubhayatantra,* eight thousand *caryātantra,* four thousand *kriyātantra,* and four thousand *kalpatantra,* making thirty-four thousand in all." / rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud kyi ming stong phrag bcu gnyis zhes bya ste / rgyas par phye na grang med do // gnyis ka'i rgyud stong phrag drug go // spyod pa'i rgyud stong phrag brgyad do // bya ba'i rgyud stong phrag bzhi'o // rtog pa'i rgyud stong phrag bzhi'o // de dag ni stong phrag sum cu rtsa bzhi ste / (DT fols. 284b-85a) This list is unconventional in that considers the *ubhaya* and *caryā* as separate classes, which are elsewhere alternatives not occuring in the same text; it is also unique in claiming a class of *kalpatantras; kalpa* is a term by which numerous early "Tantric" texts, such as the *Mañjuśriśrimūlakalpa,* were designated; the term seem to denote a compendium of lore concerning a topic such as a the cult of a particular deity; nowhere else have I have I found it used as a term for a class of Tantras. For more information concerning this passage see Eimer 1993.

[107] The pervasion of Indian classification systems by the number four in documented at length by Smith in his 1994 book.

achievement of the ultimate goal, complete Awakening in this very life, and if it results in accruement of the various mundane powers as well so much the better.

One common assertion of superiority found in the Yoginītantras is that which occurred in the *Ḍākinīvajrapañjara* quote above, that they teach a method of attaining all of the perfections *(pāramitā)* and powers *(siddhi)* taught in other texts by means of contemplation *(dhyāna)* alone. The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* for example, claims that it teaches a superior form of yoga which allows rapid success not only of all of the goals mentioned within it, but also all those mentioned in other texts as well:

> Whatever powers do not occur [in this Tantra], but which are taught in the *Ṭattvasaṃgraha,* and likewise in the *Saṃvara,* the *Guhya[samāja] Tantra,* the *Śriparamadhya,* or in the *Vajrabhairava,* attained by means of recitation *(japa),* observances *(vrata),* and so forth, the Mantrin will achieve here instantaneously, by means of contemplation *(dhyāna).*[108]

The claim that meditative contemplation alone can achieve everything that the more complex ritual actions are thought to achieve is characteristic of the Yoginī Tantras, given their inward focus and the common characterization that they focus more on wisdom, a characterization which seems to some degree to be justified.

The adherents of a competing system, perhaps associated with the *Guhyasamāja* tradition, added another superseding category, that of the *mahāyoga* or *anuttarayoga.* There were various attempts to resolve these two systems; one strategy occurring in Indic texts was to include both in the schema, which yielded five classes.[109] There are alternate fivefold classification systems found in Indic texts as well, such as the following which occurs in the *Ḍākinīsarvacittādvayācintyajñānavajravārāhyabhibhava-tantrarāja,* as follows:

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[108] CST ch. 27, vv. 22.b-24.b: / dngos grub gang las 'byung mi 'gyur // de nyid bsdus las gang gsungs dang // de bzhin bde mchog las gang gsungs // gsang ba'i rgyud las yang dag bshad // de bzhin dpal mchog dang po dang // rdo rje 'jigs byed rgyud du ni // bzlas dang brtul zhugs sogs 'grub ste // de 'dir bsam gtan tsam gyis ni // sngags pas skad cig gis 'grub 'gyur / (DK fol. 232a). Concerning the identities of these Tantras, such as the *Saṃvara,* which is in reference to the JS, see section 4.3.1 below.

[109] For example, Alaṃkakalaśa, in his *Śrīvajramālāmahāyogatantraṭikā-gaṁbhirārthdipaka-nāma,* listed five categories, which are the classes of *kriyā, caryā, yoga, mahāyoga,* and *yoginī* Tantras, which he correlates with the social classes (DT fol. 3a). This passage is quoted and discussed at length in section 4.3 below.

> "Listen, oh Lady of the Charnel Ground *(smaśāneśvari)*. All of the beings of *saṃsāra* are obscured by the darkness of misknowledge. Since they are sunk in the ocean of *saṃsāra* and mired in the mud of the addictions *(kleśa)*, all of the Buddhas of the three times have taught the eighty-four thousand, as many as can be counted, Dharma gates as cures for the addicted. They gradually taught the ordinary vehicle for the sake of those of middling and superior faculties. The *sūtra, vinaya* and *abhidharma* are the roots of all teachings. The inconceivably compassionate Sugata taught sentient beings in this way."
>
> Then the Lady of the Charnel Ground made the following request. "Unexcelled Teacher Heruka! You have taught the ordinary vehicle. What the Extremely Secret Mantra [vehicle] is like? Would you distinguish the classes of Tantras?....Oh Great Hero, please explain."
>
> Then the Teacher Heruka replied, "Listen, oh Lady of the Charnel Ground! I will explain the Secret Mantra Tantras for the sake of fortunate individuals. Abandon the three defects[110] and listen. The five types of *kriyātantra* are taught for those who emphasize ritual actions *(kriyā)*. The five kinds of the *ubhayatantra* are taught for those who emphasize practice *(caryā)*. The five kinds of *yogatantra* are taught for those who emphasize the mind itself. The five *anuttaratantra*s are taught for those who emphasize bliss and voidness. The five *niruttaratantra (gong na med pa'i rgyud)* are taught for those devoid of mental activity. Therefore, there the five classes of Tantra are famed as the "Secret Mantra Tantra". Each of these five have five, making twenty five *mahātantra*s, which are unarisen and will not arise."[111]

The strategy which was finally adopted was to take the male/female polarity as a subdivision of the fourth and highest category, however defined. An early version of this

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[110] Literally, the three kinds of defect of a vessel, the vessel being a metaphor for the student, who is to be a vessel for the Teaching. These are: having the mouth of the vessel sealed (i.e., not being open to the teaching), being like an open but unclean spittoon, (i.e., one who is not appropriate for the teaching), or having a leaky base (i.e., someone who listens to the teaching but does not reflect and meditate upon it, thus wasting the opportunity it afforded.) See Das 1902 p. 772.1.

[111] Ch. 7: / nyon cig dur khrod bdag mo khyod // 'khor ba'i sems can thams cad la // ma rig pa yi mun pas bsgribs // 'khor ba'i rgya mtsho chen por ltung // nyon mongs 'dam du bying ba yis // dus gsum sangs rgyas thams cad kyis // chos kyi sgo mo brgyad khri dang // bzhi stong gi ni grangs snyed kun // nyon mongs pa yi gnyen por bstan // dbang po rab 'bring dang sbyar nas // thun mong theg pa rim gyis bstan // mdo sde 'dul ba mngon pa gsum // bstan pa kun gyi rtsa ba yin // bder gshegs thugs rje bsam mi khyab // sems can rnams la de ltar bstan // de nas dur khrod bdag mo des yang 'di skad ces gsol to // bla med ston pa he ru ka // thun mong theg pa de ltar bstan // khyad par gsang sngags ji ltar lags // rgyud sde rnams kyi dbyed ba shu /..../ dpa' bo chen pos bshad du gsol // zhes zhus so // de nas ston pa he ru kas // nyon cig dur khrod bdag mo khyod // skal par ldan pa'i gang zag la // gsang sngags rgyud sde ngas bshad kyis // snod skyon gsum po spangs la nyon // bya ba gtso bor byed pa la // kri ya'i rgyud sde rnam lnga bstan // spyod pa gtso bor byed pa la // gnyis pa'i rgyud sde rnam lnga bstan // sems nyid gtso bor byed pa la // rnal 'byor rgyud sde rnam lnga bstan // bde stong gtso bor byed pa la // bla na med pa'i rgyud lnga bstan // yid la byed pa med rnams la // gong na med pa'i rgyud lnga bstan // de phyir rgyud sde rnam pa lnga // gsang sngags rgyud ces bya bar grags // re re la yang lnga lnga ste // rgyud chen nyi shu rtsa lnga ni // ma byung 'byung bar mi 'gyur ro // zhes gsungs so / (DK fol. 65a,b)

strategy occurs in a work by Vilāsavajra, an eighth century[112] commentator on several of the Buddhist Tantras. He wrote in his commentary on the *Guhyagarbha Tantra* that

> In reality there are three [types of Tantras]: *kriyātantras* such as the *Vajrapaṇyabhiṣekha,*[113] etc., "Capability Tantras"[114] such as the *Tattvasaṁgraha,* etc., and Art Vehicle Tantras. In that there are three [categories]: *Upāyatantras* such as the *Śrī Guhyasamāja, prajñātantras* such as the *Śrisamvara* and "Hermaphrodite Tantras" such as the *Arisal of the Buddha.*[115] In regard to these, since the *Śrī Guhyagarbha* completes the aim of all Tantras (as their) cause and effect, it teaches in common with all Tantras.[116]

This passage is interesting not only because it embeds the prajñā/upāya distinction within another category, but also because it attempts to mediate this polarity through the inclusion of the "hermaphrodite" class; this is a strategy was later adopted by advocates of the *Kālacakra Tantra* in Tibet. Finally, Vilāsavajra here takes the strategy of placing the Tantra on which he is commenting, and toward which he is evidently partial, outside of the schema entirely; claiming that it both "completes" and harmonizes with all of the other categories, he in effect accords it the status of the *summum bonum* amongst the Tantras.[117]

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[112] That Vilāsavajra lived in the eighth century is indicated by the fact that he was the instructor in India of the Tibetan translator rMa rin chen mchog, who departed Tibet for India in approximately 779 CE. See Davidson 1981 pp. 6-7.

[113] That is, the *Āryavajrapāṇyabhiṣeka-mahātantra.*

[114] Vilāsavajra's category of "capability tantra" *(thub pa'i rgyud)* seems to correspond to the Yogatantras, for he gives as an example the *Tattvasaṃgraha* which was considered as such by his contemporary, Buddhaguhya. It may however have some connection to the rNying-ma category of the same name which corresponds to the original triad of the classes of Tantras, namely, the kriyā, carya/ ubhaya & yogatantras. See Guenther 1987: x.

[115] The first mentioned Tantra is the *Āryavajrapaṇyabhiṣeka-mahātantra* (Tōh. 496), which is often given as an example of a *kriyātantra.* The "*Śrisaṃvara*" undoubtably refers to the JS rather than the CST, for reasons which will be discussed in section 3.4.2 below. The "*Arisal of the Buddha*" (dpal buddha 'byung ba) does not correspond to any Tantra with which I am familiar.

[116] This passage occurs in Vilāsavajra's *Mahārājatantra-śriguhyagarbha-nāma-ṭikā,* as follows: / ngo bo la gsum ste / phyag na rdo rje dbang bskur ba la sogs pa bya ba'i rgyud dang / de kho na nyid bsdus pa la sogs pa thub pa'i rgyud dang / thabs kyi theg pa'i rgyud do // de la yang gsum ste / dpal gsang ba 'dus pa la sogs pa thabs kyi rgyud dang / dpal bde mchogs la sogs pa shes rab kyi rgyud dang / dpal buddha 'byung ba la sogs pa ma ning gi rgyud do // de la dpal gsang ba'i snying po 'di ni thams cad kyi don dang rgyu 'bras tshang bar 'byung ba'i phyir / rgyud thams cad kyi spyi yin par gsungs so / (Sanje Dorje p. 7).

[117] It should be noted that Vilāsavajra's *Guhyagarbha*-centric presentation of Tantric doxography is limited to his commentary on that text; in his commentary on the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti,* his *Āryanāmasaṃgītiṭikā-mantrārthāvalokini-nāma,* he mentions only the basic tripartite schema of *kriyā, caryā* and *yoga,* writing that "*yoga, caryā* and *kriyātantra* are in this way the *pāramitā* method." / rnal 'byor spyod dang bya ba'i rgyud // de bzhin pha rol phyin pa'i tshul / (AN, DT fol. 27b).

Kāṇha, in his *Yogaratnamāla,* relates the four Tantra classes both to the four ages and the four *anuttarayogatantra* initiations.[118] By the time Śraddhākaravarma, a late tenth century Kashmiri scholar who aided Rinchen bZang-po with his translations, the four-fold schema seems to have been pretty well established. He wrote in his *Yogānuttaratantrārthāvatāra-saṃgraha* that "there are four doors of entry into the Adamantine Vehicle of Mantric fruition. These are generally known as *kriyātantra, caryātantra, yoga[tantra]* and *mahā[yoga]tantra.* These are secret and hidden, since they are secret for those who are not vessels for attainment."[119] Following the Guhyasamāja tradition of exegesis, Śraddhākaravarma holds that *mahāyoga* category contains numerous subdivisions, including that between *prajñā* and *upāyatantra,* as follows:

> Regarding the Mahāyoga Tantra [class] it is said that its disciples are those of supreme faculties, and its import primarily concerns yoga. In brief there are twelve thousand of them, but extensively speaking there are inconceivable tens of millions.[120] Moreover, there are two types of Mahāyoga Tantras, the Natural Tantras and the Constructed Tantras.
>
> In short there are three types of Natural Tantras, the Causal Tantra, Fruition Tantra, and Art Tantra *(upāyatantra),* as it says in the *Guhyasamāja Uttaratantra,* "*tantra* is known as a 'continuum', and it has the three aspects of basis, nature, and non-deprivation. Its nature aspect is the cause, and non-deprivation is the fruit, and the base is the means. These three comprise the meanings of the [term] *tantra.*"[121]

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[118] Kāṇha, commenting on the HV kalpa 2 ch. 3, v. 11, wrote: "Laughing and so forth is said to indicate the purification of the initiations. Laughing, in some *kriyātantra,* indicates the passion of the deities of Wisdom and Art. Purification by that means is called *ācārya,* i.e., the Master initiation. In some *caryātantra* the passion of Wisdom and Art [deities] is indicated by their gazing at each other, and the Secret initiation is purification by that means. In some *yogatantra* the Wisdom and Art [deities] mutually embrace, purification by means of which is the Wisdom initiation. In some *anuttara[yogatantras]* the Wisdom and Art deities are equipoised in the union in which the couple form a continuum, purification by which means is the Fourth Initiation." Cf. Farrow and Menon 1992, pp. 183-84. The Sanskrit is edited by Snellgrove as follows: hastitety ādina sekānāṃ viśuddhim āha / kvacit kriyātantre devatānāṃ prajñopāyayor anurāgasūcakaṃ hasitaṃ tadviśuddhyā ācārya iti ācāryābhiṣekaḥ / kvacic caryātantre prajñopāyayor anurāgasūcakam anyonyanirīkṣaṇaṃ tadviśuddhyā guhyābhiṣekaḥ / kvacid yogatantre prajñopāyayor anyonyaliṅganaṃ tadviśuddhiḥ prajñābhiṣekaḥ / kvacid anuttarādau prajñopāyayor dvandvatantraṇaṃ dvandvasamāpattiḥ tadviśuddhiś catuttho 'bhiṣekaḥ / (1959 vol. 2 p. 142)

[119] / gsang sngags 'bras bu rdo rje theg pa la ni 'jug pa'i sgo rnam pa bzhi ste / bya ba'i rgyud dang / spyod pa'i rgyud dang / rnal 'byor chen po rgyud ces spyir grags pa yin no / de dag kyang gsang zhing sbas pas 'grub la snod ma yin pas na gsang ba'o / (DT fol. 105b)

[120] Śraddhākaravarma here follows the *Jñānavajrasamuccaya,* the same passage from which is quoted above.

[121] This is the famous passage from the *Uttaratantra* quoted above in section 1.2.

> Constructed Tantras also have two types, Yoga Art Tantras and Yoga Wisdom Tantras. These are also called Supreme Yoga Tantras and Unexcelled Yoga Tantras *(anuttarayogayantra)*. They are designated as *vidyātantras* and *mūlatantras*. In regard to the differences between Art and Wisdom Tantras, those Tantras which teach primarily Thatness extensively...are Art Tantras, and those in which it is mainly taught profoundly are Wisdom Tantras. Those in which maṇḍalas with a majority of male deities are shown for the sake disciplining of men and those of one's one school are Art Tantras. Those in which are taught, for the sake of disciplining women and outsiders, maṇḍalas in which the majority are goddesses who are accordant with them are Wisdom Tantras. Those which teach the deities who purify the outer and inner aggregates, elements and sense media are Art Tantras. Those which teach the deities who purify the inner and outer channels and bodhicitta are Wisdom Tantras. Those which teach the type of deities who accord with the world are Art Tantras. Those which teach the type of deities who go against the world are Wisdom Tantras.[122]

Evidently, by the late tenth century when the second transmission of the Dharma to Tibet commenced, there had developed a number of systems of Tantric doxography in India, including several versions of the fourfold schema. The Tibetans were not confronted with any dearth of either scriptures or exegesis. Rather, they were faced with a diverse abundance that was as rich as it was complex, and often bewilderingly so, as different traditions often contradicted each other, particularly when it came to legitimating claims of superiority. Different Tibetans, perhaps to bolster their authority, claimed superiority for the tradition on which their authority rested. And while in so doing they were definitely

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[122] / rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud ni gdul bya dbang po mchog dang / rnal 'byor gtso bor byed pa'i don gsungs pa yin te / mdor bsdu na stong phrag bcu gnyis yin la / rgyas par ni dbye ba bsam gyi mi khyab pa yin no // de la rnal 'byor chen po rgyud ni rnam pa gnyis te / rang bzhin gyis rgyud dang brtag pa'i rgyud do // de la rang bzhin gyi rgyud ni mdor bsdu na rnam pa gsum ste / rgyu'i rgyud dang / 'bras bu'i rgyud dang / thabs kyi rgyud do // de yang gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud phyi ma las / rgyud ni rgyun ces bya bar grags // de ni rnam pa gsum du 'gyur // gzhi dang de bzhin rang bzhin dang // mi 'phrogs pa yi rab phye ba // gzhi dang rang bzhin rgyu yin te // de bzhin mi 'phrogs 'bras bu'o // gzhi ni thabs zhes bya ba ste // gsum gyis rgyud kyi don bsdus pa'o // zhes gsungs pa yin no // btags pa'i rgyud kyang rnam pa gnyis te / rnal 'byor thabs kyi rgyud dang / rnal 'byor shes rab kyi rgyud do // de dag kyang rnam pa gnyis su 'dod de / rnal 'byor mchog gi rgyud dang / rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud ces bya ste / rig pa'i rgyud dang / rtsa ba'i rgyud ces btags pa yin no // de la thabs and shes rab kyi rgyud kyi dbye ba ni / de kho na nyid ston pa dang / gdul bya dang / rnam dag dang / thun mong du mngon par grags pa la sogs pas tha dad par gzhag par bya'o // de yang rgya che ba'i de kho na nyid gang du gtso bor ston pa'i rgyud ni thabs kyi rgyud do // gang du zab pa nyid gtso bor byas te ston pa ni / shes rab kyi rgyud do // gang du skyes pa dang / rang gi sde ba 'dul ba'i phyir lha pho'i rnam pa mang por ston pa'i dkyil 'khor ni thabs kyi rgyud do // gang du bud med dang / phyi rol mu stegs can 'dul ba'i phyir de dag dang rje su mthun pa'i lha mo'i rnam pa mang ba'i dkyil 'khor ston ni shes rab kyi rgyud do // gang du phyi nang gi phung po dang khams dang skye mched kyi rnam par dag pa'i lha ston pa ni thabs kyi rgyud do // gang du phyi nang gi rtsa dang / byang chub kyi sems rnam par dag pa'i lha ston pa ni shes rab kyi rgyud do // gang du 'jig rten dang rjes su mthun pa'i lha'i rnam pa ston pa ni thabs kyi rgyud do // gang du 'jig rten dang 'gal ba'i lha'i rnam pa ston pa ni shes rab kyi rgyud ces bya ba la sogs pa btags pa yin no / (DT fol. 106b-107a).

following Indian precedent, they made their claims in the uniquely Tibetan social environment, in which authority was decentralized and influential masters could and did assume significant regional political power.

Bu-ston, for example, claims that there is further and ultimate category of Tantras, the "non-dual" class which mediates between the *prajñā* and *upāya* classes. This class, not surprisingly, centered around the tradition to which he was particularly partial, that of the *Kālacakra Tantra.*[123] This claim, however, was contested by Tsongkhapa, who argued that the term *non-dual Tantra (advayatantra)* refers to the non-duality of great bliss and emptiness, which is taught in all of the *anuttarayogatantras*, and not only in the *Kālacakra.*[124] His followers likewise follow this position.[125]

Regarding the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, at least one of its advocates in Tibet claimed for it a supreme position even amongst the "Unexcelled Yoga Tantras". This advocate was Sachen, who divided the *anuttarayoga* class into three groups, that of the "Unexcelled Yoga Tantra," the "Unexcelled Yogini Tantra" and the hyperbolical "Even Further Unexcelled Yogini Tantra", i.e., the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.* He made his case for this sixfold classification system as follows:

> Why are Unexcelled Yoga Tantras such as the *Guhyasāmaja,* etc. classified as Unexcelled Yoga Tantras? Although they are similar to the Yogatantras to the extent that [both] teach the samādhi of the nonduality of wisdom and liberative art, in particular [the former] teach the Perfection Stage of the channels, veins, drops and the four initiations, and also the three [types of] conduct *(caryā)* such as the contrived *(prapañca, spros bcas),* the commitment *(samaya)* of relying on the five meats and the five ambrosias, and the thirteenth ground *(bhūmi)* of fruition, etc., none of which were not taught in the Yogatantras on down. In that way, it says in the *Sandhivyākaraṇa* that "that stage *(bhūmi)* on which all buddhas rely is the thirteenth."[126]

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[123] He made this claim relying on the authority of texts such as the *Vimalaprabhā*; see RP p. 566.

[124] See Hopkins 1977, p. 74.

[125] For example, see mKhas-grub-rje's lengthy discussion ed. and trans. in Lessing and Wayman 1978, pp. 259-69.

[126] *Sandhivyākaraṇa:* / sangs rgyas kun gyis gang bsten pa'i // sar gyur de ni bcu gsum pa / (DK fol. 160a). Concerning the expansion of the *daśabhūmi* to eleven, twelve and thirteen see Dayal 1932 p. 291.

Why are Unexcelled Yoginī Tantras such as the *Hevajra* are classified as Unexcelled Mother Tantras? It is because they principally teach the wisdom which is the profound and subtle import of both wisdom and the art. In that regard, it says in the *Hevajra* that "[this] Tantra [is] the essence of art and wisdom",[127] and it says in thirteenth chapter of the *Ḍākinivajrapañjara* that "The art of the Prajñāpāramitā is called Yoginī."[128]

The Even Further Unexcelled Yoginītantra is the *Śrīherukābhidhānatantra* also known as the *Cakrasaṃvara.* As it says in its third chapter, "laughing, looking, hand-holding, coupling, etc.: one should be initiated in this, the supreme of all Tantras. This king of maṇḍalas does not occur, nor will it occur, in the *Tattvasaṃgraha, Saṃvara, Guhyasamāja,* or *Vajrabhairava.*"[129] Why is the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* classified as the sixth gate[130] which is Further Unexcelled Mother Tantra? There are three reasons,[131] the first of which is the guru Pham-thing-pa's assertion that the Three Hundred Thousand Verse Extensive *Khasama Tantra* was taught by the Teacher Mahāvajradhara to a retinue of tenth stage heroes *(vīra)* and yoginīs.[132]

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[127] HT kalpa 1 ch. 1 v. 7.3: *prajñopāyātmakaṃ tantraṃ;* / thabs dang shes rab bdag nyid rgyud / (Snellgrove 1959, vol. 2 pp. 2-3).

[128] DP ch.13 / shes rab pha rol phyin pa'i thabs // rnal 'byor ma zhes mngon par brjod / (DT 54b).

[129] Sachen quotes here the 25th and 26th verses of the third chapter of the CST. He gives the Mal translation which here differs significantly from the Sanskrit and Lochen trans. which I have translated here. Sachen's quote is included below in the text of this passage. The Sanskrit occurs as follows, but see my edition below in appendix A. hāsya īkṣaṇa paṇiṃ tu āliṅga dvandvam ādikam // abhiṣikto bhavet tatra sarvatantraikam uttaraṃ // tattvasaṃgrahe saṃvare vāpi guhye vā vajrabhairave // ayaṃ maṇḍalarājā na bhūto na bhaviṣyati //

[130] Sixth in the sense that it is the sixth class admitted by Sachen. The other five discussed by him in this text are: *kriyā, caryā, yoga, anuttarayoga* and *anuttarayoginitantras.*

[131] The text here is evidently incomplete as the other two reasons are not listed. The text following the CST quote occurs as an interlinear note and may thus not be part of his original text.

[132] / rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud ni gsang ba 'dus pa la sogs pa ste / de dag la ci'i phyir rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud du bzhag ce na / brjod bya thabs shes rab gnyis med kyi ting nge 'dzin ston pa tsam du rnal 'byor rgyud du 'dra mod kyi / khyad par du rnal 'byor rgyud man chad nas mi ston pa'i dbang bzhi dang rtsa dang rlung dang thig le la sogs pa rdzogs pa'i rim pa dang / spros bcas la sogs pa'i spyod pa gsum dang / sha lnga bdud rtsi lnga la sogs pa bsten pa'i dam tshig dang / 'bras bus bcu gsum pa la sogs ston pa ste / de skad du yang / dgong pa lung ston pa'i rgyud las / sangs rgyas kun gyis gang bsten pa'i // sar gyur de ni bcu gsum pa zhes gsungs so // rnal 'byor ma bla na med pa'i rgyud ni snying po kye'i rdo rje rgyud la sogs pa ste / de dag la ma bla na med pa'i rgyud du ci'i phyir bzhag ce na / brjod bya thabs dang shes rab gnyis las phra ba'am zab pa'i don shes rab gtso bor ston pa ste / de skad du yang / snying po kye'i rdo rje las / thab dang shes rab bdag nyid rgyud / ces gsung pa dang / mkha' 'gro ma rdo rje gur gyi le'u bcu gsum pa las / shes rab pha rol phyin pa'i thabs // 'di ni rnal 'byor mar brjod de // zhes gsungs so // rnal 'byor ma'i yang ma bla na med pa'i rgyud ni / dpal he ru ka mngon par brjod pa'i rgyud bde mchog 'khor lo ste / de yang le'u gsum pa las / dgad dang lta dang lag bcangs dang // gnyis gnyis 'khyud pa la sogs dag // rgyud rnams kun du ma gsungs te // de nyid bsdus pa 'khor sdom ma'm // gsang ba'am rdo rje 'jigs byed las // dkyil 'khor rnams kyi mchod 'di ni // ma byung 'byung bar mi 'gyur ro // zhes gsungs so // de lta bu'i bde mchog 'khor lo'i rgyud 'di la / ma'i yang ma bla na med pa'i rgyud sgo drug pa ci'i phyir bzhag ce na / 'di la rgyu mtshan gsum las / rgyu mtshan dang po ni / bla ma pham thing pa'i bzhed pas / rgyud rgyas pa 'bum phrag gsum pa nam mkha' mnyam pa / ston pa rdo rje 'chang chen po / 'khor sa bcu pa'i dpa' bo dang / rnal 'byor ma rnams la gsungs te / (PG pp. 290.1-2)

Sachen evidently was a partisan of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.* Tsongkhapa was no doubt inclined toward it as well, as the CST and the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* together were the objects of the majority of his writings on Tantric subjects. Tsongkhapa, however, rejects Sachen's doxographic creativity just as he did Bu-ston's, perhaps because he was aware that many Tantras contain similar superiority claims, which renders problematic the uncritical acceptance of any one of these claims. Concerning the verse in chapter three of the CST quoted by Sachen above Tsongkhapa wrote:

> And *this King of Maṇḍalas* previously *did not occur, nor will it occur* later in those [other Tantras]. While it is not the case that this maṇḍala is "more supreme" than the maṇḍalas of those other ones, it does mean that it is very difficult to find since it does not occur even in those other Tantras which are both profound and vast. If this were not so, then they would be more supreme than this as well, since their maṇḍalas also do not occur in this [Tantra].[133]

Obviously, claiming a Tantra is *supreme* simply because it is *unique* is problematic simply because there is probably not a single major Tantra for which one could not make this claim, which would lead to the absurd consequence that any and all Tantras are "supreme". Tsongkhapa thus diplomatically stressed the virtues of this Tantra without going so far to claim absolute superiority for it or any other Tantra.

The line of demarcation between Tantric and non-Tantric Mahāyāna traditions is not quite so clear as has been sometimes portrayed, and even among the Tantric texts the distinctions between these classes are not so clear as the exegetes portray them. The "outer action" versus "inner contemplation" distinction which informs such classification is not a particularly useful tool for distinction between Tantric texts, nor for clarifying what separates a Tantra from a Sūtra, given the fact the "inner" meditations are often the focus even of the sūtras, while the "highest" of the Tantras often appear the most preoccupied with ritual activities despite their rhetoric of interiority, orgasmic spontaneity *(sahaja)* and nonduality. This blurring of categories was noted quite some time ago by La Vallée Poussin, who wrote that

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[133] See my trans. of section III.C.b.ii. A.2.e.ii of Tsongkhapa's KS in appendix C below.

> Buddhists were not quite clear as to the specific meaning of the word *tantra* 'book.' The Tibetan canon distinguishes the *Sūtra (Mdo)* and the *Tantra (Rgyud)*, but a number of texts are classified in both sections: the limits between *Sūtra* (i.e. *Mahāyānasūtra)* and *Tantra* are not fixed. On the one hand, topics which are essentially Mahāyānist – *e.g.*, hymns to *bodhisattvas (stotra)*, resolutions to become Buddha *(praṇidhāna)* – are met with in *Tantra;* on the other hand, *Mahāyānasūtras* include a number of fragments and often whole chapters which would constitute by themselves so many Tāntrik texts. (1922:193)

It was the genius of the Tibetans that, in encountering the richly abundant and disordered canon of late Indian Buddhism, they achieved a successful organization and synthesis of it. Like any such act of classification there was a certain element of arbitrariness in the choices made. The resulting synthesis, however, was convincing enough that it was able to maintain its preminent status up until the present day. In so doing they did follow in the footsteps of their Indian predecessors, but the field of Buddhism at that time was so traced with abundant divergent tracks that they did in a sense forge their own trail. And they succeeded in doing so in such a masterful way that later Indian scholars traveling to Tibet, such as Vibhūticandra,[134] found that they were no longer automatically received as masters, but had to strive for recognition against the Tibetan prodigies such as Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan, who were masters of their own spiritual traditions as well as of their own temporal domains.

It is important not to neglect the creativity that is a crucial factor in these exegetical exercises, be they done simply out of love of learning and an impulse to organize or for the purpose of legitimation, or, as is most often the case, a mixture of both. A failure to recognize this has led some to the mistaken impression that these exegetes were simply drones, organizing the canon along obvious and previously extant lines which logically mirror their actual content. It would be a mistake, for example, to see the four categories of Tantras as corresponding, roughly, to the historical development of the Buddhist Tantras. This is not to deny that some of the earliest Tantras may be included among the "lower" classes, and the latest Tantras tend to congregate in the ultimate class. It is important to

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[134] See Stearns 1996.

keep in mind, however, that the development of this doxographic schema was an artificial process, post-dating the production of most of the Tantras, and subjecting them to classification on purely ahistorical grounds. The assumption that they are more or less historically organized has led to the misrepresentation that the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras are "late" and hence suspect, when in fact it is now clear that at least several of them were in existence by the seventh century, and are not demonstrably any "later" than the classical Tantras of, say, East Asian Esoteric Buddhist traditions.[135]

Inconsistencies in this doxographic scheme, such as those pointed out by Gibson (1997a:39) are rife; and the assumptions on which the relatively late dating of the *anuttarayogatantra*s is based collapse when they are examined. For example, the erotic imagery which is typically taken as a characteristic of the *anuttarayogatantra* is in fact richly abundant in several texts classified as *yogatantras*, such as the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha Sūtra, Sarvarahasya Tantra* and *Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatikā.* Many of these texts were translated into Chinese during the eighth century, which renders problematic many of historical assumptions on which these texts have been dated.

Rather than neatly paralleling historical development, the categorization of the Buddhist Tantras was an arbitrary identification of distinct layers in what is in fact a textual body developed over centuries by a process of accretion, and while there was in fact a definite process of evolution that occurred in this body over time, it is not possible to separate it from Mahāyāna literature on the one hand, or to distinguish classes within it on the basis of a few simplistic polarities on the other, without committing hermeneutic violence. This violence consists of an over-emphasis of the intra-class similarities and inter-class differences, and a corresponding de-emphasis of intra-class differences and inter-class similarities.

This is just a very brief look at the Tantric classifications established by Tibetans, which itself is only one minor facet of the traditions they established based on their

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[135] This issue of dating will be further explored in section 5.2 below.

encounter with India and its spiritual riches. One last point that might be made here, however, is that in their translation and categorization of Indian texts, the Tibetans attempted an act of reproduction, but at the same time could not help but at the same time reproduce their own meaningful cultural systems. The end result was a creative one: the Tibetan translation of 'Indian Buddhism' was both unique in its fidelity *and* uniquely Tibetan, for the meaning of what it signifies to be 'Tibetan' also changed. As Marshall Sahlins put it, "the more things remained the same the more they changed, since every such reproduction of the categories is not the same. Every reproduction of culture is an alteration, insofar as in action, the categories by which a present world is orchestrated pick up some novel empirical content." (1985:144)

While Tibetans, on the surface, closely followed the Indian prototypes, this appearance is exaggerated by the Tibetan recourse to Indic origins as a source for the legitimation of their authority. And even where they do sincerely follow the patterns established in Indic texts, this very act of reproduction is also a translation into a new cultural context, requiring a re-negotiation of the relationship between text and context, i.e., practice. A careful examination of these categories would most likely uncover far more "novel empirical content" than one might at first suspect, provided one takes into account the roles they played in the power differentials existing between competing traditions.

4.3 Tantric Taxonomy and Early Medieval Indian Society

It is tempting to conclude that these exegetical exercises are the product of a small elite and idiosyncratic group of authors, and thus not particularly relevant to the study of histories of the societies in which they were produced and propagated, and should be relegated instead to studies of scholastic miscellany. This conclusion would be hasty, as Lincoln has shown. He argued that

> For the most part taxonomies are regarded – and announce themselves – as systems of classifying the phenomenal world, systems through which otherwise indiscriminate data can be organized in a form wherein they become knowable. Knowers do not and cannot stand apart from the known, however, because they are objects as well as subjects of knowledge; consequently, they themselves come to be categorized within their own taxonomic systems. Taxonomy is thus not only an epistemological instrument (a means for organizing information), but it also (as it comes to organize the organizers) an instrument for the construction of society. (1989:7-8)

With this in mind, it is important to look at the political implications of key Tantric teachings. Brooks made an excellent point when he argued that

> Tantric aspirations are not only articulated into doctrines and practices that make religious claims. Tantric teachings must also be understood within social and historical contexts that locate them within a larger system of beliefs. The Tantric's claim to religious empowerment is a claim to certain intellectual and spiritual privileges as well as forms of social status. (1990:4)

There are several ways in which Tantric exegetes made such claims; one such way is implicit, made by explicitly correlating their taxonomies to the social or natural worlds, and they generally tended to build upon previously established systems of classification. Tantric exegetes had recourse to two influential systems of classification, and understandably drew from both. These are the elaborate understanding of the cosmos developed in the Buddhist *abhidharma* literature, and the equally if not more complex lore contained in the Vedas.

There are numerous ways to legitimate a new and controversial teaching. One is to attempt to efface its newness by claiming it is an old teaching which has been rediscovered. Another way is to assimilate the teachings to reality through association, to make its revelation appear natural and inevitable. This may have been the intention behind the attempts to associate the Tantras in general, and one of their most controversial aspects in particular, their eroticism, to the structure of time and space as understood in ancient and early medieval India. For example, third chapter of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* refers to the four degrees of intimacy, "laughing, looking, hand-holding and embracing", quoted above by Sachen Kun-dga'-snying-po. There is also an obscure reference to this idea in the

Sampuṭa Tantra, which is explicated by Vīravajra, who relates them to the four classes of Tantras and the four desire realm *(kāmadhātu)* heavens as follows:

> "Laughing, looking and hand holding" – this means that non-discursive bliss arises with the sound of laughter, or that non-discursive bliss arises from looking at a form, or the touch of hand holding or embracing. The word "worm" indicates the stainless great bliss and voidness, for just as a worm arises in wood and then eats it, one should meditate on voidness, which is the concentration *(samādhi)* arising from bliss. These are taught in the four [classes of] Tantras in order to accustom one to the bliss of the four [classes of] deities such as the Paranirmitavaśavartin so that one might abide in the four blisses.[136]

The correspondences established here are further developed by Abhayākara as follows:

> Regarding the Tantras, that is, the fruition Tantras, they are the Tantras of laughing, looking, and hand-holding. The Laughing Tantras are like the bliss of the Nirmāṇarati [heaven]. The Looking Tantras, are, for example, akin to the bliss of the Paranirmitavaśavartin [heaven]. The Hand-holding Tantras are akin to the bliss of the Tuṣita [heaven]. Since Laughing and so forth include the method of embracing, and as embracing also includes laughing and so forth, they are collected within [the rubric of] the Embracing Tantras, which are akin to the bliss of the Yāma [heaven]. The previously explained Coupling Tantras are akin to the bliss of the *cāturmahārājakāyika* and *trāyastriṃśa* heavens and of humans.[137]

Abhayākara also explains that these levels of intimacy can be further correlated to the four joys *(caturānanda)* which arise during the process of sexual yoga.

The association between the levels of intimacy and the levels of the desire realm heavens in the *cakravāḍa* cosmos was not an innovation of the Tantric exegetes. Rather, they were drawing upon the doctrines contained in the *abhidharma,* the division of the

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[136] Vīravajra comments on an obscure passage in SP kalpa 6 ch. 3: "Laughing, looking and hand holding, these occur in the Tantras, passion and the passionless, as a worm eating lives." / rgod dang lta dang lag bcangs nyid // rgyud du de nyid rnam par gnas // 'dod chags nyid dang chags bral yang // zos nas srin bu gnas pa nyid / (SP DT 115b) His comments occur in his *Sarvatantranidāna-mahāguhya-śrisampuṭa-nāma-tantrarājaṭikā-ratnamālā-nāma* as follows: / dgod dang blta dang lag bcangs dang // zhes smos te / dgod pa'i sgra'i steng du bde ba rtog med skye ba'am / gzugs la lta ba dang reg bya lag bcangs dang gnyis gnyis 'khyud pa dang reg bya las bde ba rtog med skye ba yin no // srin bu'i tshul gyis zhes pa ni zag med bde ba chen po stong pa'i tshul yin te / srin bu shing las skyes nas shing nyid za ba bzhin du bde ba las skyes pa'i ting nge 'dzin stong pa nyid du bsgom par bya'o // bde ba bzhir gnas shing gzhan 'phrul dbang byed la sogs pa'i lha bzhi bde ba la goms pa'i don du rgyud bzhir gsung pa'o / (DT fol. 69b). cf. Hopkins 1977, p. 161.

[137] Abhayākara, *Śrisampuṭatantrarājaṭikāmnāyamañjari:* / rgyud ni 'bras bu'i rgyud do // dgod dang lta dang lag bcangs rgyud // dgod pa'i rgyud ni 'phrul dga' rnams kyi bde ba lta bu'o // lta ba'i rgyud ni dper na gzhan 'phrul dbang byed pa rnams kyi bde ba lta bu'o // lag bcangs kyi rgyud ni dper na dga' ldan pa rnams kyi bde ba lta bu'o // dgod pa la sogs pa rnams la 'khyud pa'i tshul srid pa'i phyir dang 'khyud pa la yang dgod pa la sogs pa srid pa'i phyir 'khyud pa'i rgyud nang du 'dus shing / de ni 'thab bral ba rnams kyi bde ba lta bu'o // gnyis gnyis kyi rgyud sngar gsungs zin cing dper na sum cu rtsa gsum pa rnams dang rgyal po chen po bzhi'i ris pa rnams kyi bde ba lta bu'o / (DT fol. 216b-217a).

tripiṭaka consisting of a systematic presentation and analysis of Buddhist teachings. It is also the preeminent source of information concerning Buddhist views of reality, and its relationship to their Teachings. With regard to the legitimation of the Teachings through their association with a reality conceived in their terms, the Buddhists were no doubt aided by the polysemy of the very term *dharma*, which in Buddhist usage has the dual primary senses of "Buddhist Teachings" and "elements of reality", or even, more generally, "reality".[138] The classic description of the heavens and their inhabitants occur in the third chapter of Vasubandu's *Abhidharmakośa*, as follows:

kārikā: There are six gods who taste pleasure; they unite through coupling, an embrace, the touch of hands, a smile, and a look.[139]

bhāṣya: The Cāturmahārājakāyikas, Trāyastriṃśas, Yāmas, Tuṣitas, Nirmāṇaratis and Paranirmitavaśavartins are the gods of Kāmadhātu. The higher gods are not in Kāmadhātu. The Cāturmahārājakāyikas and the Trāyastriṃśas live on the ground; thus they unite by coupling, like humans; but they appease the fire of their desire through the emission of wind, since they do not have any semen. The Yāmas appease the fire of their desire by embracing, the Tuṣitas by the touch of hands, the Nirmāṇaratis by smiling, and the Paranirmitavaśavartins by looking at each other. Such is the doctrine of the *Prajñāpti*. According to the Vaibhāṣikas (*Vibhāṣā, TD* 27, p. 585b27), these expressions of the *Prajñāpti*, "embracing", "touching of the hands", etc., do not indicate the mode of union – for all the gods couple – but the duration of the act. The more ardent the desire by reason of the more pleasurable object, so much shorter is the duration of the union.[140]

It appears that the authors of Tantras such as the *Cakrasaṃvara* and the *Sampuṭa* drew upon such lore in writing these passages, and it is certain that the commentators interpreted the passages in this light. Such interpretations ground an otherwise abstract taxonomy in the structure of the universe as understood by Buddhists, thereby legitimating the Tantras in general and their taxonomy in particular.

Some Tantras and Tantric commentaries also took the view that the classes of Tantras could be correlated to the progression of time, to the Indian theory of the four ages

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[138] See Soothill and Hodous 1937, p. 267, and Inagaki 1989, p. 100.

[139] *kārikā* 69b-d. / 'dod pa spyod pa drug yin no // gnyis gnyis 'khyud dang lag bcang dang // dgod dang bltas pas 'khrig pa yin /. (DT fol. 9b).

[140] Translated in de la Vallée Poussin 1988, vol. II, p. 465.

(caturyuga) which was a well known system of reckoning time in India.[141] The *Śricakrasamvaratantrarāja-adbhutaśmaśānālaṃkāra,* for example, claims that

> The actuality of all Tantras is gathered in the orgasmic nature. The path achieved on [the basis of] the mundane cause is the actuality of the supermundane fruit. There are the *mūlatantra*s spoken in the beginning, and the *vyākhyātantra*s taught subsequently. The *mūlatantra* states the meanings, the *vyākhyātantra* clarifies them. Due to the progression of the four eras of time, the *kṛtayuga, tretayuga, dvāparayuga* and the *kaliyuga*, Tantra is taught in four types, the *kriyā, caryā, yoga* and *anuttara[yoga].*[142]

The author of this text evidently saw Tantras as being articulated in time with both a temporal precedence of the *mūlatantra*s over the *vyākhyatantra*s, and then the four classes, which are either taught in more most suitable four the four ages, respectively. It may be that claims of this sort gave rise to the theory that the four classes were composed in four different historical periods. To treat the *caturyuga* as periods in history, however, is to mistake a mythic chronology for a historical one.

Sachen Kun-dga'-snying-po corrolated both these fourfold taxonomies, linking the classes to divisions in time as well as in space. Commmenting on the claim in the third chapter of the Cakrasaṃvara that it is the "supreme of all Tantras", Sachen wrote:

> What are "all Tantras"? They [are indicated by] 'laughing' etc., which can be applied to the gods or to the humans. First, if we apply them to the gods, laughing is the ultimate bliss of the *kṛtayuga,* and among the Tantras refers to the *anuttarayogatantra*s. The gods of the Paranirmitavaśavartin and Nirmāṇarati heavens have the bliss of 'laughing'. 'Looking' is the ultimate

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[141] Among the four ages it is the last, the *kaliyuga,* which receives the most attention in the Tantras and their commentaries often proclaim that they are the ideal teaching for the *kali yuga*, the last and most dismal of the four eras which together comprise an aeon (*kalpa*). The term *kali* orignally refered to a losing dice throw roughly akin to our "snake eyes," (see Monier-Williams 1899, p.261 col. 3) and it also came to have the meaning of strife (see Apte 1965, p. 342 col. 3), perhaps because strife often followed losing throws in high-stake dice game, as depicted in the *Mahābhārata.* Shulman providies an interesting discussion of the dice game and the significance of the inauspicious *kali* throw. He wrote that the dice game "was executed by single players until the *kali*-result, the remainder of one, was obtained; this marked the loser, who was to kill the sacrificial offering. There was thus no proper winner, only a necessary loser." (1992:351) The *kali* throw was also associated with the deity Rudra, the inauspicious deity associated with the dangerous remainder of the sacrifice (idem.) The *kaliyuga* is the degenerate age or "age of contoversies", as it is translated into Tibetan *(rtsod pa'i dus).* Naturally, the current time is always the degenerate time; it is thus represents the quite ancient theory of the regression of time, or its progressive decay, similar, for example, to Plato's theory of the four races (see *Cratylus* 398).

[142] / lhan cig skyes pa'i rang bzhin la // rgyud rnams kun gyi ngo bo 'dus // yod pa rgyu la bsgrub pa lam // mngon 'gyur 'bras bu'i ngo bo yin // thog mar gsungs pa rtsa ba'i rgyud // phyi nas gsungs pa bshad pa'i rgyud // don rnams ston pas rtsa ba la // gsal bar byed pa bshad pa'i rgyud // bskal pa rdzogs ldan sum gnyis dang dang // rtsod ldan dus bzhi rim pa yis // rgyud kyang rnam pa bzhir gsungs te // bya spyod rnal 'byor bla med do / (DK fol. 259 a)

> bliss of the *tretāyuga*, and among Tantras corresponds to the *yogatantras*. Amongst the gods it is possessed by the gods of Tuṣita heaven. Hand-holding is the ultimate bliss of the *dvāparayuga*, and corresponds to the *caryātantras*. Among the gods the gods of the Yāma heaven have it. Embracing is the ultimate bliss of the *kaliyuga*, corresponding among Tantras to the *kriyātantras* It is possessed by the gods of the Thirty Three Heavens (*trāyastriṃśa*) and the gods of the realms of the Four Great Kings (*cāturmahārājakāyika*). Moreover, if applied to the humans, 'laughing' is the inferior bliss of the *kaliyuga*, and its Tantras are the *kriyātantras*. 'Looking' is the bliss of the *dvāparayuga*, corresponding among Tantras to the *caryātantras*. 'Hand-holding' is the bliss of the *tretāyuga*, and corresponds among Tantras to the *yogatantras*. 'Embracing' is the bliss of the *kṛtayuga*, and corresponds among Tantras to the *anuttarayogatantras*.[143]

Accounts such as these clearly present the Tantras as transhistorical. Being a part of the natural structure of the universe, they transcend the vagaries of history, entering into it not through accidental acts of human creativity, but in accordance with their *metahistorical* structure of the universe, mediated by transcendental figures such as the Buddhas and bodhisattvas.

A possibly more ambiguous taxonomy concerns the relation of the Buddhist Tantras to the Indian social structure. The *Śricakrasamvaratantrarāja-adbhutaśmaśānālaṃkāra* also connects the Tantra classes to the social classes, as follows:

> The three types of Root Tantras, which are the great *mūlatantra*, the Compendiums *(uttaratantras)* and the Concise Addendums *(uttarottaratantra)*, the thirty-two Explanatory Tantras *(vyākhyatantra)* and the countless Ancillary Tantras,[144] [were taught] in order to discipline the brahmans, kshatriyas,

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[143] / rgyud rnams kun zhes pa nyid gang zhe na / dgod dang zhes pa la sogs pa ste / 'di la lha la sbyar ba dang mi la sbyar ba gnyis las dang po lha dang sbyar na / dgod pa ni rdzogs ldan gyi bde ba'i mthar thug yin la / rgyud na rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud de / dgod pa'i bde ba de lha na gzhan 'phrul dbang byed dang // 'phrul dga'i lha la yod / lta ba ni sum ldan gyi bde ba mthar thug pa yin la / rgyud na rnal 'byor gyi rgyud de / lha na dga' ldan gyi lha na yod / lag bcangs ni gnyis ldan gyi bde ba'i mthar thug pa yin la / rgyud na spyod pa'i rgyud de / lha na 'thab bral gyi lha la yod / gnyis gnyis 'khyud pa ni rtsod pa'i dus kyi bde ba'i mthar thug pa yin la / rgyud na bya ba'i rgyud de / lha na sum cu gsum dang rgyal chen rigs bzhi la yod do // yang mi dang sbyar na dgod pa ni rtsod pa'i dus kyi bde ba dman pa yin la / rgyud ni bya ba'i rgyud do // lta dang ni gnyis ldan gyi dus kyi bde ba ste / rgyud na spyod pa'i rgyud do // lag bcang ni sum ldan gyi bde ba yin la / rgyud na rnal 'byor gyi rgyud do // gnyis gnyis 'khyud pa ni rdzogs ldan gyi bde ba ste / rgyud na rnal 'byor bla na med pa'i rgyud do /(PG pp.307.4-308.1). The surprising thing here is his insistence that the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras belong to the 'Golden Age' of the *kṛtayuga*, rather than the more troubled times of the *kaliyuga*.

[144] The Ancillary or Branch Tantras *(yan lag gi rgyud)* are Tantras which are supposedly subsidiary to a *mūlatantra*, but treating only one portion of the content of that text. The *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana Tantra*, for example, was considered by some Tibetan commentators such as Bu-ston to be an Ancillary Tantra of the *Tattvasaṃgraha*. See van der Kuipj 1992, p. 117.

> vaishyas, shudras and caṇḍalas. Four types of Tantra were also taught: the *kriyā, caryā, yoga* and *anuttara.*[145]

This list is a bit ambiguous, as it leaves one wondering whether, and how, the five social groups listed here, which are the classical four *varṇa* or castes with the outcast *caṇḍala* added as a fifth, correspond to the four classes of Tantra subsequently listed. This may simply be a lists of groups to whom the Tantras were taught in common. This would be a subversive idea vis-à-vis the Vedas, which were only to be taught to the three highest classes. It is not clear, however, if this account is hierarchical taxonomy.

A much clearer and more elaborate correlation was worked out by Alaṃkakalaśa in his *Vajramālāṭikā.* He presumes that there are five classes of Tantra, the common variant in which the final *anuttara* class is divided into the masculine and feminine *mahāyoga* and *yogini* classes, respectively. These he links to the castes plus the outcasts, who are differentiated by the relative degrees to which they are afflicted by anger, lust and delusion.

> Due to the decline of wisdom during the *kaliyuga,* the Blessed Lord taught the different types of Root Tantras to sentient beings in order to render them free of doubts. The Tantras taught by the Blessed Lord were compiled into five types, which are the classes of *kriyā, caryā, yoga, mahāyoga,* and *yogini* Tantras. With respect to those sentient beings of the brahmin class whose desire and anger are slight but whose delusion is very great, [*kriyātantras*] such as the *Glorious Lamp*[146] were taught in the heavens of the thirty-three deities; principally taught were the five *Vidyā Initiations*[147] for those who mainly practice bathing three times [a day], changing clothes thrice, and who drink milk and porridge.
>
> For those sentient beings of the Vaishya class whose desire and anger are slight, whose delusion is very great, and who are devoted to Viṣṇu, the Blessed Lord taught the *caryātantras* [such as] the *Śri-Vairocanābhisambodhi.* He taught in Akaniṣṭha [those Tantras] which primarily teach practices of fasting and bathing, etc. from the twelfth through twenty fourth [days of the month] which are ordinarily [practiced by] the ordained layperson *(upavāsa),* and

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[145] / rtsa ba'i rgyud ni rnam pa gsum // bshad rgyud sum cu rtsa gnyis te / yan lag rgyud ni grang la 'das // rtsa ba chen po phyi ma dang phyi ma'i phyi mar bsdus pa yin // bram ze rgyal rigs rje rigs dang // dmang rigs gdol pa gdul don du // rgyud kyang rnam pa bzhir gsungs te // bya spyod rnal 'byor bla med do / (DT fol. 258b)

[146] *dpal sgron ma 'byung ba,* a text with which I am unfamiliar.

[147] Here I read *rigs pa* as *rig pa,* i.e., *vidyā.* The five *vidyābhiṣeka* are the water, crown, vajra, bell and name initiations, to which is added in the *yogatantras* the *ācāryābhiṣeka,* which together constitute the six vase initiations *(kalaśābhiṣeka).* See Advayavajra's *Sekatākāryasaṃgraha* (Shastri 1927, p. 36), and also Snellgrove's translation (1987:229)

which also teach initiation similar to the preceding [*kriyātantras*], and which teach only the Creation Stage.

After that, in order to discipline the members of the Kshatriya class whose delusion, desire and anger are middling, he taught the [*yogatantras* such as] the King of Tantras, the *Śri-Tattvasaṃgraha,* the essence of which is the realization of the four maṇḍalas, the *Vajradhātu, Trilokavijaya, Jagadvinaya* and the *Sarvārthasiddhi.*[148] He did this in order to progressively discipline those of sharp faculties who are lustful, angry, stupid and jealous, along with Maheśvara, and Kubera *(elavila),* taking on the form of Mahāvairocana and abiding on the peak of Sumeru through the force of his previous aspiration made as Svetaketu[149] on the lion throne. This Tantra taught all of the Master Initiations *(ācāryābhiṣeka),* and has, in addition to the Creation Stage, the meditation of the yoga on drops *(bindıyoga).* Then he taught the *Śri-Vajrasekhara Tantra.* After that he taught, in the delightful form of Śākyamuni, the *Durgatipariśodhana* in order to tame the *devaputra* Vimalamaṇiprabha.[150] Then, in the form of Vajrapāṇi in the Bolted Gate *(dvārakapāṭa)* palace on Sumeru, He taught the *Vajrapaṇyabhiṣeka Tantra* in order to discipline the Lord of the Secret Ones, Vajrapāṇi. He then taught the *Śriparamādya Tantra* in the form of Vajrasattva in the *Paranirmitavaśavartin* heaven in order to tame Māra.

After that, for those beings of the Vaishya class whose desire and anger are great and whose delusion is minimal,[151] he taught to the Sukhavati deities the *Guhyasamāja Tantra,* which focuses on the four initiations,[152] and which brings together the two [Creation and Perfection] stages. Then the Blessed Lord taught the *Vajramālā* in both the 12,000 verse version and the abbreviated version *(laghu)* version. He did so on the mountain to the north of Oḍḍiyāna in the form of Vajrasattva in order to tame the Guardians of the Ten Directions *(daśadikpāla),* focusing on the ten Fierce Ones *(daśakrodha).* Later the Blessed Lord taught the *Sandhivyākaraṇa* to the humans on the Himavat mountain in the form of the Glorious Vajrasattva. Then the Blessed Lord, at the request of the four goddesses, taught the *Caturdeviparipṛccha* on the peak of the Vindhya mountains. Later he taught the Greater and Lesser versions of the *Śri Jñānavajrasamuccaya Tantra* on the bank of the Gaṅga.

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[148] These are the four main maṇḍalas taught in the *Tattvasaṃgraha,* described, respectively in the four sections of the text as edited by Yamada (1981).

[149] This was Śākyamuni's name when he resided as a bodhisattva in Tuṣita.

[150] The text reads the *lha bu nor bu'i 'od,* which refers to the deity of the name Vimalamaṇiprabha, whose story is recounted in the early edition of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodha Tantra,* translated into Tibetan during the late eighth century (see van der Kuijp 1992), and edited by Skorupski (1983:332-35). In this version of the text, Vimalamaṇiprabha's fall from the Trāyastriṃśa heaven into hell inspires Indra to ask the Buddha for advice on how to prevent rebirth in the evil destinies *(durgati),* which inspires the teaching of this Tantra. See also Nihom 1994, pp. 168-73.

[151] Here we might expect a mention of the Shudra class rather than a second variety of the Vaishya class. This list is a either idiosyncratic or possibly corrupt.

[152] The four initiations characteristic of the *anuttarayogatantras* begin with the Vase, which include the other lower initiations listed above, followed by the Secret *(guhya),* Wisdom-Intuition *(prajñājñāna),* and the Fourth *(caturthā)* Initiations. Concerning these initiations see Advayavajra's *Sekatākāryasaṃgraha* (Shastri 1927, pp. 38-39), and Snellgrove's translation (1987:243-44). See as well Kvaerne 1977.

> Later, for the sake of those outcast sentient beings such as the *Caṇḍāla* whose desire and anger are extremely great, but whose delusion is extremely slight, the Blessed Lord taught the greater and lesser versions of the *Śri Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* which primarily teach the two stages and the four initiations. He taught along with it the Four Explanatory Tantras which take wisdom *(prajñā)* as foremost, in a pure and noble place. There is no need to distinguish here the major points of those four [Explanatory] Tantras. After that he here in Jambudvipa taught the greater and lesser versions of the *Śri Hevajra Tantra* together with its Explanatory Tantras, in order to subdue the four Māras in Magadha.[153]

Apparently such accounts represent attempts by Indian commentators to ground their traditions in the social realities of the time, which no doubt reflect their precarious position

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[153] Alaṃkakalaśa's *Śrivajramālāmahāyogatantraṭikā-gaṁbhirārthdipaka-nāma:* / rtsod pa can gyi dus su shes rab dman pa nyid kyis sems can rnams la rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi rnam par dbyed ba bcom ldan 'das kyis bstan pas gdon mi za bar nye bar mkho ba nyid kyi phyir ro // bcom ldan 'das kyis rgyud bstan pa de yang 'dus par gyur pa ni cho ga lnga rgyud kyi sbyor ba bsdus pa ste / 'di lta ste / bya ba dang / spyod pa dang / rnal 'byor dang / rnal 'byor chen po dang / rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud kyi dbyed bas so // de la 'dod chags dang zhe sdang chung zhing chung la / gti mug che zhing che ba bram ze'i rigs su gyur pa'i sems can la brten nas // sum cu rtsa gsum pa'i lha'i gnas su dpal sgron ma 'byung ba la sogs par bstan par khrus lan gsum byed pa dang / gos lan gsum brje ba dang / 'o ma dang thug pa za ba'i spyod pa gtso bor byed pa rnams la rigs pa'i dbang lna po rnams gtso bor bstan pa mdzad do // de nas 'dod chags dang zhe sdang dag chung zhing gti mug shin tu chen por gyur pa khyab 'jug la mos pa / rje'u yi rigs kyi rigs can sems can rnams la brten nas bcom ldan 'das kyis dpal rnam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa spyod pa'i rgyud bstan pas / bsnyan gnas dang 'dra ba'i thun mong ba bcu gnyis nas nyi shu rtsa bzhi'i bar du smyung ba dang khrus la sogs pa'i spyod pa gtso bor ston par byed pa ngon gyi rang dang 'dra bar dbang bskur ston par byed pa / bskyed pa'i rim pa gcig pu tsam ston par byed pa ni 'og min gyi gnas su mdzad pa'o // de'i rje su gti mug 'bring dang 'dod chags dang zhe sdang 'bring gi sems can rnams la brten nas / rgyal rigs gyi rigs can gdul ba'i don du rnam par snang mdzad chen po'i zugs thob nas ri rab kyi rtse mor sngon gyi smon lam gyi stobs kyis seng ge khrir gyur pa la dam pa tog dkar po'i gnas skabs gyis lus kyis bzhugs nas / 'dod chags dang zhe sdang dang gti mug dang ser snas gnon pa'i dbang po dang / dbang phyug chen po dang / ma skyed pa dang / e la bi la gdul ba'i phyir rim pa ji lta ba bzhin du rdo rje dbying dang / kham gsum rnam par rgyal ba dang / 'gro ba 'dul ba dang / don thams cad grub pa'i dkyil 'khor zhes bya ba rtogs pa rnam pa bzhi'i bdag nyid can rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal de kho na nyid 'dus pa zhes bya ba bstan pa ni / gtso bor rdo rje slob dpon gyi dbang bskur ma lus pa ston pa bskyed pa'i rim pa'i steng du thig le'i rnal 'byor bsgom pa dang bcas pa mdzad do // de'i rjes su de nyid du dpal rdo rje rtse mo'i rgyud bstan par mdzad do // de'i rjes su dga' byed śākya thub pa'i gzugs kyis lha'i bu nor bu'i 'od gdul ba'i don du ngan song thams cad sbyong ba'i rgyud bstan par mdzad do // de nas ri rab gi steng du sgo glegs kyi gtsug lag khang gi nang du phyag na rdo rje'i gzugs kyis gsang ba'i bdag po phyag na rdo rje gdul ba'i don du phyag na rdo rje dbang bskur ba'i rgyud bstan par mdzad do // de nas gzhan 'phrul dbang byed du rdo rje sems dpa'i gzugs kyis bdud 'dul ba'i phyir dpal mchog chen po'i rgyud bstan par mdzad do // de rjes su 'dod chags dang zhe sdang che zhing / gti mug chung ba'i rje'u rigs kyi sems can rnams la brten nas dga' ldan gyi lha rnams la gtso bor bzhi ston pa / rim pa gnyis kyis bsdus pa dang / gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgyud bstan par mdzad do // de'i rje su u rgyan du nub kyi ri la bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa'i gzugs kyis khro bo bcu'i sgo nas gtso bor phyogs skyong bcu 'dul ba'i phyir / rdo rje phreng ba stong phrag bcu gnyis pa dang rdo rje phreng ba nyung ngu gnyis bstan par mdzad do // de'i rjes su de bzhin gshegs pa la gsol ba 'debs pa'i bcom ldan 'das kyis dpal ldan rdo rje sems dpa'i gzugs kyis kha ba can gyi ri la mi rnams kyi nang du dpal dgongs pa lung bstan gyi rgyud bstan par mdzad do // de'i rjes su lha mo bzhis gsol ba btab pa'i bcom ldan 'das kyis ri bo 'bigs byed kyi rste mo la dpal lha mo bzhis zhus kyi rgyud bstan par mdzad do // de'i rjes su gaṅga'i 'gram du dpal ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa'i rgyud chen po dang chung ngu'i dbye bas bstan par mdzad do // de'i rjes su 'dod chags dang zhe sdang chen po'i chen po gti mug chung zhing chung ba'i gdol pa'i rigs dang 'brel pa'i sems can rnams la brten nas / bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog chen po dang chung ngu'i rgyud kyi dbye bas rim pa gnyis gtso bor ston pa dang / gtso bor dbang bzhi ston pa dang / shes rab gtso bor gyur pa'i bshad pa'i rgyud bzhi dang bcas pa gnas gtsang ma 'phags pa'i gnas su stan par mdzad de / rgyud bzhi po'i gnas kyi rnam par dbye ba 'dir mi dgos pa'i phyir ma bstan to // de'i rjes su 'dzam bu'i gling 'di nyid du magadhār bdud bzhi 'dul ba'i don du dpal dgyes pa'i rdo rje rgyud bstan pa chen po dang chung ngu'i rgyud bshad pa'i rgyud dang bcas pa bstan par mdzad de / (DT fol. 3a-4a)

within the shifting sands of political power and patronage on which the Buddhist monastic establishments of the time were so heavily dependent.

As discussed in section 3.3.3.2 above, Amstutz argued that "Buddhism had no means of responding to later premodern Indian society's increasing need for social authority and caste articulation" (1998:85). Such accounts as the above, however, were composed in response to such social pressures. Caste groups and competing religious groups were social realities that could not be ignored. The attempts by Buddhist thinkers to relate their teachings to the castes or other religious sects should be seen not as mere fancy but as attempts to relate to other groups in a hierarchical fashion.

We might term such accounts as an exercise in political *upāya*, a strategy designed to make use of the circumstances at hand to achieve a desired result. All *upāya* is political in the broader sense; both the terms *upāya* and *political* can be defined as an expedient, a strategy employed for the sake of reaching a desired aim.[154] In appropriating the term *upāya* the Buddhists never lost its basic meaning of a political trick or expedient, but simply modified it to mean a strategy employed for the greater good of the involved persons, rather than simply as a means for one person or group to gain advantage over another. It is not immediately clear what the purpose of this correlation was.

At first glance it is striking that a Buddhist author is making use of the caste terminology, given the fact that caste distinctions were rejected and ridiculed in may Buddhist texts. Clearly, central aspects of the Indian social structure are being reproduced here, which was perhaps unavoidable, given the centrality of social stratification in early medieval Indian thought and practice. But, as Sahlins argued, every act of reproduction is also an alteration, which clearly is the case here. Under closer analysis Alaṃkakalaśa's text appears subversive. It undermines the brahman's claims to superiority by depicting them as more or less the same as everyone else, who are affected to some degree by the same

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[154] Concerning *upāya* see Apte 1965, p. 300; for the OED definition of political see Brown 1993 vol. 2 p. 2275.

three basic emotional poisons of anger, lust and delusion. Furthermore, the text inverts the caste hierarchy by associating the "highest" status group with the lowest of the lower Tantras, the *kriyātantra,* an association justifiable on the basis of the brahman's stereotypical obsession with rites and purity. The lowest social groups, the outcasts, are associated with some of the highest of the *anuttarayogatantra* traditions, namely, the *yoginītantras*. This correlation was no doubt justifiable on the basis of the fact that these Tantras enjoin the consumption of "impure" wine and meat as sacraments, and hence could be taken as corresponding to the behavior stereotypically attributed to the outcast groups such as the *caṇḍāla.*

Such inversion is not without political consequences, and is potentially subversive. Clark remarked that "inversion in whatever context was thus necessarily a political act" (1980:111). And while Functionalists such as Max Gluckman have argued that inversions and ritual reversals serve to strengthen the hegemonic order by "releasing tension", this view is undermined by the fact that social practices involving inversion often served as occasions for actual rebellion or revolution, as Babcock has noted (1978: 22,3). Here it might be argued that ritual inversion, like any other social practice, can be put to different uses, and might serve, under different conditions, either to support or resist hegemony.

Heesterman notes that "heretics are often bracketed with the impure Cāṇḍālas. The former group's practices and ways of subsistance put them on par with the latter group". (1984:150). This is of course the perspective of the *Vaidya* brahmins, who view the *nāstika* heretics as impure by virtue of their rejection of the Vedas, which for the former group is the source of all purity, i.e., legitimizing authority. It is interesting then that the Tantric Buddhists, who reject this ideal of purity, valorize the Cāṇḍāla and other "impure" groups, and in a sense invert the hierarchy. It is with this in mind that Alaṃkakaśala's taxonomy is particularly relevant.

Passages such as these point to a complex relationship between Indian Buddhists and their wider social contexts. According to Lincoln, there are several types of taxonomies, the hegemonic and the antihegemonic. Lincoln wrote that

> to the extent that taxonomies are socially determined, hegemonic taxonomies will tend to reproduce the same hierarchic system of which they themselves are the product. Within any society, nonetheless, there exist countertaxonomic discourses as well (inversions and others): Alternative models whereby members of subordinate strata and others marginalized under the existing social order are able to agitate for the deconstruction of that order and the reconstruction of society on a novel pattern. (1989:8)

Buddhist authors such as Alaṃkakalaśa were surely aware of the orthodox Vedic formulations, and their correlation of the Tantras to the social classes can be seen as an attempt to re-map the social structure in such a way that the brahman's privileged position is undermined, while the Tantras themselves legitimated. These attempts probably failed to have much effect in India, but that does not make them less subversive. From a certain perspective the Tantric movement as a whole can be seen as a reaction to *brahmanic* exclusivity, and are thus characterized by a tendency toward inclusivity.

On major effect of the rise of post-Gupta rise of Tantric traditions was the adoption of a more inclusive stance within a Hinduism heavily influenced by the Tantras. This change was documented by O'Flaherty, who wrote:

> For men of the Kali Age, ostracized from Vedic rituals, the post-Gupta texts recommend the use of Tantric texts: people fallen from Vedic rites and afraid of Vedic penances should resort to the Tantras; the Pañcarātras, Vaikhānasas, and Bhāgavatas use Tantric texts for people who have fallen from the Vedas. The *Kūrma Purāṇa* tells of a king Sattvata, a Vaiṣṇava, who was prompted by Nārada to teach a doctrine suitable for bastard sons of married women and widows for their welfare – this is the *sāttvata* text of the Pañcarātras. In this way, the heretics who had simply been excluded during the Gupta age were received back into the fold in the post-Gupta, Tantric age by the same class of Brāhmaṇa Paurāṇikas who had originally written them off. (1983:120)

The Tantric traditions may have had a greater influence on the development of Indian religious history than has been previously recognized.

There were various ways that inclusivity could be expressed. One was opening a tradition to persons of all social groups, which was one area in which Tantric traditions are distinct from the Vedic traditions. Another mode was to absorb elements of competing

traditions into one's own. Both Buddhist and Hindu traditions included under the rubric appear to have developed through such a process of appropriation. The Buddhists evidently used appropriation as one way of relating to its larger Indian context. Such appropriation was not difficult to justify in the Buddhist context, for it could be considered an exercise of *upāya*. Traditionally, *upāya* in the Buddhist context was understood to include strategies for bringing people into the Buddhist fold.

Ānandagarbha, in his *Guhyasamājamahātantrarājaṭikā*, suggested that some of the more trangressive rhetoric of the Buddhist Tantras derives from non-Buddhist groups, and that such rhetoric was included therein to effect their conversion. He argues this in the context of his explanation of the erotic *nidāna* of the *Guhyasamāja*, which states that the Blessed Lord resided in the vulvas of the Adamantine Ladies *(vajrayoṣidbhageṣu),*[155] as follows:

> The word "vulva" *(bhaga)* shows the place where the Blessed Lord resides. The four goddesses known as Locanā, Māmakī, Pāṇḍarā and Tārā, are the ladies *(yoṣit, btsun mo)* here; they are shown in the seventeenth chapter of this very text.[156] Why does He reside in the "secret"? It is said that they do so in order to encourage those devoted to the Tantras of Viṣṇu and so forth,[157] who have not yet renounced their objective, to renounce passion by means of passion. They claim that Viṣṇu, etc. are propitiated by relying on women and on feces, urine and so forth, and are involved in the quest for powers dependent on them. Hence they are attached to the "secret" of women. Moreover, the one "well endowed with a vulva" is Viṣṇu, which means that he dwells in the loins *(jaghana, mdoms)* of women. Since he satisfies people he is known as the human's resort *(nārāyaṇa),*[158] or so it is said.[159]

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[155] See section 5.1 below for a more detailed discussion of this and other *nidāna* verses.

[156] Ānandagarbha refers to the four Vajra songs in ch. 17 of the GT which are attributed to these goddesses. See Freemantle 1971, pp. 402, 404 and Matsunaga 1978, pp. 109-10.

[157] The expression the "Tantras of Viṣṇu" might possibly refer texts such as the *Yonitantra*, which, by advocating the practice of the *yonipūjā*, more or less fits Ānandagarbha's characterization here. Concerning this Tantra see Schoterman 1980.

[158] Regarding the derivation of the word *nārāyaṇa* see Apte 1965, p. 145 col. 2.

[159] / der bcom ldan 'das bzhugs pas na bha ga zhes bya ba 'di sa ni gnas bstan te / de yang spyan dang / māmakī dang / gos dkar mo dang / sgrol ma zhes bya ba lha mo bzhi ni 'dir btsun mo ste / de rnams ni 'di nyid kyi le'u bcu bdun pa las ston to // ci'i phyir de dag gis gsang ba la bzhugs she na / smras pa / khyab 'jug la sogs pa'i rgyud la mngon par dga' zhing yul yongs su mi spong ba rnams ni 'dod chags kyis 'dod chags spong ba 'di la dga' ba bskyed par bya ba'i phyir te // 'di ltar bud med bsten pa dang / bshang gci la sogs pa bsten pas khyab 'jug la sogs pa bsgrub par 'dod cing / des bstan pa'i dngos grub tshol ba la zhugs pa de dag btsun mo'i gsang ba la mngon par 'jug par 'gyur te / de yang / bha ga legs ldan khyab 'jug ste /

Elsewhere in the same text, Ānandagarba makes the more general statement that the *Guhyasamāja* as a whole was taught for the purpose of converting a certain type of non-Buddhist religious practitioner. He wrote that the *Guhyasamāja* was taught in order to bring into the Buddhist fold[160] those

> low born ones who are opposed to the other Tantras and who are inclined toward malicious deeds, who have the karmic obstruction of the inexorable sins,[161] and so forth, who adhere to the teachings in the Viṣṇu, the ḍākinī and deviant Tantras, who kill, who do not give but take, who tell lies, and who "practice" with their mothers and daughters and who enjoy both suitable and unsuitable foods.[162]

This recourse to the concept of *upāya* should not blind one to the fact that these strategies were conditioned by, and hence reflective of, the socio-historical contexts in which they arose; in particular, they reflect the tensions and challenges faced by adherents of the tradition. For this reason the correlation of scriptural categories to different social groups may very well reflect the relation of Buddhist groups to what Ruegg (1967) called the broader "substratum" of Indian religious culture, i.e., the religious trends which were receiving popular support in early medieval India. Passages such as these probably reflect a Buddhist self-conscious awareness that aspects of their tradition were appropriated from outside sources.

Such syncretic tendencies, however, are not simply a matter of a one-sided, one-way appropriations, but complex interactions between groups. Nor are they necessarily a

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bud med kyi mdoms na gnas // mi mams dga' bar byed pas na / des na sred med bu zhes bya // zhes bshad de / (DT fol. 4a)

[160] That it, cause to them take refuge in the Three Jewels, generate the Spirit of Awakening and enter into the maṇḍala.

[161] The *pañcānatariya*, which are 1. *pitṛghāta*, killing one's father; 2. *mātṛghāta*, killing one's mother; 3. *arhatghāta*, killing an arhat; 4. *tathāgatasyāntike duṣṭicittarūdhirotpādanam*, drawing the blood of a Tathāgata with an ill intention; 5. *saṃghabheda*, causing a schism in the saṃgha. (Rigzin 1986 p. 343).

[162] / rgyud gzhan dag las rab tu bkag pa skye gnas dmen pa shin tu gdug pa'i las sems pa / mtsham med pa la sogs pa'i las kyi sgrib pa ldan pa / khyab 'jug dang mkha' 'gro dang / chol pa'i rgyud las bstan pa la gnas pa / srog gcod pa dang / ma byin par len pa dang / brdzun du smra ba dang / ma dang bu mo la sogs pa la spyod pa dang / bza' ba dang bza' ba ma yin pa dag la dga' ba dag kyang bcom ldan 'das kyis gsum la skyabs su 'gro ba dang / byang chub tu sems bskyed cing dkyil 'khor du 'jug pa la sogs pa gnang ngo zhes spro ba skyes cing 'di la 'dod pa skyes par gyur pa ni dgos pa'o / (DT fol. 2a) cf. Hopkins 1977 p. 154.

sign that the Buddhist tradition was becoming "degenerate", falling away from its original source. There is also reason to believe that some of the very tendencies within Buddhism that gave rise to Buddhist Tantrism, namely the identity of the awakened and unawakened states, allowed it to easily assimilate the ritual practices of a variety of local cults. This might account for the incredible variety of Tantric Buddhist traditions, and may indicate a revitalizating, rather than mortifying, process.[163]

Taxonomy clearly has social implications, and the relation of abstract divisions of Buddhist scriptures to social or sectarian groupings clearly represents an attempt to negotiate the political realities that these groups taken together constituted. Whether they involved a resistance to a hegemonic ideology, or an attempt to appropriate the doctrines of influential competitors, they are relevant and meaningful only in relation to the context in which they developed. It should thus not be surprising that Tibetan commentators such as Tsongkhapa rejected these attempts to correlate the taxonomy of Tantras to the specifically Indian social context.[164] For while cosmic correlations to space and time continued to be relevant in the Tibetan context and continued to hold legitimating power therein, correlations to specifically Indian social realities did not.

By the turn of the fifteenth century when Tsongkhapa (1357-1419 C. E.) was nearing his peak, the transmission of Tantric Buddhism from India had more or less ceased, and had been accepted and was rapidly undergoing a process of categorization and integration, exemplified by the work of Bu-ston (1290-1364 C. E.), who lived a generation earlier. And while the orthodoxy of the Tantras was a crucial issue at an earlier period of Tibetan history, by the time of Tsongkhapa this was no longer as much of an issue. Nor

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[163] This point was made by Faure concerning the theory of "innate awakening" (本覺, *hongaku*); see Faure 1991 pp. 60-61. On the other hand, were this process carried too far there may be the danger that Buddhists might lose their distinct identity. Snellgrove warned that "the concept of the essential identity of the perfect state of enlightenment and the imperfect state of unenlightened man is so fundemental to tantric theory that many tantric yogins, especially those of eastern India, while claiming to be Buddhists, were well content to express this basic 'truth' in non-Buddhist terms" (Snellgrove 1988:1360).

[164] Tsongkhapa specifically discussed the theories of Alaṃkakalaśa and Ānandagarbha quoted above in his introduction to his NRC; see Hopkins 1977, pp. 154-56.

did Buddhists in Tibet during the fifteenth century face the same challenges as Buddhists in North India several centuries earlier.

Thus, the attempts of Indian Buddhists to assimilate their teachings to those of their rivals and to adapt to a social reality increasingly dominated by non-Buddhist ideologies, was not only irrelevant in Tibet but risked casting a heretical light on teachings otherwise considered orthodox, and on which the authority of a number of influential Tibetans, including Tsongkhapa, rested. Hence these attempts at taxonomic construction were rejected by the Tibetans, and consigned to numerous volumes of infrequently read scripture. The transmission of Buddhist teachings, then, was never a simple matter of reproduction, but necessarily involved as well the creative adaptation, and in some cases, the rejection, of ideas or strategies developed in response to challenges no longer relevant in the new social contexts.

Chapter Five:

Tantric Historiography

1. Traditional "Histories"

What might pass for "history" in traditional Buddhist sources usually amounts to lineage lists. While there is no doubt that these lineage lists can reflect the historical development of the tradition in question, and may *potentially* serve as a trigger for the development of a historical consciousness, the equation of "lineage" with history is problematic, if for no other reason than the fact that lineage lists are often fabricated.[1] Among the possible reasons for this fabrication, the most pervasive appears to be the legitimation of a present "innovative" tradition through connection to an authenticating authority figure, the paradigmatic example for Buddhists being Śākyamuni Buddha.

As discussed in section 3.3.3.2, possession of lineage was a source of authority in Tantric Buddhist traditions. For this reason alone there is little doubt that sleight of hand and subterfuge sometimes occurred in the production of Buddhist lineages, particularly when they are at the center of struggles for power; such subterfuge is well documented in the case of Chan traditions, for example.[2] Although one could stress here this alleged fabrication,[3] one might also stress the creative value of these lineage lists, serving as they do as constructive loci of entire traditions.

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[1] One might note, however, that histories are often fabricated as well, and perhaps for the same reasons.

[2] Yampolsky provides a general, but now somewhat outdated, introduction to the issue of the fabrication of Chan lineages in his 1967 book. See Faure 1997 for a more critical and up-to-date examination. See also Schlütter 1989 for a specific discussion of the changing lineage lists in various editions of the *Platform Sūtra*, 六祖壇經。

[3] As Lopez did when he wrote that "the notion of origin from an uncreated truth is as much at play here as in the Vedas, so too the power of lineage, of hearing from the teacher what he heard from his teacher, often couched in the rhetoric of father and son, of inheritance and birthright, traced ultimately back to the Buddha. It is this line of legitimation that accounts for the obsession with genealogy which one encounters, for example, in Ch'an and Zen and throughout Tibetan Buddhism." (1995a:39-40) My object here is not to affirm or refute this, but is simply to try to look at the problem from a different angle, and see Buddhist 'genealogies' in a different light.

It seems that to a certain extent Tantric Buddhists viewed "history" through the lens of lineage; this view is more akin to what others might term hagiography. Through placement in a lineage one is associated with a past succession of masters; their lives, beginning with the Buddha himself, are understood to be inspiring, such that the hagiographies that record their lives are called, in Tibetan parlance, "[Tales of] Liberation" *(rnam thar, vimukti).* Reading such accounts in the context of Tantric practice were thought to effect the transmission of that guru's power into oneself. Willis relates that the Tibetan Geshe Jampel Tardö told her that these spiritual biographies, *namtar,*

> are much more useful and interesting when associated with one's practice. For example, if one is practicing the *Guhysamāja Tantra,* first one reads the prayer to the lineage lamas. Second, for understanding in detail the qualities of each lama in the lineage – in order to obtain that lama's *power*– one reads the *namtar* of that lama. (1995:16)

This makes sense within the realm of Tantric discourse; since Tantric practice involves the attempt to take the goal as the path, the examples of living or past masters would ideally aid one in mimetically approximate the awakened state which they ideally embody. For this very reason, however, the guru-centric "liberating" narratives do not necessarily prize historical accuracy as the highest goal. Indeed, the embellishment of such stories could be considered a compassionate "strategy" *(upāya)* for inspiring lineage holders.[4]

As there has been some controversy concerning the "historical vision" of the Buddhists or the lack thereof, it might be worthwhile to examine the key points of this dispute. As the question of Buddhist historicism hinges on the issue of lineage, of central significance here are the textual markers of lineage claims, which in the case of Buddhist scriptures is the *nidāna* verse which serves as a preface of sorts for most scriptures, giving the time and place of the scripture's production as an oral teaching by an Awakened being, typically, but not always, Śākyamuni Buddha. Naturally, the very presence of such a "preface" makes a none too subtle assertion of authority. According to McMahan,

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[4] The skeptic, however, might argue that they also served the interests of the lineage holders who compose them.

> The *śrāvakas* (hearers) claimed to have directly heard and reported the words of the Buddha when he taught in India, and elaborate institutional efforts were employed to keep these words alive. The source of authority for the early teachings was in fact that they were heard from the self-authenticating presence of the Buddha. The repetition of these words was itself the Dharma and was the link to the living presence of Gautama who was now gone forever." (1998:252)

The sign of this authenticity was the standard *nidāna* verse with which all Buddhist sūtra began: "Thus have I heard at one time... *(evaṃ mayā śrutaṃ ekaśmin samaye...)*, followed by information concerning the speaker, setting and audience of the teaching. This verse represents an attempt to locate the text in the "self-authenticating presence of the Buddha".

Gombrich argued in a 1990 article that Mahāyāna traditions embraced the medium of writing to ensure the preservation and propagation of their texts in a context in which the oral propagation of texts in the monasteries was hegemonically dominated by a conservative and orthodox tradition not open to the innovative, unorthodox visions portrayed in the Mahāyāna sūtras. Or, to restate his argument more precisely, the very *practice* of the oral transmission of texts was a conservative one, given the difficulty of mobilizing the sizable number of persons and economic resources needed to ensure a text's preservation; this practice in effect placed great power in the hands of those who controlled these resources, i.e., the heads of the monastic community, and made it difficult if not impossible for alternative texts representing dissenting views to achieve the critical mass of support to ensure its dissemination. This may account for the fact the significant differences between early Buddhist versions of the canon are regional; geography was probably the greatest single barrier to the maintenance of standards of orthodoxy.

Gombrich (1990) and McMahan (1998) both argued that the widespread acceptance and use of writing was most likely the factor which made the greatest contribution to the development of the Mahāyāna, for writing made possible an alternative mode of transmission which required fewer persons and resources. It also facilitated the transmission of traditions across geographic and cultural barriers; the rise of the Mahāyāna was also concomitant with the dissemination of Buddhism throughout Asia, which

stereotypically was portrayed as resulting from the efforts of monk translators who would travel abroad with merchant ships and caravans, laden with a load of sūtras.

While Mahāyāna sūtras evidently were composed as written texts well after the death of the Buddha, the texts themselves maintain the pious claim that they were taught by the Buddha; this claim is made by way of the *nidāna* verse. McMahan wondered how the authors of the Mahāyāna sūtra could have had the audacity to begin their texts with the *nidāna* verse. It will probably never be known who their authors were, or under what conditions they were produced. The later Buddhists reported, however, that these scriptures were in fact taught by the Buddha, but that they were hidden away and rediscovered at a later date.

One might surmise, however, that the nidāna verse continued to be included because the older model of authentic oral transmission of the scriptures continued to hold prestige, even if in practice the production and preservation of oral texts was overtaken by the production and preservation of written texts. Perhaps the prestige of authentic origins maintained via a lineage of "hearers" continued to be influential in the context where it developed, the monasteries. It is probably the case that whenever prestige is placed on lineage, lineages are fabricated, and even though Mahāyāna sūtras were almost certainly composed in written form it is not too difficult to simulate the trappings of an authentically transmitted text.

In practice, however, the line between authentic and inauthentic texts blurs. The nidāna verse is the textual marker for such origin claims, but just reading the text does not effect its transmission. Regardless of the origins of a text, its authenticity or inauthenticity, or whether it was originally composed as an oral or written text, the lineage transmission is maintained following the model of oral transmission. Even with texts that are not memorized but read, lineage transference is effected by oral transmission, by being present for the recitation of the text. Such oral transmission, the *āgama* which continues to be a requirement for the study of written scriptures in Buddhist communities to this day, is

typically a performance divorced from its original purpose. That is, it is not attended for the purpose of memorizing an oral text; indeed, the texts are typically recited in such a rapid, stylized fashion that aural *comprehension*, not to mention *retention*, would be impossible. The importance and prestige associated with such performances, however, is so great that traditional Tibetan teachers, for example, will typically not give teachings on a text without first reciting it, effecting the *āgama* transmission.

Buddhist monastic education continues to place a strong emphasis on the recitation and memorization of texts, despite the widespread accessibility of printed texts.[5] In the context of Tibetan Buddhism, debate remains an important and central feature of the monastic education system, and it requires the memorization of an extensive corpus of key textual passages.[6]

Texts which were produced in or for monastic communities thus continued to maintain that they originated in the presence of the Buddha and were transmitted thence via an unbroken lineage. Even the Tantric texts generally maintained this practice, which probably indicates that most of them, whatever their ultimate origin, achieved the form in which they were preserved in a monastic context. This was undoubtedly a strategy for legitimation, perhaps akin to the appeals to Vedic orthodoxy by later Hindu texts which in fact bear little or no similarity to the Vedas themselves.

For innovative Buddhist teachers such as the authors of Mahāyāna sūtras, "history" presented a problem. As their texts were hitherto unknown, it was necessary to create a revised version of Buddhist history, one that would allow the occult transmission of texts, a lineage deriving ultimately from the Buddha or some other awakened being. There were several ways in which such revision was effected. A typical explanation accounting for the diversity of texts, including both the sūtras and Tantras, as well as for their frequent

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[5] Collins has noted that "despite the existence of written texts, the Buddhist tradition remained in various ways also an oral/aural one." (1992:121)

[6] Concerning debate in Tibetan Buddhist traditions see Onoda 1992 and Perdue 1992.

divergence from orthodox standards, is that they represent an exercise of *upāya*, liberative technique, as a result of historical encounters of Awakened Beings with persons of diverse needs and predilections. This explanation is frequently invoked by Tantric Buddhist exegetes, but here they follow a hoary Mahāyāna tradition of legitimation.

The *locus classicus* of this idea is the *Lotus Sūtra*, particularly the "Parable" chapter, in which the reader is told that the teachings of Buddha to the *śrāvaka*s were merely provisional, given with the intention of guiding them to the more complete and valid path of the Mahāyāna.[7] Zhi-yi (智 顗, 538-597 CE) further developed this idea in his doctrinal classification scheme (判 教, *pan-jiao*), describing a class of "indeterminate Teachings" (不 定 教), which were given by the Buddha with a particular individual in mind, with the implication that often different members of an audience would receive the teaching in radically different ways, hearing, in effect, totally different teachings.[8]

Obviously, the idea that multiple witnesses of a scene might perceive the events therein entirely differently[9] opens up a pathway for alternative versions of Buddhist textual history. This vision, however, does not well correspond to the idea of history as understood in the West, where it is generally assumed that reality is singular and thus automatically accessible to the perception of all those with normal sensuous and mental faculties. One might even call this a strategy of *dehistoricization*, that is, the adoption of a rhetorical strategy that downplays the "historical" setting of the Buddhist teachings, i.e., the life of Śākyamuni, and which emphasizes the ahistorical, cosmic universality of the teachings. Or, as McMahan put it,

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[7] See Hurvitz 1976, pp. 49-83.

[8] See Hurvitz 1962, pp. 247-48.

[9] A well known example is the opening scene of the *Avataṃsaka Sūtra*, wherein the Buddha, by virtue of the "Coming Forth of the Lion Samādhi", transforms the Jeta grove into a inconceivably magnificent pure land. This vision, however, is not perceived by *śrāvaka* such as Śāriputra because they lacked the corresponding "roots of goodness". See Cleary 1993, pp. 14-23.

> The tendency of Mahāyāna sūtras, then, was to disembed the teachings from Deer Park and re-embed them in a transcendent realm. The Mahāyāna attempted to transfer the basis of legitimacy from the spoken word of Śākyamuni to the vision of the transcendent Buddha, which rendered the specificity of the places that the Buddha spoke (sic.) during his lifetime less relevant. (1998:272)

Or, we might say that having disembedded the teachings from their spatial and temporal context the Mahāyāna Buddhists steadfastly refused to re-embed them, maintaining instead a stance of ultimacy by insisting on their non-locality; the pure vision of the Buddha is not, as one learns in chapter one of the *Vimalakirti-nirdeśa Sūtra,* contingent upon the outside world, but upon the purity of one's own mind. As the *Pratyutpannabuddha-saṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra* relates,

> Just as, for example, space is formless, incommunicable, unlocalised *(aniketa),* utterly pure, and undefiled, so the bodhisattva regards all dharmas, and with regard to dharmas conditioned and unconditioned *(saṃskṛtāsaṃskṛtadharma)* his eye becomes unobstructed. To the unobstructed eye of the bodhisattva dharmas are manifested, and if he concentrates, he sees....the Tathāgatas, Arhats, Samyaksaṃbuddhas. (Harrison 1978:51)

For the Mahāyāna adept, the awakened worlds of the Buddhas are always accessible, provided that one has the wisdom and merit to apprehend them.

This suggests that the "historical vision" of the Buddhists is more equivocal than Tambiah has described, as follows:

> A 'history' that begins with a great man, is transformed into an order of monks as the continuers of the tradition, and then expands into a *saṅgha* and *sāsana* within a polity, is of course 'objectively' a cooked and tendentious account. But it is precisely because that historical vision contains a magnificent plan of unfolding; a set of moral criteria by which to evaluate the acts of kings and monks; and a framework for describing a succession of kings *(vaṁsa),* together with a succession of monastic lineages and saintly *theras* (elders) that the Buddhist scholar monks of Lanka, Burma, and Thailand wrote the kind of continuos historical chronicles that are so conspicuously sparse, if not lacking, in India. There, the priestly accounts of authenticating religious knowledge and privilege in terms of a line of Brahman teachers had no way of leading to and joining up with a the *vaṁsa* accounts of royal dynastic succession. And the early destruction of Buddhism and its decline in the face of a Brahmanical restoration did not allow the emergence in India of an unfolding historical vision that materialized in Southeast Asia. (1984:118)

The *vaṃsa* "histories" of the Buddhists are in fact derived from the lineage lists of the early Buddhists, who on account of their oral mode of textual transmission were very concerned

with maintaining the semblance of an unbroken transmission of the teachings. The Mahāyāna traditions, however, relied on written texts, and while they maintained the fiction of lineage continuity, their rhetorical strategy implied an entirely different understanding of "history", one which is characterized by an inconceivability of reality which allows for cosmic transformations of all sorts; in this visionary context the mysterious appearance of a "long lost" Teaching, or the revelation of new Teachings by cosmic Buddhas, is far from achieving the limit of inconceivability which is so eloquently traced by Vimalakirti in the *sūtra* bearing his name. The Buddhists then, were not necessarily wholehearted advocates of Tambiah's "historical vision", so the blame for the disappearance of this vision cannot be fairly laid at the feet of Turks such as Muhammad Bakhtiyar; although much was no doubt lost when they sacked the great monastic complexes of Northeast India,[10] it is not at all clear that that a "linear" model of history was lost to India with their fall.

While it is probably not possible to avoid the conclusion that Buddhists did on occasion concoct lineage claims, it may be more enlightening to dwell not on the falsehood of such claims, but their creative consequences. Buddhist authors may have been constrained here by convention, a convention which considered the *nidāna* to be of central, definitive importance, a sign not only of scriptural *authenticity* but of scriptural *identity.* According to the *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra,* one of the defining characteristics of a sūtra is its context, *āśraya.*[11] Asaṅga[12] defines the "context" of the *sūtra* as the place wherein and the persons by whom and for whom the discourse was taught. [13] This information is what is conveyed in the *nidāna* of the *sūtra.* This point is made by Sthiramati, who defines the

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[10] Concerning the history of the Turks in India see Wink 1992; Muhammad Bakhtiyar's invasion of East India is discussed in Eaton 1993.

[11] See Nagao 1991 p. 76. *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* XI.3 defines a sūtra as follows: "A *sūtra* is [so called] because it communicates by means of context, characteristics, reality and import." (āśrayato lakṣaṇato dharmād arthāc ca sūcanāt sūtram; Bagchi 1970 p. 55).

[12] However, we should note that the Mahāyāna tradition attributes this text to the bodhisattva Maitreya, who transmitted it to Asaṅga via a revelatory process.

[13] *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra,* XI.3 auto-commentary: tatrāśrayo yatra deśe deśitaṃ yena yasmai ca (Bagchi 1970:56).

context of a *sūtra* in terms of the commonly accepted *nidāna* verse.[14] It may very well be that the *nidāna* had become so strongly accepted as a sign for scriptural authenticity that it was not lightly abandoned by later authors, lest they risk obscurity or ignominy for their revelations.

It is not necessary or even advisable, however, to assume that the authors of Mahāyāna or Tantric texts were conscious producers of apocryphal texts. For the ideology and practice of revelation may have led their authors to sincerely believe that the texts they produced were in fact the results of genuine revelations deriving from authoritative sources. Of central importance here is not only the *idea* that such revelation is possible, or its *ideological* appropriation as a tool for legitimation, but the development of specific *practices* or meditative techniques that were believed to effect such revelation.

There evidently was a belief among Mahāyāna circles in India, dating back at least to the beginning of the common era, that it was in fact possible to receive a revelation of *buddhavacana* even in the present time, after the decease of Śākyamuni. This idea was developed by the *Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthita-samādhi-sūtra*, which describes a samādhi which is defined as the "concentration of being face-to-face with the Buddha of the present time". The text describes a meditative practice designed to achieve this samādhi, which permits one to directly encounter a Buddha. The bodhisattva who achieves this is described as follows:

> that bodhisattva does not see the Tathāgata through obtaining the divine eye; he does not hear the True Dharma through obtaining the range of the divine ear; nor does he go to that world-system in an instant through obtaining magical powers – Bhadrapāla, while remaining in this very world system that

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[14] Sthiramati's comments occur in his *Sūtrālaṃkāravṛttibhāṣya*, in the context of his elucidation of h *Mahāyānasūtrālaṃkāra* XI.3. He wrote: "Moreover, in the *sūtras* it is stated: 'Thus have I heard: at one time the Blessed Lord resided in Rājagṛha together with many monks and bodhisattvas.' 'Rājagṛha', etc. shows the context in the sense of the place wherin it was taught. 'Blessed Lord' shows the context in the sense that it is He by whom it was taught. The persons [mentioned] show the context in the sense of the persons for whom the discourse was taught." / de yang mdo sde de dag las / 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na bcom ldan 'das rgyal po'i khab ni dge slong dang / byang chub sems dpa' mang po dang thab cig tu bzhugs so zhes bya ba gsungs so // de ltar na rgyal po'i khab la sogs pa yul gang du bshad pa de yang gnas yin par bstan to // bcom ldan 'das gang gis bshad pa'i don bstan pa'i bcom ldan 'das kyang gnas yin par bstan to // gang zag gang gi don du chos bshad pa'i gang zag gnas yin par bstan to / (DT sems tsam vol. mi fol. 157b)

> bodhisattva sees the Lord, the Tathāgata Amitāyus; and conceiving himself to be in that world-system he also hears the Dharma. Having heard their exposition he accepts, masters, and retains those Dharmas. He worships, venerates, honours, and reveres the Lord, the Tathāgata, Arhat, Samyaksaṃbuddha Amitāyus. After he has emerged from that *samādhi* that bodhisattva also expounds widely to others those Dharmas as he has heard, retained and mastered them.[15]

This passage claims that, through recourse to an altered state of consciousness, it is possible to directly perceive a celestial Buddha, receive teachings and disseminate those teachings, including ones that had never before been heard *(aśrutapūrvadharma).*[16] This is, in effect, an acceptance of the validity of teachings coming from sources other than a legitimate transmission going back to the historical Buddha. But more importantly, the widespread dissemination of such techniques may have opened the door of inspiration, giving rise to the virtual tidal wave of revelations that gave rise to the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna movements, sparking innovations both in the realms of ideas and in aesthetics. Faced with such an upswell of creative innovation, it seems rather petty to dwell exclusively on its authenticity, while exploring the ideas and particularly the practices that contributed to it may well be far more fruitful.

It turns out, not surprisingly, that a number of Tantric traditions hold that they entered the world via some sort of post-Śākyamuni revelation or discovery. A most famous example is story of Nāgārjuna's entry into an iron stūpa in southern India, wherein he was initiated into the garbha maṇḍala and received the extensive version of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra.*[17] This claim was not particularly revolutionary in the Mahāyāna context, as similar claims had previously made to account for the appearance of the Prajñāpāramitā scriptures as well as Asaṅga's reception of the Yogācāra teachings from

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[15] Trans. in Harrison 1978 p. 43; see also Williams 1989 p. 30 and McMahon 1998 p. 270.

[16] See Harrison 1978, p. 54.

[17] See the passage translated from Kūkai's *Introduction to the Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in section 4.1.1 above; see also Abé 1999 pp. 220 ff., and also Orzech 1995.

Maitreya, which Kūkai wisely pointed out to a critic of his account of the iron stūpa transmission.[18]

Faure suggests that the Buddhist preoccupation with lineage issues can be seen as a sign of a developing historical consciousness. He noted that "Shenhui's adoption of the twenty-eight (or twenty-nine) Indian patriarchs theory resulted from his awareness of the impossibility of his earlier theory of thirteen patriarchs spanning from Buddha to Bodhidharma, according to traditional computation, over a period of fifteen centuries." (1993:91.) A concern with lineage can go hand in hand with the development of a tradition of historical scholarship, but only perhaps where there is *not* undue preoccupation with immutable origins and the capture and containment of some sort of jealously guarded essence, as Tambiah implies was the case in the Indian brahmanical tradition. The rise of historicism instead is dependent upon an awareness of the change, transformation and intrinsic instability that characterizes all phenomena.

And such an awareness of impermanence is clearly present in most Buddhist intellectual traditions, as LaFleur has argued in regard to medieval Japanese literature.[19] A strong awareness of the inevitability of change is present in Buddhism even in regard to the Buddha's teaching, for the Buddha is said to have predicted the possibility, nay, the inevitability, of his teaching's decline and disappearance. The age of the decline of the Dharma cannot be forestalled, and thus lineages can be broken, and their transmissions lost. Yampolsky reported that "the T'ien-t'ai school had an established lineage, going back to the historical Buddha and maintaining that the Faith had been handed down from Patriarch to Patriarch until it reached Siṁha bhikṣu, the twenty-fourth, who was killed during a persecution of Buddhism, after which time the transmission was cut off." (1967:6)

And while it is certainly the case that lineage is commonly resorted to as a potential source of authority and legitimation, the Buddhist tradition also has a meta-level of criticism

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[18] See Abé 1999 pp. 226-350.

[19] See LaFleur 1983,ch. 3 , esp. pp. 60-69.

of such tactics. This may be related to a certain critical sophistication and sensitivity regarding language, as in the case of the poet Ryōkan, whom Abé described as follows: "Precisely because he had studied language and was fully aware of its power, Ryōkan was extremely sensitive about the harm that could result when this same power of words was abused." Ryōkan was also noted for his criticism of those who used or abused lineage claims. He included "people who always want to be acknowledged" and "telling others about one's distinguished lineage" among a list of things he dislikes. (1996:70)

Lineages can just as easily be a record of loss and degeneration through time. Despite the timeless verity of Śākyamuni's teachings, the continuity of his sermons have always been threatened by human inconstancy. Fortunately there is the possibility, or there came to be at any rate, of multiple authentic origins. Certain Tantric Buddhist traditions part from the Buddhist norm by declaring/admitting/recognizing that their tradition does not descend from Śākyamuni Buddha. But in so doing they open up the floodgates for revelation, by implicitly accepting the authenticity of inspired traditions. With regard to Kūkai, Hakeda wrote that

> his assertion that Esoteric Buddhism was not the doctrine expounded by the historical Buddha was a radical one....According to Kūkai, the historical Buddha is but one manifestation of Mahāvairocana, who exists in history and yet at the same time transcends it. Mahāvairocana in his samadhi is timeless and eternally present in a state of bliss. (1972:63)

Mahāvairocana qua *dharmakāya* was understood to be perpetually preaching the *dharma*, which was thus always accessible to one who had the wisdom and the art to access it. At the same time, the teachings were understood to be beyond time, being therefore always accessible and thus available for multiple revelations. Such is claimed by the author of the *Ḍākārnava Tantra*, who at the end of the passage speaks in the first person, assuming the voice of Vajradhara, the *dharmakāya* Buddha for this tradition:

> Regarding the origin of this Tantra, it has not arisen nor will it arise...The non-dual *Ḍākārṇava*, that is the non-dual Root Tantra which is the *mahātantra*, and the abbreviated text exist in the mouths of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas at all time. The basket of all syllables, first the three million six hundred thousand [verse text and then] the *Ḍākārṇava* were explained, stated in greater and lesser [extent], stated by all *ḍāka*, as numerous as the atoms of Mt. Sumeru. They are

> stated by infinite Blessed Lords in infinite, boundless lands, and during the *kaliyuga*, on earth. This Tantra, spoken by the Lion of the Śākyas, is the Transcendent Yoga; the auditor and Teacher are both myself, although the commentator is someone else.[20]

Padmavajra makes it clear in his commentary on the above that both the thirty-six hundred thousand verse massive version and the eighty-four thousand verse "condensed" versions of this text are perpetually taught by infinite Buddhas in infinite worlds, but that it manifested in this world through its preaching by Śākyamuni Buddha. He also notes that, just like the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, this text is preserved in this world by the mother goddesses *(mātṛkā)* who were present at the initial revelation, and who permanently reside at the power places *(vajrapiṭha)* that exist within the world, ready to divulge the Teaching again when it is necessary to do so.[21] This passage also expresses the idea that the Teacher and the auditor of the teaching are identical, which appears to be a move to legitimate the reception of revealed teachings. It is expressed even more strongly in a famous verse in the *Hevajra Tantra*, which is also expressed in the first person as follows: "I am the Teacher and I am the Teaching, and I am the auditor along with the audience. I am the goal, and I am the Teacher of the world; I am the world and beyond the world." [22] Here again the typical Tantric focus on non-duality is manifest, deliberately collapsing the distinction

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[20] DM ch. 52: / rgyud 'di rab tu byung ba ni // ma byung 'byung bar mi 'gyur ro /..../ gnyis med mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho dang // gnyis med rtsa rgyud rgyud chen po // 'dus pa'i rnam pa'i gzugs can de // sangs rgyas byang chub sems rnams kyi // dus thams cad du zhal na gnas // yi ge kun gyi za ma tog / 'bum phrag gsum cu drug dang po // mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho rab bshad de // chen po chung ngur gsungs pa'o // ri rab kyi ni rdul tshad kyi // mkha' 'gro thams cad kyis gsungs so // mtha' yas shing ni mu med nyid // rtsod pa'i dus kyi sa'i nang du // bcom ldan mtha' yas pas 'di gsungs // shākya seng ges gsungs pa'i rgyud // rnal 'byor pha rol son pa'o // nyan pa ston pa rang nyid de // 'chad po skye bo gzhan kyang ngo / (DK fol. 264a)

[21] See Padmavajra's *Śriḍākārṇavamahāyogini-tantrarāja-vāhikaṭikā*, ch. 52 DT fol. 316b-317b.

[22] HT II.2 v. 39, edited by in Snellgrove as follows: vyākhyātāham ahaṃ dharmaḥ śrotāhaṃ suganair yutaḥ // sādhyo 'ham jagataḥ śāstā loko 'haṃ laukiko 'py ahaṃ // 'chad pa po nga chos kyang nga // rang gi tshogs ldan nyan pa nga // 'jig rten ston pa bsgrub bya nga // 'jig rten 'jig rten 'das pa nga / (1959 vol. 2, pp.48-51). Snellgrove mistranslated *śrotāhaṃ suganair yutaḥ*, reading *gaṇa* as *guṇa*, "virtue", but here *sugaṇa* definitely refers to the troop of divine beings who would also have been present for the teaching along with the auditor (cf. 1959 vol. 1 p. 92). Snellgrove also follows the Sanskrit for his translation of the last *pada*, but I follow the Tibetan, simply because the Tibetan preserves the contrast between complementary figures.

between the ultimate and conventional realms, with the implication that both are pervaded by this Teaching and its Teacher.

Often Tantric traditions project their revelations far back into the mythic past, to lend the air of traditional authority to innovative teachings. Exegetes of the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinījālasaṃvara,* for example, claim that it was initially revealed as a massive text called the *Adibuddhatantra.* brGya-byin sdang-po describes its revelation in his *Sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvaratantrārthodaraṭikā* as follows:

> Vajradhara, the embodiment of all Victors, at the beginning of the fortunate eon[23] created the maṇḍala, emanated by means of his compassion, in order to purify things in the animate and inanimate worlds. Thinking that he should clearly explain the import of the Tantra in accordance with his previously formed intention to teach, he manifested the maṇḍala on the peak of Mount Sumeru, in order to please his fortunate followers and the deity hosts. He progressively explained the yoga of purification and so forth, in accordance with the Great Aditantra, etc.[24]

The danger with such accounts, however, is that they describe an ideal state of affairs which does not well correspond to the actually realities of Tantric texts and practices. It is here that the myth of degeneration filled the gap; humans of the present day, allegedly, due to their shorter life spans and greater burden of addictions *(kleśa),* are unable to fathom such massive texts. For this reason, the texts claim, more abbreviated versions were produced, and in particular *sādhana,* the meditation texts which condense the crucial meditation instructions often scattered pell-mell throughout the Tantras. brGya-byin sdang-po portrays this state of affairs as being foreseen and acted upon by the Buddha in the following "quote" from the mythic source text:

> It says in the *Adibuddha Tantra* "The meaning of the *mantratantra* is very hard to understand, but it is realized with recourse to the Explanatory Tantras and Ancillary [Tantras], etc. Seeking out the lineage instructions, one should give

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[23] The *bhadrakalpa,* according to Buddhist reckoning, is the current aeon in which one thousand Buddhas are scheduled to appear, among whom Śākyamuni was the fourth. See Rigzin1986, p. 24.

[24] / rgyal ba kun gyi bdag nyid rdo rje 'chang // bskal pa bzang po'i thog mar rab sprul nas // snod bcud brtan g.yo dngos po dag bya'i phyir // thugs rjes sprul pa'i dkyil 'khor mdzad // skal ldan rjes 'jug lha tshogs gzung bya'i phyir // sngon byung ston pa'i dgong mdzad rjes mthun par // rtson cha'i rgyud don gsal bar bstan dgongs nas // ri rab rtse mor dkyil 'khor rnam sprul zhing // dang po'i rgyud chen la sogs rim bzhin du // dag pa'i rnal 'byor la sogs rim bzhin bshad / (DT fol. 245a)

> rise to, settle and realize a vast expanse of certainty. The intelligent beings of the future will take delight in the *sādhana* and the abbreviated commentaries, so to begin with they were condensed at my command: uphold them reverentially so that they will last long.[25]

The Cakrasaṃvara tradition claims similar divine origins, and likewise does not claim that its root text originated with Śākyamuni. The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* was thought to derive not from the "nirmāṇakāya" Buddha Śākyamuni but from the "dharmakāya" Buddha Vajradhara, whence it descended into the world via revelation not once but twice, first to the mahāsiddha Saraha from Vajrapāṇi and then to the mahāsiddha Lūipa from Vajravārāhi.[26]

Such claims may seem ahistorical, and in a sense they are; they are also *atemporal*, but rather than negating time or history they claim to transcend it, in a *transhistorical* and *trans-temporal* manner; but this does not necessarily imply a denial of history, but perhaps instead the interpenetration of the ultimate and conventional levels of reality, in which "the desire for transcendence turns into a radical immanence, and the soteriological structure elaborated as an expedient tends to become an end in itself." (Faure 1991:58.) It recognizes the historical likelihood that these traditions derive from a post-Śākyamuni source, which preserves history while making a claim that there exists an ultimate reality behind its shifting screen of appearances; Buddhists tend to look more to that ultimate reality as a source of authority, rather than to the unreal saṃsāric transformations that constitute "history". Both, however, are understood to exist in a non-dual fashion, which means that the Buddhists would ultimately reject questions of origins as nonsensical, conducive not to liberation but to confusion, which is indeed a position Śākyamuni Buddha is reported to have held. This, however, does not mean that they would not resort to origin claims as a means of political legitimation, which they often did. Rather, in the final, Buddhist

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[25] / de ltar dang po'i sangs rgyas rgyud las kyang // gsang sngags rgyud don shin tu rtogs dka' ba // bshad rgyud cha mthun sogs kyis bgrub byas te // de nyid brgyud pa'i gdams ngag lags btsal bas // nges pa'i klong bskyed thag bcad rtogs par bya // de don ma 'ongs 'gro ba blo ldan pa // sgrub thabs bsdus don 'grel sogs 'thad pa yis // legs brtsams rnam par bsdus byas nga yi bka' // yun ring gnas phyir gus par gzung bar gyis / (DT fol. 246b)

[26] See Appendix E below.

analysis, all such claims would be considered irrelevant, and would be considered meaningful only insofar as they advanced the cause of liberation. No doubt, however, those who made such claims for their tradition would have also claimed ultimate status for its teachings, and thus could justify their strategy as a form of political *upāya.*

Tantric texts are stylistically different from the early Buddhist *suttas* which presumably were orally transmitted for some time before being set down into writing. Given this difference, it is somewhat surprising to find out that some of the categories applicable to the earlier, orally transmitted *suttas* linger problematically in the exegesis of Tantric texts. In particular, the *nidāna* verse continued to occur at the beginning of most Buddhist Tantras, and if anything its significance increased in the commentatorial literature, which no doubt is due to the problems its presence provoked.

Its continued presence reflects the continued influence of the early Buddhist model of oral transmission of the texts, even though this model was not likely to have been *practically* applicable in Buddhist communities were texts were preserved in a written medium. In fact, the Tantras tend toward a stylistic model opposite to the model of the earlier orally composed *suttas*. Rather than exhibiting "the rhythmic and repetitious patterns and formulary expressions"[27] characteristic of orally composed and preserved texts, they are written in a style which demands commentary, and they often appear to be deliberately vague, with their content sometimes scattered haphazardly throughout the text. Their style of composition implies that they were from the start written rather than oral texts, since only with a written text can one jump through the text at will to compare passages at different locations within the text.

The typical explanation accounting for this stylistic obscurity is that it is a deliberate strategy to ensure the secrecy of the Teachings. While the skeptic might wonder if this secrecy was also in the economic interest of the Tantric masters who wrote these texts,

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[27] McMahan 1998 p. 261; McMahan here draws upon Ong's 1982 book, *Orality and Literacy: The Technologizing of the Word.*

there were also more practical reasons to maintain such secrecy. Tantric texts do frequently employ transgressive imagery, and it was probably not in anyone's interest that they receive widespread dissemination in easily accessible forms. There were several known attempts to repress Tantric teachings, which were probably not unrelated to the intense anti-Tantric rhetoric contained in texts such as the *Kūrmapurāṇa;* even if such persecutions were relatively infrequent, they no doubt provided ample evidence of the dangers of the open propagation of these teachings.[28]

It is possible that the stylistic obscurity of the Tantric texts was a strategy for the control of the dissemination and propagation of the texts. This may have represent an attempt to reassert control of the dissemination and interpretation of the texts, texts which may have been inspired in part by sources of authority that lay outside of the monastic sphere, such as among the forest and charnel ground renunciants whose relationships with the monasteries were probably tenuous. Tantric exegetes are actually quite explicit about their need to control the dissemination of their texts, typically explaining that such obscurity and secrecy was necessary in order to protect those not prepared for the study of the texts.

On the other hand, this obscurity may derive from two distinct internal factors. The first is simply that Tantric texts primarily deal with ritual and meditative practices, which even under ideal circumstances are never easy to learn from a text. A second factor may be that Tantric texts typically had a long and precarious textual history, and were periodically subject to partial loss and reconstruction or revision, which over time tended to result in obscurity. Both of these factors were observed in the seventh century by the Chinese pilgrim Yi-jing, whose observations are translated and discussed in 5.2 below.

The *nidāna* verses contained in the relatively early Buddhist Tantras clearly follow the model of the Mahāyāna sūtras. The *Sarvatathātattvasaṃgraha,* for example, begins

[28] Concerning the suppression of Tantric traditions see Dyczkowski 1988, p. 10.

with a lengthy *nidāna*[29] which is can be seen as a subdued version of the massive *nidānas* found in *sūtras* such as the *Gaṇḍavyūha*. The *nidāna* of the former text occurs as follows:

> Thus have I heard at one time: the greatly compassionate Blessed Lord Mahāvairocana, who is endowed with the various qualities of the intuition of the adamantine blessings and commitments of all Tathāgatas, and who has been consecrated as the dharmarāja of the three realms with the jeweled crown of all Tathāgatas, and who is the lord of the great yogins of the omniscience of all Tathāgatas, and who fulfills all of the hopes of all beings without exception by doing whatever needs to be done and the equal mastery of all of the mudrā of all Tathāgatas, and who always abides in the three times and who has the vajra of the body, speech and mind of all Tathāgatas, resided in the palace of the divine king of Akaniṣṭha in which dwell, and which is praised by all Tathāgatas, which is studded with great precious jewels, and which is decorated with lovely colors, wind chimes, silk, flower wreaths, yak tail fans, garlands and half garlands and moons, along with twice times nine hundred and ninety million bodhisattvas, including Vajrapāṇi, Avalokiteśvara, Ākāśagarbha, Vajramuṣṭi, Mañjuśri, Sahacittotpādadharmacakrapravartinā, Gaganagañja, Sarvamārabalapramardinā, and as many Tathāgatas as there are grains of sand in the Gaṅgā.[30]

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[29] Some Tantras do have quite lengthy nidānas; others, however, had extremely short and cryptic ones, such as the *Āryâcalamahākrodharājasya sarvatathāgatasya balāparimitaviravinayasvākhyāta-nāma-kalpa*, which begins as follows: "Thus have I heard: at one time the Blessed Lord resided the wind." (/ 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na / bcom ldan 'das rlung la bzhugs te / DK fol. 261b). In short, there is a great deal of diversity within the various Tantras preserved in the Tibetan canon.

[30] evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye bhagavān sarvatathāgatavajrādhiṣṭhāna-samayajñāna-vividhaviśeṣasamanvāgataḥ sarvatathāgataratnamukuṭa-traidhātukadharmarājyābhiṣeka-prāptaḥ sarvatathāgatasarvajñajñānamahāyogīśvaraḥ sarvatathāgatasarvamudrā-samatādhigata-viśvakāryakaraṇatāśeṣānavaśeṣa-sattvadhātusarvāśā-paripūrakaḥ mahākṛpo vairocanaḥ śāśvatas tryadhvasamayavyavasthitaḥ sarvakāyavākcittavajras tathāgataḥ sarvatathāgatādhyuṣitapraśastastavite mahāmaṇiratnapratyupte vicitravarṇa-ghaṇṭāvasakta-mārutoddhūta-paṭṭasrakcāmara-hārārdhahāra-candropaśobhite akaniṣṭhadevarājasya bhavane vijahāra / navanavatibhir bodhisattvakoṭibhiḥ sārdhaṃ tadyathā vajrapāṇinā ca bodhisattvena avalokiteśvareṇa ca bodhisattvena ākāśagarbheṇa ca vajramuṣṭinā ca mañjuśriyā ca sahacittotpādadharmacakrapravartinā ca gaganagañjena ca sarvamārabalapramardinā ca evaṃ pramukhair navanavatibhir bodhisattvakoṭibhiḥ gaṅgānadīvalukāsamākhyātaiś ca tathāgataiḥ / (Yamada 1981:3-4); / 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na / bcom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad thugs rje chen po de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi rdo rje'i byin gyis brlabs dang / dam tshig gi ye shes rnam pa sna tshogs kyi khyad par dang ldan pa / de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi rin po che'i dbu rgyan gyis khams gsum gyi chos kyi rgyal po dbang bskur ba mnga' brnyes pa / de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes rnal 'byor chen po'i dbang phyug / de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi phyag rgya thams cad mnyam pa nyid du thugs su chud cing / thams cad kyi dgos pa mdzed pa nyid kyis / sems can gyi khams ma lus shing lus pa med pa thams cad kyi re ba yongs su skong ba'i 'phrin las mdzad pa / thugs rje che ba rnams par snang mdzad dus gsum du rtag par bzhugs shing / sku dang / gsung dang / thugs thams cad rdo rje lta bur gyur pa'i de bzhin gshegs pa / de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad bzhugs shing bsngags bstod pa / nor bu dang rin po che chen pos spras pa / kha dog sna tshogs shing dril bu btags pa / dar dang / 'phan dang / me tog gi phreng ba dang / rna ma dang / dra ba dang / dra ba phyed pa dang / zla ba rlung gis bskyod pa rnams kyis mdzes pa byas pa'i 'og min gyi lha'i rgyal po'i gnas na bzhugs pa / byang chub sems dpa' bye ba phrag dgu bcu rtsa dgu la 'di lta ste / byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po phyag na rdo rje dang / kun tu spyan ras gzigs kyi dbang po dang / nam mkha'i snying po dang / rdo rje khu tshur dang / 'jam dpal dang / sems bskyed ma thag tu chos kyi 'khor lo bskor ba dang / nam mkha'i mdzod dang / bdud kyi stobs thams cad rab tu 'joms pa la sogs pa byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po bye ba phrag dgu bcu rtsa dgu dang / gang gā'i klung gi bye ma snyed kyi de bzhin gshegs pa rnams dang thabs cig tu bzhugs te / (DK fol. 1b-2a).

The context set here is definitely transhistorical, unlike the *Gaṇḍavyūha*, which begins in the mundane realm in Jeta grove which is transformed through the miraculous power of Śākyamuni Buddha. Instead, this text begins in the Mahāvairocana's palace in Akaniṣṭha, and does not purport to describe events in the life of Śākyamuni or any other historical figure.

Tantric texts are traditional in the sense of being prefaced by a *nidāna* verse, but they diverge from the tradition of the *nikāya suttas* insofar as they do not place their text in the "historical" context of Śākyamuni Buddha. Often, however, they diverged even further. Such was the case with the *nidāna* verse of the *Guhyasamāja*, famous for its strong erotic savour. It occurs as follows: "Thus have I heard: at one time the Blessed Lord was residing in the vulva of the Adamantine Lady, the essence of the Body, Speech and Mind of all Tathāgatas."[31] This verse or its variants occur in many other Tantric texts, which no doubt reflects its popularity in Tantric Buddhist circles.[32]

There appear to have been a major shift in the significance of the *nidāna* verse in Tantric traditions. No longer a simple statement of the context in which the Teaching occurred, it came to be glorified in its own right. There is even a Tantra dedicated to the glorification of the *nidāna*. This text, the *Tattvapradīpa*, claims that "the expression *evaṃ mayā*, etc. seals everything animate and inanimate in the three worlds without exception, since its nature is Wisdom and Art *(prajñopāya)*. It is famed as the lamp of reality, and its

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[31] evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye bhagavān sarvatathāgata-kāyavākcittahṛdaya-vajrayoṣidbhageṣu vijahāra /; 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na / bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku dang gsung dang thugs kyi snying po rdo rje btsun mo'i bhaga la bzhugs so / (Fremantle 1971:174-75).

[32] Variants of it include the *nidāna* of the *Sarvatathāgata-kāyavākcitta-guhyālaṃkāravyūha*, which is similar to the GS nidāna but somewhat less erotic, as it places the *bhagavān* in the company of male deities such as *vajrajñānayogamaheśvara* of the "body, speech and mind of all Tathāgatas". (DK fol. 83b). This is followed by a feminine version of the *nidāna*, whic again placed the bhagavān not in the vulva, but in the company *(thabs cig tu bzhugs)* of the *vajrayoṣit* known as Prajñāpāramitā. (See DK fol. 84a). Another variant occurs in the *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa* as follows: "Thus have I heard: at one time the Blessed Lord Vajrasattva was residing in the vulva of Vajradhātviśvarī, the essence of the body, speech and mind of all Tathāgatas, with many hosts of adamantine yogins and yoginis." evaṃ mayā śrutam ekasmin samaye bhagavān vajrasattvaḥ sarvatathāgata-kāyavākcittahṛdaya-vajradhātviśvarībhage vijahāra / anekaiś ca vajrayogiyoginigaṇaiḥ / (George 1974:18). This verse is also interesting in that it corrects the unusual locutive plural *bhageṣu* to the locutive singular *bhage*.

form is the stainless, perfected fruit."[33] While these *nidāna* no longer make a claim to legitimacy via Śākyamuni Buddha, it appears that there was a concerted effort to claim that the nidāna in and of themselves are legitimating in the sense that they encapsulate profound truths concerning ultimate reality.

For those who were not impressed by the literal meaning of these passages, however, many commentators began pointing out the esoteric significance of these passages. A trend which appears to have developed in Tantric circles is a style of analysis which might be termed "atomic analysis" in which the passage is reduced to the smallest possible lexical or sublexical unit, and esoteric meanings are ascribed to either the words, syllables or letters, and in some cases even the component portions of the letters.[34] This commentatorial strategy was particularly applied to the Tantric *nidāna* verses. The *Vajramālā* Explanatory Tantra is well known for its elucidation of the hidden significance of the *Guhyasamāja nidāna* through forty stanzas of verse, each of which begins with one of the forty syllables that constitute that textual passage.[35]

The *Hevajra Tantra* begins with a slightly shortened, thirty-seven syllable version of the *Guhyasamāja nidāna*.[36] The esoteric significance of the *nidāna*'s syllables are the subject of the third chapter of the *Sampuṭa Tantra*.[37] They are also discussed at length by

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[33] *Tattvapradipa-nāma-mahāyoginitantrarāja:* / e vaṃ ma yā sogs sgra yis // khams gsum 'gro dang mi 'gro bcas // shes rab thabs kyi rang bzhin gyis // thams cad rgyas btab gzhan gyis min // de kho na nyid sgron mar grags // dri med rdzogs pa'i 'bras bu'i gzugs / (DK fol. 137a)

[34] The syllable *hūm*, the *bija* of the *vajrakula*, was often broken down into its component parts, with even the *bindu* or 'dot' signifying the nasal receiving an esoteric import. See for example Kūkai's essay "The Meaning of the Syllable *Hūṃ*" (吽字義, *Unjigi*), translated in Hakeda 1972, pp. 246-62.

[35] These stanzas are edited, translated and analyzed by Wayman in his 1977 book. Other important commentatorial works that discuss the import of these syllables include Candrakīrti's *Pradipodyotana* and Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*.

[36] According to Vajragarbha's *Hevajrapiṇḍārthaṭikā*, the *nidāna* of the HT has thirty seven syllables, which is achieved by subtracting the three syllable word *hṛdaya* from the nidāna of the GS. See DT fol. 7a,b. Snellgrove's edition includes the word *hṛdaya*, but he notes that two of the three Sanskrit manuscripts he used omit the word, which suggests that his edition may have to be emended; at the very least, the 37 syllable version was an important and well attested variant.

[37] Concerning the *Saṃpuṭa* see the fourth chapter of the first *kalpa*, which is translated and edited by Elder 1978 and edited by Skorupski 1996. This import of this nidāna verse is also discussed in chapter two of Kāṇha's *Guhyatattvaprakāśa*.

Vajragarbha in his commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*, where they are correlated to the thirty-seven deities of the *Hevajra* maṇḍala and the thirty-seven Aids to Awakening *(bodhipakṣakadharma).*[38]

It appears likely that the majority of Buddhist Tantric texts, whatever their ultimate origin(s), reached their final form and were preserved in a monastic context. The *nidāna* verse, regardless of its form, seems to represent for Tantric texts the monastic "seal of approval", a sign of its authentic status as *buddhavacana.* That this was the case is suggested by the commentatorial crisis caused by the existence of Tantras which conspicuously lacked the typical *nidāna* beginning with *evaṃ mayā*, etc. Tantras in this category include the *Cakrasaṃvara*, the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara*, as well as the *Mañjuśrināmasaṃgiti.*[39] These texts begin instead with the word *atha*, "And then," which is quite atypical for Buddhist scriptures.

The controversy concerning these texts had developed at least by the eighth century. It is discussed by Vilāsavajra in his commentary on the *Guhyasamāja nidāna*, who discusses with some disapproval the Tantras that lack the *nidāna*, as follows:

> The meaning of *yoṣit* is consort, and it is a great wonder that the Lord dwells in her place, the place of the *origin du monde (dharmodaya).* At this point some people might object that while it is acceptable that this is authentic scripture *(buddhavacana)*, there is no necessity for *evaṃ mayā śrutaṃ*, since some Tantras have *atha*, which is an augment signifying that bliss is orgasmic. Why is this so? If [a text] is stated after the Lord has passed in Nirvāṇa, then it is of the class [of texts] that state 'Thus have I heard'. Why are texts that [state] 'Thus have I heard" not of the contemporary time when the Lord exists manifestly? The answer is they are of that type; *evaṃ mayā śrutaṃ* occurs in all Tantras, and 'the Lord has passed into Nirvāṇa' is not stated in any other Tantra as well. Someone might object that others have said that concise Tantras lack it. Why is that? It is because these Tantras exist in a non-dual fashion. The reply to that is that others might wonder how these Tantras could exist is they lacked a interlocutor. It is order to clarify these [doubts] that 'Thus have I heard' is stated.[40]

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[38] Vajragarbha's comments occur in his *Hevajrapiṇḍārthaṭikā*, DT fols. 7 ff.

[39] The Tibetan version of the *Vajraśekhara Tantra* (Tōh. 480) also begins with *atha (de nas).* See DK fol. 142b.

[40] *Śriguhyasamājatantranidānagurūpadeśana-vyākhyāna:* / btsun mo zhes pa ni phyag rgya'i don to // bcom ldan 'das chos kyi 'byung gnas de gnas na bzhugs so zhes bya ba de ni ngo mtshar che'o // skabs 'dir gzhan dag gis brgal ba bcom ldan 'das kyis gsungs pa zhes bya bas chog mod / 'di skad bdag gis thos pa dgos ched med de / de nas zhes bya ba dang rgyud ldan pa'm / lhan cig ces byas ni tshig 'brel cing bde

Interestingly, he makes his convoluted objection in the context of discussing the erotic portion of the *Guhyasamāja nidāna*; the objection we expect here is that the statement that the Blessed Lord resides in an Adamantine Lady's vulva is not authentic scripture, an objection that he fails to answer. Instead, he has his straw man accept the authenticity of this *nidāna*, but express the idea that the *nidāna* is not necessary. It is as if he sought to avoid that question by deflecting the reader's attention to the case of texts that don't even have a *nidāna* at all, as if having an erotic *nidāna* is less problematic than lacking one. He then proceeds to suggest that having a *nidāna* is a good idea to prevent "doubts", although he does not outright state that texts lacking one are uncanonical.

The "doubts" concerning these texts, however, were undoubtedly doubts concerning their status as *Buddhavacana*, which is certainly a well-founded doubt in the case of the *Cakrasaṃvara*, which lacks many of the typical characteristics of Buddhist Tantras. Not only does it lack the *nidāna*, but its use of Buddhist terminology is paltry, while it is rife with the terminology associated with the charnel ground cults that appear to be associated more closely with ecstatic Śaiva groups such as the kāpālikas than with normative monastic Buddhism. For example, two of its chapters, eleven and forty-nine, are concerned with the powers gained from consuming the bezoar or concretion found in the heart of a man born seven times a brahmin, a practice that is hardly compatible with the Mahāyāna Buddhist doctrine of compassion.

There is no doubt that the more unconventional Tantras such as the Cakrasaṃvara had achieved a great degree of prestige and popularity in India, at least among the Buddhist monks responsible for the dissemination of these traditions to Tibet. This prestige was most likely based on the charisma attained by the groups of realized saints *(siddha)* but

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ste / de yang ci phyir zhe na / bcom ldan 'das mya ngan las 'das pa'i 'og tu brjod na ni 'di skad bdag gis thos pa zhes brjod pa'i rigs kyi / de lta bcom ldan 'das mngon sum du bzhugs pa'i dus su 'di skad bdag gis thos pa zhes pa 'di rigs pa ma yin no zhe na / lan du rigs pa yin te / rgyud thams cad las kyang 'di skad bdag gis thos so zhes 'byung la / ston pa mya ngan las 'das so zhes ni rgyud gzhan gang las kyang ma gsungs so // kha cig gis brgal ba / rgyud sdud par mdzad pa dag med do zhes gzhan dag smra'o // de ci'i phyir zhe na / rgyud 'di dag gnyis su med par gnas pa'i phyir ro zhe'o / lan du rgyud 'di dag las phyir gyur pa gzhan dag ci 'dri ba po zhig med na rgyud 'di dag ji ltar 'byung bar 'gyur zhes rnam pa rtog ste // de dag bsal ba'i phyir 'di skad bdag gis thos so zhes smos so / (DT fol. 92a).

rapidly spread outward, so that by the time texts and practiced associated with them reached the monastic universities they were accepted as is, with minimal editing. The task, then, for the monastic scholars was to engage in creative commentary to naturalize these texts to the Buddhist monastic context.

Thus, commentators who wished to demonstrate the authenticity of texts such as the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara* and the *Cakrasamvara Tantra* which lack the nidāna needed to either explain its absence or demonstrate its occult presence. The various attempts with regard to the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* are reviewed by Tsongkhapa in his text below. As it turns out, Tsongkhapa rejected attempts at the former, and opted for the latter.

In so doing he goes to great lengths to show that the passage in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* which Kāṇha called the *"yoginitantra nidāna,"*[41] i.e., "The Hero made of all ḍākinis, Vajrasattva, Supreme Bliss, always abides in the secret supreme delighted, the Universal Self", is esoterically equivalent to the standard Buddhist *nidāna* beginning with *evaṃ mayā*, etc.[42]

There was also another controversy concerning the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* which concerned both the "context" of its origination and its lineage transmission. Since the Cakrasaṃvara lacked an ordinary, exoteric *nidāna* which answered the basic questions of who taught it to whom in what place, it was up to the commentators to provide this information. It seems to have been generally accepted that it was taught by an Awakened Buddha in a divine locale; the controversial question concerned to whom was it taught. Basically, the Indian commentators divided into two camps, that it was taught either to Vajravārāhi or Vajrapāṇi. Kambala states in his commentary that Vajrapāṇi is the interlocutor for the Tantra, meaning that it is Vajrapāṇi who asked the question(s) that inspired its teaching; he is followed in making this claim by Durjayacandra and

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[41] See the passage in his TP quoted in section 4.2.2 above.

[42] Tsongkhapa's arguments are contained in his comments on the relevant verses in chapter one below.

Devagupta.[43] On the other hand, the "Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi" himself states, in the commentary attributed to him, that Vajravārāhi is the interlocutor, which would appear to undercut the former claims, were one to accept that commentary's claim to divine authorship. Bhavabhadra accepts the latter's claim but attempts to mediate between these two camps by arguing that while the Teaching it self transcends time, its actual manifestations in history are illusory. He nonetheless assigns Vajravārāhi the role of interlocutor, and Vajrapāṇi to the role of compiler. He wrote:

> The teacher is the Great Vajradhara whose body has four faces and so forth; he exists thus in his emanation body. This Tantra has existed being taught since time beginningless. It might decline somewhere on account of the lack of sentient beings' merit, but elsewhere it would spread due to the power of merit. Furthermore, the Teacher and the Teaching are illusory, as the deeds of the Tathāgatas are inconceivable. Thus the Bhagavani Vajravārāhi was the supplicant, and Vajrapāṇi the compiler, and the Teaching was entrusted to them in common.[44]

Jayabhadra, on the other hand, simply lists some of the competing positions. Commenting on the imperative "Listen!" in chapter one, he wrote: "Regarding "listen", some say that it was the Blessed Lord speaking to the Reverend Lady. Others say that they both spoke together with one voice. Still others claim that the Blessed Lady was the instuctor for the Blessed Lord."[45]

Tibetan commentators, including Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po and Tsongkhapa, generally did not take sides and accepted both positions as possible; Tsongkhapa is led to the conclusion that there were multiple occurrences of the teaching of this Tantra, and hence

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[43] The positions of these and the following commentators are described at length in Tsongkhapa's ch.1 commentary below, and in my notes thereon.

[44] / zhal bzhi pa la sogs pa'i sku rdo rje 'chang chen po ni ston pa po ste // de yang de nyid dngos su sprul pa'i skur gnas pa'o // rgyud 'di ni thogs ma med pa'i dus nas bstan par bya ba nyid du gnas te / sems can rnams kyi bsod nams ma yin pas kha cig tu ni nub // la lar bsod nams kyi dbang gis dar ro // de yang bstan bya dang ston pa po la sogs pa 'di sgyu ma lta bu ste / de bzhin gshegs pa'i mdzad pa ni bsam gyis mi khyab bo // 'di phyir bcom 'dan 'das rdo rje phag mo ni zhu ba po'o // phyag na rdo rje sdud pa po ste / de yang thun mong du bstan pa gtad pa nyid kyi phyir ro / (CP, DT fol. 141b)

[45] MP ch. 1: śṛnv iti bhagavān evam āha bhaṭṭārikāṃ prati ke cit / ubhayor ekakaṇṭhasvaninaivam uktām ity anye / yatra bhagavaṃtaṃ prati bhagavati de[śi]kety apare / (MS. D fol. 9b-10a) / mnyan par gyis zhes bya ba ni la la dag bcom ldan 'das nyid kyis yum rje ma la gsungs pa yin no zhes 'dod do // gzhan dag ni gnyi gsung gcig tu 'di ltar gcig pa nyid yin no zhes zer ro // gzhan dag ni bcom ldan 'das ma yum ni bcom ldan 'das la ston par mdzad pa yin te / (QT fol. 22.5)

multiple accounts of its origination. This in turn led to multiple lineage lists, as each revelation of the Teaching into this world gave rise to a different sequence of its transmission. These distinct accounts of the Tantra's origination may represent two distinct tendencies among Cakrasamvara adepts in India. The tradition that Vajravārāhi was the supplicant, who in turn revealed the Teaching to Lūipa, may reflect a more unorthodox, Śaiva-influenced orientation. This orientation sees the Tantra as originating in a conversation between Cakrasamvara and Vajravārāhi in the manner of Śiva and Umā's conversations, and its transmission to Lūipa in a manner not far removed from the Śaiva account of Matsyendra's overhearing of a conversation between Śiva and Umā. The tradition which sees Vajrapāṇi as the supplicant and the revealer of the text to Saraha may reflect a Buddhist monastic orientation, more in line with the clearly orthodox Buddhist Tantras.

It appears that the former is an older tradition, and perhaps more authentic, for while the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is an abbreviated text it still contains traces of the conversation mode of discourse, and closely related texts are clearly presented in the form of a conversation between the god and goddess. The latter perspective is probably a later orthodox Buddhist interpretation, perhaps developed circa the ninth century when the Tantra appears to have made inroads into the monastic context. If so, it never succeeded in fully supplanting the competing perspective. If anything, the compromise position reported by Jayabhadra, that both the Blessed Lord Heruka Cakrasaṃvara and Vajravārāhi taught the Tantra mutually, seems to have been the most widely accepted. Kāṇha, for example, wrote in his *Saṃvaravyākhyā* that "the divine couple taught this *Śricakrasaṃvara,* which is a treasure of all virtues, the nature of all things,"[46] skillfully skirting this issue.

The history of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, viewed from the perspective of traditional sources, reveals, as Foucault predicted not the "inviolable identity" of its origin, but

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[46] / pha ma gnyis ni dbyer med pas // dpal ldan bde mchog bshad pa 'di // yon tan kun gyi gter gyur pa // dngos po kun gyi rang bzhin no / (DT fol. 6b, 7a)

dissension and disparity. It "originated" not once but on multiple occasions, in Buddhist and Śaiva contexts, respectively, reflecting the disparate influences which are brought together into a state of harmonic tension within the text.

The genius of the commentatorial traditions, developed in India but perfected in Tibet, was to fully synthesize these elements. Through the application of "creative commentary," they forged a truly harmonious and ultimately extremely successful integration of textual interpretations and meditative and ritual techniques. This synthesis extended beyond the commentaries and into the interrelated realms of myth and ritual, as shall be shown in chapter six below.

5.2 Modern Chronologies

The critical reader will have by now noticed that this study has thus far assumed a date for the arisal of Tantric Buddhism in India that is somewhat earlier than has been propounded in some earlier studies. It may be noted, with reference to the *Saṃvaravyākhyā* quoted above, that it is assumed here that the Kāṇha to whom the text is attributed is the same Kāṇha who can be dated with reasonable certainty to the late eighth and/or early ninth century. This would date the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* itself several centuries earlier than has been previously proposed. There is in fact an assumption or hypothesis at work here, but also reasoning based on known historical data. Both will be explicated here in this section.

Regarding assumptions, it has often been assumed that there are numerous authors of the same name, such as two or more Nāgārjuna, two or more Candrakirti, and so forth. While it is of course possible that there were multiple authors with the same name, generally these assumptions were made not on the basis of actual evidence pointing toward multiple authorship, but simply based on a presumption of the (relatively late) date of the development of Tantric literature. That is, an assumption is used as the basis for the

development of a chronology. The principle which is followed here, however, is to work from the basis of known dates and develop a chronology thence. Obviously, reason must play a role here; we are probably safe in assuming that the *mahāsiddha* Nāgārjuna to whom a number of works of Tantric literature is ascribed is a different person than the philosopher Nāgārjuna who most likely lived sometime in the second century CE,[47] a safe assumption for those unable to accept that he lived five hundred or more years.[48] On the other hand, this assumption itself is fraught with problems.[49]

The assumption that the philosopher Candrakirti, who lived during the seventh century, was not the author of *Pradipodyotana* commentary on the Guhyasamāja is not necessarily quite so reasonable.[50] This assertion is based on two incorrect assumptions.

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[47] The problem of the identity of Nāgārjuna (N.) and his possible homonymous successor is complex; N. qua Madhyamaka philosopher is generally dated to the first to third centuries C.E. (See Ruegg 1981 n. 11 pp. 4-5). The so-called "Tantric N." has been dated to the seventh century (see Bhattacharrya pp. 67-68, though this dating is based on specious reasoning, such as the assumption that each guru and disciple in the lineages is separated by twelve years). It might seem a safe assumption that N. the Tantric author was the N. famed for his alchemical prowess; this is certainly possible, although the legend of N. the alchemist was also quite ancient. The legend was reported by Xuan-zang, who in the mid seventh century depicted N. as both a man of profound wisdom and alchemical prowess. (See Beal 1884, pt. 2 pp. 210-17) and later in the same century by Yi-jing (see Takakusu 1896 p. 158). Xuan-zang also reported meeting a disciple of Nāgārjuna who appeared to be 30 years old but was actually aged 700 years (see Watters 1904, pp. 286-87). White suggests that if we assume this disciple was in fact 30 years old then N. the alchemist would have been active in the early seventh century (1996a:75). This legend was evidently very widespread throughout India; Al-Biruni, travelling in India in the early eleventh century, also mentions the legend of the alchemist N. (see Sachau 1910 vol. 1 pp. 188 ff.) It was not soon afterward, in the early eighth century, that legends reached China concerning N. and his extraction of the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi* from the iron stūpa. It certainly appears possible that there lived a Tantric and/or alchemical master named N. during the sixth or early seventh century. On the other hand Mabbett, after overviewing the data concerning N., suggests that "the object of our quest may itself be an artifact of the quest (*māyā* or *gandharvanagara*, so to speak). We must give proper weight to the default hypothesis that the association of the name Nāgārjuna with a profusion of tantric and quasi-scientific texts is demonstrative of the absorptive power of the legend originating in a single historical Nāgārjuna, the author of the Madhyamaka." (1998:346)

[48] This is no place to tackle the complex issue of Nāgārjuna's lifespan, but we might note that the "skeptical" rejection of such claims for a saint's longevity shed no more light on the issue than their naive acceptance, since further inquiry is typically cut off in both cases. Ray, in a 1997 article, has shown that the belief in the longevity or potential longevity of Buddhist saints, including the Buddha himself, are very ancient; the power of extending one's life to as long as an eon *(kalpa)* is attributed to all Tathāgatas and eight stage bodhisattvas by the *Mahānirvāṇa Sūtra* and the *Daśabhūmika Sūtra*, respectively (Ray 1997:134-35). N. is far from alone in being credited with supernormal longevity.

[49] It has often been assumed, for example that the "Tantric Nāgārjuna" has often been believed to have lived in the eighth century (see for example Bharati 1993, p. 214). The problem with this dating is that aspects of the legends connected to the "Tantric Nāgārjuna", such as his mastery of alchemy and his association with Śriparvata were reported by Xuan-zang in the seventh century. Concerning these problems see Jan 1970.

[50] Ruegg dates Candrakirti to c. 600-650 C.E. (1981:71). He assumes that the Candrakirti who was the author of Tantric texts was a different person, but notes that the author of the Madhyamaka literature and of Tantric literature were considered to be one and the same person by the Buddhist tradition. He hesitantly

The first, that the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* could not have been composed by the seventh century, will be debunked below. The second, typically unstated, assumption appears to be the judgment that a fine philosopher such as Candrakīrti would not have stooped to so low as to comment on degenerate literature such as the Tantras. This sort of judgment, however, is nothing but an example of cultural chauvinism, and it is alien to the tradition being purportedly studied. The Tibetan Buddhists, who inherited the full flower of Indian Buddhism, consider Tantric Buddhism to be the highest teaching of their traditions deserving the greatest respect possible, and here they are clearly following the example set for them by their Indian mentors.[51]

Instead, it seems advisable to follow the attributions of the tradition except when there is strong evidence to the contrary. Hence the author of the *Pradipodyotana* is simply considered here to be Candrakīrti, rather than a "Tantric" Candrakīrti number two. Such attributions alone, naturally, do not provide enough evidence to date the text with absolute certainty to the seventh century, and to thereon construct a chronology, but they provide at least tentative dates which can be considered hypotheses awaiting confirmation or contradiction. This approach also has the virtue of respecting the tradition that the scholar is studying; it seems disrespectful, for example, to *begin* one's research with the *assumption* that the traditional attributions are incorrect. Rather, they are the natural position from which to begin one's research, but still must be taken as hypothesis, subject to confirmation or, failing that, revision.

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ascribes the **Triśaraṇagamanasaptati* to the Tantric Candrakirti on the basis of the fact that this text this text mentions a *Vidhyadharapiṭaka* (1981:105). We shall see below, however, that there is a lengthy account of this *Vidhyadharapiṭaka* in a seventh century text, more or less contemporaneous with the Madhayamaka Candrakirti, which from a chronological point of view at least renders superfluous the assumption that this text was *necessarily* written by a different individual, although it is of course *possible* that it was.

[51] Wayman, for example, wrote "Āryadeva is a tantric writer, no more to be identified with the celebrated Mādhyamika author of the same name than are the tantrics Nāgārjuna and Candrakirti." (1977:93). My objection is not to the multiplicity of Āryadevas per se (which is quite possible), but to the peculiar, demeaning assumption here that an Indian author is only capable of excelling within one genre of literature. This is patently absurd, and the fact to the contrary is pointed out by later Indian authors such as Ātiśa who wrote well across several different genres, as well as his Tibetan followers such as Bu-ston, gLong-chen-pa and Tsongkhapa, who wrote prolifically in just about all of the genres and on all of the topics available to them.

Regarding the construction of a chronology, the earliest available textual evidence is preserved in the Chinese canon, which, in addition to translations, contains an ample record of the writings of Indian translators such as Amoghavajra and the accounts of Chinese pilgrims to India. Tantric forms of religious theory and practice had developed over several centuries in India, manifesting as the slow trickle of texts with "esoteric elements" into China. An important milestone in the development of Tantric Buddhism, however, appears to be the acceptance of Tantric texts in the monastic centers in the seventh century. This acceptance is textually evident in the appearance of systematized compilations of Tantric texts during this century, which would have required the editorial and commentatorial activity to which literate monks were particularly inclined.[52]

The typical objection to this argument is that Xuan-zang, traveling throughout India during the first half of the seventh century, did not note the presence of Tantric texts or practices. Were Xuan-zang's testimony the only available evidence this objection would bear weight. There are, however, ample sources which suggest otherwise, which call into question a lacuna in the observations of one individual, recorded in one text, for which there is good reason to suspect unreliability.

Tantric traditions have tended to portray themselves as esoteric, elite movement suited primarily to superior practitioners. One thus might suspect that a foreign pilgrim may have not been aware of the presence of Tantric practitioners within a monastic institution. Xuan-zang here may also be doubted on account of his strong partisan bias toward the Yogācāra school; he traveled to India for the purpose of bringing back Yogācāra texts,[53] and he may not have been interested in the texts of other traditions. His bias is

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[52] This general chronology has been proposed by Matsunaga, which I accept generally, while rejecting some small aspects of it. Matsunaga, for example concluded that "by ordering the periods of the translation of the Buddhist Tantras as above, it is possible to a process of change from unsystematic texts to systematic ones, from simple to complication ones, and from external rituals to serious internal meditation. On the basis of this examination of the particular periods in which the Sūtras or Tantra were translated, we know that Tantrism had not yet arisen by the second or third century. Rather, it had its roots in this period. Through a gradual process of development it attained its greatest popularity after the seventh century A. D." (1978 pp. xix)

[53] See Ch'en 1964, p. 234.

indicated by his role in the obstruction of the translation activities of Puṇyodaya, who arrived in China in 655 CE bringing fifteen hundred texts, which certainly included esoteric texts and may have included the works of Candrakīrti.[54] As a result of "doubts", he was only able to translate three of these texts, which are clearly Tantric in character. They were the *Eight Maṇḍalas (*aṣṭamaṇḍala), The Rite of Buddha Worship (*buddapūjāvidhi)* and the *Āṭānāṭiya.*[55] The fact that only a few decades later the pilgrim Wu-xing secured a copy of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra,* which was sent to China after his death in 674 CE is also revealing.[56]

While Xuan-zang, traveling in India during the first half of the seventh century, did not encounter evidence of Tantrism, some of his contemporaries did. One of the most striking accounts is reported by Yi-jing, who himself traveled in India during the later part of the seventh century, concerning one of his predecessors, the monk Dao-lin. Yi-jing recorded Dao-lin's adventures as follows:[57]

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[54] Punyodaya's biography is contained in Dao Xuan's (道宣) Tang dynasty work *Continious Heights of Master Monks* (續高僧傳 , T 2060, pp. 458-59). It describes him as a monk from Madhyadeśa, also known as Naḍi (那提) who travelled to China via the Southern Sea route. He brought 1500 texts with him including Mahāyāna and Hinayāna sūtras and Vinaya texts. He had originally intended to go north to the capital and translate and disseminate these texts, but he was obstructed by Xuan-zang, and was sent instead to the Kun-lun (崑崙) mountains to search for medicine. The text is vague concerning Xuan-zang's motivation or the exact nature of his involvement, but perhaps jealousy played a role. Richard Chi (1969:lxxv) is of the opinion that Nadī was carrying Candrakīrti's texts, which were uncompromising in their criticism of the Yogācāra school favored by Xuan-zang. See also Chou 1945 pp. 244-45. This matter is also discussed by Ch'en (1964:332) and Huntington (1987:89), both based on Chou.

[55] T 2060: 有依憑 惟譯八曼荼羅 禮佛法 阿吒那智等三經 , p. 459. According to Lin the *Eight Maṇḍalas* is a text concerning the cult of the eight bodhisattvas (1935:92) which is well attested in the sculptural record in India (i.e. at Ellora, Ratnagiri, Nālandā) as well as in Tibet, Central Asian and East Asia (see Yoritomi 1990). The "Method of Buddha Worship" is a Tantric-style pūjā involving the worship of the Buddhas of the Ten directions, with Vairocana occupying the nadir, and which became popular with the Tian-tai (天台) school. (Lin 1935:97) Puṇydaya's translation of the *Āṭānāṭiya Sūtra* was lost, but it is preserved in the *Dīgha Nikāya* in both the Pāli and Tibetan canons. The text gives a mantra for the protection against malevolent yakṣa, and gives a list of benevolent yakṣa, among whom are included Aṭānāti. See Hoernle 1916, pp. 24-27.

[56] See Wayman 1992, p. 21.

[57] This biography, recorded in Yi-jing's *Records of Eminent Monks of the Great Tang who Sought the Dharma in the Western Regions* (義淨 ◦ 大唐西域求法高僧傳◦ T. 2066. vol. 51, pp. 6.3-7.1). Takakusu translated (1896) not this work but Yi-jing's account of his own travels; this work is however a useful resource for the translation of his biographies. This work has not been fully translated to my knowledge, although an excerpt from it is translated in Hodge 1994, pp. 64-65. The exact dates of Dao-lin are not known, aside from the fact that he was a predecessor of Yi-jing, whose journey lasted more than two decades, from 671-95 (See Takakusu 1896, p. xv). According to Ch'en (1964:239), the 56 biographies recorded in Yi-jing's text narrate lives of monks who journeyed to India during the seventh century,

The Dharma Master Dao-lin was a native of Jiang-ling in Jing-zhou.[58] His Sanskrit name was Śīlaprabha, which means "Light of Discipline". Before coming of age,[59] he put on the robe and renounced the world. When he reached adulthood he called on his friends in search of the truth. He sought the treasury of the Vinaya and an explanation of the lustrous pearl which is the discipline *(śīla).* He sat in meditation and calmed his mind. [Recognizing that things are] naturally void, pure and refined, he maintained incorruptible chastity. He bathed in the azure spring and scoured the jade fountain with his quiet determination, and he was nourished with spiritual power. He always sat and did not lie down, ate once a day, and was thoroughly honest.

Later he was saddened [by the fact that as] the great Teachings spread east many sūtras had been recorded, but few of the teachings on meditation had made it, and there had been some loss in the Vinaya canon . Consequently, he desired to travel and seek out their source, to journey far to the Western Countries. So staff [in hand], risking death, he set out on a boat for the southern deeps. Passing the bronze pillar he arrived at Śrī Laṅka. They passed through Kaliṅga and the Land of the Naked People.[60] The king there treated him with respect and extended to him the highest degree of generosity. After a few years he reached Tāmralipti in East India. He lived there for three years studying Sanskrit. Then he gave up serious undertakings, studying all of the divisions [of knowledge]. The discipline, however, [involves] not only study but also meditation on wisdom. Now there also happens to be the *Vidyādharakośa* of erotic pleasures. Later in Central India he observed an excellent ritual, the rite of Awakening on the Adamantine Throne *(*vajramaṇḍabodhividhi).*

Subsequently he reached Nālanda monastery, where he studied the *Mahāyānaśāstras.* He fixed his mind and resided there, and staying a few years. He went to Gṛdhrakuṭa Peak and Yaṣṭivana monastery.[61] Exerting himself to the upmost, he raised his head, exhibiting total sincerity.

Then he went to Southern India in search of the profound arts. He spent a year in Lāṭa in West India practicing.[62] Standing before the divine altar he received again the *vidhyā.* It says in the *śāstra* that there are [texts] which contain the *vidhyā,* called in Sanskrit the *vidhyādharapiṭika. vidyā* means "that which illumines", and *dhara* "to hold"*; piṭaka* means a "treasury". One could say that it is the treasury which contains the *vidyā.* Moreover, traditionally it is said that this *vidhyādharapiṭaka* originally in Sanskrit consisted of one hundred

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generally from the reign period of Tai-zong up to that of Empress Wu (c. 627-705). Xuan-zang's journey extended from 629 to 645 CE. It is possible that Dao-lin's time in India overlapped Xuan-zang's; at the latest it would have commensed shortly after Xuan-zang left India.

[58] Jing-zhou, 荊州, was a large province in central China consisting of what is now the province of Hunan, as well as most of Hubei and Guizhou provinces. Jiang-ling (江陵) was its capital.

[59] Literally, before he received his cap, at age twenty.

[60] 裸國, which according to Takakusu refers to the Nicobar Islands (1896:xxxviii-xxxix).

[61] This line is somewhat unclear.

[62] 羅茶國, which is not identified but restored by Takakusu as *Lāṭa,* which he suggests may be equivalent to *rāṣṭra* (1896:9). Sircar, however, identifies Lāṭa as a region in Gujarat (1983:46).

thousand stanzas, which in Chinese translation would amount to three hundred fascicles. Nowadays, if you search for [these texts] it is evident that many have been lost and few are complete.

After the death of the great sage, Ārya Nāgārjuna bodhisattva in particular mastered them. At that time he had a disciple named Nanda who was bright, very learned and thoroughly steeped in this text. He spent twelve years in West India, and singlemindedly practiced the *vidyā*, whereupon he was experienced [supernormal] effects. Whenever it was mealtime, his food descended from space. Also, once while reciting *vidyā* he prayed for a wish-fulfilling vase, which he obtained after a little while. And within the jar he found a *sūtra*, which delighted him. But since he failed to bind his vase with a *vidyā*, it disappeared.

The Dharma Master Nanda, fearing that the *vidyās* would be scattered and lost, gathered them together to form a single compilation of about twelve thousand verses. Within each stanza he paired the text for the *vidyā* with the *mudrā*. But although the letters and words [of this text] are the same [as those of ordinary writing], their meaning and usage are in fact different. There is actually no way that these can be understood without receiving the oral transmission. Later the commentator Master Dignāga saw that it was written so artfully that [it required] the intelligence of extraordinary people, since its import reached the limit of the sensible. Clasping the book he sighed, saying, "Had this sage applied his intellect to the science of reasoning *(hetuvidyā)*, what would there have been for me [to do]?"[63] From this it is evident that the wise recognize their own capacity, while fools are blind to the differences between themselves and others!

This *Vidyādharakośa* has not yet been transmitted to the East, and Dao-lin was deeply impressed by its subtleties. For the *Vidyādharakośa* says that "Only with the *vidyā* may one access the way of ascending into the heavens, riding a dragon *(nāga)*, controlling one hundred spirits, or benefiting sentient beings."[64] When I, Yi-jing was at Nālandā, I repeatedly tried to enter the maṇḍala,[65] but my hopes were vain as I was unable to produce sufficient merit, which shattered my aspiration to propagate these extraordinary teachings.[66]

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[63] It is quite intriguing that this legendary account makes the production of this *vidhyādharapiṭaka* occur either contempory with or somewhat earlier than the famous logician Dignāga (c. 480-540, see Ruegg 1981 p. 60). There is no other evidence that would confirm this early date, at it seems that this portion of the legend was inserted to glorify and legitimate this tradition, by portraying it as more subtle and profound than the normative, insightful philosophic works of authors such as Dignāga. The implication of the moral following the "quote" appears to be that one is a fool if one fails to appreciate the sublimity of this tradition.

[64] This list would not be out of place in any of the later Tantras, which typically include lists of the powers *(siddhi)* attainable through their practice.

[65] 壇場 , *tan-chang*. *tan* typically means altar, but can designate a *maṇḍala* in Tantric texts (see Soothill and Hodous 1937, p. 446). *tan-chang* here clearly means maṇḍala, as the term *chang* implies a expanse of space which would be occupied by a maṇḍala, but not by the typical altar.

[66] 道琳法師者荊州江陵人也。梵名尸羅鉢頗唐云戒光。弱冠之年披緇離俗。成人之歲訪友尋真。搜律藏而戒珠瑩啟。禪門而定水清。稟　　性虛潔雅操廉貞。濯青溪以恬志漱玉泉而養靈。即常坐不臥一食全誡。後復慨大教東流時經多載。定門鮮入律典頗虧。遂欲尋流討源遠遊西國。乃杖錫遐逝鼓舶南溟。越銅柱而屆郎迦。歷訶陵而經裸國。所在國王禮待極致殷厚。經乎數

This biography is interesting for several reasons, not the least for its report that Tantric practice was underway at Nālandā, and evidently among an elite group, which Yi-jing, while he was there (c. 675-85 CE), hoped to join but failed on account of his sufficient merit. This is corroborated by the reports of "heretical" Kāpālika doctrines taught at Nālandā during the mid-seventh century contained Xuan-zang's biography, discussed in section 3.2.2.2 above. The presence of Tantric teachings at Nālandā is also suggested by the short biography of Padmasambhava, the *mahāsiddha* who travelled to Tibet in the late eighth century, discovered at Nālandā.[67]

This passage also suggests that Tantric practice may have been popular at an earlier date at other areas such as South and West India. It is also interesting in that Yi-jing reported that after studying *vidyā* in Western India, Dao-lin continued on to Kashmir and Udhyāna.[68] While Yi-jing does not specifically state what Dao-lin studied in these places,

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戟到東印度耽摩立底國。住經三年學梵語。律非唯學兼定慧。蓋亦憎耽咒藏。後乃觀化中天頂禮金剛御座菩提聖儀。復至那爛陀寺。搜覽大乘經論。注憎俱舍。經於數年。至於鷲嶺杖林山園鶏樹。備盡翹仰並展精誠。乃遊南天竺國搜訪玄謨。向西印度於羅荼國住經年稔。更立靈壇重稟明咒。嘗試論之曰夫明咒者梵云畏睇陀羅必得家。畏睇譯為明咒。陀羅是持。必得家是藏。應云持明咒　藏。然相承云此咒藏梵本有十萬頌。唐譯可成三　百卷。現今求覓多失少全。而大聖沒後阿離野那　伽曷樹那即龍樹菩薩。特精斯要。時彼弟子厥號難陀。聰明博識濱意斯典。在西印度經十二年。專心持咒遂便感應。每至食時食從空下。又誦咒求如意瓶。不久便獲。乃於瓶中得經歡喜。不以咒結其瓶遂去。於是難陀法師恐咒明散失。遂便撮集可十二千頌。成一家之言。每於一頌之內離合　印之文。雖復言同字同實乃義別用別。自非口相傳授而實解悟無因。後陳那論師見其製作巧殊人智思極情端。撫經嘆曰。嚮使此賢政意因明者我復何顏之有乎。是知智士識己之度量。愚者闇他之淺深矣。斯之咒藏東夏未流。所以道琳意存斯妙。故　藏云。升天乘龍役使　百神利生之道唯咒是親。淨於那爛陀亦屢入壇場希心此要而為功不並就。遂泯斯懷為廣異聽。　(pp.6.3-7.1)

[67] I refer to the short biography discovered at Dunhuang, *Pelliot tibétain 44*, catalogued in Lalou 1961 and edited in Bischoff and Hartman 1971. This text was probably written during the ninth century, as the Tibetans lost control of Dunhuang in 851 CE, although it could have been composed as late as the early tenth century, as Tibetans remained in the area despite the loss of control of the region by the central government. See Beckwith 1987, pp. 42, 170-171. This text narrates that Padmasambhava sent two of his assistants from Nepal to Nālandā to retrieve a copy of the *"One Hundred Thousand [Verse] Kila Piṭaka" (phur bu 'i 'bum sde)*, which the text later identifies the *Vidyottama Tantra*, i.e., the *Āryavidyottama-mahātantra*, a very large and well known *kriyātantra*.

[68] Immediately following the above passage Yi-jing states that "Dao-lin then turned from the Western regions and proceeded to North India. He visited Kashmir and then entered the land of Udyāna, to inquire about meditation methods and seek wisdom *(prajñā)*." (道琳遂從西境轉向北天。觀化羯濕彌羅。便入烏長那國。詢訪定門搜求般若。　(T. 2066 p. 7.1).

it is interesting that he would travel to two of the regions most famous as loci for Tantric practice just after studying the *Vidyādharakośa* in West India.

For the purpose of developing a chronology of the development of Tantric Buddhism, particularly significant is the data concerning the seventh-century existence of a *Vidyādharapiṭaka* provided by this account. The term *Vidyādharapiṭaka* is well known in Tibetan literature as an early term for Tantric literature in general. Matsunaga reports that a *vidhyādhara-piṭaka* was compiled by the Dhammaguttas separately from their *tripiṭaka* (1977:169). The legendary association of this tradition with Nāgārjuna is perhaps not surprising. His disciple and the compiler of this text, the "Dharma Master" Nanda, is not a well known personage, and does not appear to be attested in other accounts from this period.

Yi-jing gives a mythic account of its origin as a one hundred thousand verse compilation. Evidently this unified text became dispersed. Nanda, fearing the loss of various dispersed *vidyā* traditions, gathered them together into a unified compilation. This sort of origin myth is found in many Tantric traditions. Leaving aside the issue of origins, these myths describe a state of affairs; namely, the disorganized state of disparate diversity which faced the seeker of esoteric knowledge in early medieval India. The canon of Buddhist Tantric literature existed even in India in a fragmentary and piecemeal state, which points to the gradual and unsystematic manner in which it developed, through the efforts of diverse persons of different times and places. This state was "explained" through a commentatorial sleight of hand which concealed the origins of the texts through a sort of historical inversion. That is, the still unachieved ideal of a completed canon was projected back into the mythical past. This strategy manifests as the persistent claim found through Tantric exegetical literature that the extant body of Tantric literature consists of only a fragmented portion of a much larger mythic versions of the texts. Examples of this sort of claim include Amoghavajra's description of the one hundred thousand verse edition of the *Vajraśekhara* collection, as well as other versions of this legend described above.

Typically the size of these mythic canons are measured in units of one hundred thousand verses, with some supposedly extending far beyond the million verse level. Even as early as the seventh century, Yi-jing relates that there were accounts of a one hundred thousand verse *Vidyādharapiṭaka* collection, of which contemporary versions were only fragments. The multiplicity of origins is thus hidden by claims for an original, unitary origin from which the diversity of texts allegedly descends.

This account suggests that Tantric traditions developed regionally and unsystematically, and quite possibly in a number of different social contexts. The main contribution of the monasteries may have been serving as sites for the compilation, preservation and later the elaboration of these new spiritual technologies. This project was undoubtedly well underway during the seventh century, which implies that the creative impetus may have begun quite earlier, perhaps during the sixth or even fifth centuries. That earlier pilgrims such as Fa-xian did not report of such developments may only be a sign that these early manifestations of what would later be called Tantric traditions had not yet penetrated the Buddhist monasteries and academies which were the places where the Chinese pilgrims must have spent most of their time when not traveling. Or, if they had, they were not yet accepted as part of the normative monastic curricula.

If this account of the development of the *vidhyādharapiṭaka* were singular it would only be of limited interest. But it was not the only compilation of Tantric scriptures to arise in the context of Indian Buddhist monasticism during the seventh century. Atigupta, for example, arrived at Chang-an in 652 CE and translated the **Dhāraṇisaṃgraha-sūtra* (陀羅尼集經),[69] a compilation of Tantric rituals concerning maṇḍalas, initiations and so forth, which bear strong similarities to the practices disseminated to China fifty years later.[70]

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[69] This text, T 901, is quite large, occupying over 100 pages in the Taishō canon. It appears to cover a wide range of topics, definitely fulfilling the size requirement for a massive compilation.

[70] Concerning Atigupta (阿地瞿多), see Chou (1945) appendix k, p. 319. See also Matsunaga 1978, p. xiv.

Finally, the early eighth century saw the partial dissemination to China of the *Vajraśekhara* compilation of eighteen Tantras described by Amoghavajra, followed by the translation of a similar group into Tibetan later that century. While this specific tradition of a compilation of eighteen Tantras does not appear in the historical record until the arrival of Vajrabodhi in China in 719 CE,[71] it seems reasonable that the composition and compilation of this textual body would have taken decades if not longer, making it almost certain that this tradition developed in India during the seventh century, although individual texts contained within it may have been written in some form even earlier.

The development, propagation and dissemination of these compilations during the seventh century points to this century as a watershed era for the development of Tantric Buddhism. It is not necessarily the era when "Tantrism" per se began, elements of which may have been developing for centuries. Rather, it was a time when there are the first observable traces of "Tantrism" as a distinct movement with adherents who self-consciously understood themselves to be located within it. These traces exist because Tantrism has by this time become the object of the attention of monastic scholars, the bearers of the tradition as its transmitters to China and Tibet.

While this conclusion is not particularly radical, it goes against the general chronology developed by scholars for Tantric Buddhism. This is because past chronologies have typically dated the *composition* of texts vis-à-vis their translation into Chinese or Tibetan. The dates of translation are for many texts the only firm dates known, in which cases they provide the *terminus post quem* for the composition of the text. To take such a dates as anything other than an important milestone in a text's history, and to treat it as a de facto date of composition, is to engage in extremely unrealistic historiography.

There are two problems with *assuming* that a text's production immediately preceded its dissemination. First, it ignores the fact that travel between Indian and its

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[71] See Chou 1945, p. 275.

neighbors was difficult and dangerous even under the best of conditions, and often impossible due to political instability and warfare. For example, during the eighth century there was significant dissemination and translation of Buddhist Tantric texts into Tibetan and Chinese. In both cases, however, there was a period of about a century and a half during which the flow of texts and the production of translations virtually ceased, resuming only at the end of the tenth century. Since this period is known to be the heyday of Tantric Buddhism in India, it is safe to assume that textual production did not cease there. Rather, political instability in both Tibet and China made travel there particularly dangerous. The patronage required for translation activity was most likely not forthcoming, making translation during this period difficult if not impossible. The increasing aggression of Muslim chieftains such as Mahmud of Ghazni (c. 998-1030 CE)[72] may also account for an exodus of Indian Buddhist scholars at this time. Any chronology of Tantric Buddhism must take these political factors into account when determining the likely dates of composition for the numerous texts translated immediately following the resumption of political stability in Tibet and China., with the rise of the Song dynasty in China and the consolidation and entrenchment of power of local hegemons in Tibet.

Secondly, the assumption that texts could not have been composed significantly in advance of its date of translation ignores the decades or even centuries it may have taken for these texts to reach China or Tibet, and, in particular, the time it would take for there to develop not only the texts but traditions of exegesis and practice in India. The fact that by the early eighth century there existed not only a body of Tantric texts, but an evidently widespread canon of eighteen Tantras suggests that Buddhist Tantrism had by this time passed from the stage of composition of primary texts into the secondary level wherein these texts were being studied, systematized and commented upon. This suggests that

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[72] Mahmud was famous for his almost annual raids on Indian cities and towns; these represented looting raids more than systematic conquest; he was famous for his attacks on temples such as Somanāth, perhaps attracted more by the gold amassed at such sites than by iconoclastic zeal. While he was particulary infamous for his looting of Hindu temples, it is unlikely that over the course of his numerous raids Buddhist sites in Northern India remained unscathed. See Thapar 1966, pp. 229-34.

placing the dates of these texts only a decade or two before their translation into Chinese is highly unrealistic, as it provides very little time for the production, dissemination and acceptance of the texts, which in early medieval Asia would have taken a considerable amount of time, given that the primary mode of dissemination was the monk, traveling on foot and copying the texts by hand.

Such assumptions are particularly inadmissible when there is earlier evidence for the existence of a text, in which case the date(s) of translation are not in fact the *terminus post quem*. A central text Buddhist Tantric text concerning which there has been controversy concerning its date of composition is the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. The versions of this text which exist in the standard Tibetan and Chinese canons were both translated around the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries.[73] Were one unaware of the political history of Tibet and China, one might be tempted to conclude that the nearly simultaneous dissemination of this text to both Tibet and China immediately followed the text's composition. One would be perhaps less likely to jump to this conclusion if aware of the fact that the text was described by Amoghavajra in text written more than two hundred and fifty years earlier. Amoghavajra's description occurs as follows:

> Volume fifteen is called the *Guhyasamāja-yoga*. It was taught in the secret place called the *yośidbhaga*, which is designated the *Prajñāpāramitā* palace. Thence was taught the maṇḍala, mudrā and mantra. [The Bhagavān] resided there in discipline, speaking words which appeared to correspond to the worldly passions.
> In the assembly was Hindrances Removed Sarvanivaraṇaviskambhin Bodhisattva and others. He stood up from his seat, saluted the Buddha and respectfully said, "Lord, ordinary people are unable to leave behind vulgar, degenerate speech."
>
> The Buddha said, "You speak chaste words. What form do they take? These words of mine are empowering *(adhiṣṭhana)* words. They are a means for transforming [people], causing them to enter the Buddhist path. They are also formless, and achieve great benefit. You shouldn't give rise to doubt." Then he

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[73] The Chinese version was translated by 施護 (Dānapāla), c. 1002 CE according to Matsunaga (1978:vii). The standard Tibetan version was translated by Rinchen bZang-po (958-1055 CE) and the Kaśmiri Pandit Śraddhākaravarman around the same time. According to Tucci, he studied the *Guhyasamāja* with Nāropa while in Kaśmir. He returned from this trip at age 33 (c. 991 CE), where he met Śraddhākaravarman and proceeded to correct with his help the translations he made in India. This would most likely date the translation to the last decade of the tenth century (See Tucci 1988:35-36).

> completely explained the reality samādhi. The bodhisattvas all explained the four maṇḍalas and four mudrās.[74]

This brief summary corresponds quite closely to several important sections of the Tantra itself. Notably, the description begins with an evocation of the infamously erotic *nidāna* of the *Guhysamāja,* the key term of which, *yośidbhaga,* Amoghavajra diplomatically transliterates rather than translates.[75]

The next two paragraphs summarizes an exchange between the Buddha and the bodhisattva Sarvanivaraṇaviskambhin, which occurs in chapter five of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra.* This exchange occurs immediately after a passage in which the Buddha glorifies this Teaching by employing the hyperbolic rhetoric similar to the sort quoted from the *Prajñāpāramitānaya Sūtra* in section 2.4.2 above; specifically, it claims that even murderers, committers of incest and so forth can succeed on this path. Once again, the point seems not so much as to condone such activities as to glorify the text. The bodhisattvas exemplified by Sarvanivaraṇaviskambhin react with disapproval, doubting whether such rhetoric is appropriate or not. This passage thus can be taken as an apologetic defense of the use of such rhetoric.[76]

Amoghavajra's juxtaposition of the *Guhyasamāja* nidāna with this scene from the fifth chapter is certainly not coincidental, and seems to support Eastman's hypothesis

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[74] 第十五會名秘密集會瑜伽。於秘密處說所謂喻師婆加處說。號般若杷羅蜜宮。此中說教法壇印契真言。住禁戒。似如世間貪染相應語。會中除蓋障菩薩等。從座而起禮佛白言。世尊大人不應出麤言雜染相應語。佛言汝等清淨相應語。有何相狀。我之此語加持文字。應化緣方便引入佛道。亦無相狀。成大利益。汝等不應生疑。從此廣說實相三摩地。諸菩薩各各說四種曼荼羅四印。 (T 869 p. 287.1,2)

[75] Tibetan translators likewise typically chose to transliterate terms such as *bhaga* and *liṅga.* The same strategy is taken by Dharmapāla, who, in his eleventh century Chinese translation of the *Hevajra Tantra* transliterated *yoṣidbhaga* in a similar fashion (see T 892 p. 587.3) It is a strategy preferable to Dānapāla's(施護), who, in his Chinese translation of the *Guhyasamāja,* chose to "translate" *bhaga* figuratively as "pure realm" (清淨境界) rather than literally as "vulva", and completely elided all reference to femininity, neither translating nor transliterating *yoṣit.*

[76] The placing of "doubts" in the mind of a straw man, which are then promptly dispelled by the Buddha or some other authoritative figure is a rhetorical strategy commonly employed in Mahāyāna texts. A classic example is the *Vimālakirti Nirdeśa Sūtra,* in which Śāriputra repeatedly plays the role of the straw man (See Thurman 1976). This undoubtably represents an attempt to preempt questions concerning the orthodoxy of the text. For a similar example in the context of Chinese apocrphya see Orzech 1998, p. 83.

concerning Amoghavajra's failure to translate the majority of the texts in *Vajraśekhara* compilation, including the *Guhyasamāja, Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara,* and all but a few excerpts from the *Śrī Paramādya.* Eastman argues that the reason is not likely to have been that recorded in the Taishō canon, that Amoghavajra had to cast the texts overboard during a typhoon on his way back to China. Nor is it likely to have been the reason given by later skeptics, that the texts simply did not exist at that time. Rather, he concluded that

> There is now little doubt that the complete *Vajraśekhara-tantra* did exist, and there seems to be no tenable reason why it would have not have reached China. The evidence actually suggests that it was present in China, that much material was extracted from it, and that some untranslated portions seem to have circulated orally. If we now ask why the complete text was left untranslated for the most part, I feel confident the answer is that it was suppressed. (1983:31)

This casts doubt on Matsunaga's reasoning, which holds that while Amoghavajra's summary does indicate that the *Guhyasamāja* existed in some form by the early eighth century, it most likely did not exist in a complete form by that time since he does not refer to all of the essential points of this scripture. Matsunaga argues instead that it was completed by the late eighth century.[77] While it is true that Amoghavajra's account provides only a partial synopsis of the text (anything more would have hardly been possible in such a brief account) and thus does not *prove* that the scripture existed in a complete form at that time, it does not follow from this evidence that the text was *incomplete* at this time. This matter cannot be decided on the basis of such sparse evidence.

What this account does show is that the *Guhyasamāja* existed in some form by the early eighth century. This is further supported by the fact that Buddhaśrījñānapāda, the

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[77] Matsunaga comes to this conclusion in his preface to his edition of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra,* where he wrote: "we can probably conjecture that the first half of the 8th century was the formative period of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* while the text in its present form was completed in the latter half of the eighth century." (1978:xxvi). On the other hand, de Jong reports that in his 1980 work *Mikkyō kyōten seiritsushi-ron* (Kyōto:Hōzōkan) that Matsunaga wrote that "At the time of Amoghavajra (700-750) the G. [*Guhyasamāja*] had not been composed yet. The G. was translated into Chinese in 1002 and into Tibetan at about the same time. The lower limit for its composition is around 1000 A. D." (de Jong 1984:107). There is something very unclear, however, either in Matsunaga's writing or de Jong's presentation of it, for the latter goes on to write that Matsunaga feels it must have existed in some form by 800 CE. Obviously, to hold that the text was composed around 1000 CE, more or less at the time of its translation is absurd, and is contradicted by evidence discussed below.

founder of an important school of *Guhyasamāja,* was active during the mid to late eighth century.[78] That it was in fact completed by the end of the century has been shown by Eastman, who demonstrated that the Dunhuang translation of the Tantra was made during the dynastic period, probably c. 795 CE if its attribution to the translator Vimalamitra is correct.[79]

Matsunaga's late eighth century date is thus plausible, but it is also clearly *possible* that the text had been complete earlier in the eighth or even in the seventh century. This is because Amoghavajra's failure to translate the text does not *prove* that it did not exist at that time, since there is another quite plausible reason for this failure. This reason is censorship, either self-imposed or imposed by the imperial authorities under whose watch and patronage such translations were made. Such censorship was not unknown in the Chinese tradition,[80] nor in the Tibetan, at least during the Imperial period when there was effective state control over translation activities.[81] It very well may be that the "lost" texts of the

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[78] This is based upon the fact that he is considered to be the teacher of Buddhaguhya who is datable to late eighth century.

[79] See Eastman 1983 p. 25, as well as his 1980 article "Chibetto yaku Guhyasamājatantra no tonkōshutsudoshahon" in *Nihonchibettogakkaikaihō,* vol. 26, pp. 8-12.

[80] Translation activity was closely monitered in China during both the Tang and Song dynasties, and "the success or failure of such texts – and ultimately of the foreign missionaries who would have created them – would have beem heavily dependent on their reception by Chinese officialdom." as Buswell noted (1990:18). Lewis discussed the politics that surrounded the development of imperial bibliographies and canons under Empress Wu and the Xuan-zong Emperor in 695 and 730 CE, respectively (1990:230-31). Forte (1990) illuminates the way in which imperial politics affect the translation activity of Bodhiruci during the same period. Finally, see Jan 1966a for a discussion of the imperially appointed commission responsible for the translation of Buddhist scriptures during the Song period, and also Jan 1966b, p. 136, for an example of the scrutiny required by the Song court for new translations.

[81] The translation activity during the imperial period occurred over a period of about two hundred years from the mid-7th to mid-9th centuries. Karmay concluded that "Already towards the end of the 8th century A.D. there was the question of whether the tantras, especially the anutarayogatantras, were to be practiced literally. Finally, it was decided that such tantras should be translated into Tibetan only when royal permission was given." (1980a:151) Karmay draws this conclusion based upon Bu-ston, who wrote: "Tibet's king and high ranking ministers observed that dishonest sentient beings of the future would not understand the profound intentional import [of the texts], and would apprehend the symbols literally. Without even the slightest unification of art and wisdom, they would be educated in the mantras without being bound to even a single commitment concerning [what behaviors are] to be avoided or cultivated. These practitioners of the immodest, deviant, semblant Tantras of the heretics would denigrate the Teachings of the Buddha and engage in a method of destroying both self and other. Hence it was decided through royal proclamation that there was to be no translation of the Mahāyoga Tantras except when permission is granted." / bod kyi rgyal blon sa chen po la bzhugs pa dag gis kyang / phyi rabs kyi sems can ldem por dgongs pa'i don zab mo ma rtogs par sgra ji bzhin pa la mtshan mar bzung ste / thabs shes rab kyi rnal 'byor cung zad kyang med cing / spang bsrung gi dam tshig sna gcig kyang mi sdom par

Vajraśekhara were lost due to censorship, either self-imposed on the part of the translators or imposed by their patrons, on account of their erotic and otherwise transgressive passages.[82] It is thus probably not coincidental that Amoghavajra chose to summarize here this passage from the *Guhyasamāja,* which is in effect an apologetic defense of the erotic and violent language found in the Tantras.

If this is the case, it is surprising that Amoghavajra succeeded in translation the *Prajñāpāramitā-naya,* which also contains erotic and transgressive rhetoric. Here perhaps he was protected by the fact that this text had already been translated one century earlier by Xuan-zang, and Amoghavajra's version is richer not so much in transgressive rhetoric than in Tantric ritual technology, primarily through the inclusion of mantras. Amoghavajra organized this technology into a tradition of practice centering on Mahāsukha Vajrasattva, through the composition of a commentary and the translation of short ritual texts which are evidently extracts from the *Śri Paramādya* .[83]

There are other cases as well where an earlier late date based on the time of translation has had to be revised following the revelation of additional data. For example,

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gsang sngags la bsnyad btags nas mu stegs 'chol pa'i rgyud ltar bag med pa'i spyod pas sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa nyams smad par byed pa rang gzhan phung bar byed pa'i tshul la 'jug pa gzigs nas / blad nas bka' stsal ba ma gtogs ba rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud bsgyur du med par bkas bcad pa yin no / (RP p. 127). The absence of passages describing the fierce *abhicārahoma* rite in the early dynastic translation of the *Sarvadurgatiparišodhana Tantra* (SDP) was evidently due to censorship. van der Kuijp reports that "Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan refers to some earlier exegetes who opined that these two passages were lacking in the SDP because earlier kings and ministers had prohibited their translation out of fear of antagonistic tantric practitioners. He, however, is of the view that they were indeed translated....but were never included in the authoritive translation." (1992:116)

[82] Eastman speculates that the suppression of transgressive Tantric literature may have been due to the obvious conflict of this material with Chinese ethical, moral and aesthetic standands. (1983:32) It is possible that this suppression might have been externally imposed, i.e., by the Confucian court bureacracy, but this seems unlikely, given the high esteem in which Amoghavajra received at the court and the fact that there are no records of an official suppression. Rather, it is more likely that it was internally imposed, by Amoghavajra and/or his Chinese Buddhist assistants. Here it should be noted that the Chinese Buddhists were in the midst of waging an extensive propaganda campaign, and were attempting to answer Confucian criticisms that Buddhism, and in particular Buddhist monastic renunciation, violated Chinese moral standards. Concerning their creative answer to this critique see Teiser 1986 and 1988 and Cole 1998. In addition, as Eastman notes, Chinese Buddhists had frequently criticized the Daoists for allegedly engaging in the same sort of morally questionable behavior rhetorically advocated in the Tantras, which would have rendered their open acceptance of such textual traditions problematic to say the least.

[83] Amoghavajra's translation of the PN occurs at T 243, and his elucidation of the practice of the PN occurs at T 1004. Tranlated texts in this tradition of practice, some of which are designated to be extracts from the *Paramādhya,* include T 1119, 1120A, 1120B, 1121-23. The significance of this tradition vis-à-vis the Cakrasaṃvara tradition is discussed in section 3.4.3 below.

de Jong, in a 1974 article, dates the Indonesian text, the *Sang Hyang Kamahāyānan Mantranaya* to "before 999 CE," because this text contains quotes from the *Paramādya* , which was translated into Chinese at that time. This "dating" is of course nothing but a statement of the text's *terminus post quem,* but it suggests that it was composed not long before that time. Here again, however, de Jong was most likely off by several centuries, as Nihom has shown on the basis of Indonesian evidence, as well as the fact that verses from it are quoted in Buddhaguhya's mid to late eighth century *Tantrārthāvatāra.*[84] One might also note that the *Paramādya* is included both in Amoghavajra's Index to the Eighteen Vajraśekhara Compilation, as well as in the rNying-ma eighteen Māyājāla Tantras which was possibly translated into Tibetan during the same century. The *terminus post quem* for this text should be shifted to the late eighth century, with the understanding that it may have been composed significantly earlier.

Information concerning the transmission of Tantric Buddhism to Indonesia provides important data for the construction of a chronology of esoteric Buddhism, data which not only collaborates data from Tibet and East Asia, but which at times provides a counterpoint. It is well known that significant trade was conducted between the South East Asian kingdom of Śrīvijaya and the Pālas of East India;[85] this is indicated as well by the influence of Pāla art on that of Southeast Asia.[86] There was also religious influence, which is indicated by the fact that the Śailendra Balaputra built a monastery at Nālandā in 860 CE for Śrīvijayan monks. He also requested and received from King Devapāla, who reigned from 811-860 CE, a grant of the tax income from five villages for the support of these monks.[87] As discussed above, Nālandā was well known as a site for Tantric studies by the eighth century.

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[84] See Nihom 1994, pp. 70-71.

[85] Concerning Pāla-Śailendra trade relations see Kuwata 1972.

[86] Concerning this influence see Huntington and Huntington 1990.

[87] See Kulke and Rothermund 1986, pp. 112-13, and also Majumder 1948, p. 219.

One such area where it paints a contrasting picture is the history of *Tattvasaṃgraha* tradition. The view received from both the East Asian and Tibetan traditions holds that the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is an ur-text of central importance. It forms the backbone, as it were, of the Shingon tradition in Japan, and figured prominently in the *Vajraśekhara* compilation described by Amoghavajra, although it was not fully translated into Chinese until after Amoghavajra's death.[88] In the Tibetan tradition, it was considered the central Yogatantra, with most of the other Yogatantras, such as the *Śrī Paramādya* , *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana* and the *Trailokyavijaya* considered to be its Explanatory Tantras. This view is encouraged by the *Tattvasaṃgraha* itself, which contains the maṇḍalas of these other traditions, but subordinates them to the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala*, which is unique to this text.

It is extremely common for temporally later Tantras to claim that they exceed or encompass those that preceded it. Nonetheless, it has been commonly assumed that the *Tattvasaṃgraha* was a relatively early Tantra since it was at least partially translated into Chinese during the eighth century, while certain of its "Explanatory Tantras" such as the *Śrī Paramādya* were not translated until the late tenth century. Hence the claims made by the traditions for the precedence of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* have been generally accepted. Indonesia provides an interesting test case for such claims. Since Indonesia appears to have received and maintained the textual and practice transmissions of a number of *yogatantra*s, one might assume that if the *Tattvasaṃgraha* had indeed been the earliest and widely accepted preeminent among them, it surely would have been transmitted and maintained there. Nihom has, however, reviewed the available evidence and concluded that while some forms of the *Vajraśekhara, Trailokyavijaya, Śriparāmadya* where known in Indonesia, there is no evidence that the *Tattvasaṃgraha* itself ever was.[89]

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[88] Partial translations were made by both Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra (See T 866 & 865). A complete translation (T 882) was made by Shi-hu (施護, Dānapāla), who arrived in China in 980 CE. See de Jong 1984, p. 101.

[89] See Nihom (1994), pp. 66-115 and (1998).

There is evidence that some of the maṇḍalas contained in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* but also in other texts, such as the *Jagadvinaya, Trilokyavijaya* and *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana maṇḍalas,* are found in Indonesia. In this case, however, Nihom shows that there is no evidence even that the *Vajradhātu maṇḍala,* the hallmark maṇḍala of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* which is believed by its adherents to underlie the others, was ever transmitted to Indonesia. From this evidence he concludes that

> if the Trilokyavijaya, Jagadvinaya and Sarvadurgatipariśodhana and possibly other, similar maṇḍalas existed in Indonesia without the concurrent presence of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala and in the absence of text traces of the Tattvasaṃgraha, then an economical explanation of the nature of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala presents itself which strikes several blows simultaneously: namely, the Vajradhātumaṇḍala may have been codified from pre-existing elements and so introduced by the Tattvasaṃgraha for the purpose of providing a relatively orthodox Buddhist explanation for other *yogatantra* maṇḍalas. (1994:114)

In addition, there is evidence that the *Vajraśekhara Tantra* as it occurs in the Tibetan canon is a composite text, and that it was adapted to fit its later role as a Explanatory Tantra of the Tattvasaṃgraha, suggesting that the tradition centering upon that text was a late phenomenon relative to the composition of the Explanatory Tantras themselves.[90]

A possible sign of the relative lateness of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is its relatively orthodox Buddhist character, a characteristic which is typically taken as an indication that it predates the "later" and "degenerate" Tantras which exhibit more ambiguous and syncretic traits. It has often been assumed that Hindu-Buddhist syncretism in Buddhist Tantras is a sign for their lateness and degeneracy. Nihom, however, has argued the opposite. He concluded that the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana, Jagadvinaya,* and *Trilokavijaya* maṇḍalas and the texts which describe them are in fact relatively early, and were transmitted to Indonesia, then Śrīvijaya, during the seventh or early eighth century. (1994:114) On the other hand, the Tattvasaṃgraha, which includes these maṇḍalas along with the Vajradhātu,

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[90] Nihom, on the basis of a detailed comparison of the Tibetan texts of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Vajraśekhara Tantras*, concluded that "the recension of the Vajraśekhara available to us in Tibetan translation is indeed a synthetic text which, although composed in the canon as an explanatory tantra to the Tattvasaṃgraha, yet retains evidence suggesting that the systematics of the Trilokavijayamaṇḍala are anterior to those of the Vajradhātumaṇḍala. In other words, the version of the Vajraśekhara as found in the Tibetan Buddhist canon is not, from the viewpoint of history, reliable." (1998:251).

appears to have been compiled by the early eighth century, and completed during the same century. Its relative lateness vis-à-vis the other Tantras is suggested by its failure to disseminate to Indonesia, despite the significant popularity it later achieved, by the end of the eighth century perhaps. Its lateness is also suggested by its composite structure, drawing as it does from the traditions of several other *yogatantras*.

It is of course possible that the Tattvasaṃgraha was compiled earlier; Amoghavajra's mission after all did not extend beyond the East coast of India and Śri Laṅka. Davidson argues that it was codified by the early eighth century (1991a:199), and while he does not provide evidence supporting this date, it is certainly possible. On the other hand, Matsunaga's claim that it was a seventh century text is unsubstantiated.[91] Nihom also observes that the structure of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala is relatively orthodox, being populated only by Buddhist deities. The *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana, Jagadvinaya,* and *Trilokavijaya* maṇḍalas, however, are all populated by Hindu as well as Buddhist deities, and the *Śri Paramādya* "Explanatory" Tantra, in particular, is filled with numerous features evocative of the more transgressive Unexcelled Yogatantras. The *Tattvasaṃgraha* itself repeatedly insists that the Vajradhātu maṇḍala underlies and therefore predominates the other *yogatantra* maṇḍalas, thus attempting to encompass them within a more orthodox environment. Nihom thus suggests that Tattvasaṃgraha and its Vajradhātu maṇḍala represent a relatively late attempt by the Buddhists to appropriate and render more orthodox earlier Tantric traditions that were not clearly and unequivocally Buddhist. (1994:114)

Nihom thus turns the common chronology of Tantric Buddhism on its head, by arguing that orthodox Buddhist Tantras such as the *Tattvasaṃgraha* are relatively late products of a Buddhist attempt, beginning most likely in the seventh century, to adopt, compile and compose a distinctly Buddhist body of Tantric texts and practices, from a substratum of practices and possibly texts as well that were most likely of diverse

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[91] See Matsunaga 1978, p. xix. Matsunaga's assignment of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* to the seventh and the *Guhyasamāja* to the late eighth, on the basis of the same evidence provided by Amoghavajra, reveals his bias toward to Shingon apologetic chronology.

provenance. If the we take the *Tattvasaṃgraha* as a highly successful product of this process of synthesis, we might characterize this process as one whereby distinctly non-Buddhist elements are either excised or naturalized via their insertion or entanglement in a "truly astounding reticulation of patterned semantic cross-references" (Nihom 1994:113) of an orthodox Buddhist nature.

That the Tattvasaṃgraha was an eighth century Buddhist product is further suggested by the fact that it is a variant element in the two known eighth century compilations of eighteen Tantras. That is, the *Tattvasaṃgraha* was considered the central text in the *Vajraśekhara* compilation disseminated by Amoghavajra to China, while this position was occupied by the *Māyājāla* in the Tibetan version. It is possible that these variants represent historically latter developments, but it is also possible that they are the products of spatial differentiation. Different traditions may have been centered in different regions of India, whence they disseminated separately to China and Tibet and, in part, to Indonesia. However, the compilations themselves clearly are the product of a monastic effort to synthesize the hitherto disparate bodies of Tantric texts and practices, and it seems likely that the central traditions associated with these efforts, the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and the *Māyājāla*, are the products of related but ultimately divergent attempts at such synthesis, while the texts that are included in both compilations, namely the *Śri Paramādya* , *Guhyasamāja* and the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara*, occupied the older textual layer that was the original object of the efforts toward systematization. Nor is it coincidental that these three texts are among the most unorthodox texts contained in either compilation.

This reverses the usual chronology; it is typically assumed that the maṇḍalas of the Unexcelled Yogatantras are indebted to the Vajradhātu maṇḍala. Here again, however, the thorough and complete systematization achieved by the authors of the Tattvasaṃgraha is somewhat misleading. I will argue in section 6.2.1 below that it is not the Vajradhātu itself

which was the model for the Unexcelled Yogatantras but the *Nayamaṇḍala* which was subsumed into it, and which is in fact derived from the *Śrī Paramādya*.

Taken together this evidence, while not absolutely conclusive, does suggest that the traditional Tantric Buddhist historiography has been subject to considerable revision, and is significantly apologetic in character. This also suggests that the chronology developed by those sympathetic to the Shingon school, which sees the Shingon Tantras such as the *Tattvasaṃgraha* as historically prior to the more syncretic Tantras, may not accurately reflect the actual development of Tantric Buddhist traditions.[92]

Of particular relevance is the history of the development and transmission of the *yoginitantras*. Much is unclear in this area, but it seems certain that one of the earliest of the *yoginitantras* is the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara Tantra.* Its relatively early date is suggested by its description by Amoghavajra in his *Index*, as follows:

> Volume Nine is called the *Sarvabuddhasamājaḍākinijālasaṃvara-yoga*, which was taught in the Mantra Palace. In it are taught the yoga of establishing one's body as one's chosen deity *(iṣṭadevatā)*, and the yoga that whatever resides outside of the body is the form of the deity. It extensively explains the principles of reality, and the basis of the five clans (*pañcakula*, 五部). It explains the yogic methods of employing the nine sentiments *(navarasa*, 九味), which are: eroticism *(śṛṅgāra*, 華麗, corresponding to Vajrasattva),[93] heroism *(vira*, 勇健 , corresponding to Vairocana), compassion *(karuṇa*, 大悲, corresponding to Vajradhara), humor *(hāsya*, 喜笑 , corresponding to Avalokiteśvara), ferocity (*raudra*, 瞋怒 , corresponding to Vajratejas), terror *(bhayānaka*, 恐怖 , corresponding to Trailokyavijaya), revulsion (*bibhatsa*, 厭患 , corresponding to Śākyamuni Buddha), wonder (*adbhuta*, 奇 特 , corresponding to Vajrahāsa), and tranquillity (*śānta*, 寂靜 , corresponding to *Yogavairocana).
>
> It contains accounts of the bodhisattvas from Samantabhadra to Vajramuṣṭi, and explanations of each of the four maṇḍalas, rites for initiating disciples, the

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[92] For example, Tsuda was generally open-minded concerning the more unorthodox *yoginitantras*, since he partially edited and translated one of them, the *Saṃvarodaya* (see Tsuda 1974). Nonetheless, Tsuda accepts, without demonstrating its accuracy, the traditional chronology which roughly orders the major Tantric traditions as follows: the *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhi*, the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, the *Guhyasamāja*, followed by the yoginitantras, namely the JS, the *Hevajra* and the Cakrasaṃvara. See Tsuda 1978 and 1982.

[93] The names of the deites occur in smaller print in the Taishō edition between the names of the nine sentiments, which may indicate that they occurred in interstitial notes. To designate this difference I have reproduced the names in brackets in both the translation and in my Chinese edition below.

> reception of the four mudrās, and also the rites of song and dance of the five clans.[94]

There has been some confusion concerning the transmission of this Tantra to Tibet. It, along with its compendium *(uttaratantra),*[95] was translated by Rinchen bZangpo, presumably in the late tenth or early eleventh century. In this translation, however, the JS is designated an *uttaratantra,* and its compendium an *uttarottaratantra,* which has led to its misidentification by both Eastman and Tsuda.[96] This, however, is almost certainly incorrect, for the version contained in the rNying-ma-rgyud-'bum, which is almost identical, is simply designated as a Tantra.[97] For some reason, however, its compendium retains the title *uttarottaratantra,*[98] which may indicate that there was some confusion concerning the relationship of these texts to their mythic version. It appears that this rNying-ma edition reflects an earlier translation made during the Tibetan dynastic period in the eighth century. The colophon of this JS text attributes its translation to rMa Rinchen-mchog,[99] a disciple of Vimalamitra.[100] Since Amoghavajra's description was followed by a

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[94] 第九會名一切佛集會拏吉尼戒網瑜伽。於真言宮殿說。此中說立自身為本尊瑜伽。訶身外主形像瑜伽者。廣說實相理。并說五部根源。并說瑜伽 法具九味。所謂華麗（金剛薩 垂）勇健 （畏盧遮那丑^大悲 （持金剛） 喜笑 （ 觀自在） 瞋怒 （金剛光） 恐怖 （降三世） 厭患 （釋迦牟尼佛） 奇特 （金剛笑） 寂靜 （瑜 伽中畏盧遮那）說普賢菩薩等至金剛拳。各說四種曼荼羅。及引入弟子儀。及受四種印。并說五部中歌讚舞儀。 (T 869 p. 286.3) My trans., cf. Eastman 1981 p. 27.

[95] The *Sarvakalpasamuccaya-nāma-sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvara-uttarottaratantra,* Tōh. 367.

[96] Eastman's error was discussed in section 4.2.1 above. Tsuda also appears confused concerning the identity of this text; see Tsuda 1982 pp. 608-10, and, esp., p. 616 n. 24.

[97] This text is simply called the *Śrisarvabuddhasamayoga-tantrarāja* at the beginning of the text (NGB vol. 18, fol. 58b). However, in its colophon it is given the more extensive name *Tantrarāja Śrisarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara-mahāsukhamudrātantra* (NGB vol. 18, fol. 126b).

[98] In the NGB it received the same title as the edition in the DK.

[99] See NGB vol. 18, fol. 126b. rMa Rin-chen-mchog was active during the first half of the ninth century, during the reigns of kings Khri lde srong brtsan (799-815) and Khri gtsug lde brtsan (815-838). See van der Kuijp 1991, p. 110 and Beckwith 1987, p. 229. Since the version of the text preserved in the DK has no colophon and is more or less identical to the version in the NGB, it seems likely that it is a different edition of rMa's translation.

[100] Vimalamitra was a student of Buddhaguhya (Davidson 1991:9). Concerning rMa Rin-chen-mchog's translation activities see Dudjom Rinpoche 1991, pp. 533 ff.

Tibetan translation some decades later, it is probably safe to assume that the text existed by the mid eighth century in a more or less complete fashion.

While the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara* has received very little scholarly attention, it is an extremely important text, one which clearly bridges the gap between texts such as the *Śrī Paramādya* and the classical *yoginitantra*s such as the *Hevajra* and *Cakrasaṃvara*. It appears to be the earliest surviving text centering on the deity Heruka, and may in fact have introduced this deity. It is most likely the earliest extant Buddhist *ḍākinitantra*, i.e., a text which introduces and focuses on the *ḍākini* as a class of spiritual guides. It describes the ḍākini as follows:

> *Ḍā* means sky travel, and she who is directly realized in space, that is, who has achieved [the ability] to range all throughout the sky, is called the *ḍākini*.. She who is united with all Buddhas by means of all mudrā without exception and the great bliss of all without exception is known as the *ḍākini*. She who is the *ḍākini* is composed of the Buddha elements. The *ḍākini* who is the self of all Buddhas has achieved [the ability to] go everywhere.[101]

This appears to be the earliest extant folk etymology deriving *ḍākini* from the verbal root *ḍi*, "to fly".[102]

Amoghavajra's description and its Tibetan dynastic translation certifies its existence in some form by the mid-eighth century. Dharmakīrti's discussion of *ḍākinitantra*s is thus particularly suggestive of the possibility that it or some similar text had already been composed by the seventh century, and was at that time gaining the attention of Buddhist

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[101] JS kalpa 1: / ḍā ni nam mkhar 'gro ba zhes // khams las mngon par brtags pa ste // nam mkha' kun tu spyod 'grub pa // mkha' 'gro ma zhes rab tu grags // thams cad ma lus phyag rgya yi // thams cad ma lus bde mchog gis // sangs rgyas thams cad mnyam sbyor ba // mkha' 'gro ma zhes rab tu grags // de ni nam mkha' 'gro ba zhes // sangs rgyas khams las rnam par brtags // kun tu 'gro bar grub pa ni // sangs rgyas kun bdag mkha' 'gro ma'o / (DK fol. 151a)

[102] This folk etymology is the basis of the Tibetan translation compound *mkha' 'gro ma*, literally "she who travels in space"; regarding such compounds see Beyer 1992, pp. 108-109. It occurs in several CS commentaries as well, such as Jayabhadra's, as follows: "The *ḍākini* are those who travel in space"; dākiṇyaḥ ākāśagāminyaḥ (manuscript D, fol. 4a); / mkha' 'gro ma ni mkha' la 'gro ba ste / (QT p. 21.4). Herrmann-Pfandt (1996:42) claims it is derived from this root; however, this etymology is incorrect, as *ḍākini* is clearly not a Sanskrit word. Elsewhere Herrmann-Pfandt (1992:115) reports Mayrhofer's conclusion that it derives from an Austronesian language, most likely Muṇḍa (1953: vol. 1 p. 461). On this basis she concludes that "insofar that this is plausible, then the word *ḍākini* is not of Indo-Aryan origin and the Sankrit etymology is thus secondary"; "Insofern ist es wahrscheinlicher, dass auch der Name der Ḍākinīs nichtindoarischen Ursprungs und die Sanskrit-Etymologie sekundär ist" (1992 p. 115 n. 1).

scholars. This discussion, which occurs in Dharmakirti's *Svavṛtti* on his *Pramāṇavārttika,* has been published elsewhere, but given its importance it is reproduced here as follows:

> Objection: There is success *(siddhi)* or lack of success either when there is the increase of *dharma* or *adharma* by means of the practice of the observances *(vrata)* or falling [into saṃsāra] etc., or [success and its lack occur] naturally in those having the nature of *dharma* or *adharma.*
>
> Reply: That is not the case at all since there is the teaching in the *ḍākini* and *bhagini tantras*[103] of numerous observances involving perverse actions *(hinakarma)* which are inimical to *dharma* such as cruelty, theft, sexual intercourse and so forth. Since there is preeminent [spiritual] success even through these [actions], we will show at an opportune time that the nature of *dharma* is not as you say.[104]

As noted above, Dharmakirti is thought to have lived during the first half of the seventh century, and while this passage definitely does not *prove* that the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara* or any other Tantra existed at that time, it certainly suggests that such texts may have had a quite ancient history, and supports the hypothesis that this text was composed by eighth century, and the possibly even earlier.

Despite Amoghavajra's description of this text, it was never translated into Chinese, probably because by the late tenth century when translations from Chinese into Sanskrit resumed the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara* had been more or less overtaken by the popular *yoginitantra* traditions derived from it, namely the *Cakrasaṃvara* and *Hevajra Tantras.* The latter Tantra, was, however, translated during the Song dynasty. This translation is notable for its lack of fidelity to the Sanskrit text, and is characterized by highly euphemistic renderings, or outright omissions, of the more controversial passages in

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[103] The term *ḍākinitantra* also occurs in Ānandagarbha's *Guhyasamāja-mahātantrarājaṭikā* in the passage quoted in section 4.3 above, where it clearly refers to heretical teachings. *bhagini,* normally meaning "sister" or a "woman" (Apte 1965:709), is clearly noun derived from the word *bhaga* and the possessive suffix *-in,* just as *yogini* is derived from the word *yoga. bhaga* is typically understood to mean "fortune", but *bhagini,* in this context at least, most likely derives from a early secondary meaning of *bhaga,* "vulva". See Schoterman 1980, p. 11 and Gonda 1953.

[104] Davidson's translation (1981:8) , revised by me. The Sanskrit occurs as follows in Gnoli's edition: / vratacaryābhraṃśādinā dharmādharmopacaye dharmādharmātmanor vā prakṛtyā siddhyasiddhi iti cet / na / dharmaviruddhānām api krauryasteyamaithunahīnakarmādibahulānāṃ vratānāṃ ḍākinibhaginitantrādiṣu darśanāt / taiś ca siddhiviśeśāt (sic) / na caivaṃvidho dharmasvabhāva iti ca yathāvasaraṃ nivedayiṣyāmaḥ / (1960:163).

the text.[105] It is worthy of consideration, if not for its merits as a translation, than for the light it sheds on the politics surrounding translations. For it was certainly not made in a neutral, uninterested political environment. It was made in the imperially established Institute for the Propagation of the Dharma (傳 法 院) under the guidance of Dharmapāla (法 護), and was presented to the throne of the Ren-zong Emperor (仁 宗) during the first year of the Zhi-he (至 和) reign period (1054-1055 CE).[106] Willemen has concluded that the text's euphemistic translations were not the product of misunderstanding but of diplomatic compromise. Concerning, for example, the erotic process of initiation described in the text, Willemen wrote that

> The Chinese Hevajratantra is very mysterious and appears to avoid clarity. Knowledge of the initiations is assumed by the Chinese text. Without such prior knowledge, it is unclear what the Chinese text actually means. On the other hand, the Indian text is much more explicit. I am convinced that Dharmapāla rendered the Indian original in a very tactful, deliberately abstruse way, but remaining true to the actual proceedings of the Indian original. The coherence of the Chinese "mistranslations" only proves Dharmapāla's sound philological abilities and his remarkable talent for tactfulness. It would be a mistake to discard the Chinese Hevajratantra as a faulty translation. Dharmapāla delivered a translation which was morally acceptable and in line with the existing Chinese esoteric texts, yet ambigious enough to leave room for the right interpretation." (1983:29)

Since it is unlikely that the text's lack of fidelity to the presumed Sanskrit original is due to simple, inadvertent mistranslation, it appears that political considerations or pressures, and possibly the outright fear or threat of censorship, is responsible for the text's studious avoidance of explicit or controversial language. This evidence for censorship, most likely self-imposed by the translators, in the Song dynastic translation committee, supports Eastman's argument concerning the fate of the *Vajraśekhara-yoga* Tantras during the Tang.

Returning to the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara Tantra,* it centers on the deity Vajrasattva, the Tantric Buddhist deity extraordinaire, whose meditations figure prominently in the practice of most *anuttarayogatantra* traditions maintained by the

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[105] See Abbot 1978.

[106] See Willemen 1983: 24.

Tibetans. It focuses on the achievement of union with a deity and the achievement of bliss thereby, as passages translated above attest.[107] As Amoghavajra suggests, it propounds the doctrine of the five Buddha clans, and teaches a *maṇḍala* corresponding to each one.[108] The text also seems to suggest the possibility of a sixth clan embracing the five, over which presides Vajrasattva or Mahāvajradhara, which points toward the developments in the other *yoginitantras*.[109] The clan or *kula* based system of practice, along with the charnel ground paraphernalia abounding in the text, point to an originary context for the tradition that is neither monastic, nor orthodox, but rather connected to the groups of yogin and yogini practitioners who proliferated during this period.[110]

The *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara* also contains the type of erotic language connected with the representations of the *gaṇacakra* rites which are persistently featured in the *yoginitantras*.[111] In this respect it is very interesting that Amoghavajra specifically discusses the text's teaching of the doctrine of the *navarasa*, which appears to

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[107] See section 2.3.1 above.

[108] These five *kulamaṇḍala* are discussed by Hūṃkāravajra in his *Śrisarvabuddhasamayogamaṇḍalasādhanakrama*. See QT p. 26.4.

[109] brGya-byin sdang-po, in his *Sarvabuddhasamayogaḍākinijālasaṃvara-tantrārthodaraṭikā*, links the major deities of the JS to the clans as follows: "Vairocana, the supreme, is of the Tathāgata [clan], and He teaches in accord with the Great Sage's import; Heruka, the discipliner, the most ferocious of the fierce, is of the Vajra [clan]; Puṇḍarika, the purifier, [of the Lotus clan], abides passionlessly through the method of passion. The great Vajrasurya, of the Ratna [clan], causes a downpour of a great rain of jewels in the sky. Hayagriva, who accomplishes all, is of the Karma [clan], and turns the Universal Vajra wheel. The essence of all the clans is the supreme Mahāvajradhara, of the sixth [clan]." / de bzhin gshegs pa snang mdzad mchog / thub pa chen po'i don bzhin bstan // rdo rje 'dul ba he ru ka // khro rnams khro ba'i mchog gis so // dag mdzad padma gar dbang phyug / chags bral chags pa'i tshul gyis bzhugs // rin chen rigs drug nyi ma mchog / mkha' la rin chen char chen 'bebs // las kun mdzad nyid rta mchog ste // sna tshogs rdo rje 'khor lo bskor // rigs rnams kun gyi bdag nyid ni // drug pa rdo rje 'chang chen mchog (DT fol. 271b). The *Hevajra Tantra* also refers to both five and six clans. See HT I.v.5-10, Snellgrove 1959 vol. 1 p. 61 and vol. 2, pp. 16-17.

[110] Xuan-zang's biography is replete with references to ascetic practitioners in various guises, especially to *paśupatas* smeared with ashes. He also describes at several points ascetics decorated with charnel ground ornaments. In Kāpiśā, he wrote, "there are naked ascetics, and others who cover themselves with ashes, and some who make chaplets of bones, which they wear as crowns on their heads (Beal 1884:55). He describes the dress of non-Buddhist ascetics as follows: "Some wear peacocks' feathers; some wear as ornaments necklaces made of skull bones (the *Kapāladhārinas);* some have no clothing, but go naked *(Nirgranthas);* some wear leaf and bark garments; some pull out their hair and cut off their moustaches; others have bushy whiskers and their hair braided on the top of their heads. The costume is not uniform, and the colour, whether red or while, not constant." (1884:76).

[111] They are also described in *mahāyogatantras* such as the *Guhyasamāja;* and this sort of erotic rhetoric is also found in *yogatantras* such as the *Śriparamādhya* and the *Sarvarahasya* Tantras.

indicate an application of the theory of the dramatic sentiments to the ritual arts practiced within the *gaṇacakra.*[112] Here it appears that Buddhist ritual theorists anticipated by over a millennium the insights of theorists such as Turner.

The *navarasa* theory is developed in the oeuvre of Abhinavagupta,[113] who sought to apply this theory to the spiritual path, which in his case was a Tantric tradition not too dissimilar to the Buddhist *yoginitantra*s. Abhinavagupta used the idea of the *rasa* in a manner akin to the Buddhists when he wrote:

> One attains the state of complete repose *(viśrāntidhāma)* and all phenomenal objects *(bhāvajāta)*[114] are merged into one's own self through the force of the relish *(carvaṇā)* of outward things which are filled with one's own flow *(rasa)*[115] due to the flow *(rasa)* of desire.[116]

This description of the union of subject and object mediated by sensuous experience mobilized by the force of desire is quite similar with the Buddhist descriptions of great bliss achieved through the experiential unity *(ekarasa)* of one's self and all things.

In the Buddhist *anuttarayogatantra* traditions, it was held that the strangely erotic and terrifying scenes of the central deity couple in union exhibits all of the nine dramatic

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[112] This idea was broadly suggested by Eastman, who wrote: "If I may boldly speculate, the eroticism and attendant features of Vajrayāna Buddhist literature that many scholars, not only in Japan, have found morally objectionable are not the property of a literature confined to late medieval India, nor the products of a long period of 'degeneration', but the radical use of language, indebted to the canons of poetics and theatrics to a yet undetermined extent, seems to be an essential and defining feature of Vajrayāna literature as such and the property of its earliest redactions. The contemporary Tibetan translations of texts belonging to the Chinese *Vajraśekhara* system, but not found in Tibetan translation, confirm these features." (1983:31). Obviously, in this chapter I have tried to argue that Eastman was in fact correct in his hypothesis, which can be supported with a significant amount to evidence beyond that which he discussed in his article.

[113] Concerning Abhinava's thought on the *navarasa* see Masson and Patwardhan 1969, and also Gerow and Aklujkar, 1972.

[114] This word is provided from Jayaratha's commentary.

[115] Here Masson and Patwardhan translate *rasa* in its oldest sense of any sap, juice or liquid, (see Apte 1965, p. 796 col. 2), which seems appropriate in this context, which seems to describe the interpenetration of subject and object as a fluidic process.

[116] *Tattvāloka* v. 97: raṇaraṇakarasān nijarasabharitabāhirbhāvacarvaṇavaśena / viśrāntidhāma kiṃcil labdhvā svātmanyathārpayet // (1969:42). This passage is translated by Masson and Patwardhan (1969:42) and emended by me.

sentiments, providing thus a complete and perfect experiential scene. For example, Rāhugupta, in his *Prakāśa-nāma-śrihevajrasādhana,* wrote that:

> He [Heruka] is endowed with the nine sentiments of dance, which are: the erotic *(śṛṅgāra)*, heroic *(vira)*, disgusting *(bibhatsa)*, ferocious *(raudra)*, humour *(hāsya)*, terrifying *(bhayānaka)*, compassionate *(karuṇa)*, wondrous *(adbhuta)* and tranquil *(śānta)*. His experiential unity with Nairātmyā is the erotic, dwelling in a charnel ground is the heroic, his furrowed brows and bared fangs express disgust, his blazing light expresses fury, his beaming countenance[117] expresses humour, his garland of bloodied heads invokes terror, his expression of kindness to sentient beings is compassionate, his magical form conveys wonder, and his renouncing the addictions such as passion and so forth is tranquillity. It is these with which he is endowed.[118]

Abhayākaragupta, in his description of the *Saṃvara maṇḍala,* also describes Heruka Cakrasaṃvara as endowed with all nine of the sentiments, thus symbolizing a aesthetic harmonization which neatly integrates the "mundane" into the spiritual goal He symbolizes, as follows:

> In the Saṃvara maṇḍala, there is a varigated lotus atop of Mount Sumeru within a vajra tent *(vajrapañjara)*.[119] Placed on it is a double vajra, which sits as the base of a court in the middle of which is the Blessed Lord. He stands in the *ālīḍa* stance[120] on Bhairava and Kālaratri who lie on a solar disk atop the pericarp of the lotus. He is black and has four faces which are, beginning with the front [and continuing around counter-clockwise], black, green, red and yellow, each of which has three eyes. He has a tiger skin and has twelve arms. Two arms holding a vajra and a vajra bell embrace Vajravārāhi. Two of his hands hold up over his back a white elephant hide dripping with blood. His other [right hands hold] a *ḍamaru* drum, an axe, a flaying knife *(kartri)* and a

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[117] **vikāśamukha, zhal rnam par rgyas pa*

[118] / sgeg pa dpa' ba mi sdug pa // drag shul rgod dang 'jigs su rung // snying rje ngo mtshar zhi rnams kyis // gar gyi dgu ldan pa nyid // ces pa ste / de la bdag med ma dang lhan cig ro gcig pa nyid ni sgeg pa'o // dur khrod na bzhugs pa ni dpa' ba'o // khro gnyer gtsigs pa nyid ni mi sdug pa'o // 'bar ba'i 'od nyid ni drag shul lo // zhal rnam par rgyas pa nyid ni rgod pa'o // mgo bo rlon pa'i phreng ba nyid ni 'jigs su rung ba'o // sems can rjes su 'dzin pas sems nyid ni snying rje'o // sgyus ma'i gzugs nyid ni ngo mtshar ba'o // 'dod chags la sogs pa'i nyon mongs pa spangs pa nyid ni zhi ba ste de rnams dang ldan pa'o / (DT fol. 108a; cf. Wayman 1977 p. 328).

[119] *pañjara* is usually translated as "cage" (see Apte 1965, p. 580.1); however, I translate it as "tent" following the Tibetan translation, *gur.* In the Tantric context, the protective net of vajras is not understood to be placed to trap the inhabitants within like a cage, but to protect them from baleful outside elements, like a tent.

[120] The stance taken in archery by a left-handed person, with the right leg extended and the left leg contracted, bent slightly at the knee. (See Apte 1965, p. 231.2.) There has been some confusion with regard to the *ālīḍha* and *pratyālīḍha* concerning which leg is extended. Newman cites the *Nātyaśāstra* (10.70c-71b) and the Tibetan *Mahāvyutpatti* (#4266 & 4267) in support of the interpretation of *ālīḍha* as a stance with the right leg extended and the left contracted (1990:124-25, n. 4). See also Bhattacarya 1958 and Harle 1971.

> trident. His remaining left [hands hold] a skull staff marked with a vajra, a skull-bowl filled with blood, a vajra noose and the head of Brahmā. A garland of fifty moist human heads hangs about his neck. He has the six insignia[121] and a sacred thread made of human sinew.[122] He has a row of five skulls above his forehead, and a crest of black dredlocks topped by a left-oriented crescent moon and a double vajra. He affects the meditative contemplations *(dhyāna)* and his face is fiercely fanged. He brings together in one the nine dramatic sentiments *(navarasa).*[123]

The *yoginitantra* traditions are not alone in attributing mastery of the range of dramatic expression to its chief hierophant, the *vajrācārya* qua Heruka or Vajrasattva. Similar passages are also found in the writings of commentators in the *Guhyasamāja* tradition, wherein the *navarasa* are attributed to Vajrasattva in his role as Tantric hierophant. They are relevant, it seems, to the goal of union with the awakened deity, which can be achieved through the affection of these sentiments. According to Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*, this union can be affected in the following way:

> Regard the Adamantine body just as one would regard a celestial spirit. Engage in the worship of oneself as Vajrasattva. One's self is the nature of all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, so always worship oneself through every action. Always undertake the application of *mudrā* and *mantra*, the preparation of *maṇḍala*, etc. and the rites of sacrificial cakes and fire sacrifice as if everything is illusory. Always undertake all [ritual actions of] pacification, enrichment, controlling, destroying, summoning and so forth as if all things were rainbows. Engage in the experience of the erotic, etc., worship by means of song and music, etc., and in the performance of the [erotic] arts,[124] in the manner of the moon in water.[125]

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[121] See section 6.2.2 below.

[122] Reading the variant *naharu*, which means sinew according to Sanderson (1994a:98, n. 4).

[123] saṃvaramaṇḍale vajrapañjarasyābhyantare sumerūpari viśvābjapuṣkarasthaviśvavajravedisthitakūṭāgārasya madhye bhagavān viśvāmbojasya karṇikopari bhānusthabhairavakālarātryāv ālīḍacaraṇābhyām ākrāntaḥ kṛṣṇaḥ kṛṣṇharitaraktapitapūrvottarādi caturmukhaḥ prativaktraṃ trinetro vyāghracarmāmbaro dvādaśabhujaḥ savajravajraghaṇṭābhujayugmāliṅgitavajravārāhiko bhujābhyāṃ pṛṣṭhataḥ śubhrasaraktaprasṛtagajacarmadharas tad aparair ḍamaruparaśukartritriśūlāni bibhradvāmair vajrāliṅgitakhatvāṅgaraktapūritakapālaṃ vajrapāśaṃ bhrahmaśiraśca galāvalambipañcāśatsārdranaraśiraḥ śreṇikaḥ ṣaṇmudro naharuyajñopaviti lalāṭordhvapañcakapālamālī vāmāvarttitārdhacandraviśvavajrākrāntakṛṣṇajaṭāmukuṭo vikṛtadhyānotkaṭadaṃṣṭravaktro navanāṭyarasarāśiḥ / (Bhattacharyya 1949:23); cf. Sanderson 1994a, p. 91.

[124] The text, which reads *kalāsu ca pravṛttiṃ*, is ambigious, but Śrīlakṣmī makes it clear in her *Pañcakrama-vṛttārtha-virocana-nāma* that the reference here is to the sixty-four *kāmakalā*, as described in the *kāmaśātra*. She wrote that "*kalā* can refer to the sixty-four [*kāmakalā*] such as kissing, embracing and so forth as explained in the *kāmaśāstra*." / de bzhin du sgyu rtsal ni 'dod pa'i bstan bcos las bshad pa'i 'khyud pa dang 'od byed pa la sogs pa drug cu rtsa bzhi gang yin pa de'am / (DT fol. 252b). See also Wayman 1977 p. 329.

[125] *Pañcakrama* III vv. 27-31: saiva gandharvasattvaḥ syād vajrakāyaḥ sa eva hi / vajrasattvaḥ svayaṃ tasmāt svasya pūjāṃ pravartayet // ātmā vai sarvabuddhatvaṃ sarvasauritvam eva ca / tasmāt sarvaprayatnena hy ātmānaṃ pūjayet sadā // mantramudrāprayogaṃ ca maṇḍalādivikalpanam

Aryādeva argued that the Tantric adept should engage in all activities, from song and dance to more mundane activities, with the sense of being in union with a deity, as follows:

> The *mantrin*, who always smiling has opened his eyes, giving rise to the unexcelled spirit of awakening should earnestly see what is to be seen, hear what is to be heard, and speak what is to be spoken, free of truth or falsehood, through meditation on one's own deity. When engaged in bathing, annointing, dressing, eating, drinking and so forth, conceive of oneself through union with one's deity, worshipping in accordance with the rites. The observant one should engage in song, music and dance by means of liberative art, having produced affection for all things. Do not torment oneself with asceticism which abandons the reality of one's self, for the future Buddha gains bliss from bliss.[126]

The *anuttarayogatantra*s thus prescribe an elaborate code of conduct, utilizing the full range of ritual, musical and possibly dramatic and sexual arts to achieve an expanded and awakened state of physical and mental well-being. And while the extant exegetical literature in the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara* tradition is too small to ascertain the extent to which this code was developed therein, it seems safe to assume that during Amoghavajra's lifetime it was already well developed.

While there is a noticable but indefinite relationship between the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara, Guhyasamāja* and *Hevajra Tantra*s, that which exists between the former text and the *Cakrasaṃvara* is much more clear. The reason for this clarity is the fact the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* directly borrows a large portion of its text from the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara Tantra,* which will be

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balihomakriyāṃ sarvāṃ kuryān māyopamāṃ sadā // śāntikaṃ pauṣṭikaṃ cāpi tathā vaśyābhicārakam / ākarṣaṇādi yat sarvaṃ kuryād indrāyudhopamam // śṛṅgārādyupabhogaṃ ca gitavādyādisevanam / kalāsu ca pravṛttiṃ ca kuryād udakacandravat //. (Mimaki and Tomabechi 1994:35-36). The last verse is translated and discussed at length in Wayman 1977, pp. 327 ff.

[126] CV vv. 107-111: (107) sarvadā smitavaktreṇa mantravistṛtacakṣuṣā / sambodhau cittam utpādya svādhidaivatabhāvataḥ // (108) paśyed daśyaṃ kṣaṇaṃ kiṃcic chotavyaṃ śṛṇuyān tathā / satyāsatyaviyuktaṃ tu vaded vākyam atandritaḥ // (109) snānābhyañjanavastrādi-khānapānādiyatnataḥ / svādhidaivatayogena cintayet pūjanāvidhim // (110) gītaṃ vādyaṃ tathā nṛtyaṃ sopāyena vratī bhajet / akurvan iha bhaveṣu sarveṣv abhiniveśanam // (111) svātmabhāvaprahāṇena tāpayen na tapasyayā / sukhād yathā sukhaṃ dhyāyet sambuddho 'yam anāgataḥ //; (Patel 1949:8) / rtag tu zhal ni bzhad pa yis // sngags pas spyan ni rgyas gyur na // rjog pa'i byang chub sems bskyed nas // rang gi lha yi bsgom nas na // skad cig mthong la blta bar bya // gang yang thos pa mnyan par bya // brdzun dang bden dang bral ba yang // gyal ba med pas tshig tu smra // khrus dang bsku mnye gos la sogs // bza' gtung la sogs 'bad pa nyid // bdag nyid che ba'i lhar sbyar bas // cho gas mchod par bsam par bya // glu dang rol mo gar de bzhin // thabs bcas brtul zhugs can gyis spyad // 'dir ni dngos po thams cad la // lhag par chags par mi bya'o // rang gi bdag nyid yongs spangs nas // dka' thub kyis ni gdung mi bya // ji ltar bde bas bde ba bzung // 'di ni ma 'ongs rdzogs sangs rgyas // (Patel 1949:41-42)

discussed in detail in section 6.2.1 below. There has been confusion concerning the relationship between and the identity of these two texts. This can be seen, for example, in Davidson's identification of a number of citations "from the *Laghusaṃvaratantra (bDe mchog gi rgyud,* Tōh. 368)" (1981:7-8) in Vilāsavajra's *Ārya-Nāmasaṃgitiṭikā-mantrārthāvalokini-nāma.* Since Vilāsavajra lived in the eighth century this would be a startling discovery, as it would firmly date the text to this period. It turns out, however, that Davidson erred in assuming that the moniker *Saṃvaratantra (bde mchog gi rgyud)* in Indic commentaries referred to the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.* He was no doubt led astray by the fact that in current Tibetan usage the term *bde mchog,* literally "Supreme Bliss", always refers to the Cakrasaṃvara. In Indic translations, however, *bde mchog* was a literal translation of *śaṃvara* or *saṃvara;*[127] and it turns out that in almost all of the cases where an Vilasāvajra quoted the *Saṃvara* or the *Saṃvara Tantra* he was quoting from the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara.*[128] This was the case not only in Vilāsavajra's commentary, but others as well.[129] Generally, when Indian commentators refer to the *Cakrasaṃvara* they generally used the name *Laghusaṃvara (bde mchog nyung ngu* or *bde mchog chung ngu)* or *Cakrasaṃvara,* which was typically translated into Tibetan as either *'khor lo dbe mchog* or *'khor lo sdom pa.*

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[127] As Tsongkhapa shows in his commentary translated below, *śaṃvara,* and sometimes by extension, *saṃvara,* was understood to mean the "bliss supreme", from *śam,* an indeclinable particle expressing happiness, etc. (See Apte 1965, p. 908.a) and *vara,* "supreme". *Saṃvara,* on the other hand, quite properly means to bind or to tie, and this is the meaning understood in the compound *cakrasaṃvara.*

[128] The following passages in Vilāsavajra's AN correspond to passages in the JS. (1) AN: 'di nyid dpal bde mchog gi rgyud las gsungs pa ste */ nam mkha' kun gyi skabs na dpal // rdo rje sems dpa' de bzhin gshegs /* (DT fol. 29b); JS: */ nam mkha' kun gyi skabs na dpal // rdo rje sems dpa' de bzhin gshegs //* (DK fol. 152a). (2) AN: / de nyid las gsungs pa'ng *bde ba ni saṃ zhes pa* la sogs pa'o / (DT fol. 67b); JS: */ shaṃ zhes bya ba bde bar* bshad / (DK fol.151.b). (3) AN: / de ltar yang dpal bde mchog gi rgyud las gsungs pa */ kun tu kun nas thams cad du // bdag nyid rtag tu rnam pa kun // sangs rgyas la sogs brtan gyo kun // kun gyi dngos por bdag gyur to /* (DT 102a); JS: */ kun tu kun nas thams cad ni // bdag nyid rtag tu rnam pa kun // sangs rgyas la sogs brtan gyo kun // kun gyi dngos por bdag gyur to /* (DK fol. 151b).

[129] For example, Nāgabodhi, in his *Samājasādhanavyavasthāna* quotes the *Saṃvara* as follows: */ rnal 'byor thams cad bcom ldan 'das // rdo rje sems dpa' de bzhin gshegs // khams gsum pa ni ma lus kun // de yi nye bar longs spyod nyid //* ces bde mchog las gsungs te / (QT p. 9.3,4). This occurs in the JS as follows: */ rnal 'byor kun ni bcom ldan 'das // rdo rje sems dpa' de bzhin gshegs // de yi nye bar sbyor ba ni // khams gsum ma lus thams cad do /* (DK fol. 153a).

Davidson should be forgiven this simple mistake, for it turns out that there is one instance in his commentary where Vilāsavajra does quote the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, from its second chapter.[130] He also makes a reference to its forty-eighth chapter.[131] While it is not possible to date the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* earlier than the tenth century on the basis of the extant manuscripts and translations *alone,* Vilāsavajra's commentary strongly suggests that the text was compiled in some form by the eighth century. The assumption expressed above, then, that the ninth century Kāṇha who composed the *Yogaratnamālā* was the same Kāṇha who wrote several texts in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition appears to be a reasonable one. The Cakrasaṃvara thus is traceable to perhaps the latter end of an epoch of Indian history, i.e., the seventh and eighth centuries, which a preponderance of data suggests was a crucial era in the development of Tantric Buddhism. Concerning this epoch Naudou suggested "Let us recognize that the arguments invoked in order to justify that chronology are not all of equal value; certain can assuredly be proven false, but, from whichever angle one approaches the problem, all lead us to the end of the 7th and to the 8th century."[132]

This would make the Cakrasaṃvara an unorthodox contemporary tradition to the *Tattvasaṃgraha;* the former the product of extra-monastic communities of yogins, the latter a product of the monastic context. The latter tradition was well received in East Asia which was for cultural reasons more receptive to less transgressive traditions, but the

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[130] The first quote, occurs as follows: AN: / *glang chen ko rlon gos su gyon* // zhes pa ni dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rgyud las te / (DT fol. 67.a). This clearly corresponds to CST ch. 2 v. 15.c: hasticarmaviruddhaṃ ca, *glang po'i pags pa rnam par bgos* /.

[131] AN: // keng rus mche ba gtsigs pa po // ha la ha la gdong brgya pa // zhes pa ni / de la keng rus ni dpal bde mchog 'khor lo'i rgyud las so / (DT fol. 66b). He begins by quoting the last half of verse 67 from the MNS, which occurs as follows in Davidson's edition: daṃṣṭrākarālakaṅkālo halāhalaśatānanaḥ (1981 p. 54). He continues, writing "As for that, *skeleton* [occurs] in the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.*" It turns out that there is a passage which corresponds to this in ch. 48 of the CST, which occurs as follows: vikaṭadaṃṣṭriṇām eva ca kaṃkālamahākaṃkāla (ms. fol. 23b); / de bzhin mche ba rnam gtsigs dang // keng rus keng rus chen po dang / (DK fol. 244a).

[132] Naudou (1980:79) comes to this conclusion via a review of the various attempts to date the Tantras, and has argued that a great deal of evidence, none of which is absolutely firm in and of itself, points to the seventh and eighth centuries as the period of greatest activity in the development of the Tantras. He reviews Tucci's claim that "the *Guhyasamāja* was eloborated in the Swat valley, in or about the epoch of this personage [of Indrabhūti], which seems to be, more or less, the end of the VIIth and the beginning of the VIIIth century A.D. (1949:213). He also notes that Bagchi dates the HT to the 7th to 8th century (1939:28), and Snellgrove, via different reasoning, dates it to the late 8th (1959: vol. 1, p. 28).

former tradition was very well received in Tibet, where objections of the type encountered in China were raised, but were evidently overcome, probably due to the decentralized political state Tibet was in at the time, which would have rendered ineffective any attempts at censorship.

Based on textual sources alone, one might propose the following chronology. While Tantric elements and possible formative Tantric traditions may had been already developing for several centuries, Buddhist *textual* sources indicate existence of Tantric traditions by the mid seventh century, which probably indicates that they were receiving by that time the attention of Buddhist scholars and at acceptance by at least certain factions or groups within the Buddhist monastic community. Many of these early traditions most like included syncretic and transgressive elements from the very start, and more orthodox traditions such as the *Tattvasaṃgraha* may represent a later monastic response. The *yoginitantras*, while notable for their erotic imagery in particular, are not exceptional but represent a natural development, and major traditions such as the Cakrasaṃvara and the Hevajra may have been extant by the mid to late eighth century.

This chronology, if based merely upon textual data, would be provisional at best. It is, however, supported by archaeological data as well. A copper plate dated to the thirty-ninth year of Devapāla's reign, circa 850 CE,[133] discovered at Nālandā described the monks of Nālandā as *taṃtrikabodhisattvas*,[134] which suggests that by the mid-eighth century Tantric practice was no longer limited to an elect few as it evidently was over a hundred and fifty years earlier when Yi-jing was studying there.

There is interesting evidence discovered in regions south of Nālandā. Donaldson, summarizing the data of archeological studies of Buddhist sites in Orissa, presented the following chronology:

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[133] Devapāla is believed to have ascended the throne c. 810 CE and to have ruled for 39 years. His successor, Śūrapāla I, ascended the throne in 850 CE. See Majumdar 1983, p. 28.

[134] See Naudou 1980, p. 80 n. 3.

> In the earliest phase of sustained artistic activity, characterized by late Gupta stylistic features and concentrated primarily at Lalitagiri (i.e., Śrī Candrāditya-*vihāra)*, activity extends into the 7th century and the imagery is primarily of the Buddha himself. In a transitional period leading into the second phase, Bodhisattvas are added as attendants of the Buddha. In phase two, beginning at the end of the 7th century and extending into the 9th century, images of Buddha are replaced in popularity by sculptures of Bodhisattvas, female deities, and by sculptural-*maṇḍalas*....Virtually all of these maṇḍalas can be dated to the 8th-10th centuries and there is little doubt that the *maṇḍala* concept played a major role in Buddhist ritual throughout the Bhauma-kara period [mid-7th to mid-9th century]. (1995:179-80)

This general chronology was also developed by Hock in her dissertation on the sculptural remains at Ratnagiri; she in particular stresses the abundance of goddess imagery that appears at a relatively early date.[135] Hock also describes the presence of significant *anuttarayoga*-Tantric imagery, including a number of Heruka images, dating to the ninth and tenth centuries.[136] Similar finds have also been reported for the region of South Kosala in Madhya Pradesh by Bajpai.[137] By the twelfth century images of Heruka are widely disseminated, and have been discovered not only throughout India but also in Southeast Asia.[138] The development of *yoginitantra* iconography may be related to the kāpālika and

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[135] Hock claims that "beginning in the seventh century, in conjunction with the increased importance of the *tantras*, increasingly complex images and iconographic programs proliferated throughout the Buddhist world." (1987:3) This proliferation involved and explosion of goddess images. "At the same time, the goddess takes on a new importance, which prefigures her role in the *anuttarayoga tantras*, rather than reflecting her minor status in Mahāyāna Buddhism. This greater emphasis on the female in Mantrayāna Buddhism is further exaggerated at Ratnagiri, where her popularity, in a variety of forms, may well reflect her regional importance." (1987:4) It is possible that Orissan sites show greater influence from Tantric traditions than those of other regions of the same period; we might question, however, her assumption that increasing presence of goddesses *prefigures* or precedes the *anuttarayoga tantras*, when it is possible that this proliferation of goddess imagery might reflect the influence of such traditions.

[136] See Hock 1987, pp. 152-57, 169-75.

[137] Bajpai reports that "The recent field work conducted by the author at Malhār has brought to light interesting evidence that the Vajrayāna aspect of Buddhism grew up in this area from the later half of the 7th century AD and continued up to *c.* AD 1000. This cult was also developed in Orissa almost during the same period. It is evident that in the reign of the Somavaṁśī rulers not only Śaivism and Vaishṇavism had their growth, but also the Buddhist Vajrayāna flourished in their extensive kingdom. Buddhism became quite popular in the early medieval period in the eastern and south-eastern parts of India. At Malhār a temple complex of the Buddhist deity Hevajra, along with his image and several inscribed clay sealings, has been excavated." (1988:31)

[138] See Murthy 1988, esp. pp. 41-46.

yoginī cults that flourished in central India during this time period.[139] This data is supported by Dehejia's research on the curious, open air, circular temples dedicated to the cult of the sixty-four yoginīs that are scattered across a broad arch that cuts through central India more or less along the Vindhya belt, from Rajasthan across Madhya Pradesh into Orissa.[140] Dehejia suggests that these temples were built by the Kaulas (1986:35), which corresponds with White's conclusions concerning the Kaulas.[141]

While there is no evidence that the extant Buddhist *yoginītantras*, with the possible exception of the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinījālasaṃvara*, existed before the eighth century, there is ample evidence that the cults of fierce goddesses such as the *ḍākinī* and *mātṛ* preceded them by several centuries. The *yoginītantra* type of Tantric cults focusing on goddesses may be quite ancient. The goddess cults appears to have been well established in West India by the fifth century, at the other end of the Vindhya range, in the region where Yi-jing described Dao-lin's encounter with the *Vidyādharapiṭaka* tradition in the seventh century. The famous Ujjayinī astrologer Varāhamihira who lived in the sixth century,[142] refers in his *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* (LX.19) to "those who know the procedures for the worship of the *mātṛ-maṇḍala*."[143] A sixth century inscription in Udaygiri records the

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[139] See Donaldson 1986 for a discussion of erotic Orissan temple sculpture which he attributed to the kāpālikas (for the early sites) and the kaulas (tenth century and onward)., whom White locates in the Vindhya belt. (1998, p. 172, n. 1)

[140] These temples tend to be located on hill tops in inaccessible places (p. 40), and they are often still dreaded and avoided by nearby villagers. They are found scattered over a broad swath of central India stretching from Rajasthan in the west to Orissa in the east, (p. 77)) and they are found primarily in mountainous areas, i.e., in the general vicinity of the Vindhya range. She dates them from the ninth to twelfth centuries, which more or less corresponds to the period when most of the Heruka images are dated. It may very well be that this region of central India was of crucial importance in the development of Tantric Buddhism. This is in fact argued by Donaldson (1995) and Chandra 1979, both of whom wish to locate Oḍḍiyāna in Orissa. The thorny question of the location of Oḍḍiyāna aside, it is clear that this region was an important locus for the development and practice of Buddhist, and perhaps even more so, non-Buddhist Tantric traditions, such as the Kaulas.

[141] White, in his 1998 article, likewise locates the Vindhya belt as the central region of Kaula activity (1998:172, n. 1), and likewise concluded that they were constructed by royal patrons of the Kaulas. (1998:198)

[142] See Basham 1954:492.

[143] The textual passage reads either as *mātṛ-maṇḍala-vidaḥ* or *mātṛ-maṇḍala-krama-vidaḥ*. Utpala explains *maṇḍala-krama* as [*maṇḍala*]-*pūjā-krama*. See Sircar 1967, p. 88.

construction and consecration of a temple of the Mothers, also using the expression *mātṛṇāṁ maṇḍalam.*[144] Sircar also reports that the Aulika inscription of 423 describing a the construction of a temple to the Mothers is markedly Tantric in character. This

> temple of the Mothers is described as a terrible abode full of Ḍākinīs or female ghouls *(ḍākinī-samprakīrṇa)* and the goddesses themselves are represented as uttering loud and tremendous shouts of joy and stirring up the very oceans with the winds rising from the *tantra* or magical rites *(pramudita-ghan-ātyartha-nihrādini* and *tantrodbhūta-prabala-pavan-odvartit-āmbhonidhi).* (1967:91)

There is still no doubt as much work to be done in the archeological field as there is in the textual, so it is perhaps not yet possible to draw any definite conclusions. The current data seems to point toward the development of Tantric over several centuries, with the Tantric Buddhist traditions emerging by the seventh century. Certain of the *anuttarayoga* traditions, such as the *Guhyasamāja* and *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara,* traditions, may have been extant by that time as well, and were in any case closely followed by the classical *yoginitantra*s such as the Cakrasaṃvara. These *anuttarayogatantra* traditions most likely took longer to receive partial acceptance by monastic communities, and were clearly rejected by many Buddhist communities, which no doubt accounts for the mistaken impression that they were a much later development.

In the field of Tantric historiography, it is still the case that much more is unclear than clear. Tantric texts and traditions are not monolithic, but developed over time in an often haphazard way; there are multiple traditions with multiple recensions for many texts, the development of which must have occurred gradually over time. Nor does the translation of a text fix in any way its date of composition, but merely shows the latest possible date for the text, with the actual date of composition often preceding this by several centuries. The purpose of this section was not to imply that any of the dates argued or assumed here are absolute. They are at best hypotheses, which are potentially subject to revision or rejection as new evidence becomes available. Rather, the purpose was to challenge some commonly held and often unexamined assumptions.

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[144] See Sircar 1967, p. 89.

Tantric traditions clearly stem from a multivalent array of inspirations and developmental sources, the paths of which appeared to have converged for the Buddhists during the seventh century. The strongest case for Buddhist inspiration appear to be on the more scholastic side of "Tantrism". Clearly, the theoretical background for the Tantrism had been developing for centuries within Buddhism, and this theoretical justification for Tantric practices appears to have been fully convincing to a large number of Buddhists throughout Asia. It even appears to have provided much of the basis for the Hindu Tantric theorists, who came much later, such as Abhinavagupta, who, for example, was evidently influenced by Buddhist scholasticism.[145] This would also explain the frequent appearance of Buddhistic terminology in Śaiva Tantras. The second unequivocally Buddhist contribution was the systematization and exegesis of the Tantras, which appears again to have preceded that among Hindu circles by at least a century. This is no doubt due to the fact that the Tantras were accepted by a significant portion of the Buddhist scholastic (i.e. monastic) communities as a valuable or even essential body of texts for study and practice, well before it was accepted by the literary elites of the Hindu tradition, i.e. the Brahmins.

Regarding Tantric ritual *praxis*, there is no doubt that the source for a good deal of its ritual technology is ultimately derived from the Vedic tradition. Some of this borrowing may have gradually occurred during the imperial period or soon after, with the development of the cults of the Buddhas and bodhisattvas, for which the Vedic rites would have been a significant source of ritual technologies; Buddhist Tantras are no doubt indebted to the liturgical texts that developed thence. Some of the early so-called "Tantras" are *tantra*s per say but *kalpa*s, such as the *Mañjuśrimūlakalpa.* These texts are more like encyclopedias, containing a collection of the lore and liturgies that accrued around a certain deity. No doubt the products of centuries of development of the cults surrounding the great Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, their production may be analogous to that of the *purāṇa*s of classical

[145] See Masson and Patwardhan (1969), who argue that Abhinavagupta's concept of *śāntarasa* was influenced by Buddhist thinkers such as Aśvaghoṣa. Concerning the general influence of Buddhist scholasticism on Advaita Vedānta thought see Isayeva 1995 and King 1995.

Hinduism, which likewise can be understood as "encyclopedic" compendia of legends and religious instructions, developing over a period that might have spanned centuries.

There were also the *naya* or "method" texts, such as the *Āryaprajñāpāramitānaya-śatapañcāśatikā;* the Prajñāpāramitā corpus went on and on about the "Transcendences" which an aspiring bodhisattva needs to cultivate; as the Mahāyāna became well established in India, however, there were no doubt many aspiring practitioners who wanted specific information concerning how they are to be practiced; the common literary trope that the "Transcendence of Generosity" *(dānapāramitā)* is achieved by selflessly sacrificing one's life or body parts who would have appealed only to the most brave or foolhardy. The "Transcendence of Discerning Wisdom" *(prajñāpāramitā)* is described quite eloquently in the literature but in a apophatic manner, proceeding via merciless negation of all reified absolutes; standing in the wake of this frontal assault on self-hypostatization, one would not be surprised to find a bewildered neophyte wondering exactly how is this Transcendence practiced, and just what is the method for doing so?

Tantric literature, from a certain perspective, attempts to answer this question by providing a systematic procedure for the attainment of the insights described by the classical Mahāyāna sūtras. In attempting this, however, the so-called "Tantras" probably at first developed as a growing trend within Mahāyāna Buddhism, the origin of which cannot be discerned with any exactitude, as the trend can be seen within a number of the classical Mahāyāna sūtras themselves.[146] The question of when Tantrism was understood to be a distinct "vehicle", however, is another question. Although one can trace Tantric "elements" back into earlier strata of Buddhist texts, there is no evidence for the existence of Tantric Buddhism as a self-conscious movement before the seventh century.

On the other hand, the evidence of Śaiva influence on the development of the Buddhist Tantras, suggesting that Buddhist and Hindu traditions may have often developed from common or similar sources before diverging. In the area of meditative techniques the

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[146] This has been pointed out by Thurman (1976:7) with regard to the *Vimalakirtinirdeśa Sūtra.*

Buddhists were and continued to be innovators throughout their history in India.[147] Yet important aspects of Tantric yogic meditation were also inspired by what Bronkhorst called the "mainstream tradition" of Indian meditation, in which he includes Vedic and Upaniṣadic inspired brahmanic groups as well as the Jains.[148] These groups, who tended to focus on more ascetic meditative techniques, were the likely originators of the *praṇayama* breathing techniques which form a central role in the Buddhist Tantric *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* traditions,[149] but which were criticized in an earlier strata of Buddhist literature.[150]

The early stages of the development of Tantric traditions may never be ascertained with certainty. Their development in distinctly Buddhist forms, however, was well underway by the seventh century, and it may be that this was the earliest manifestation to take shape in an institutionalized, historically traceable form. Exactly what occurred before this time in the charnel grounds and sacred sites haunted by a creative yet unconventional breed of spiritual seeker is probably unrecoverable, as the only evidence of their activities is the suggestive but faint traces left in subsequent traditions.

Rather than a quest for origins, it seems likely that an investigation the texts and practices of living traditions will prove the most fruitful approach to the study of Tantric traditions. It is perhaps too early to propose sweeping theories concerning Tantric traditions, when so much basic work remains undone.[151] When individual traditions and extant texts have been more thoroughly studied it will probably be possible to speak more

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[147] Even the *Yogasūtra* owes a clear but not fully understood debt to Buddhist meditative techniques; see Bronkhorst 1986, pp. 65-74.

[148] Important elements of the subtle physiology are described in the *upaniṣads*, see for example *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* 8.6.1-6 (Olivelle 1996:170-71), and *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* (Olivelle 1996:61). The significance of these passages are discussed in Bïezer's 1992 article. The influence of the Vedic tradition on the development of the subtle body yogas has been extensively discussed by Hartzell (1997).

[149] This tradition of meditation has been traced back to the *upaniṣads*. See Zigmund-Cerbu 1963.

[150] See Bronkhorst 1986, pp. 9-15.

[151] This was the opinion of Torella, who wrote: "What is at present required from scholars of Tantrism is, in my opinion, the close study of single schools, on the basis on the published texts (where they exist) and, above all, the difficult work of editing what is preserved in manuscript form. Only the minute and intense tasting of each individual flavor would allow one to make a future synthesis." (1983: 309)

conclusively of the origins of the Tantras, but even then there will no doubt be much that will remain a mystery.

Chapter Six

The Cakrasaṃvara Tantra and the Origin of Heruka

In previous chapters some of the central ideas present in Tantras such as the Cakrasaṃvara were explored, as well as aspects of the social ideology discernible within them. In addition hypotheses were developed concerning their history in India, and the interpretive strategies taken by the commentators were examined in some detail. This final chapter will, in the light of these efforts, take a closer look at the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra itself, looking in particular at its text and the myth of its origination. This final effort will hopefully shed some light on the processes by which the Cakrasaṃvara tradition was constituted in India and transmitted to Tibet, although it constitutes only a first step, so to speak, in the much larger project of exploring the history of this tradition in India and Tibet.

6.1 The Texts of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra

1. Description of the Texts

As mentioned above in section 4.1.1, the name which is usually used for this Tantra in both Indian and Tibetan sources, the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,*[1] does not actually occur in the text itself, with one exception which will be addressed below. It is also commonly entitled the *Laghusaṃvara,* the title which appears at the beginning of the standard Tibetan translation.[2] This designation, however, does not occur in the Sanskrit Texts.[3] At the end

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[1] The word *cakrasaṃvara* is usually translated into Tibetan either literally as *'khor lo sdom pa,* or as *'khor lo bde mchog,* which is a translation of *cakraśaṃvara, śaṃvara* being understood to be a analyzable into the indeclinable particle *śam* "happiness" and *vara,* "supreme".

[2] It occurs, for example, in the rDe-dge Kanjur as *tantrarāja-śrilaghusaṃvara-nāma, rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal bde mchog nyung ngu zhes bya ba.* (DK fol. 213a).

[3] The Sanskrit manuscripts do not being with a title, but simply with the statement "Homage to Śricakrasaṃvara" *(namaḥ śricakrasamvarāya),* addressed not to the *text* but to the deity with the same name.

of each chapter in both the Sanskrit manuscripts and the Tibetan translations, the text refers to itself as the *Śriherukābhidhāna (dpal heruka'i nges par brjod pa).* A more complete version of the name occurs in the colophon. In the Tibetan translation the name *Śriherukābhidhāna-nāma-mahāyoginitantrarāja*[4] is given. The Sanskrit text, however, contains the variant *Śricakrasaṃvara-nāma-mahāyoginitantrarāja.* The text itself, then provides two names, the *Śriherukābhidhāna* and the *Cakrasaṃvara.* The presence of the former at the end of (almost) all chapters, suggests that the name *Śriherukābhidhāna* is quite old, and quite possibly the original name of the text.[5] On the other hand, the commentatorial tradition overwhelmingly knows the text and its tradition as the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, and given the presence of this name and definite quotes from the text in Vilāsavajra's commentary, this name is also undoubtedly quite ancient.

The known, extant texts of the *Cakrasaṃvara* consist of three Sanskrit manuscripts and several translations into Tibetan.[6] Regarding the former, there are two manuscripts in the collection of the Oriental Institute in Vadodara, India, and one in the Kaiser Library collection, in Kathmandu, Nepal. All of these manuscripts are of Nepali origin.

The earliest manuscript is in Bhujimol script on palm leaves. Its brief colophon has no date,[7] but there are several features of the script which will enable the ascription of an

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[4] That is, *dpal heruka'i nges par brjod pa zhes bya ba zhes bya ba rnal 'byor ma chen mo'i rgyud kyi rgyal po* (DK fol. 246b).

[5] The word *abhidhāna,* "discourse" also occurs as the name of the mythic text of the tradition, as well as in the names of one of the most important Explanatory Tantras in the tradition, the *Abhidhānottara.*

[6] Li Fangwen, in a 1997 article, described a find of scriptures in Xixia and Chinese unearthed from the ruins of a stūpa in Ning-xia province, China. Among these he lists a *Sūtra of Saṃvara* (Ch. 上樂經), which could possibly be a Chinese or Xixia translation of this scripture. If so, it would be a remarkable find, but hardly an unlikely one. The Xixia, ethnically related to the Tibetans, was heavily influenced by Tibetan schools of Buddhism, and were thus quite likely to have been exposed with this popular Tibetan tradition before their defeat by the Mongols in 1227 CE.

[7] Its colophon has no date, but it does contain two interesting elements. The first is a statement of the *Pratityasamutpādagātha*, occurring there as *ye dharmā hetuprabhavā hetuṃ teṣāṃ tathāgato hy avadat teṣāṃ ca yo nirodha evaṃvādī mahāśramaṇaḥ* (ms. fol. 38a). This " 'Buddhist creed' [is] known in Tibetan as the "Essence of Relativity dhāraṇi" *(rten 'brel snying po'i gzung),* [and] is used to consecrate images in the Tibetan tradition." (Gyalzur and Verwey 1983:176-77) See also Boucher (1991) for a discussion of the consecratorial uses of this verse in early medieval India. Its appearance in the colophon of this manuscript is interesting, implying that the text itself was seen as being in need of consecration.

approximate date. The first consideration concerns the Bhujimol script.[8] It contains the "Newari hook" which was in use for a period of about three and a half centuries, from the twelfth through fifteen centuries.[9] Comparison of the script in this text with those in other, dated texts suggests that it was written in the mid to late twelfth century, making it a relatively early example of this script.[10]

The other two manuscripts are much later copies of this palm leaf text. They are on Nepali paper in *devanāgari* script. The one in the Oriental Institute collection is dated N. S. *(nevāri saṃvat)* 1050, that is, 1930 CE. The manuscript in the Kaiser Library collection has no colophon, but it appears to have been written by the same hand as the former manuscript, and is thus most certainly a twentieth century copy.

The text consists of approximately seven hundred stanzas *(śloka)* divided into fifty-one chapters of uneven size. It is written in Sanskrit, not the "Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit" described by Edgerton (1970),[11] and while the Sanskrit at times seems poor, many of these irregularities are common to Nevāri manuscripts, and often reflect as well textual corruptions that inevitably arise when a text is repeatedly recopied by scribes with a limited or non-existent command of Sanskrit.[12] The Sanskrit in this text is, however, generally

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[8] Lienhard wrote that the name *bhujiṃmola* means "fly headed", which is probably a reference to its characteristic "hook" at the top of the letters, as opposed to the horizontal line that tops most Devanāgari letters. It is derived from the ornamental *kuṭila* script. See Leinhard 1988, p. xviii.

[9] See Bendall 1992, pp. xxii-xxiii.

[10] There are a variety of different sources for the comparison of different scripts. The examples in Śākya's (1974) *Nepāla Lipi Prakāśa* and Rājavaṃśi's (1959) *Prācina Lipi Varṇamālā*, while generally useful, did not provide a close match to the script in this text. The closest match occurs in the (1992) reprint of Bendall's catalogue. This match is to ms. add. 1686, a 1167 CE palm leaf manuscript of the *Sādhanamālātantra*. See Bendall 1992 p. 174, and also plate II.3 and the Table of Letters. Both manuscripts contain, for example, an archaic version of the letter *tha*, which does not occur, for example, in the manuscripts described by George (1974) which are of a somewhat later date. On the other hand, the letter *bha* in this text is closer to that contained in Bendall's ms. add. 1693, dated to 1165 CE.

[11] Brough has argued that "Edgerton throughout [his 1953 grammar] rather underestimates the degree of accidental transmissional corruption which our texts may have suffered". (1954:353).

[12] Common irregularities include the ignoring of *saṃdhi* rules and confusion concerning the proper endings for the declension of nouns and adjectives. Textual corruptions are commonly due to similarities in *nevāri* scripts between the letters *c* and *v*, *y* and *p*, *n* and *t*, and *ś* and *s*, while *b* and *v* were not distinguished. These letter pairs were frequently confused, and larger errors were not unknown as well, particularly common was the loss of subscribed and superscribed marks for vowels and consonants. A full account of

good. The main problem in the text is its metre. It is written in thirty-two syllable *śloka* verse in what appears to be the *anuṣṭubh* metre. The metre, however, is frequently violated, and the syllable count also often irregular. This situation has been observed for other Nevārī manuscripts as well, which as a general class do not readily permit editorial correction for the purpose of restoring the metre.[13]

A possible solution to this problem is that the "original" text may not have been composed in Sanskrit at all, but in some *prākṛta* or *apabhraṃśa*.[14] If this were the case, the Sanskrit version of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* would in effect be a translation, a translation which perhaps preserved aspects of a non-Sanskrit metre. This appears unlikely, however, because the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is clearly a composite text, and is composed of a number of passages drawn from other texts which were clearly written in Sanskrit, as will be shown in section 6.2.1 below. Hence, the most likely explanation for the poor metre of the text is either that its author or editor was a poor poet, who succeeded in producing a text in decent Sanskrit which did not, however, conform well to the standards of classical poetics,[15] or that the metre was obliterated through a long succession of imperfect copying and recopying of the manuscripts.

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the problems and corruptions commonly found in these manuscripts are provided by Brough in his 1954 article.

[13] Snellgrove, for example, noted that in mss. of the HT "more than a hundred lines are quite irregular, and although they clearly represent *ślokas* of a kind, it is impossible to see how many of them can ever have been anything but irregular. Thus, where there is a choice of reading, the original one is by no means necessarily the one that would permit correct scansion." (1959: vol. 2, p. ix). Elder, in his introduction to his edition of the *Saṃpuṭa Tantra*, further admits: "We must, like Snellgrove, make our confession of leaving very much open in our edition the solution to problems of meter. Essentially, where it occurred, it was *śloka*, but frequently the Pāda reached nine or ten syllables, and occasionally there appears an independent Pāda joined only in sense to a regular line. We think it most likely that mediocre poetical skill is involved in many cases; but we also think that a thorough study of metrical patterns in the *Saṃpuṭa* is necessary in the future." (1978: n.2, pp. 34-35)

[14] This possibility is suggested by the fact that there exists an *apabhraṃśa* text for one of the CST's Explanatory Tantras, the DM. See Chaudhuri's 1935 edition.

[15] Another factor that may have affected the metre is alterations to the text. The Sanskrit contains a number of *śloka* which contain too many syllables; in certain of these cases there are also words or groups of words that wildly violate the metre, which would be restored if they were elided. Dr. Gary Tubb has suggested to me that these words may be glosses or notes which somehow became incorporated into the text. One possibility is that they were interlinear notes which were added into the text by a copyist. Another possibility is that the text was, at some point in its long and precarious history, lost, but recovered from a commentary. An example occurs in CST I.5.a-b, in which the bracketed words appear to be

The Nevārī palm leaf manuscript (and the paper copies which maintain its pagination) consisted of a total of thirty eight folios, which contained the text of the entire fifty-two chapters of the text along with a colophon. The handwriting of the text is generally quite clear, although at certain points the text is damaged by causes such as insects, fraying of the palm leaves, or simple smudging or fading of the ink. Generally the text is still readable in these areas, or can at least be reasonably reconstructed with the help of the commentaries and translations. The largest problem with the manuscript is that it is incomplete. Eleven of the thirty-eight folios are lost,[16] resulting in the total loss of thirteen of the chapters, and the partial loss of another six.[17] Some of the missing passages do occur, however, in the extant commentaries,[18] or in overlapping passages in the Explanatory Tantras. Those that are not thus recoverable could, theoretically, be reconstructed on the basis of the Tibetan translations.[19]

Fortunately, there were several Tibetan translations of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* which were made prior to the reproduction of the earliest extant Sanskrit manuscript. The first known translation was that made by Rinchen bZang-po and the Kaśmiri paṇḍit Padmākaravarma, presumably during the tenth century when the former was studying in

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commentatorial-style notes, which if excised would more or less restore the metre: manthamanthāna saṃyogaṃ [yathā tathā] mantra[jāpa]dhyānādibhir yuktaṃ. It should be noted, however, that these additions are generally attested in the Tibetan editions, suggesting that if such additions in fact occurred they are quite ancient. The early history of this text (that is, the period before its 10th century translation into Tibetan) is completely unknown, but these observations suggest that it had a long and complex history preceding its translation into Tibetan.

[16] These are the folios numbered 15, 18-22, 28-31 and 36.

[17] The chapters completely lost are 23-29 and 39, and the ones partially lost are 18,19, 22, 38, 49 and 50.

[18] There are at least two surviving commentaries. One is Vajrapaṇi's *Lakṣābhidhānāduddhṛta Laghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa*, which has been edited by Cicuzza, but which unfortunately only comments on the first ten and one half verses of the text, which are in fact well preserved in the palm leaf manuscript. The other is Jayabhadra's *Śricakrasamvara-mūlatantra-pañjikā*, which is complete and covers much more of the text, but which does not, however, repeat the entire text word for word.

[19] This work is currently being undertaken by scholars of the Rare Buddhist Text Research Project of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi.

Kashmir.[20] This translation was revised twice, but the original version does not appear to be still extant, although it was available to Tsongkhapa in the fifteenth century.

The most well known revised version, which was preserved in the Kanjur section of the Tibetan canon, is that undertaken by Marpa Chos-kyi dbang-phyug, usually known as Marpa Dopa or Mardo, together with Prajñākirti. Mardo was born in c. 1043 CE,[21] and studied the Cakrasaṃvara tradition in India and Nepal with disciples of the Mahāsiddha Nāropa. In Nepal he translated a number of texts in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition with the assistance of Sumatikīrti,[22] who was himself responsible for the other revision of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra. After his return to Tibet he played an important role in the dissemination of the texts and practices of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition there.

Sumatikīrti, a Kaśmiri, was a disciple of Nāropa (956-1040 CE),[23] and is depicted as senior to Marpa Lho-brag-pa (1012-1096 CE) in the latter's biography.[24] Sumatikīrti participated in the translation of a number of texts with Mardo, and was himself the author of a short but influential work on the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra called the *The Intended Import of the Chapters of the Concise Samvara Tantra (laghusaṃvaratantrapaṭalābhisandhi).*[25] He also revised Rinchen bZang-po's translation with the help of the Tibetan translator bLo-

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[20] Rinchen bZang-po (958-1055 CE) studied in India for over a decade, returning to Tibet c. 991 CE. It is not known exactly when he made this translation, but it seems safe to assume that he made it while in India. He translated several other works in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition after his return to Tibet, with Śraddhākaravarman and Atīśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna. His work with the various Indian paṇḍits can be in any case limited to a period of about seventy-five years, since they "are contemporaries of Rin-chen-bzang-po and their activity should therefore be confined to within a very precise time limit: the second half of the 10th century up until about the third quarter of the 11th century." (Tucci 1932:49) This period can be even more precisely confined between 975 CE, when he departed for India, and 1055 CE, when he died.

[21] gZhon-nu-dpal wrote, in his *Blue Annals*, that Mardo "seems to have been born when the venerable Marpa was about 31. He lived to the age of 95." (Roerich 1949:383). This would allow us to tentatively assign him dates of 1043-1138 CE.

[22] See Roerich 1949, p. 384.

[23] Concerning the dates of Nāropa see Wylie 1982.

[24] See Trungpa 1982, p. 106.

[25] This work is quoted in its entirety by Tsongkhapa in his text translated below; it is also edited in appendix D below.

gros-grags.[26] This version of the text was preserved only in the Phug-brag manuscript Kanjur discovered in Ladak,[27] but it is of great significance in that it appears to be the Tibetan version that is closest to the surviving Sanskrit copies of this Tantra.

A second translation was made by Mal-gyo blo-gros-grags, who also traveled to India. He studied the Cakrasaṃvara tradition in Nepal with Pham-ting-pa and other disciples of Nāropa.[28] Returning to Tibet he taught Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po;[29] his translation and lineage thus became the one followed by subsequent members of the Sa-skya school. His translation was not included in the Tibetan canon, but is preserved within this school.

There are several indications that the Cakrasaṃvara tradition was already well developed by the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. One is the fact that by this time the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra itself was already well distributed throughout India, and was not simply a regional tradition. According to the colophon of the edition of the Root Tantra contained in the sDe-dge Kanjur, it was translated by Rinchen bZangpo and Padmākara from a Kaśmīri edition of the Sanskrit text, and was revised by Mardo and Prajñākīrti, from a Sanskrit edition from Central India *(Madhyadeśa, yul dbus).*[30] The wide dissemination of the text by this time does not prove much, as there evidently was quite a bit of mobility enjoyed by the Tantric adepts of this period.[31] More definitive is the fact that by this time

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[26] It is possible that this bLo-gros-grags is Mal-gyo blo-gros-grags, the Tibetan monk who made a second translation of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.

[27] This edition of the Kanjur was cataloged by Jampa Samten (1992). The manuscripts themselves are preserved in the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Gangchen Kyishong, Dharamsala, India. It has also been microfilmed by the Institute for Advanced Studies of World Religions (Carmel, NY), catalogue # Lmpj 016,901.

[28] See Roerich 1949, p. 382.

[29] Sachen's dates are 1092-1158 CE (see Krapivina 1991). Mal-gyo must have been somewhat older; it seems safe to assume that he traveled to Nepal in the second half of the eleventh century while some of Nāropa's were still living, and that he served as Sachen's guru later during the first half of the twelfth century.

[30] See CST DK fol. 246b.

[31] Marpa's biography depict him encountering, in Central India, several Kaśmīri students of Nāropa, namely Bodhibhadra and Sumatikīrti, see Trungpa 1982.

there had already developed a significant textual corpus in this tradition. Rinchen bZang-po did not only translate the *mūlatantra,* but also ten other texts,[32] with the help of Kaśmiri scholars and, later, with Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrijñāna.[33] The next century and a half saw a tremendous increase in such translation activity, until literally hundreds of texts in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition were translated into Tibetan.

The abundance of such literature by the early eleventh century, as well as the complex textual history of the root text itself,[34] suggests that this tradition must have been well established by that time; while some of these texts were certainly composed around or shortly before that time, some of them were likely to have textual histories spanning a significantly longer time period, and oral and practice lineages that go back possibly even further. This appears to support the eighth century date for the composition of the root text tentatively proposed above.

6.1.2. Survey of Contents

The style of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is quite different from that of the typical Mahāyāna sūtras, and even more divergent from the texts of the ostensibly earlier Pāli canon. It is quite concise, lacking the lofty prose of the Mahāyāna sūtras, and the mnemonic repetitiveness of the Pāli sūtras. Its style, in fact, is closer to that of the *sūtra*

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[32] These texts include the AD explanatory Tantra and Bhavyakirti's SM commentary, as well as a number of ritual texts, including Lūipa's important *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya.* See Tucci 1949, pp. 40, 44.

[33] Atiśa arrived in Western Tibet in 1042 CE (Wylie 1982:687), and collaborated with Rinchen bZang-po in a number of translations; the story of their meeting and work together is well known and need not be restated here. (See Chattopadhyaya 1967, pp. 340 f.) Atiśa also wrote an important commentary *(vibhaṅga)* on Lūipa's *Abhisamaya,* which was translated not with Rinchen bZang-po but with Tshul-khrims rgyal-ba, the monk who was sent to Vikramaśila to invite him to come to Tibet.

[34] Some of these issues will be discussed in section 6.2.1, and also in the notes to the edition of the first four chapters of the CST below. Generally, differences between the early manuscript, and the even earlier translations and commentaries support the hypothesis that there were several centuries of textual transmission preceding the production of translations in the tenth and eleventh centuries. Schoterman came to a similar conclusion with regard to the Kubjikāmata Tantra in its Kulālikāmnaya version. See Schoterman 1990, p. 82.

tradition of texts such as Patañjali's *Yogasūtra* than that of the classical Buddhist *sūtras*. Gombrich has argued that the Buddhist *sutta* genre was incorrectly re-Sanskritized as *sūtra*. He wrote that

> early Buddhist poems were called *sūkta*, which in Pāli (and other forms of Middle Indo-Aryan) becomes *sutta*, as in *Suttanipāta*. Literally a *sūkta* is synonymous with a *subhāṣita*, something 'well spoken', in this case by the Buddha or one of his immediate disciples; but the word also alludes to the *Veda*. I am of course aware that many centuries later *sutta* was re-Sanskritized as *sūtra*. A *sūtra* is however a recognizable genre of Sanskrit literature, a prose text composed with the greatest possible brevity, so that it cannot normally be understood without a lengthy commentary. No early Pāli text is anything like that." (1990:23)

Regardless of the verity of this hypothesis, *mūlatantra*s such as the *Cakrasaṃvara*, which have completely renounced the Buddhist *sutta/sūtra* genre, are, like the non-Buddhist *sūtra*s, relatively short, aphoristic and cryptic texts concerning ritual and meditative practices; it is an abridged manual which covers essential points but not in sufficient detail. They thus demand the exegesis provided by the Explanatory Tantras and commentaries, as well as the copious ritual texts that explicate the practices cryptically described in the *mūlatantra*s.[35]

The *Cakrasaṃvara's* brevity may be a consequence of its being a "concise Tantra"; its conciseness is in fact announced in its very first line, as if this was a crucial fact for the prospective reader's consideration.[36] This may in fact signal its derivation from a more extensive source as the tradition claims, but it is also possible that it was the text's brevity that inspired the fabrication of myths of extensively verbose origins, a myth probably inspired by the Mahāyāna sūtra tradition which did in facts reach tremendous heights of prolixity, the pinnacle of which is the one hundred thousand stanza *(śloka)* version of the *Prajñāpāramitā sūtra*.

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[35] An analogous pattern can be discerned with the *yogasūtra*, which was followed not only by an extensive *yogabhāṣya*, but also numerous *yogopaniṣad*s. See Bronckhorst 1985, and also Eliade 1958.

[36] The Tantra begins with the declaration, "And now I will explain the secret, concisely, not extensively." (athāto rahasyaṃ vakṣye samāsān na tu vistarāt, see my edition below).

Tantric traditions greatly elaborated upon the visionary tendencies of the Mahāyāna sūtras. However, unlike these *sūtras*, which vividly presented these visions in their texts, the Tantric literature tended to focus on the meditative technologies for directly experiencing these visions, and hence tend to be more technical, with less vivid descriptions of the visions themselves when they occur at all. The very use of the word "literature" in the Tantric context must be qualified with the observation that with many Tantric texts do not seem to have been written for the sake of "reading", at least not reading as an aesthetic, intellectual or even meditative exercise, as the Mahāyāna sūtras appear to have been intended. Reading the Tantras is often a perplexing experience. This no doubt reflects their function. Concerning one of the more esoteric sūtras, Abé wrote that

> in the *Eleven-faced Avalokiteśvara Dhāraṇi Sūtra,* the dhāraṇi is not presented as an aid for reciting and memorizing the sūtra text. On the contrary, it is the sūtra text that encourages the recitation of the dhāraṇi. It is no longer the reading, reciting and memorizing of the sūtra but the ritual actions prescribed in the sūtra that provide the context for reciting the dhāraṇi. That is to say, the esoteric sūtra partakes of the function of a ritual manual. One of the features that distinguish esoteric scriptures from the exoteric Mahāyāna sūtras is the shift from sūtra reading to ritual action as a normative method of mastering the text (1999:167)

It is precisely this function of a ritual manual, with an increasing focus on praxis, that characterizes Tantric texts, and to set them apart from exoteric literature. Tantras such as the Cakrasaṃvara are primarily ritual texts, which are to be mastered not so much through a practice of reading but through an introduction to the ritual vocabulary that can only be obtained through direct instruction.

The esoteric nature of the Tantric texts may be precisely due to their content and function. It is not really possible to learn complex ritual procedures, which are among their most important topics, from reading a book. The texts are secret simply because there is no way that such traditions could be transmitted *solely* via texts. The subject matter more than anything else necessitates the instructional method. But over time and the vagaries of history teaching lineages can change, diverge or be lost altogether, and the cryptic "sūtras" might seem all the more cryptic, hence the need to explicate them gradually grows.

It is thus no surprise that Kūkai found it necessary to travel to China in order to master the ritual portions of the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra*, despite his proficiency in Chinese.[37] The ritual portions of these texts clearly are not intended to instruct the untutored; their brevity and esoteric nature would easily thwart such attempts, and Tantric literature is filled with warnings against the dangers of this.[38] Instead, the descriptions of rituals in the Tantras may have functioned as aids for those who have already studied under a master and learned the procedures; the *mūlatantras*, particularly when memorized, would have provided a convenient resumé of the important points of the tradition.[39]

That this is the case is suggested by an interesting passage in the *Hevajra Tantra*, which describes for the practitioner the required manner in which the Tantra was to be handled, as follows:

> O listen, Goddess, greatly blessed, and I will speak on the subject of books. The book should be written by one of our tradition on leaves of birch-bark twelve *aṅgula* long,[40] with collyrium for ink and with a human bone as a pen. But if someone unworthy should see either book or painting, one will fail to gain either in this world or the next. To one of our tradition it may be shown at any time. Then on a journey the book should be hidden in the hair or under the arm.[41]

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[37] Regarding his encounter with the *Mahāvairocana Sūtra* in Japan and his motivation to travel to China see Abé 1999, pp. 108-11.

[38] Vilāsavajra, for example, wrote in his *Mahārājatantra-śriguhyagarbha-nāma-ṭikā* that "Since it is extremely harmful if those who has not received the personal instructions on the mantra practice literally, it is necessary to teach secretly, that is, symbolically." / sngags kyi man ngag med pa dang / sgra bzhin spyod pa rnams kyis spyad na / shin tu nyes pa che bas / brdar sbas nas bstan dgos pa ste / (Sanje Dorje p. 9).

[39] Concerning the Tantras Wayman wrote that "the principle texts, usually in verse (*śloka*) form for memorizing purposes, were not strictly secret to the masses of people, but were unknown or inconsequential to them. Down the centuries, there would have been a relatively small number of persons who sought the tantric 'secrets' and were turned down. These tantric texts were positively secret to the very persons who memorized them, if memorizing is all they did with those texts. The reason is that the Tantra is essentially a practice, for which directions are required. A text giving such directions is not sufficiently detailed when written in the traditional Indian form of summary verses. Therefore, the guru had to add commentarial explanations. He would fill in those necessary details omitted by the basic texts, and fill them in for the disciples who had been conferred the necessary initiations and taken the vows. His explanations were thus secret in the sense that they could be withheld, but the basic texts had the secrecy of obscurity, just as any manual, on whatever topic, would be obscure if written in too abbreviated a form to permit anyone to follow through with the necessary actions." (1973:42)

[40] This would be a quite small text, as an *aṅgula* is a measure equal to a finger's breadth; 12 *aṅgula* was thought to equal the span of one's hand. See Apte 1965, p. 19 col. 3.

[41] HT II.vii.2-4, trans. in Snellgrove 1959, vol. 1 p. 115. śṛṇu devi mahābhāge pustakaṃ kathayāmy ahaṃ / bhūrjapatre likhet samayī dvādaśāṅgulapustakaṃ / mahāmadhumasiṃ kṛtvā lekhanyāṃ mānuṣāsthibhiḥ // pustakañ ca paṭañ caiva yadi vā dunduraḥ paśyati / iha janmani na siddhiḥ syān na vā paralokagocare //

That the warning to secrecy was taken seriously is suggested not only by the behavior of modern adherents to these traditions,[42] but also by the lack of apologetics in the texts themselves, which sets them apart from the exoteric *sūtras*.[43] At most, Tantric traditions exhibit a sort of jockeying for position, with a tradition claiming for itself supremacy relative to it competing traditions. Rarely is there a rejection of the approach taken by another tradition, but more typically the claim that its approach supersedes and contains those of the others, as if the goal was to reassure its adherents rather than convert other. Indeed, such a rejection would hardly be possible, since Buddhist Tantric traditions appear to share a great deal in common, and differ mainly in the elaboration of details. Nor would the texts be useful for proselytizing if the commitment to secrecy was kept, and there is indeed no indication that these texts were composed with such an aim in mind.

The Tantras do seem to have been written for a specific audience. This is *not* the general public or even interested parties from other traditions, since traditionally education in the *texts* of a tradition was supposed to follow initiation into its *practice*. Its expected readership was not then opponents or potential converts from other traditions, but rather adherents who had already made at least a tentative commitment to the tradition. Tantras such as the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* thus focus on the needs of the prospective practitioner. The practice of all aspects of the tradition are covered, but typically in a skeletal outline,

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saṃpradāyaprayktasya darśanañ ca kadācana / gopitavyam kace kakṣe pustakam adhvagocare // (1959:vol. 2 p. 88)

[42] There is also a common belief that Tantric practitioners should conceal their practice as much as possible in order to accelerate their spiritual growth. See Kelsang Gyatso 1996, pp. 21-22.

[43] Commenting on the almost total lack of apologetics in the otherwise extensive Tantric Buddhist textual corpus, which is in sharp distinction to the Mahāyāna corpus, Davidson suggests that "an apparent inference from the lack of polemics is that the Mantrayāna took its epithet of 'secret' *(guhya)* seriously, so that many of its methods were not widely publicized, unlike the Mahāyāna. Its lack of argumentation then begins to become comprehensible, for attacks on one Buddhist tradition by another mainly occurred, as we have inferred in the case of the Mahāyāna, when the new tradition achieved some degree of widespread popularity as a separate, new tradition. Neither the Mahāyānists nor the Vajrayānists appeared aware that this was the case, since the Vajrayāna still maintained the ideal of the bodhisattva (even if slightly offset as bodhisattva-cum-mahāsiddha), the path structure of the Mahāyāna, and the perspective *(darśana)* developed by the later Mādhyamikas, such as Śāntarakṣita. Both the *Prātimokṣa* and the bodhisattvaśīla were generally observed by Vajrayānists, since the *Vajraśekhara-tantra* has established the doctrine of the *trisaṃvara*, the triple discipline of Srāvakayāna, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, all undertaken by a single individual. Primarily the methods of the Vajrayāna and its time frame – enlightenment in this life – were the elements touted as dissimilar." (1990:315)

with the details to be filled out through the reception of the textual and oral transmissions *(āgama* and *upadeśa)* as well as consultation with the appropriate commentaries and practice handbooks.

The concise, esoteric natures of the *mūlatantra*s, coupled with the necessity of their study under the guidance of a guru, may indicate that the social milieu in which such texts was practiced, disseminated, and (possibly) produced was not the monastic environments that produced the increasingly long and elaborate Mahāyāna sūtras, but rather small, loosely organized groups of yogins and yoginis, centered around charismatic teachers, as is typified by the lives of the siddhas as portrayed in Indian and Tibetan accounts.[44] To the extent that Tantras were produced, practiced and transmitted in the monasteries, it appears that in this context too they were surrounded by secrecy, as Yi-jing's account of his attempts to enter the maṇḍala at Nālandā suggests.[45]

It should thus not be surprising that accounts of ritual and meditative practice occupy the bulk of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.* By far, the description of the mantras and their magical applications occupy most of the text. Ritual activities such as the procedures for constructing the maṇḍala, performing the rites of initiation *(abhiṣeka)* and fire sacrifice *(homa)* also receive significant attention, as does the procedures for identifying and communicating with the *yoginis* so that one might gain access to their *gaṇacakra* rites. Meditative practices are also described, such as the creation stage visualizations as well as the perfection stage inner body manipulations performed in conjunction with a consort *(dūti).*

Indian and Tibetan commentaries on a text often begin with a survey of its contents, usually in the form of a brief description of its chapters. It is not necessary to give here a complete resumé of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*'s contents as this task is taken up by

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[44] Groups such as those surrounding Nāropa and other siddhas are colorfully depicted in Marpa's biography. See Trungpa 1982.

[45] See my translation of Yi-jing's biography of Dao-lin in section 5.2 above.

Tsongkhapa in the translation below. Here it is only necessary to briefly survey the major topics propounded in the text.

Chapter One, the exegetes claim, introduces the major topics of the text, and it does indeed have a composite feel, as significant portions of it are indeed drawn from other texts, as will be discussed in section 6.2.1 below. Chapter Two is concerned with maṇḍala construction, and chapter three with initiation therein. Chapter Four, extremely brief at only seven verses, lists the names of the twenty-four *yoginīs*, whose positions in the maṇḍala are revealed during initiation . Chapters Five through Eight deal with the selection of the vowels and consonants for the root *(mūla)*, essence *(hṛdaya)*, quintessence *(upahṛdaya)* and armor *(kavaca)* mantras of the central male deity, Śriheruka.

Chapters Nine through Fourteen deal with the powers derived from recitation of Śriheruka's mantras. Chapter Nine deals extensively with the magical applications of the male deity's root mantra. Chapter Ten discusses the doctrine of the Triple Body *(trikāya)* of a Buddha, and also the seven *kṣetrapāla* animal forms. Chapter Eleven deals with the powers gained from consumption of the concretion *(rocana)* of a person seven times born a brahmin. Chapter Twelve discusses the powers gained from recitation of the quintessence mantra, and Chapter Thirteen with the magical applications of the armor mantras. Chapter Fourteen deals with the ritual applications of the essence mantra.

The fifteenth through twenty-fourth chapters deal with the various clans of female deities and practitioners. Chapter Fifteen discusses the symbolic syllables *(ekākṣaracchoma)* and responses to be used when encountering a yoginī. The different characteristics of clans of the *yoginīs*, *ḍākinīs* and *lāmās* are described in Chapters Sixteen through Nineteen. Chapters Twenty through Twenty-two list the symbolic gestures and responses to be used when encountering the yoginīs, and Chapter Twenty-three lists the indications that one has been accepted by them into their assembly. Chapter Twenty-four discusses the symbolic speech used within the assemblies *(melāpaka)* of the yoginīs.

Chapter Twenty-five gives Śriheruka's root mantra, while chapter twenty-six deals mainly with the worship of one's consort *(dūti)*. Chapter Twenty-seven describes the conduct *(caryā)* and observances *(vrata)* to be undertaken by the adept of this tradition. The required conduct ranges from the very general, such as the rejection of the observance of caste distinctions, to the very specific, such as details concerning the way in which the adept *(sādhaka)* should serve his consort *(dūti)*. Chapter Twenty-eight describes the inner fire sacrifice *(homa)* and propounds the ideology of the identity of all clans of practice. Chapter Twenty-nine describes the different types of consorts and also the visions seen during the dying process. Chapter Thirty deals with the selection of the Śumbha-niśumbha mantra. Chapter Thirty-one describes the fire sacrifice and offering cakes *(bali)* involving the "great flesh" *(mahāmāṃsa)*, i.e. human flesh, and also describes the "left-handed conduct" *(vāmacaryā)*, which here means privileging the left side of one's body in worship of and all other interactions with one's consort *(dūti)*. Chapter Thirty-two is concerned with fire sacrifice using the flesh of domestic animals, the practice of the corpse reanimation *(vetālasiddhi)*, and the Creation Stage visualization of the maṇḍala and the central deity couple.

Chapter Thirty-three deals with the worship and pleasing of the consort. Chapter Thirty-four discusses the inner fire sacrifice which one performs in conjunction with the consort. Chapter Thirty-five concerns ritual actions performed from a non-dual perspective as well as the prevention of untimely death. Chapter Thirty-six goes further into the worship of the consort and the powers attained thereby. Chapter Thirty seven discusses a procedure for controlling one's life-force, along with the practice of fire sacrifice and offering cakes. Chapter Thirty-eight describes the types of conduct appropriate and inappropriate for the adept. Chapter Thirty-nine gives a brief account of the "foreplay" of the vira and yogini. Chapter Forty describes a rite for controlling a king and his army, and also variations for members of each of the four castes. Chapter Forty-one further elaborates on the rites and also lists the twenty-four sites on the greater Indian sub-

continent that constitute the greater Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala. Chapter Forty-two deals with "equipoise" or union with the consort.

Chapter Forty-three describes further applications of the mantras, while Forty-four does the same focusing on Heruka's quintessence, the seven syllable mantra and the six yogini armour mantras. Chapter Forty-five contains predictions concerning the results of mantra practice, while Chapter Forty-six details the applications of a five syllable mantra, and Chapter Forty-seven those of Vajravārāhi's essence mantra. Chapter Forty-eight discusses the significance of Her essence mantra and discusses further the maṇḍala. Chapter Forty-nine has more on the powers attained with the concretion of one born seven times a brahmin. Chapter Fifty discusses fire sacrifice and the different places for assembly. Chapter Fifty-one, the last chapter, is believed to conclude and draw together the import of the other chapters, and it does in fact cover a diverse number of topics.

6.2 A Genealogy of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra

1. Buddhist Sources

Although the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is a laconic and enigmatic text, it is possible to discern traces within it, to map out the influences that worked upon it and served seminal roles in its production. The purpose of this section will be to construct a tentative genealogy for the text. Foucault described genealogy as "an analysis of descent, is thus situated within the articulation of the body and history. Its task is to expose a body totally imprinted by history and the process of history's destruction of the body." (1977a:148). The body which is of interest here is the textual body, for which, like the physical body, it is possible to trace its descent even while its ultimate origins remain indiscernible. Like the human body, it is unstable and impermanent, subject to transformation and change, and inexorably interconnected with the contexts in which it was elaborated and practiced.

Tantric traditions generally see their origin as occurring through a process of revelation. This very well may be true, but neither confirming nor denying this is properly speaking the goal of a genealogy. Foucault also wrote that

> Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity that operates beyond the dispersion of forgotten things; its duty is not to demonstrate that the past actively exists in the present, that it continues secretly to animate the present, having imposed a predetermined form to all its vicissitudes. Genealogy does not resemble the evolution of a species and does not map the destiny of a people. On the contrary, to follow the complex course of descent is to maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations – or conversely, the complete reversals – the errors, the false appraisals, the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being do not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. (1977a:146)

Since the origin or "root" of the tradition is not accessible, it is possible here only to examine the form in which it has passed down to us, and to look at the connections between traditions and also their deviations and differences. It is thus possible to trace a *genus* consisting of related *species*, but no attempt will be made to identify the "origin" of the tradition or traditions.

Generally, within the Indo-Tibetan context, the "Mother" Tantras, also known as the *prajñā* or *yoginitantras*, can and have been understood as continuing the project of the Prajñāpāramitā corpus. There is a conceptual thread here which links wisdom *(prajñā)* to the feminine, via *Prajñāpāramitā*, the "Transcendence of Wisdom" personified as a goddess, the Mother of All Buddhas. Wisdom serves this role precisely because it is the realization that all things lack intrinsic reality status, the insight into the voidness of self and other, which gives rise to the perfect Awakening of a Buddha. According to Buddhist thinkers such as Sachen, quoted above, it is not in the area of wisdom that the *Mantrayāna* is to be differentiated from the *Pāramitāyāna*, i.e., normative Mahāyāna Buddhism. Rather it is in the area of means that they are to be differentiated, meaning that they both seek to realize same transformative insight into the nature of reality, and to actualize by transforming one's body and environment, but they seek to do so by different means.

This was also the view of Tsongkhapa, who wrote the well known passage as follows:

> Just as the mother is the common cause of her children, while their fathers are the basis for distinguishing their individual lineages, so too the mother, Prajñāpāramitā, is the common cause of her four sons,[46] while the basis for discerning their individual lineage in the Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna is the liberative arts *(upāya)* such as giving rise to the Spirit [of Awakening] and so forth.[47]

From this perspective, the Tantric vehicle is simply one manifestation of the liberative art which is infinitely protean, limited only by the predilections and needs of beings. The mother, *prajñā,* then is both the source and the end of this process of Awakening, the source of all Buddhas and the very attainment of the Awakened state.[48]

The *prajñātantras* are characterized by their uncompromising stance toward the perception of reality, characterized by negation. Reality, as properly understood through the faculty of discerning wisdom, lacks any entities of intrinsically identifiable status, the lack thereof, or voidness, constitutes reality in its ultimate sense. Likewise, the *prajñātantras* can be seen as having a certain affinity with the Prajñāpāramitā, aside from the facile generalization that being "feminine" they are aligned with the pole of discerning, deconstructive wisdom *(prajñā)* rather than with the compassionate activity *(upāya)* which is considered to be masculine.

The *Vajrapañjara Tantra,* as noted above, defines the term *yogini* as the "method of the Prajñāpāramitā",[49] a method which many *yoginitantras* claim to provide. A typical example occurs in the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga-ḍākinijālasaṃvara Tantra* (JS), which

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[46] Hopkins reports that the four sons are the *śrāvaka, pratyekabuddha, bodhisattva* and *buddha.* (1977:99)

[47] NRC: / ma ni bu rnams kyi thun mong gi rgyu yin la pha ni de dag gi rigs so sor 'byed pa'i rgyu yin pa bzhin du / yum sher phyin ni sras bzhi ka'i thun mong gi rgyu yin la de rnams theg pa che chung gi rigs so sor 'byed pa'i rgyu ni sems bskyed la sogs pa'i thabs rnams yin pa'i phyir ro / (fols. 8b-9a); cf. Hopkins 1977, p. 99. Concerning the import of this passage see especially Thurman 1985, and also Wayman 1973, p. 5.

[48] Thurman wrote that "the final truimph, the manifestation of the Supreme Emanation Body in the dawn of Buddhahood, symbolizes complete attainment of the fifth stage integration of the purified illusion body of great bliss intuitive wisdom with the "mother," or absolute clear light brilliance of universal voidness." (1985:376)

[49] See section 4.2.2 above.

connects the perfection of wisdom to the discourse commonly occurring in the *yoginitantras*, as follows:

> This application of the magic of all women is the supreme vehicle of nonduality. If one is sealed with this seal (*mudrā*), one can come, go and fly as desired. The glorious self of all magic well achieves Vajrasattva. It is the knowledge of the mudrā of the goddess of all magic. It is neither existent nor non-existent, nor is it conceived in the middle. The application of the Prajñāpāramitā well attains the awakening of the Buddhas. Everything has the characteristic of space, in that space has no characteristics. All of the three worlds without exception are illusion-like, everywhere seen and felt as magical. Not being conceivable in this way is the mode of all beings. The yogin by means of this mudrā comes, goes and flies as he pleases. Women etc. are the supreme treasure, ranging everywhere made of space. Through uniting oneself to the insubstantial, one is equalized with space, and will always attain the ḍākinis' magic, the bliss supreme.[50]

This association is probably related to the idea that the "Mother" Tantras focus on the void-side or ultimate nature of reality, culminating in the experience of clear light *(prabhāsvara)*, while the Father Tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja* focus on the vision-side or the miraculous manifestation of visionary forms in reality, through practices productive of the magic body *(māyādeha)*. mKhas-drub-rjes characterized the Mother Tantras as follows:

> Were one to categorize the Mother Tantra, it would include any Tantra which emphasizes the intuition of the inseparability of bliss and voidness, from the perspective of void-side wisdom, and which do not emphasize the agile emergence through the methods of achieving the magic body and so forth, from the perspective of vision-side liberative art. Or rather, [it would include] any *anuttarayogatantra* belonging to this category.[51]

The Mother Tantras are said to focus on clear light, which is the pristine form of mind when completely unclouded by discursive thought patterns. This is typically realized not in

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[50] JS kalpa 6: / bud med kun gyi sgyu sbyor 'di // gnyis su med pa'i theg pa'i mchog / phyag rgya 'di yis btab na ni // 'dod pa bzhin du 'gro 'ong lding // dpal ldan sgyu ma kun gyi bdag / rdo rje sems dpa' rab tu 'grub // sgyu ma thams cad kyi lha mo'i phyag rgya shes pa'o // yod pa ma yin med pa'ang min // dbu mar yang ni dmigs su med // shes rab pha rol phyin sbyor ba // sangs rgyas byang chub rab 'grub pa'o // thams cad nam mkha'i mtshan nyid de // nam mkha' la yang mtshan nyid med // khams gsum dag ni ma lus pa // thams cad sgyu ma lta bu ste // ji ltar sgyu ma thams cad du // mthong ba dang ni reg par 'gyur // dmigs su yod pa'ang ma yin te // de bzhin 'gro ba kun gyi tshul // phyag rgya 'di yis rnal 'byor pa // 'dod pa bzhin du 'gro 'ong lding // bud med la sogs rin chen mchog / mkha' las dngos rnams thams cad spyod // dngos po med par bdag sbyor bas // nam mkha' kun dang mnyam sbyor ba // mkha' 'gro sgyu ma bde ba'i mchog / (DK fol. 175b)

[51] / de ltar na ma rgyud kyi 'jog byed ni stong phyogs shes rab kyi cha bde stong dbyer med kyi ye shes brjod bya'i gtso bor byas na 'chad cing / snang phyogs thabs kyi cha rgyud ma'i sku sgrub tshul sogs rtsal du bton nas mi 'chad pa'i rgyud dngos sam / de'i sder gtogs kyi bla med kyi rgyud gang rung yin pa'o / (Lessing and Wayman 1978:264), cf. Wayman's translation (1978:265).

ordinary modes of cognition, but in liminal states *(antarābhava)* such as the states of dying, falling asleep, and orgasm. Mother Tantras are thus characterized by their deconstructive or critical approach to conventional life, with the goal of cutting through appearances and realizing the ultimate nature of things, and realizing the "unobscured mind, originally luminous, completely formless,"[52] the basis of things, which must be realized to achieve both liberation from attachment to the world which is necessary for self-mastery within the world. Besides being preoccupied with liminal states as a focus of practice, the Mother Tantras tend to focus on liminal spaces as the appropriate sites for this practice. These spaces can be either external or internal; fearsome, unclean, inauspicious sites such as a charnel ground, or "unclean," conventionally inappropriate sites on the body such as the genital organs, the yogic manipulation of which yield one of the liminal states suitable for introspective realization of clear light.

Ultimately it is within the mind and body that this realization dawns. The *Ārya Prajñāpāramitā Upadeśa,* attributed to Āryadeva, holds that the import of the Prajñāpāramitā is to be found precisely through such introspection: "The meaning of the Prajñāpāramitā is not to be looked for elsewhere: it exists within yourself. Neither real nor endowed with characteristics, the nature [of mind] is the great clear light."[53] The *method* of the Prajñāpāramitā is precisely the practices that are supposed effect this realization. The *Śriparamādya Tantra,* a text with strong connections with the Prajñāpāramitā literature, states that "clear light, the intuition of reality, is naturally attained by means the meditation on Prajñāpāramitā."[54]

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[52] In the words of Saṃgharakṣa; see section 2.1 above.

[53] Translated in Edou 1996 p. 17. This is a central text in the *gcod* tradition in Tibet, a tradition of practice related to the *yoginitantras* wherein the practitioner isolates him or herself in terrifying locales and imaginatively offers up his or her body as an offering to the hungry demons and spirits, imagining that his or her body is consumed down to the very bones. This is believed to cut off attachment to the body, and to effect the radical insight into subjective and objective voidness by means of such meditation. Concerning this tradition see Edou 1996.

[54] PA: / rang bzhin gyis 'od gsal ba chos kyi ye shes thob pa la ni shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa bsgoms pas so / (DK fol. 166b).

It will be argued here that the *yoginitantras* such as the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra are not only connected to the Prajñāpāramitā corpus in spirit, but that they also genetically related, and that this descent is text-historically demonstrable. To make this argument it will be necessary to turn to the text of the Tantra itself to see what clues it offers concerning its genetic descent.

The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* (CST) mentions several other Tantric texts, which proves not only that these texts preceded in time the final compilation of the text of the Tantra, but also suggested the possibility that some or all of them might have indirectly influenced or served as direct sources for this text. There are two places in the text where other Tantras are mentioned. The first occurs in chapter three as follows: "This king of maṇḍalas does not occur, nor will it occur, in the *Tattvasaṃgraha, Saṃvara, Guhyasamāja,* or *Vajrabhairava.* All things spoken or unspoken exist in Śriheruka."[55] The second occurrence mentions five rather than four Tantras, in Chapter Thirty as follows: "This Vidyārājacakravarti mantra has not occurred nor will occur in the *Tattvasaṃgraha, Paramādya, Saṃvara, Guhyasamāja* or *Vajrabhairava.*"[56]

Both of these lists seek to compare the CST to what must have been rival traditions, to the detriment of the latter. While these passages only show that the latter texts predated the final composition of the CST, at least in its extant *laghu* form, they also provide a starting point for the examination of the Cakrasaṃvara's textual history.

As it turns out, only two of these five texts can be definitively shown to have been direct influences on the CST. The *Tattvasaṃgraha* does not appear to have been a direct influence on the formulation of the CST, although it is always possible that it was an

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[55] ch. 3 v. 26, 27: tattvasaṃgrahe samvare vāpi guhye vā vajrabhairave / ayam maṇḍalarājā na bhūto na bhaviṣyati // uktānuktaṃ ca yat kiṃcit tat sarvaṃ śriheruke sthitaḥ // See appendix A below.

[56] vidyārājacakravarti ayam mantra na bhūto (A,B: bhūyo) na bhaviṣyati / tattvasaṃgrahe (A,B: satvasaṃgrahe) paramādye (A,B,C: paramādya) saṃvare guhye vā vajrabhairave // (ms. fol. 23b; see the conspectus siglorum in my edition below): / rig rgyal 'khor los sgyur ba'i sngags // 'di ni ma 'byung 'byung mi 'gyur // de nyid bsdus dang dpal mchog dang // bde mchog rdo rje 'jigs byed du / (DK fol. 234b).

indirect influence.[57] The *Vajrabhairava Tantra* as well, while exhibiting some general similarities with the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* shows no sign of being a direct influence, at least not in the version preserved in the Tibetan canon.[58]

The *Guhyasamāja Tantra* (GST), however, does appear to have been a direct influence, as there is a quote from it in the first chapter.[59] The first chapter actually gives the impression of being a composite text, as a significant portion of it is drawn from the JS, including the well known "*yoginitantra nidāna*", which likewise occurs at the beginning of the first *kalpa* of the JS.[60] The first kalpa of the JS also contains several other passages that re-occur in the first chapter of the CST, including the second half of the eighth verse, the

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[57] This tentative conclusion is based upon a survey of the Tibetan translation of the TS; it is definitely possible that a more detailed study would reveal concrete evidence of influence. The CST here is thus distinct from the HT, which refers to the TS (HT II.v.57), and was strongly influenced by the TS in Snellgrove's opinion, who claims the very name *Hevajra* is derived from a salutation made by the Vajrācārya during the initiation ceremony described in the TS. See Snellgrove 1987, p. 156.

[58] I refer to the *Śrivajramahābhairava-nāma-tantra,* which has no obvious points of similarity with the CST. A possible exception is the following claim made in the 3rd kalpa: "This King of Mantras does not nor will occur." / 'di ni sngags kyi rgyal po ste // ma byung 'byung bar mi 'gyur ro / (DK fol. 156b) Such statements, however, appears to be a cliché found in many Tantras.

[59] The CST and GST share one half of a verse, and the former must have drawn the shared *pāda*s from the latter, since its mention of the latter shows that it antecedes it. The verse in question in the CS is ch. 1 v. 8: "Worship the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with one's own seminal drops, and with sight and touch, and with hearing and thought." svaretobindubhir buddhān bodhisattvāṃś ca pūjayet / darśanasparśanābhyāś ca śravaṇasmaraṇena ca // (See my edition below). The corresponding passage in the GST is even more erotic: "Through the union of the two organs, one's own vajra together with the the lotus, one should worship the Buddhas and Vajrasattvas with one's own seminal drops." svavajraṃ padmasaṃyuktaṃ dvayendriyaprayogataḥ / svaretobindubhir buddhān vajrasattvāṃś ca pūjayet // (ch. 7 v. 26, ed. in Matsunaga 1978, p. 22). The two *pāda* in question differ only in the question of whether it is the Bodhisattvas or the Vajrasattvas who are worshipped. While the GST is clearly an older text, the mention of "Buddhas and Bodhisattvas" together is far more typical than "Buddhas and Vajrasattvas".

[60] Both the CST and the JS begin with the word *de nas* in Tibetan translation, *athāto* in the CST Sanskrit edition. This is immediately followed in the JS by the "Yoginitantra nidāna", which occurs therein as follows: / gsang ba mchog gi dgyes pa na // thams cad bdag nyid rtag tu bzhugs // sems dpa' sangs rgyas kun gyi dngos // rdo rje sems dpa' bde ba'i mchog (DK fol. 151). This occurs as well in the CST, which differs only in the third pāda, where the word *buddha (sangs rgyas)* is replaced by the word *ḍākini,* as follows: rahasye parame ramye sarvātmani sadā sthitaḥ // sarvaḍākinimayaḥ sattvo vajrasattvaḥ paraṃ sukhaṃ //; / gsang ba mchog gi dgyes pa na // thams cad bdag nyid rtag tu bzhugs // mkha' 'gro kun dngos sems dpa' ni // rdo rje sems dpa' bde ba'i mchog (ch. 1 v.2.c-3.b); "When the Secret Supreme is delighted, the Universal Self always abides. The Hero made of all ḍākinis is the Adamantine Hero, Supreme Bliss." In both texts this is followed by the almost identical half verse identifying Vajrasattva: "He is the self-arisen Blesses Lord" / 'di ni rang byung bcom ldan 'das // mkha' 'gro dra ba'i sdom pa yin / (JS DK fol. 151) and "He is the self-arisen Blesses Lord Hero, the Binding of the Ḍākinis' Net."; asau hi svayambhūr bhagavān vīro ḍākinijālasaṃvaraṃ //; / 'di ni rang byung bcom ldan dpa' // mkha' 'gro dra ba'i sdom pa yin / (v.3.c-d).

first half of which is drawn from the GST, which underscores the degree to which the first chapter of the CST was cobbled together from different sources.[61]

There is another important source from which the author of the CST drew in composing the first chapter. This is the sixth kalpa of the *JS*, which contains the following description of the *gaṇacakra* and the rite of initiation bestowed therein:

> The women who are similar to one's deity who are well prepared, fortunate and marked with one's insignia *(mudrā)*[62] should be examined in the *gaṇacakra.* In order to prepare the human blood which is called the *great blood* you must succeed with her who is has the nature of the powers of reality itself. Regarding the preparation of the great blood with the vajra water and the vajra, it is well prepared with the power, inserted within the vessel of her lotus. The Blessed Lord of great passion, the Tathāgata Vajrasattva, who has the adamantine mind of all Buddhas: difficult to surpass is his commitment. The great blood is prepared from her blood and the semen, and since it arises from great passion, it is called the great blood. Mix the great blood with camphor and red sandalwood. Going amidst the retinue, all of alchemy is gained. For one who has union with one's deity, success is always attained as sweet as drinking soma, from the tip of the thumb and ring finger.[63]

From this longer passage is plainly derived the following more condensed version in two verses in the first chapter of the CST:

> Mix honey with vermilion, camphor and red sandalwood. Go amidst the retinue, bearing the sign of the Universal Vajra mark; join the tips of the thumb

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[61] The JS contains the passage / mthong ba dang ni reg pa dang // thos pa dang ni dran pa yis / (DK fol. 153a), which corresponds exactly to the second half of CST I.8.c-d quoted above. This is followed in both texts that "one will be liberated from all sins": / sdig pa kun las rnams grol zhing / (JS DK fol. 153a); mucyate sarvapāpais tu; / sdig pa kun las grol 'gyur ba / (CST I.9.a).

[62] The *mudrā* here appears to be that sort defined as follows at HT II.iv.15: "The *mudrā* is a sign or mark, and by this mark the clan *(kula)* is indicated. Through engaging in mediation with the wrong clan, there be be neither success *(siddhi)* nor one who succeeds." mudraṇam liṅgaṇāṅkaṃ ca aṅkena lakṣate kulaṃ / vyastakulaṃ bhāvanāyogān na siddhi nāpi sādhakaḥ //; / phyag rgya rtags dang mtshan ma ste // 'di ni rigs ni mtshon par bya // rigs 'chol sgom pa'i sbyor ba las // dngos grub med cing sgrub pa'ang / (Snellgrove 1959:vol. 2, pp. 64-65); cf. Snellgrove 1959, vol. 1, p. 103.

[63] JS kalpa 6: / rang gi lha dang 'dra ba yi // bud med dag ni legs bsgrubs pa // skal bzang rang gi phyag rgyas mtshan // tshogs kyi dkyil 'khor brtag par bya // mi yi mtshal ni grub pa la // dmar chen po zhes bya bar bshad // ngo bo nyid kyi mthu dag dang // rang bzhin gyi ni de grub pa'o // rdo rje chu dang rdo rjer bcas // mtshal chen po dag bsgrub pa ni // mthu yis rab tu grub pa ste // padma snod kyi nang du bzhag / chags pa chen po bcom ldan 'das // rdo rje sems dpa' de bzhin gshegs // sangs rgyas kun gyi rdo rje'i thugs // dam tshig 'di ni 'da' bar dka' // de yi mtshal dang khu ba dang // mtshal chen po ni bsgrub pa dag / chags pa chen po las byung bas // dmar chen po zhes bya bar bshad // dmar chen dang ni ga bur bcas // tsanda na dmar por sbyar ba dag / tshogs kyi dbus su bzhag pa ni // ra sa ya na kun slong ba // rang gi lha yi sbyor ldan pas // srin lag dang ni mthe bo'i rtses // zhi ba'i btung ba bzhin myang na // rtag pa yi ni dngos grub thob / (DK fol. 160a)

> and ring finger, always knowing yoga. Success is always attained as sweet as drinking soma.[64]

Passages from these two sources account for slightly more than one quarter of the text of the first chapter,[65] and it is possible that further investigation will yield the discovery of additional passages in the CST drawn from these or other sources.[66] The JS has already been described in section 5.2 above, but here it is worth emphasizing that it appears to be the earliest Tantra to introduce the god Heruka as well as to focus on the *ḍākini* as a central element in the charnel ground cult.

This leaves just one other text which is mentioned in the text of the CST; this is the *Śriparamādya* (PA), which, along with the GST and JS, is one of the three texts included in both versions of the Eighteen Tantra Vajraśekhara/Māyājāla compilation. While there does not appear to be any passages from the PA directly incorporated in the CST, it does in general bear strong similarity to the CST and, in particular, to the JS.

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[64] CST I.11.c-13.b: madhuraktaṃ sakarpūraṃ raktacandanayojitaṃ // gaṇamadhye pratiṣṭhaṃ tu sarvavajrāṅkacihnadhṛk / anāmāṅguṣṭhavaktrābhyāṃ lehayed yogavit sadā // somapānavad āsvādya siddhiṃ āpnoti śāśvatiṃ //; / sbrang rtsi mar dang ga pur bcas // tsanda na dmar po dang sbyar ba // tshogs kyi nang du bzhag pa ni // thams cad rdor mtshan mtshan ma 'dzin // ming med mthe bong rtse sbyar bas // rnal 'byor rig pas rtag tu spyad // myangs pas zhi ba'i btung ba bzhin // dngos grub rtag pa thob par 'gyur /. There are several minor differences here. First, the CST has *madhuraktaṃ* rather than *mahāraktaṃ* (dmar chen po), which could represent a textual corruption, as *mahā* and *madhu* differ only slightly in many Indic scripts; if so, it would represent an ancient error, as all of the Tibetan translations read *madhu*. The CST also adds the idea that one enters the *gaṇacakra* bearing the sign of Universal Vajra mark, and adds as well the verse fragment *yogavit sadā*.

[65] There are a total of sixty two pāda in the ch. 1 of the CST, of which 16 are drawn from the JS and GT.

[66] The overlap of the CST and JS is significant, but there do not seem to be passages drawn from the JS in subsequent chapters of the CST. While reading through the JS for the first time I was in the process of editing CST ch. 1, and my familiarity with that chapter no doubt facilitated my identification of the source verses listed above. Fearing that my lesser degree of familiarity with the later chapters of the CST might have led me to underestimate the influence of the JS, I read through the JS a second time after studying the rest of CST in more depth. This second exploration did not, however, turn up any further quotations. It is also possible that other texts might have served as a source for the CST. One possibility is the *Mahābhārata*. CST I.15 occurs as follows: "If the bliss of the heavens and humans were taken together, it would not amount to one sixteenth of that of Vajrasattva." divyamanuṣyaṇāṃ saukhyaṃ piṇḍīkṛtya vajrakaṇikayā // kalā nārghanti ṣoḍaśim //; / lha dang mi yi bde ba ni // bsdus byas rdor rje 'dzin pa yis // de lta bur ni byed pa yi // bcu drug char ni mi phod do /. This reminds one of the following *subhāṣita* from the *Mahābhārata* (XIII.174.46): "The bliss of love in the world, as well as the great bliss of heaven, does not amount to one sixteenth of the bliss succeeding the destruction of desire." yac ca kāmasukhaṃ loke yac ca divyaṃ mahatsukham / tṛṣṇākṣayasukhasyaite nārhataḥ ṣoḍaśīṃ kalām // (Quoted in Ānandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*, op. cit. Masson and Patwarshan 1969, p. 94; trans. by them with emendation by me, p. 96.) Since this verse was evidently well known, and as the comparison of something not amounting to even one sixteenth of something else appears to have been a cliché, it appears unlikely that this represents an instance of direct influence.

To begin with, this text exhibits the same sort of Buddhist-Hindu syncretism for which the *yoginitantras* are well known.[67] It also describes Vajrapāṇi in a manner which prefigures the deity Heruka. It describes him as follows as: "He bears his vajra fangs, radiant with blazing garlands, of blue color like Bhairava, laughing"[68] It also describes him as follows:

> One should draw the outer maṇḍala. As for the inner wheel, it is like the eight maṇḍalas. Place in its center the Great Fierce One *(mahākhrodha)* Vajrapāṇi, complete with a row of Buddhas [on his forehead]. His complexion is blue like the *utpala* flower, and his face scowls a bit. He laughs ferociously. He stands with his left leg extended, gathering in *Vajrahūṃkara*. His left foot presses down Maheśvara, while his right foot is placed on Umā's[69] breast.[70]

This stance is that in which Heruka is typically depicted, standing upon the head of Bhairava and the breast of Kālarātri.[71] It likewise teaches a path of practice involving the transgressive elements of the *gaṇacakra* rites.[72]

The CST is connected to the Prajñāpāramitā through the intermediaries of this trio of Tantras, the GST, JS and PA. These elements are all brought together in a lengthy

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[67] The PA contains a description, for example, of a Mahādeva maṇḍala, which is very well described in Ānandagarbha's *Śriparamādi-vivaraṇa*. See DT fols. 46b-48a.

[68] / rdo rje mche ba gtsigs pa dang // 'bar ba'i phreng ba 'khrigs pa'i 'od // 'jigs byed kha dog sngo ba dang // ha ha zhes bzhad gsal ba'i zhal / (PA DK 169b-170a)

[69] Literally, the text says his right foot is placed on the breast of "she who thwarts asceticism" *(*taponivartiṇi, dka' thub zlog ma)*. Clearly this name refers to Mahādeva's wife, Umā a.k.a. Pārvatī, although I am not aware of her being given this name in Sanskrit literature. Clearly, however, it refers to her portrayal in Hindu mythology as the disturber of Śiva's asceticism. Indeed, O'Flaherty wrote: "Pārvati is the natural enemy of his *tapas*, constantly attempting to interrupt his meditations for one reason or another after they have been married." (1973:154).

[70] / phyi yi dkyil 'khor bri bar bya // de yi nang gi 'khor lo ni // dkyil 'khor brgyad pa dag dang mtshungs // de yi dbus su khro bo che // phyag na rdo rje gzhag par bya // sangs rgyas phreng la sogs pas spras // utpa la sngon po'i mdog 'dra ba // zhal ni cung zad mche ba gtsigs // khro bcas bzhad pa'i zhal mnga' ba // g.yon brkyang ba yis legs bzhugs la // rdo rje hūṃ mdzad bsdus pas so // g.yon gyi zhabs kyis legs gnon po // de yi bya ba dbang phug che // g.yas ni dka' thub zlog ma yi // nu ma steng du rab tu 'jog / (PA DK fol. 159b)

[71] The myth of Heruka's subdual of Rudra/Bhairava and Kālarātri will be discussed in section 6.3.1 below.

[72] The text describes the *mudrācārya* as follows: "The Master of Mudrā practices the dharma and lives a pure life; no matter what he eats and no matter what he does he is beyond reproach. He is cherished by the *śivadūti* consorts and he repeats the essence mantra." / de nas phyag rgya'i slob dpon chos spyod pa gtsang ba gos gtsang ma bgos pa // thams cad za'am thams cad spyad pa la yang smed pa med de / zhi ba'i pho nya'i phyag rgyas zhugs la snying po bzlas par bya'o / (PA DK fol. 171a). Concerning the *śivadūti*, female members of Śiva's troop *(gaṇa)*, see Wayman 1990.

passage in Jñānamitra's commentary on the *Prajñāpāramitānaya* (PN), an important hybrid text which bridges the gap between the Prajñāpāramitā and Tantric canons. This passage has already been translated into English by Eastman, but since his (1983) article was not well disseminated I have re-translated it as follows:

> Regarding the history of this scripture, when the Buddha had previously lived for eighty years in the human world, there was not yet in the human world of Jambudvipa anyone and who were suitable vessels for practice in the vehicles of the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga, Guhyasamāja*[73] and so forth. These scriptures existed at that time in *Cāturmahārājakāyika, Trāyastriṃśa*, Tuṣita [heavens], etc. where there were gods and fortunate bodhisattvas who were suitable vessels. Later, after the Buddha's *parinirvāṇa*, there were some persons in the retinue of King Indrabhūti of Zahor who had faith in the miraculous Dharma, who were destined for the practice of this vehicle and who were suitable vessels [for this]. The eighteen classes [of scripture] such as the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga* thus came to Zahor through the grace *(adhiṣṭāna)* of Vajrapāṇi.
>
> King Indrabhūti examined the scriptures but could not make sense of them. Through the force of his previous actions, however, he saw by means of extra-sensory perception *(abhijñā)* that in Malapa in the land of *Madhyadeśa* there lived the Ācārya Kukkura.[74] He was called the "Dog Master" since by day he taught the dharma to just one thousand dogs, and by night he bestowed the enjoyment of the *samaya* to those dogs. [Realizing] that he was a suitable vessel for this vehicle, and that [the king] himself might be destined to be his disciple, the king sent a messenger beseeching the ācārya to come.
>
> This ācārya also, through the force of his past karma, was endowed with the five extrasensory perceptions,[75] and ascertained whether or not the king was destined to be his disciple, or whether or not he himself was a suitable vessel for these scriptures. He gave to the messenger his reply, that while the king was destined to be his disciple, he himself was a suitable vessel for the scriptures, and the king's doubts would be resolved, however it would be very bad if I were not able to dispel the king's doubts on account of not having previously seen the scriptures." The king replied, "Send hither those scriptures which I previously asked to see!"
>
> The scriptures arrived and he read them, but from beginning to end they were unlike anything he had ever read, on account of which he collapsed, without recourse. Exclaiming "I am without refuge", Śrī Vajrasattva appeared and asked him what he desired. He asked "I wish that I could understand these

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[73] Text reads here *guhyasamañca.*

[74] The Tibetan text has *kukura,* but this should be read as Kukkura or Kukkuri since this story is clearly about the dog-loving mahāsiddha of that name. He may as well be the Kukurāja to whom is attributed several JS commentaries.

[75] These are: 1) knowledge of miraculous procedures, *ṛddhividhijñāna;* 2) clairvoyance, *divyaṃcakṣus;* 3) clairaudience, *divyaṃśrota;* 4) mind-reading, *paracittajñāna;* 5) recollection of past lives, *pūrvanirvāsānusmṛtijñāna.* (Rigzin 1986: 95-96)

scriptures just by reading them." [Vajrasattva] said, "Thus shall it be granted", whereupon the meanings of these unopened texts of the *Sarvabuddhasamayoga*, etc. became directly apparent in his mind.

The ācārya then went to Zahor and taught these teachings to the king and his retinue. Having received the instructions of Vajrasattva, the king and his retinue were commanded to meditate in the manner of the Vajradhātu maṇḍala, with the king himself in the center, his four holy queens positioned as his consorts, his four ministers positioned as the four clans *(kula)*, his four daughters positioned as the inner goddesses, his four concubines positioned as the outer goddesses, and the lesser officers positioned as the four gate keepers and the virtuous bodhisattvas. As a result the king thought that he along with his retinue had achieved the state of the *vidyādhara*, and in order that this holy teaching would not decline, the consecration was bestowed on his son, Śakraputi, and the ācārya Kukupa taught the prince, investing him with the scriptural and oral transmissions, [teaching him the practice whereby] a king and his retinue can attain [the state of a] bodhisattva-vidyādhara residing in voidness. His son Śakraputi meditated thus, and through seven hundred meditations on the maṇḍala he attained the state of a vidyādhara.

The prince Śakraputi, for his younger sister Govadevi, arranged and withdrew the *Naya-śatapañcāśatikā* from within the *Śriparamādya*,[76] and the king commanded her to teach it in the countries and lands held by him. She also meditated on the maṇḍala one hundred times and attained [the state of a] vidyādhara. Then the princess entrusted the scriptural and oral transmissions to the prince, and propagated it, which is now this very [tradition].[77]

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[76] This passage has spawned some controversy concerning the relationship between the PA and PN; the PN is in fact contained in it entirety within the PA; the question is really which text has precedence. Jñānamitra clearly holds that the PN was "arranged" as a separate text and "withdrawn" from within the PA. It is not really possible to know if this account is true or not; the PN was first translated into Chinese in the mid-seventh century, and this version differs signifcantly from the version contained within the Tibetan trans. of the PA. On the other hand, is certainly not impossible that the PA existed by the mid-seventh century as well. Concerning this controversy see Eastman 1981, pp. 24-25. Matsunaga also calls into question whether the text which Jñānamitra calls the *dpal dam pa* is in fact the PA, since the PA is usually designated the *dpal mchog dang po* in Tibetan. However, given the fact that the PA does in fact contain the PN, Matsunaga's objection is unwarranted, being based on an overly rigid assumption of the inviolability of Tibetan translation conventions. See de Jong 1985, p. 103.

[77] This passage occurs in Jñānamitra's *Prajñāpāramitānayaśatapañcāśatikā-ṭikā* as follows: / gsung rab 'di'i lo rgyus bshad na // sngon sangs rgyas mi yul na lo brgyad cu bzhugs pa'i tshe na / sarva buddha sa ma yo ga dang / guhya sa mañca la sogs pas 'dul zhing theg pa de dag gi snod du gyur pa 'dzam bu'i gling gi mi yul na med pas rgyal chen ris bzhi pas sum cu rtsa gsum dang / dga' ldan la sogs pa'i gnas na lha rnams dang bskal pa bzang po'i byang chub sems dpa' la sogs pa snod du gyur nas de'i tshe mdo sde de ni bzhugs so // slad kyis sangs rgyas mya ngan las 'das pa'i 'og tu za hor gyi rgyal po 'khor dang bcas pa ngo mtshar du chos dad pa dag cig 'dug pa theg pa de'i 'dul skal du gyur cing snod du gyur nas / sarva buddha sa ma yo ga la sogs pa sde chen po bco brgyas phyag na rdo rje'i byin gyi rlabs kyis za hor gyi yul du gshegs pa dang / za hor gyi rgyal po indra bhū tis mdo sde dag bltas na brda na phrad nas sngon gyi las kyi dbang gis na mngon par shes pa thob pas bltas na yul gyi dbus yul ma la pa na ā cārya ku ku ra nyin zhing khyi stong tsam la chos 'chad / mtshan zhing ni khyi de dag la dam tshig longs spyod mdzad pa khyi'i slob dpon mdzad pa zhig bzhugs pa de theg pa'i snod du gyur la / bdag gi 'dul skal du gyur pa yang 'dra nas rgyal pos pho nya btang ste slob dpon gshegs su gsol pa dang / slob dpon de yang sngon gyi las kyi dbang gis na mngon par shes pa lnga dang ldan nas / rgyal po de bdag gi 'dul skal du 'bab pam mi 'bab mdo sde de dag gi snod du bdag gyur ram ma gyur brtags na / bdag gi 'dul skal du yang 'bab / bdag kyang mdo sde'i snod du yang gyur / rgyal po'i the tshom yang sel bar 'gyur mdo kyi / 'on kyang mdo sde dag sngar ma bltas na brgya la rgyal po'i the tshom dag ma sol bar gyur na shin tu ma legs pas pho nya la slar spring ba / mdo sde dag kho bos sngar blta 'tshal gyis tshur bskur cig ces spring ba dang / de nas mdo sde dag pas gshegs te bltas na mgo mjug gar lta ba'i cha ma mchis na de nyid du lus brdabs te mgon med do / skyabs med do zhes bos pa dang dpal rdo rje sems dpa' mngon par gshegs te khyod ci

The text of the *Prajñāpāramitānaya* is indeed contained within the PA, and Jñānamitra plainly considers the former to be derived from the latter. It is certainly possible that this was indeed the case, although this issue is not important here.[78]

There is one significant factor that links these traditions, which is the centrality of the deity Vajrasattva. Vajrasattva, in his form of Mahāsukhavajrasattva, is the central deity in the *Naya* maṇḍala which is derived from the PN. This tradition is particularly important in East Asian Esoteric Buddhism, where it was introduced by Amoghavajra.[79] The *naya assembly* (理趣會, Jp. *rishu-e*) maṇḍala consists of seventeen deities with Vajrasattva at the center. It occurs as the seventh of the nine sub-maṇḍalas within the Vajradhātu maṇḍala described in the *Tattvasaṃgraha.* It is a rather anomalous within the Vajradhātu complex in that it is the only maṇḍala therein centering on Vajrasattva rather than Mahāvairocana,

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'dod ces dris pa dang / bdag mdo sde zab mo 'di bltas pa tsam gyis shes par 'dod ces gsol ba dang / de bzhin gnang ngo zhes gsungs nas de nas sarva buddha sa ma yo ga la sogs pa'i glegs bam rnams ma phye bar de dag gi don yid la mngon sum du gsal bar gyur to // de nas slob dpon de za hor gyi yul du gshegs nas rgyal po 'khor dang bcas pa rnams la dharmā de dag bshad de / rdo rje sems dpas lung bstan nas rgyal po 'khor dang bcas pa rnams rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor ltar sgom du stsal te dbus su rgyal po nyid / btsun mo dam pa bzhi yum gyi sar bkod / blon po bzhi rigs bzhi'i sar bkod / sras mo rnams nang gi lha mo'i sar bkod / btsun mo phal pa rnams phyi'i lha mo'i sar bkod / blon po phal pa rnams sgo srung bzhi dang / bskal pa bzang po'i byang chub sems dpa' ltar bkod pa dang / rgyal pos bsams pa bdag cag 'khor dang bcas pa rig 'dzin gyi gnas su grub pa'i phyir dang dam pa'i chos 'di mi nub par bya ba'i phyir sras sha kra pu ti rgyal tshab tu dbang bskur nas / ā cārya ku ku pas lung dang man ngag bstan pa rgyal bu de la bstan te bzhag nas bsgoms pa dang / rgyal po 'khor dang bcas pa stong la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa'i rig 'dzin du grub po // de'i sras sha kra pu tis kyang de bzhin du bsgoms pa dang / 'khor sgom pa bdun brgya dang yang rig 'dzin gyi gnas grub po // yang rgyal bu sha kra pu tis sras ni chung ste sras mo go ba de byi la dpal dam pa'i nang nas tshul brgya lnga bcu pa bkod de bshams nas indra bhū ti'i lung de sras mo yul dang sa 'dzin du stsal de la bstan pa las sras mo de yang 'khor dang bcas pa brgya dang yang rig 'dzin du grub po // de nas sras mo des / rgyal bu la lung dang man ngag bzhag pa las 'phel ba ni deng du'di dag lags te / (DT fol. 272b-273b) My translation generally follows Eastman's (1981:21-23), but differs with his on numerous, mainly minor, points.

[78] The PN first appears in the historical record in the mid-seventh century when it was translated into Chinese by Xuan-zang. It is perhaps probable that this text preceded the PA and was later incorporated into it. However, in light of section 4.1.2 above, it is certainly possible that the PA was extant in some form by the mid-seventh century, so Jñānamitra's account cannot and should not be rejected out of hand.

[79] Amoghavajra retranslated the PN in a manner which highlights its ritual elements (T 243). He describes its maṇḍala in his 般若波羅蜜多理趣經大樂不空三昧真實金剛菩薩等一十七聖大曼荼羅義述。(*Elucidation of the Seventeen Holy Maṇḍalas* of *Mahāsukhāmoghasamayatattva Vajrasattva Bodhisattva*, etc., of the *Prajñāpāramitānaya Sūtra*, T 1004.) There are also a series of texts evidently translated by Amoghavajra from another text, possibly the PA, which include T 1119, 1120A, 1121-25, which describe the ritual and meditative practices associated with this tradition. These ritual texts have been discussed at some length by Astley-Kristensen (1988, 1990). For a diagram of the nine Vajradhātu sub-maṇḍalas and bried description of each see Ishida 1987, pp.42-46.

and it is also atypical in that it contains a large proportion of goddesses.[80] The *rishu-e* maṇḍala is also unusual in that it surrounds Vajrasattva not with four Buddhas or bodhisattvas, but four goddesses, named, Iṣṭavajriṇī, Kelikilavajriṇi, Kāmavajriṇi and Mānavajriṇi. Together with Vajrasattva they form a pentad called the "five mysteries" (五秘密) of Vajrasattva; considered to be in union with Vajrasattva, this pentad is commonly depicted together in Japanese esoteric art, with Vajrasattva seated on a lotus surrounded by the four goddesses.[81]

This Prajñāpāramitānaya tradition is interesting in that it connects a Prajñāpāramitā text with a new pattern of maṇḍalic organization that was increasingly gynocentric. It may be one of the earliest of traditions to have surrounded the central deity with four goddesses. The *anuttarayogatantras* maintained this pattern, and in the *yoginitantras* it was further developed with the overall increase of feminine deities within the maṇḍala.[82]

The *rishu-e* tradition may also be one of the earliest traditions to place central emphasis on Vajrasattva and the vajra clan in general. This tendency, which came to full fruition in the *anuttarayoga-tantras*, was well underway by the eighth century, as Buddhaguhya indicated when he wrote in his *Tantrārthāvatāra* that

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[80] Concerning the relationship of the *naya maṇḍala* to the Vajradhātu see Astley-Kristensen 1990, p. 111. This maṇḍala contains eight goddesses, which thus account for 47% of the total.

[81] See Astley-Kristensen 1988, especially figures 1 and 2, for typical line drawings of these deities.

[82] Generally, in the *anuttarayogatantras* the four goddesses surrounding the central deity are typically a different set, Locanā, Māmaki, Pāṇḍuradevi and Tārā. These goddesses occur in the GT ch. 17. They are also described more detail in the *Māyājāla Mahātantrarāja*, yet another text associated with the compilation of 18 Tantras, where the following maṇḍala is described: "In the center place Vairocana, in the east Akṣobhya, in the south Ratnasambhava, in the west Amitābha, and in the north Amoghasiddhi. In the corners of the maṇḍala draw the four goddesses who bestow siddhi: in the direction of Indra (northwest), Locanā; in the direction of Agni (southeast), Māmaki; in the direction of destruction (*nirṛti*, southwest), Pāṇḍura, and in the direction of the wind (northeast), Tārā." / dkyil du rnam par snang mdzad gzhag / shar phyogs su ni mi 'khrugs pa // lho phyogs su ni rin chen 'byung // nub phyogs su ni 'od dpag med // byang phyogs su nidon grub rnams // 'khor lo grwar ni lha mo bzhi // dngos grub sbyin par mdzad par bri // dbang bdag gi phyogs su ni spyan no // me'i phyogs su ni mā ma ki'o // bden bral phyogs su ni gos dkar can no // rlung gi phyogs su ni lha mo sgrol ma'o / (DK fol. 97a,b) In the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra they are replaced by Ḍākinī, Rūpinī, Khaṇḍarohā and Lāmā, although CST ch. 31 mentions the previous set of four. For a description of the 62 deity Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala see Huntington and Huntington 1990, appendix II.

> From among all of the clans Vajrasattva's is understood to be the principle one, and it is taught that the clan of the Fierce Ones is included in it. Regarding the determination of clans such as that one, know that it is taught in view of the beings to be disciplined.[83]

The *rishu-e* evidently is not "native" to the Vajradhātu maṇḍala or the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, and its inclusion therein indicate the hybrid nature of that text, and thus its *relative* lateness vis-à-vis texts such as the PA and possibly the GST and JS as well. Amoghavajra identifies the *rishu-e* tradition as derived from the PA,[84] and this is corroborated with evidence from the PA itself; not only does it contain the text of the PN, but it also identifies its central deity, named *Śriparamādya*, as Vajrasattva. It also associated Vajrasattva with Mānavajriṇi, one of the four central goddesses of the *rishu-e*. The *Śriparamādya-mantrakalpakhaṇḍa* poses and answers the following question:

> In what way is the Blessed Lord the master of Mānavajriṇi? Since she, who is the supreme *mudrā* of Maheśvara who has the supreme of great powers *(mahāsiddhi)*, praises the Adamantine Lord, he is the Mānavajriṇi's master. This Blessed Lord is the very person [known as] Śri Paramādya, who is himself said to be Vajrasattva.[85]

The PA, which is itself the source of the *rishu-e* tradition, also thus appears to be either source of or closely related to the Vajrasattva purification practice involving the visualization of Vajrasattva in union with Mānavajriṇi, which is one of the most important preliminary practice in the *anuttarayogatantra* traditions, including that of the CST.

The *rishu-e* maṇḍala and body of practice is not limited to the Sino-Japanese context. There is in fact a significant body of works in the Tibetan canon associated with Mahāsukha Vajrasattva. There is in fact one work, the *Bhagavācchrimahāsukha-*

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[83] / rdo rje sems dpa'i rigs thams cad kyi gtso bor brtags nas khro bo'i rigs der 'dus par bstan te / de la sogs pa'i rigs rnam par brtag pa ni 'dul ba'i skyes bo la gzigs nas bstan par shes par bya'o / (DT fol. 12a)

[84] Amoghavajra indicates this in his titles to T 1120 A & B, both of which are indicated as being derived from the 勝 初 瑜 伽, the *Śriparamādya-yoga*.

[85] / de la rdo rje bsnyems pa'i bdag po bcom ldan 'das ji ltar yin zhes na / kun mchog dngos grub chen po yi // dbang phyug chen po'i phyag rgya'i mchog / rdo rje dbang phyug cher bstod pas // rdo rje bsnyems pa'i bdag po'i bdag / ces bya ba ni bcom ldan 'das mchog dang po'i skyes bu'o // mchog dang po yi de nyid 'di // rdo rje sems dpa' gang gang brjod / (DK fol. 262b-263a)

vajrasattva-sādhana, attributed to Rājahasti,[86] which in fact closely parallels the ritual structure described in the *Rite for Achieving the Mahāsukha Vajrasattva Practice*, translated by Amoghavajra (T 1119).[87] Interestingly, however, it is associated with the JS rather than the PA, and the text contains terminology peculiar to the JS tradition. This should come as no surprise, for the JS focuses on Vajrasattva and the vajra-clan in general, and thus its association with a vajra clan maṇḍala such as Mahāsukha Vajrasattva's would not seem unnatural. Jñānamitra understands the PN to related to the JS. This relationship is implicit through his inclusion in the compilation of eighteen Tantras of both the JS and the PA, which he understands to be the source of the PN. He also implicitly links the two traditions through his use of terminology, as well as his description of the *practice* of the PN in terms commonly used to describe the practice of the JS.[88] The erotic tone of the JS, replete with its description of *gaṇacakra* rites and the secret initiation, is also compatible with the general erotic flavor of the PN and the *rishu-e* tradition associated with it.

It appears, then, that the *rishu-e* tradition is one variant of a larger tradition associated with the eighteen text *Vajraśekhara* compilation, and one which appears to have been extremely influential in the further development of Tantric Buddhism in India. It served as an important precursor to the more goddess oriented, erotic forms taken in subsequent traditions such as the CST. Indeed, it appears that the "method of the Prajñāpāramitā", proclaimed in this text and in other *yoginitantras*, was a method that allowed or even encouraged its practitioners to "go to the other side", to take recourse to, *prajñā*, which is a polysemantic term, designating a wisdom conceived as feminine, and, by

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[86] The text has no colophon, although the compilers of the Tōhoku catalogue of the sDe-dge canon provide this attribution. I do not know what the basis was for making this attribution, aside from the rather weak circumstance that it happens to be situated in the canon adjacent to several other texts by Rājahasti.

[87] Astley-Kristensen wrote that this text is "extant only in Chinese" (1988:67). Technically of course he is correct, but any future study of this tradition would be well advised to take into consideration the closely related Tibetan texts such as this *sādhana*.

[88] Jñānamitra repeatedly uses the term *Prajñāpāramitā-samayoga (shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa mnyam par sbyor ba'i tshul)* to describe the practice of the PN, which in his description involves meditation on the maṇḍalas of the five clans *(pañcakulamaṇḍala)*, which he describes at length in his text. See DT fols. 282 ff.

extension, a female consort. The other side is beyond both this world and its conventions, including the idea that spiritual and sexual matters are incompatible. Rather, these traditions boldly claim the opposite, as Ishida noted in describing the *rishu-e* maṇḍala, with reference to its four goddesses, "Adamantine Desire" *(iṣṭavajriṇi)*, "Adamantine Loveplay" *(kelikilavajriṇi)*, "Adamantine Eros" *(kāmavajriṇi)* and "Adamantine Pride" *(mānavajriṇi)*, as follows:

> Just as mundane desires and passions become the exalted desire for Awakening, just as physical desires are purified by embracing the vajra, just as loving immersed in desire becomes compassion and mercy in unlimited love for the salvation of man, and just as the pride in which we exult becomes the great courage of self-confidence, so too this mandala expresses the transformation of desires by Buddhism. The passions *are* awakening. (1987:46)

The perhaps inevitable conclusion of the process of eroticization manifested in the *rishu-e* system is exemplified by a highly erotic *yoginitantra* called the *Vajrāmṛta Tantra.* Presided over by Mahāsukhavajrasattva, its narrative structure is dialogical, being set in the context of a conversation between Vajrāmṛta alias Mahāsukhavajrasattva and his consort, who here is Māmakī rather than Mānavajriṇi. Its exhausts a great deal space discussing the more erotic rites which occur in the *gaṇacakra* such as the *yonipūjā*[89] and the production of the five ambrosias *(pañcāmṛta)*.[90] The text, somewhat incongruously from the conventional perspective, united eroticism with meditative disciplines. The following passage is characteristic:

> The Blessed Adamantine Lord Vajrāmṛta Mahāsukha said: "Listen, Māmaki, regarding the origination of *mudrā* and *mantra*, I say that there are three types of *mudrā*, arising from Body, Speech and Mind. The Body is the supreme consort, and speech the *mudrā* which is the activity of mantra. The symbolic *mudrā* of mind is the concentration which exists figuratively and nondualistically. The

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[89] Ch. 1 describes the production of the *vajrāmṛta* as follows: "Producing passion for the secret maṇḍala, lift your face to the lotus, rolling your tongue. Then the great bliss of adamantine ambrosia (*vajrāmṛtamahāsukha*) will be quickly attained." / gsang ba'i dkyil 'khor la 'dod byas // lce ni dril bar byas nas su // kha yis padmar blang bar bya // rdo rje dbud rtsi bde ba che // de nas myur bar dngos grub bo / (DK fol. 17b)

[90] Ch. 1 also characterizes the *pañcāmṛta* as follows: "Prepare everyday the five adamantine ambrosias, with the 'great flesh' *(mahāmāṃsa*, human flesh, taken from a corpse, preferably from an executed criminal or one killed in battle), "great blood" *(mahārudhira*, i.e., menstruum), and likewise with feces, urine and semen." / sha chen dang ni khrag chen gyis // de bzhin bshag gci khu ba dag / de dag rdo rje bdud rtsi lnga // nyin dang nyid du bsgrub par bya / (DK fol. 18a)

> *mudrā* of union should be known from the *Vajrāmṛta Mahātantra.* The symbolic *mudrā* is not drawn, but is the *mudrā* of manifest form. The deity is the divine woman. Worship the lotus of her vulva with all of one's faculties, blissfully. Uniting the vajra and lotus, all ritual activities will succeed."[91]

It appears that the trends manifesting in full blown form in the *yoginitantra*s can be traced back to some of the earliest strata of Tantric Buddhism. The chronology which posits a move from "purity" to "degeneracy" is simply incorrect, since it actually appears that some of the more transgressive and less "orthodox" Tantras are among the earliest, while certain of the more orthodox traditions, such as the *Tattvasaṃgraha,* selectively draw from them and thus antecede them.

The CST does not occupy a position amongst these early Tantras, but it does draw upon them. Its lateness has been exaggerated, and while it antecedes the *Tattvasaṃgraha,* it probably does not antecede it by much. Its inspiration appears to lie in the eighteen Tantras of the Vajraśekhara/Māyājāla compilations, particularly in the three possibly earliest traditions, those of the GST, JS and PA which are found in all known renditions of this compilation. It can thus be, textually, traced back to the Prajñāpāramitā corpus via the JS and PA, both of which connect with the PN. This link is admittedly tenuous, as the CST itself nowhere mentions the Prajñāpāramitā. It does, however, proceed along the general course known as the "method of the Prajñāpāramitā", and its descent can be traced back to the Buddhist hybrid sūtra/tantra of that name.

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[91] ch. 3 / rdo rje bdud rtsi bde chen po // bcom ldan rdo rje can 'di gsungs // phyag rgya sngags dag 'byung ba ni // bshad de nyon cig mā ma ki // phyag rgya rnam pa gsum gsungs te // sku dang gsung dang thugs las 'byung // sku ni phyag rgya mchog 'gyur te // gsung ni phyag rgya sngags kyi las // thugs kyi mtshan ma'i phyag rgya ni // bsam gtan rim mo gnyis med gnas // rdo rje bdud rtsi rgyud chen las // sbyor ba'i phyag rgya shes bya ste // mtshan ma'i phyag rgya mi bri'o // phyag rgya mngon gzugs yin te // lha ni lha mo bud med do // dbang po thams cad bde ba ru // bha ga'i padmar mchod par bya // rdo rje padma mnyam sbyor zhing // las thams cad ni 'grub par bya / (DK fol. 19b)

6.2.2 Hindu Sources

The CST does not mentions any non-Buddhist scriptures. This is, however, a conspicuous absence, as Heruka and his entourage are clearly iconographically derived from the cults of "Hindu" groups such as the Kāpālikas, such as the cult of Bhairava himself. This should not come as a surprise, as the period in which this text was composed was a period of appropriation and adaptation of religious ideas and practices between different religious traditions. Nor was this a one-way movement; there was widespread borrowing of concepts from Buddhism into Hindu traditions; this occurred at all levels, from the field of logic revolutionized by Buddhist thinkers such as Dignāga and Dharmakirti,[92] the occult borrowing of Buddhist doctrines by the developing Vedānta schools,[93] and institutionally, as Buddhist and Jain monasticism was the obvious model on which Śaṅkara based his network of monasteries for his Daśanāmi renunciant order, ostensibly to combat the dominance of Buddhism and Jainism in India at the time.[94] Such borrowing may in part account for the stridency of the denunciations of Buddhism attributed to Śaṅkara and others.[95] Such representations of extreme partisan hostility often

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[92] Concerning the profound impact of the Buddhist logic and epistemology on the *Pratyabhijñā* school of Kashmir Śaivism, see Torella 1992.

[93] Concerning the influence of Buddhism on early Vendānta thinkers such as Gauḍapāda see King 1995 and Isayeva 1995.

[94] According to Miller and Wertz, medieval Hinduism's adoption of monasticism on the Buddhist model was attributed to Śaṅkara, to whom legendary accounts attribute the founding of four monasteries. See Miller and Wertz 1976, pp. 4 ff.

[95] Śaṅkara's dates are unknown, but his 32 short years were generally thought to have more or less spanned the end of the 8th and beginning of the 9th century. (Flood 1996, pp. 239-40). Recent research, however, has suggested that this might have to be shifted to an earlier date (Isayeva 1995:15). However, reference in his writings to Dharmakirti, who lived in the 7th century, date him to probably the late 7th century at the earliest. Later biographies, such as the tenth century *Śaṅkaraprādurbhāva*, portray Śaṅkara as a fierce foe of heresy (O'Flaherty 1983); such portrayals may represent an attempt by his followers to deflect criticism that Śaṅkara was unduly influenced by Mahāyāna Buddhism, or even a cryptic Buddhist. (See Raju 1985, p. 506).

appear to be part of a strategy to bolster the credentials of figures suspected of being unorthodox, and this strategy was not monopolized by any one particular tradition.[96]

While such violent rhetoric may have at times sparked actual violence,[97] in India inter-sectarian violence appears to have been more the exception than the rule. More common appears to has been the inclusivist approach, buffered with claims to superiority and the subordination or reinterpretation of elements borrowed from competing traditions. This process is not necessarily peaceful nor violent, but can perhaps go either way depending upon the circumstances. Chattopadhyaya observed that "cult assimilation does not necessarily imply a harmonious syncretism, but does imply the formation of a structure which combines heterogeneous beliefs and rituals into a whole even while making (or transforming) specific elements dominant." (1994:30) This process of cult-assimilation appears to be a ubiquitous feature of South Asian religious history, and one which currently continues to function, as Obeyesekere, in his has shown with regard to the cult of the goddess Pattini in South India and Sri Lanka.[98]

There are numerous examples of the appropriation of non-Buddhist ideas or practices into Buddhism, which are then subordinated by their insertion into a hierarchy,

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[96] A example also occurs in Jain literature, concerning Haribhadra (d. 529 CE), a Śvetāmbara Jain whose numerous writings reveal a profound influence from Buddhism. According to Dundas, "the medieval hagiographers appear to acknowledge Haribhadra's interest in Buddhism by turning him into a scourge of the Buddhists and, in a story which does not appear to antedate the twelfth century, they describe his violent revenge on the Buddhists who killed his nephews. Such a story may have been intended to 'reclaim' Haribhadra fully as a prominent Jain teacher at a time when Jainism was trying to establish a firm identity to facilitate conversions which might otherwise be threatened through an excessive stress on relativism." (1992:208)

[97] The *Śaṅkaraprādurbhāva*, for example, claims that "by the tenth century A.D., heresy was so widespread and so abhorred that Śiva himself was said to have become incarnate as the philosopher Śaṅkara in order to explain the Vedas, destroy the temples and books of the Jains, and massacre all who opposed him, particularly the Jains." (O'Flaherty 1983: 121). Such accounts may not be unrelated to the wholesale slaughter of Jains in Southern India around the same time. Concerning this Dundas wrote that "in Hindu temples in Tamil Nadu today, including the shrine to Murugan at Kalugamalai, one may see lurid mural representations of the massacre by impaling of eight thousand Jains in Madurai for having taken Shiva's name in vain. This event, which is often taken as marking an end of Jainism's influence in Tamil Nadu, is most graphically represented in the great Minakshi temple in Madurai itself and it remains a folk memory among Hindu peasantry who can have only the vaguest idea of what a Jain is." (1992:109)

[98] See Obeyesekere 1984.

and in certain cases "explained" by means a myth of domination.[99] These non-Buddhist elements or figures are then often reinterpreted in light of more orthodox Buddhist scriptural categories. The *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* clearly appropriated elements from the Kāpālika cult of Bhairava and its attendant charnel ground imagery and paraphernalia.[100] Various Buddhist commentators then naturalized many of these elements to Buddhism through association with Buddhist concepts. For example, Śraddhākaravarman felt it necessary to interpret the presence of Bhairava and Kālarātri in the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala, albeit in a subordinate position, literally under Heruka's feet, by associating them with the Māra, the classical Buddhist embodiment of evil.[101] He describes Bhairava and Kālarātri as follows in his *Herukaviśuddha*:

> Bhairava is the essence of Māra of the Addictions. The addictions are the root of passion *(kāma)*, and the passions *are* Mahādeva. He has the pride of emanating and recollecting out of desire and attachment, and he *is* the very thing which binds one, namely, saṃsāra. He is the lord who produces the terrors *(bhairava)* of old age, dilapidation, eyebrows, beard and so forth by means of partiality and impartiality. This is because he is nature of speech which is sound itself such as the sound of thunder and so forth. In order to counteract his pride, he is supine, pressed down with [Heruka's] left foot, playfully, without undue fixation or zeal.
>
> Kālarātri is the essence of Māra Lord of Death.[102] [She represents] the destruction and voidness of the aggregates. Lacking all mental states of wrath, she is has the nature of nirvāna, and at the same time has the essence of deepening the reality of saṃsāra, the inner and outer essence of which exists in the three times, the past, future and present. Therefore, she signifies the intuition which is an aspect of the great bliss which arises from the contact of the his right foot with her who is the passionless night, the darkness of unknowing.[103]

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[99] One example concerns the idea that certain Buddhist Tantras were taught as a "skillful means" for the conversion of Hindus; see section 3.2.3 above.

[100] This obvious fact has been noted many times before; for more interesting discussions see Snellgrove 1987, pp. 152 f. See also Tsuda 1982 and 1990.

[101] Māra, the Evil One, is traditionally considered to have four forms: These are: 1) Māra of the Heaps, *skandhamāra*, 2) Māra of the Addictions, *kleṣamāra*, 3) Māra the Lord of Death, *mṛtyupatimāra* and 4) Māra the Divine Prince, *devaputramāra*. Concerning the mythology surrounding the Māras see Ling 1962.

[102] This correlation is quite interesting, as Kālarātri is commonly associated in mythology with Yama, the Lord of Death. See Nihom 1994, pp. 143 ff.

[103] / 'jig byed ni nyon mongs pa'i bdud kyi rang bzhin yin te / nyon mongs pa ni 'dod chags kyi rtsa ba can yin la / 'dod chags ni dbang phyug chen po yin te / 'dod pas zhen pa'i 'dod pas spro ba dang bsdu ba'i nga rgyal can // bdag 'ching bar byed pa de nyid 'khor ba yin no // mnyam pa dang mi mnyam pa la sogs

Such appropriation and subordination of Hindu deities is not unique to the Tantras, but occurs as well in the earliest strata of Buddhist literature.[104] Likewise, a similar pattern occurs in Hinduism, where individual traditions quite often claimed to encompass and thus surpass its competitors.[105] Traditions sometimes fused and often absorbed the cults of lesser deities, who were then became the attendants or devotees of the central deity of the tradition.[106] The Buddha himself was appropriated by the Vaiṣṇavas, and was depicted as being the eighth incarnation *(avatāra)* of Viṣṇu, albeit an incarnation of ambiguous status, one intended not to instruct people but deceive them with false doctrines.[107]

The overlap between teachings of the *kāpālika*s and the *yoginitantra*s are significant, and while it is probably safe to assume that the Buddhists borrowed significantly from the Kāpālikas, the extent to which they did so is unclear, since they are an extinct tradition, and most of their scriptures are presumably lost. There is evidence

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pas lus rgas pa / rnyings pa / smin ma dang sma ra la sogs pa 'jigs par byed pa'i bdag nyid / ngag gi rang bzhin 'brug sgra la sogs pa sgrogs pa nyid kyi phyir ro // de'i nga rgyal bzlog pa'i don du rol pas nges par ma bzung zhing 'bad rtsol med par g.yon pa'i zhabs kyis gan rkyal du mnan pa yin no zhes bya ba'i don to // dus mtshan ni 'chi bdag gi bdud kyi rang bzhin yin te / phung po rnam par 'jig cing stong pa nyid do // 'das pa dang / ma 'ongs pa dang / da ltar byung ba'i dus gsum na yod pa'i phyi dang nang gi bdag nyid can gyi 'khor ba'i chos zab par byed pa'i bdag nyid can gcig tu mya ngan las 'das pa'i rang bzhin can khong khro ba'i sems kyi rgyun thams cad med pa // 'dod chags dang bral ba mtshan mo mi shes pa mun pa de la zhabs g.yas pa reg pas bskyed pa'i bde ba chen po'i rnam pa'i ye shes nges par 'dzin pa'i phyir / (DT fol. 126b-127a)

[104] This pattern is very ancient, as even the earliest Buddhist *suttas* are replete with Hindu deities, who often are portrayed as playing important, but clearly subordinate roles vis-à-vis Śākyamuni Buddha. Indra makes numerous appearances in Aśvaghoṣa's *Buddhacarita* (see Johnston 1936), while the conceits of Brahma are ridiculed in *sutta* such as the *Brahmajāla Sutta* and the *Kevaddha Sutta* (Dīgha Nikāya 1 and 11; see Walshe 1987 pp. 67-90 and pp. 175-80).

[105] For example, the Śaivite *Ajitāgama* claims: "also in the (tradition) of Bhairava, and in other (traditions) such as that of Paśupati, and in the Vaiṣṇava and Buddhist lore as well as in the worship of the deities of the regions...all that is none other than He, the Ruler of the Gods, the Eternal, called Śiva" (from Goudriaan 1978, pp. 36-37, with emendations by me). bhairave ca tathānyeṣu paśupāśupatādiṣu viṣṇutantre ca bauddhe ca tathā dikpāladarśane... tat tat sa eva deveśaḥ śivasaṃjñaḥ sanātanaḥ (*Ajitāgama*, Kriyāpāda 1.22, *op. cit.* Goudriaan 1978 p. 439).

[106] The classic example of a tradition formed by fusion is that of the deity Harihara. The process whereby a tradition of a "greater" deity would absorb a cult of a local deity by making the latter a devotee of the former is discussed at length by the essays contained in Hiltebeital, ed. 1989. The Harihara tradition, incidentally, also engaged in this process; the Indian museum contains an image of Harihara flanked by the Buddha and Sūrya. See Roychowdhury 1988, p. 208.

[107] The Buddha avatar appears in the *Viṣṇu Purāṇa*, which has been dated to c. 400-500 CE. See O'Flaherty 1976, pp. 187-89.

suggesting that they were influenced to some extent by the Buddhists. For example, Yāmunācārya, a *guru* of Rāmānuja,[108] attributed to the kāpālikas the following belief:

> The fruit of liberation *(apavarga)* is attained through knowledge of the six insignia (*mudrikā-ṣaṭka*) and through wearing them, not through understanding *brahman.* He who knows the essence of the six insignia, who is proficient in the highest mudrā, and who meditates on the Self as seated in the vulva (*bhagāsana-stha*), attains nirvāṇa. (The Kāpālikas) define the six insignia as the *karṇikā* (earring), the *rucaka* (necklace), the *kuṇḍala* (earring), the *śikhāmaṇi* (crest-jewel), ashes *(bhasma)*, and the sacred thread *(yajñopavita)*. The skull *(kapāla)* and the khaṭvāṅga are declared to be the secondary insignia. If the body is marked with these (various insignia) one is not born again here (on earth).[109]

This passage is notable for its use of Buddhist terminology, such as *nirvāṇa* and possibly *mudrā* in one of the senses listed here. The reference to being seated in the *bhaga* may indicate influence from Buddhist Tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja.* The six insignia, however, appear to be a purely kāpālika feature, one which appears to be adopted from them into the *yoginitantra* traditions.

That the six insignia were adopted into the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* from another source is suggested by the disjointed and confused manner in which they are presented in the text, and the necessity felt by the commentators to interpret them in terms of normative Buddhist concepts. The relevant passage occurs in chapter twenty-seven, which deals with the conduct *(cārya)* befitting a yogin in this tradition, and the observances *(vrata)* to be followed by him. The wearing of the six insignia evidently one of the observances. It is described as follows:

> Abandon the sacred thread *(yajñopavita)*, as purity exists in Śriheruka. The adept who is endowed with the five insignia strives for success. One should be ornamented with the necklace *(rucaka)*, choker *(kaṇṭhikā)*, earring *(kuṇḍala)*, crest jewel *(śikhāmaṇi)*, and also with the sacred thread *(yajñopavita)* and ash *(bhasma)*. They should be on [one's person] at all times, always displayed at night, and hidden during the day.[110]

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[108] The dates of Yāmunācārya and Rāmānuja are not, to my knowledge, known; they are typically attributed to the 10th and 11th centuries CE, respectively, but this is clearly an approximation. See Raju 1985, pp. 438-39.

[109] Lorenzen 1989, p. 234. Translated from Yāmunācārya's *Āgamaprāmāṇya* (J. A. B. van Buitenen, ed. Madras: Ramanuja Research Society, 1971, p. 43, lines 7-16).

[110] CST ch. 27, vv. 17c-18d: / mgul rgyan gdu bu rna rgyan dang // spyi bor nor bus rnam par brgyan // mchod phyir thogs dang thal ba dang // dus kun tu ni rnam par gnas // mtshan mo rtag par gsal bya zhing

This passage contains an obvious contradiction, in that it first prohibits the use of the sacred thread, but then this prohibited article is included in the list of six insignia to be worn at all times. The text also mentions five insignia rather than six, which we might logically include consists of the six insignia mentioned minus the sacred thread. It is difficult to explain this contradiction, but perhaps the most likely scenario is that the passage above is composite, with the list of six insignia taken from another source. At some point a Buddhist author or editor added a prohibition against the sacred thread, which is understandable, given the fact that the sacred thread was never a Buddhist emblem, but was rather an emblem symbolizing that one is a *dvija*, an observer of the Vedic tradition.

This contradiction was not adequately explained by the commentators, who typically ignore it. Jayabhadra does comment on the passage, as follows:

> As for "abandoning the sacred thread, purity", it means abandoning the [codes of] purity[111] prescribed in the *smṛti*, such as the sacred thread and so forth. This means that all mundane and transcendent purities are observed through the blessing of śriheruka. The five insignia *(pañcamudrā)* are the necklace *(rucaka)*, crest jewel *(śikhāmaṇi)*, earring *(kuṇḍala)*, choker *(kaṇṭhikā)*, and the sacred thread *(yajñopavita)*.[112]

Although commenting on the major points in this passage, he did not resolve the contradiction, as later commentators also fail to do.[113] If anything he exacerbated it, by

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// nyin par gsang ba nyid du bya / (DT fol. 232a) This list corresponds exactly to Rāmānuja's description, which differs only slightly from Yāmunācārya's. He lists the six insignia as follows: *kaṇṭhikā*, *rucaka*, *kuṇḍala*, *śikhāmaṇi*, *bhasma*, and *yajñopavita*. See Lorenzen 1972, p.2.

[111] MP ms. reads *sauca* throughout this passage, which I edit to *śauca*

[112] yajñopavitaṃ pratyajya śaucam iti yajñopavitādi ṛtismṛtivihitaśauca[ṃ] parityajya / śriherukādhiṣṭhāna sarvalaukikalokottaraśaucam ācarito bhavatity arthaḥ / pañcamudrā rucaka-śikhāmaṇi-kuṇḍala-kaṇṭhikā-[yajño]pavitāḥ pañcaṃ / (MP ms. fol. 39a); / mchod phyir thogs ni yongs spangs gtsang zhes bya ba ni mchod phyir thogs la sogs pa rig byed dang chos kyi bstan bcos las byung ba'i gtsang sbra yongs su spang ba'o // phyag rgya lnga ni mgul rgyan dang gdu bu dang spyi bo'i nor bu dang / rna rgyan dang / mchod phyir thogs te lnga'o / (QT p. 29.2)

[113] Tsongkhapa seems to have followed Jayabhadra in his *Total Illumination* commentary. He wrote: "The *yajñopavita* or *brahmasūtra* which are stated to be purifying in the Vedic texts are renounced. The yoga which exists in Śriheruka is the great purity. Are the insignia such as the necklace, etc. to be renounces at that time or not? [The text] states that one is to be endowed with the five insignia such as the necklace, and that they should be present, i.e., observed, at all times. And while the *yajñopavita*, and also the *brahmasūtra* which appears to occur elsewhere, are renounced, it is not that they are renounced at all times." / rig byed kyi gzhung las dag byed du bshad pa'i mchod phyir thogs tshang skud ni yongs su spangs la / śri he ru kar gnas pa'i mal 'byor ni gtsang sbra chen po'i // de'i tshe mgul rgyan la sogs pa'i phyag rgya'ang spong ngam zhe na / mgul rgyan la sogs pa'i phyag rgya lnga dang yang dag par ldan pa ni

including the sacred thread in the list of five insignia, ejecting from it the ash instead. On the other hand, ash is a purely Śaiva insignia,[114] and is perhaps as likely a candidate for exclusion from a Buddhist text as is the sacred thread. While the history of this and other similar passages is unknown, such contradictions suggest that it is a composite text, portions of which may have been drawn from another source and poorly integrated into it.[115] Perhaps because of the non-Buddhist provenance of these insignia, Dārika, in his *Śricakrasaṃvarastotra Sarvārthasiddhiviśuddhacūḍāmaṇi*, describes Heruka as "beautified by the six *mudrā* of the Six Trancendences *(pāramitā)*,"[116] purifying them of heretical association through correlating them to normative Mahāyāna Buddhist categories.

That Buddhist Tantras such as the CST owe a debt to the Kāpālikas or some such non-Buddhist group is clear, and it is certainly possible that they are intertextually related to the texts of such group(s), but the extent of this debt and its exact sources remain to be determined. That is, there is the question of whether Buddhists drew their inspiration from extant, verifiable Śaiva sources, or whether perhaps they drew from what Ruegg called the Indian "religious substratum", a common, non-sectarian source for both Buddhist and Śaiva traditions.[117]

Sanderson has argued for the former hypothesis. He has identified a group of Nepali manuscripts as surviving Kāpālika scriptures, which he claims is the inspiration for the Buddhist *yoginitantras*. These texts are the *Siddhayogeśvarimata*, the *Tantrasadbhāva*, the *Jayadrathayāmala* and the *Brahmayāmala*. Now, in order to

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/ dus kun tu ni rnam par gnas pa ste yang dag par spyad do / zhes 'chad do / mchod phyir thogs kyang gzhan nas 'byung ba ltar tshang skud spong gi gtan spong ba min no / (KS TL fol. 149a)

[114] The motif of ash in Śaiva mythology is extensively explored in O'Flaherty 1973.

[115] Of course, it is always possible that such inconsistencies arose as a process of textual corruption, or even deliberate obscuration.

[116] / pha rol phyin drug phyag rgya drug gis mdzes / (DT fol. 193a). The six Transcendances are the Transcendance of 1) Generosity *(dāna)*, 2) Discipline *(śila)*, 3) Patience *(kṣānti)*, 4) Effort *(virya)*, 5) Meditation *(dhyāna)*, and 6) Wisdom *(prajñā)*.

[117] Ruegg makes the this case first in a 1964 article, then again in a (1967) lecture, and a book review (1989c).

establish that these texts are sources of the Buddhist Yoginitantras, it is necessary that he prove not only that they share passages in common, but that they are actual sources of the Buddhist texts, since it is also possible that both groups of text could draw from an earlier common source. With regard to the CST, Sanderson argues that it directly borrowed from two of these texts, as follows:

> Chapters 15 to 17 of the Buddhist Laghusaṃvara (Herukābhidhāna), which teaches a secret jargon of monosyllables (*ekākṣaracchoma*) (15), and the characteristics by means of which the Buddhist adepts may recognize females as belonging to one or the other of seven Yogini-families (16) and seven Ḍākini-families (17) equals the *samayācāracestā vidhāna* chapter of the Yoginisaṃcāra section of the Jayadrathayāmala. Chapter 19 of the Laghusaṃvara, on the characteristics of the Yoginis known as Lāmas, equals chapter 29 of the Siddhayogeśvarīmata. (1994a:94-95)

Sanderson does not explain what he means by the term "equals", i.e., whether there is an exact word for word correspondence, or merely close similarity. Even if the passages were identical however, does not necessarily prove that the CST borrowed from these sources; it is always possible that they borrowed from the CST, or that all these texts derive from an earlier unknown or lost source. Sanderson has not proven this point; he claims that he will publish a monograph comparing these passages, and until he does this will have to remain an open question.

The possibility of Śaiva texts borrowing from Buddhist texts may not be as absurd as one might at first think. Bühnemann has in two recent articles (1999 and 2000) traced extensive borrowings in Hindu Tantras from Buddhist Tantras. Nor is textual history of the CST and the Kāpālika texts entirely clear. Unlike Buddhist texts which were preserved in translation, and the dating of which can be established on the basis of translation dates, Śaiva Tantric texts are in a much poorer state of preservation. Many texts can only be dated by their occurrence in the works of Abhinavagupta (c. 975-1025 CE), far after the dates established for many Buddhist Tantras. While it is possible that they preceded him by centuries, there is often no independent evidence to confirm this. The *Jayadrathayāmala* may be an exception; Banerji notes that there is a Cambodian inscription dated to 802 CE which mentions a text called the *Śiraścheda*, which is usually identified with the

Jayadrathayāmala. (1992:86) The *Śiraścheda*, however, is sometimes identified with another work,[118] but even if the inscription does refer to the *Śiraścheda* qua *Jayadrathayāmala*, the later text is also evidently a composite text, and there is no way to know which portions of it existed by the early ninth century. Moreover, the *Jayadrathayāmala,* in the thirty-fifth chapter of its first *ṣaṭka,* lists the names of a number of Buddhist śāstras,[119] suggesting that it in turn may have been influenced by Buddhist works, and might possibly be a composite work drawing from one or more of them. And while the *Jayadrathayāmala* probably can be dated with some confidence to the eighth century, this is also the period when appears that the CST was composed.

With these traditions, Buddhist and Śaiva, the safest assumption seems to be that there is no purity and singularity of origin, but rather a multiplicity. Interdependence should be assumed, despite sectarian protests to the contrary. Sanderson's presumption that Śaiva texts preceded their Buddhist Yoginitantra counterparts thus remains to be proven; his common-sensical notion that Śaiva-inspired cults are of ultimately Śaiva origin is probably more or less true, but his specific claims of direct textual borrowing may not necessarily be.

Sanderson was correct when he wrote that "Tantric Buddhism is, of course, entirely Buddhist in terms of its function and self-perception; and in transforming Śaiva elements it gave them meanings which obscure these origins." (1994a:96) The same is true of other Indian traditions, including Śaivism, that appropriated elements from other traditions. In the case of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* however, its heterogeneous origins are not entirely obscured, there are inconsistencies such as those discussed above which belie its composite nature, and not fully integrate nature. These inconsistencies are not noticed, however, by the vast majority of practitioners of this tradition, most of whom rely on the exegetical literature produced by savants such as Tsongkhapa, whose genius lie in part in their

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[118] See Banerji 1992, p. 98, n. 49.

[119] See Banerji 1992, p. 86.

creative ability to constitute a coherent tradition of practice from the not entirely coherent body of scriptures inherited from the *mahāsiddhas* of India.

6.3. Heruka

1. The Origin of Heruka

The central figure of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is the Buddhist deity Heruka, who is both one of the most interesting but also confounding of Buddhist deities. A fierce deity clearly inspired from a Śaiva model, most likely Bhairava, he has nonetheless become a quintessential deity of the "higher" Buddhist Tantras, making an appearance in most of the *anuttarayogatantras*, and playing a central role in most of the *yoginitantras*.

Heruka is a generic name for a fierce Buddhist deity, who also receives different names in different traditions. In the Cakrasaṃvara tradition he is called both Heruka and Śriheruka, as well as Saṃvara/Śaṃvara or Śambara, or Cakrasaṃvara. His earliest appearance is in the JS, in which he is described as follows:

> Greatly Glorious Vajraheruka is very terrifying, blazing with ash; his visage blazes blue for beings, and his maṇḍala of light blazes red. He is as fierce as the Endtime of great destruction. Greatly blazing, his voice blazes, like a charnel ground fire. He has a crown of skulls, fierce like the end time of great destruction. Possessing the methods such as anger, he is as terrifying as a charnel ground, with various faces, and eyebrows arched in anger. With his blazing gaze and dance, he completely reduces the three worlds to ash, along with Mahādeva, Viṣṇu (Upendra), the Sun, the Moon, Yama and Brahmā.[120]

This description clearly borrows heavily from Śaiva imagery, particularly the imagery of Śiva as the Destroyer of the Cosmos, Mahākāla, the Great Endtime.[121] Another description

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[120] JS kalpa 5, *śriheruka-āśvāsa*: / dpal chen rdo rje he ru ka // 'bar bas thal bas rab tu 'jig / sems dpa' sngon por 'bar ba'i ngang // 'od kyi dkyil 'khor dmar por 'bar // 'jig pa chen po'i dus ltar drag / dur khrod kyi ni me dang 'dra // 'bar ba chen po sgra 'bar ba // thod pa mang po'i dbu rgyan can // 'jig pa chen po'i dus ltar drag / dur khrod bzhin du rab tu 'jigs // khro la sogs pa'i tshul ldan pa // zhal rnams sna tshogs 'gyur ba dang // smin ma khro gnyer bcas par 'gyur // 'bar ba'i lta bas gar byas pas // gu lang dbang chen nye dbang bcas // nyi zla gshin rje tshangs par bcas // gnas gsum dag ni 'bar byas nas // thal ba bzhin tu rab tu bshig (DK fol. 157b)

[121] For an analysis of Śiva's destructive forms, see O'Flaherty 1973 and 1976.

of Heruka, that contained in a *sādhana* composed by Advayavajra, recalls another Hindu myth, the *amṛta-manthana*, the churning of the Ocean of Milk for ambrosia.[122] His description occurs as follows:

> Śriheruka, who dances laughing with a skull staff and double drum in his hands, who as if shaking the world stirs up the mass of waters with a mountain peak, and who, with beautiful eyes and face, is reddened, pressing his foot into the ocean – He, together with his troop of yoginis, is always victorious upon the earth. He is blue with three faces and six arms, self-luminant, and inseparable from his consort *(prajñā)*. Hūṃkāra, the Lord of the Six Goddess: saluting him I will write this sādhana.[123]

The mythology surrounding Heruka, and his very iconography which is connected to it, gives the impression of being a composite phenomenon. It is, in Lévi-Strauss' terminology, a *bricolage*. Lévi-Strauss wrote that

> The characteristic feature of mythical thought is that it expresses itself by means of a heterogeneous repertoire which, even if extensive, is nevertheless limited. It has to use this repertoire, however, whatever the task in hand because it has nothing else at its disposal. Mythical thought is therefore a kind of intellectual 'bricologe'. (1966:17)

These sources cannot be not limited to any particular sect or school; the sources on which the formulators and elaborators of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition drew cannot be definitively circumscribed, but it most likely included a broad range of Indian mythic thought. An examination of these sources may shed some light on the forces that motivated its constitution. This was argued by Obeyesekere, who, in his *magnum opus* on the Pattini cult argued that

> Any mythological tradition comes from historically diverse sources. A tradition of myth is a composite of preexisting beliefs, beliefs that are newly invented, and those incorporated from other belief systems. An analysis of the sources of a given mythic tradition may help us to unravel the processes by which a religious tradition came to be constituted. (1984:283)

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[122] Concerning this myth see Long 1976.

[123] *Saptākṣarasādhana:* / gang gi phyag na kha tvāṃ ga dang ḍa ma rus ni cher sgrogs pa yis gar mdzad dang // 'jig rten gsum pa 'gul bzhin pa yis ri yi rtse mo bskyod pas chu yi phung po 'khrugs // mdzes pa'i spyan dang zhal rnams mnga' bas zhabs mnan rgya mtso nang gis ni dmar gyur pa // rnal 'byor ma yi tshogs ldan dpal ldan khrag 'thung 'di de sa stengs rtag tu rgyal gyur cig / zhal gsum phyag drug sngon po la // rang snang shes rab lus 'jar ba // hūṃ skyes lha mo drug gi mgon // btud nas sgrub thabs bri bar bya / (DT fol. 30b)

Such an analysis of the traditions centering on Heruka could easily occupy a monograph; here it will only be possible to conclude this study with a look at some of the more interesting and/or important of these sources.

The figure of Heruka is quite enigmatic; even his name is unusual, and does not appear to be an actual Sanskrit word. There has been some speculation concerning its derivation. Przyluski suggested that *heruka* is a corruption of *bhairava*, but this seems unlikely, despite Heruka's obvious relation to the Śaiva deity Bhairava.[124] Lokesh Chandra notes the interesting similarity between *heruka* and the Greek word *heriikō*, 'to restrain, hinder, control', which, interestingly, corresponds exactly to the Sanskrit *saṃvara*, an alternate name for Heruka in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition.[125] This is an interesting hypothesis, but it is not at all clear how to account for it; it is perhaps possible that the term could have been applied to a deity from the Northwest, where Greek linguistic influence lingered on into the first few centuries of the common era, as the bilingual Greek-Karosthi Kuṣāṇa coinage indicates.[126]

Another theory is that argued by Parpola. Parpola argued that "buffalo-shaped" deities such as Heruka are remnants of a pre-Āryan buffalo cult, and that *Saṃvara/Śambara* is a variant of the Dāsa Śambara of the *Ṛg Veda*, the enemy of Indra,[127] and who is related to the Buffalo Demons Mahiṣāsura, Śumbha and Niśumbha, who are also thought to derive from non-Āryan sources.[128] Parpola goes on to suggest that the

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[124] See Snellgrove 1959b, p. 216.

[125] Chandra made this observation in his preface to Tucci 1989, p. xvi.

[126] For examples of this coinage see Mitchiner 1973 and 1978.

[127] Regarding Śambara in Ṛg Veda see Macdonell 1898, p. 161. According to Macdonell, Śaṃvara is mentioned about twenty times in the Ṛg Veda, such as in the following cases: "Indra shook the summit of heaven when he cut down Śambara (1.54.4). He found Śambara dwelling in the mountains (2.2.11) and struck down from the mountain (1.130.7; 6.26.5). He struck down from the great mountain the Dāsa Śambara, the son of Kulitara (4.30.14). He struck down from the height Śambara, who thought himself a little god (7.18.20)." (1898:161) Several other verses depict him as dwelling in the forts of the Dāsas, which Indra cast down.

[128] See Parpola 1992, p. 298. The theory that the Śumbha-Niśumbha myth in the *Devi-Māhātmya* is derived from non-Āryan mythic traditions was earlier argued by Vaudeville (1982) and Coburn (1984) and (1991).

name *heruka* derives from the Tamil term *eṛu* or its cognates, which means "bull, male of any animal remarkable for its strength, male buffalo". (1992:298) Parpola's theory is actually quite grand, and takes into consideration a wide range of evidence, from Harappan seals to Vedic and Tantric texts. The only problem is that Heruka is not in fact "buffalo-shaped", unlike other fierce Tantric Buddhist deities such as Yamāntaka. On the other hand, the suggestion of a Tamil derivation is not impossible, and Heruka, who *is* depicted in a heroic *human* form, could be considered a "bull" in the figurative sense. Another interesting point is that the names *śumbha* and *niśumbha* appear in mantras in the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, although they also appear in mantras of many other Tantras such as the *Tattvasaṃgraha.*[129]

There is also some evidence connecting Heruka to the Buddhist deity Vairocana, and while it would probably be a stretch to suggest that *heruka* is derived from *vairocana*, this evidence should be considered nonetheless. Heruka's consort in the CST, Vajravārāhi, is associated with the Vaircana clan, and one of the names connected with her, i.e., contained in her mantra, is Vajravairocani.[130] One of the interesting features of Amoghavajra's description of the JS in his *Index* is that, in his list of the nine deities associated with the *navarasa*, he does not mention Heruka per se. However, in addition to Vairocana, whom he associates with the heroic sentiment *(virarasa)*, he lists a *Yogavairocana (瑜伽 中 畏 盧 遮 那), whom he associates with the tranquil sentiment *(śāntarasa).*[131]

The term **Yogavairocana* clearly does not transliterate *heruka*, but it may be a description of him. If so, this would imply that Heruka at that time, i.e., the mid-eighth century was understood to be a form of or closely related to Vairocana, and one particularly

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[129] See Snellgrove 1987, pp. 137-44, 153.

[130] Vajravairocani is one of the names associated with Trikāyavajrayoginī; Vajrayoginī is considered identical to, i.e., the solitary *ekavirā* form of, Vajravārāhi. See Nihom 1992.

[131] T 869, p. 286.3. See my translation of this passage in section 5.2 above.

associated with *yoga* or *yogins*. This in fact may have been how Heruka was understood in monastic settings in India at that time, and may represent an attempt to naturalize Heruka to a Buddhist context through association with a more orthodox Buddhist deity. This is also suggested by a passage in Śubhākarasiṃha and Yi-xing's early eighth century, in which Vairocana is depicted as taking on a dreadful charnel ground guise to subdue evil-doers, as Heruka is also depicted. This passage depicts the *ḍākini*, fierce female deities, as anthropophagic, lusting after the concretion or bezoar (人黃) which exists in the hearts of men. Since this substance was highly desired by not only ḍākini but also other evil spirits, they evidently got into the habit of slaying people to attain this substance. Śubhākarasiṃha narrates Vairocana's subdual of them as follows:

> They were subject to Mahākāla, the god called the "Great Black One". As for the Dharma Gate of Vairocana conquering the three worlds, Vairocana, wanting to do away with them, took the form of Mahākāla, exceeding him in an immeasurable manifestation. His body smeared with ashes, in a desolate place he, with his magical art, summoned all of [the ḍākini] who had magical powers [such as] flying, walking on water. Being completely unhindered by the *ḍākini*s, he upbraided them, saying: "Since you alone always devour people, now I will eat you!" Then he swallowed them, but did not allow them to die. He pressed and pushed them, causing their flesh to be severed off.
>
> They spoke to the Buddha saying, "We've eaten all sorts of flesh, so how can we save ourselves now?
>
> The Buddha said, "Listen! You will eat the hearts of dead people."
>
> They said, "When someone is about to die, the *mahāyakṣa*s and so forth know that their lives are exhausted. They rush there to eat him, so how can we get [our share]?"
>
> The Buddha said, "I will teach you the *mantra, dharma,* and *mudrā*. You will be able to know six months before someone dies, and knowing this, you will be protected and will no longer be afraid of losing out. When you hear that someone's life has expired, then you can seize and eat [his heart]." Thereupon they were gradually induced to embark upon this path. Thus there is this mantra, *hri hā*, which removes the taint of pernicious practices.[132]

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[132] 屬摩訶迦羅。所謂大黑神也。毘盧遮那以降伏三世法門。欲除彼故化作大黑神。過於彼無量示現。以灰塗身。在曠野中以術悉召一切法成就乘空噉水皆無礙諸荼吉尼。而訶責之。猶汝常啖人故。我今亦當食汝。即吞啖之。然不令死彼。伏已放之。悉令斷肉。彼白佛言。我今悉食肉得存。今如何自濟。佛言聽汝食死人心。彼言人欲死時諸大夜叉等知彼命盡。爭來欲食。我云何得之。佛言為汝說真言法及印。六月未死即能知之。知已以法加護勿令他畏得損。至命盡時聽汝取食也。如是誘引令得入道。故有此真言 (T 1796, p. 687.2-3)

In this case, Vairocana is depicted as taking on the Śiva's fierce form of Mahākāla, which is depicted in the text as a form of Mahāśvara, rather than the Tantric Buddhist deity of the same name.[133] Vairocana's motivation is compassionate; he wants to restrain them from killing people, and uses the coercive means of "consumption" and violent but not lethal "digestion" to convince them to only eat the concretion of corpses. When they submit, he provides them with the ritual technologies to find these corpses and thus beat the competition.

Heruka is depicted as taking on the form not of Mahākāla but Bhairava, but like Vairocana, is depicted as taking on this fierce form out of the compassionate desire to subdue evil doers. If there was an association of Heruka with Vairocana by eighth century Indian Buddhists, this would have been just a preliminary association, since Heruka later was understood to constitute his own distinct "clan", just as he was also understood to embody all nine of the dramatic sentiments. The association of Heruka *qua* *Yogavairocana with the tranquil sentiment *(śāntarasa)* may seem counter-intuitive, but it actually accords well with Indian dramatic theory, which tended to see the odd or atypical *rasa*, which was not in fact accepted by all theorists. It is, as Masson and Patwardhan have shown, associated with renunciation, impermanence and death. As such, "the one thing that *śāntarasa* does that no other *rasa* can, is that it disturbs us." (1969:ix) Kalhaṇa prefaced his *Rājataraṅgiṇi* with the following comment: "Considering how the life of creatures cracks after a few moments, one should understand [why] *śāntarasa* has been given the most position in this [work]".[134]

The *śāntarasa* could be associated with the charnel ground, the cite which exemplifies impermanence like no other, and Heruka is of course associated with this site.

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[133] Concerning Śiva qua Mahākāla see Long 1970, pp. 218 ff.

[134] *Rājataraṅgiṇi* I.23,4: kṣanabhaṅgini jantunāṃ sphurite paricintite / mūrdhābhiṣekaḥ śāntasya rasasyātra vicāryatām // Trans. in Masson and Patwardhan 1969, p. xiii, who cite Viśva Bandhu's edition. (Hoshiarpur: Viśveśvarānanda Vedic Research Institute, 1963)

As noted above in section 3.2.2.2, the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala is ideally drawn in a charnel ground with substances attained there. This is also depicted artistically; representations of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala are typically depicted as surrounded by the "eight great charnel grounds".[135] The *Cakrasaṃvara* maṇḍala is described in the Tantra as not only a city, but the "city supreme", *puraṃ paraṃ*.[136] Like a city it is also surrounded on its periphery by charnel grounds, although here it goes well beyond the norm in that it is surrounded by the eight great charnel grounds. The maṇḍala, then, is really not typical at all, but depicts an alternate vision of the cosmos, a residence suitable for a deity preeminently associated with charnel grounds. It depicts Heruka's abode as a sort of liminal nerve center, a nexus for the alternative yogic culture associated with the charnel grounds. That this is so is suggested by a fragment from an early Heruka sādhana preserved at Dunhuang, which, describing Heruka and his awesome environs, also negates the 'inside-outside' dichotomy on which social distinctions are drawn:

> From that, there is Mahā-śriheruka, the great blazing one with nine dancers, a fury like that at the time of destruction. In the utterly terrifying great charnel ground, 'midst the roaring waves of blood circling 'round, is the gargantuan mound of skeletons, and in the blazing pyre on its top is found the maṇḍala palace of knowing's flames, an expanse in every way without end–with neither in nor out, thus all is in.[137]

As the association between Heruka and charnel grounds is so strong, it is perhaps not surprising that the *Kālikāpurāṇa*, with a certain degree of confusion, refers to Heruka, both as a place of cremation as well as a deity.[138]

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[135] For a description of these charnel grounds and their artistic depiction on Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala art see Tucci 1989, pp. 50-54 and 173-81.

[136] Chapter Two, verse 11 reads: "Then, with a corpse thread, or one coloured with human blood *(mahārudhira)*, lay out the terrifying maṇḍala, Heruka's palace supreme." tato mṛtakasūtreṇa mahārudhirarañjitena vā / sūtrayet maṇḍalaṃ ghoraṃ herukasya paraṃ puraṃ // See my edition in appendix A below.

[137] Trans. in Eastman 1981, 49, emended by me.

[138] See for example ch. 67 v. 34-36, translated by van Kooij as follows: "One should worship the place of cremation, named Heruka, being of red color, terrifying, bearing knives and skins, being like Rudra, consuming human flesh, resplendent by the three wreaths of human heads, from which blood is trickling down, crowded with ghosts, of which the teeth have fallen out and which are consumed by fire, adorned with sword-bearers; (one should worship this place of cremation) by means of a meditation only." (1972:158) It seems that the author of this text was aware of, but somewhat confused concerning, the

The setting for this maṇḍala is the terrifying site charnel ground not only in its visualized or artistic depiction, but also in practice. It is also not surprising that a central, albeit subordinate, role should be given to the *other* charnel ground deity whose appearance Heruka usurped, namely Bhairava. In artistic depictions of the maṇḍala he, along with his wife Kālarātrī is depicted at the center of the maṇḍala, albeit in a subordinate and compromised position, under Heruka's feet.

Bhairava is depicted prostrate, with Heruka's foot on his head. This is typical image of the subjection of one king by another, or simply subordination in more general terms; it is the same gesture a disciple might make toward his guru. Here it as if Heruka defeated Bhairava in battle, and the latter now prostrates himself to the former amidst his assembled court. Indeed, according to the myth this is exactly the case; Heruka and his host manifested precisely to subdue Bhairava and his. From another perspective then, the site for the maṇḍala is the top of Sumeru/Kailash, the site of Śiva/Bhairava's incessant lovemaking with his wife. Here however their union has been broken, and their position and appearances usurped by Heruka and his consort, Vajravārāhi.

Kālarātri, on whom Heruka's other foot rests, is depicted lying prone, which may symbolize sexual domination. On the other hand, the texts always assert that it is her breast on which his foot presses, which might here represent control over the nurturing and life-giving qualities of *devi* qua mother,[139] while her "dangerous" sexual aspects are taken over by Vajravārāhi, who usurps her form as well as her position of consort, clearly depicted via her nudity and embrace of Heruka.[140]

Buddhist deity Heruka. The comparison with Rudra, however, is apt, as both deities are associated with death, and the former was almost certainly the inspiration for the latter.

[139] For more on the importance of breast imagery in the India imagination, see Kakar 1989, pp. 126-27 as well as O'Flaherty 1980.

[140] Among the types of sexual union outlined by Marglin 1982, Heruka and Vajravārāhi seem to be in the 'union between equals' mode of lovemaking. They are depicted more or less equal in size, and make love in the standing position in which there is no obvious domination of one over another, which is similar to the standing position in which Kṛṣṇa and Radhā engage in loveplay as described by Marglin.

There are ample precursor myths for Heruka's subdual of Bhairava in Buddhist literature. The earliest center around Vajrapāṇi, the fierce *yakṣa* guardian of the Buddha, who was gradually elevated to a supreme position in the Vajrayāna.[141] He is depicted as possessing cosmic mastery in the following passage in the *Jñānatilaka-yoginitantrarāja-paramamahādbhuta*:

> Then the Blessed Lady offered the ambrosial fluid *(amṛtarasa)* of her lower lip and made offerings of solar and lunar flowers. When the Blessed Lord was satisfied, she asked the following: "Hey Blessed Lord, who will teach this truly secret Tantra in the future to fortunate sentient beings?"
>
> The Blessed Lord replied, "It will be taught by the glorious sovereign Vajrapāṇi."
>
> The Blessed Lady asked, "You, Lord have bestowed the marvelous descent of intuitive ambrosia *(jñānāmṛta)*. Tell me, oh King of Knowledge, Lord of Sovereign Might, what is the origin of the great sovereign Vajrapāṇi?"
>
> The Blessed Lord replied, "Listen well, Blessed Lady, to that which you have requested. The great sovereign Vajrapāṇi is the lord of all Vajradharas, and is the cause of the creation and destruction of infinite worlds and realms *(lokadhātu)*. There is nothing which arises apart from him, the original, supreme lord *(svayambhūpareśvara)*. Vajrapāṇi, who has the twelve *jñānas*, is unoriginated. At the top the five Tathāgatas arose on the five mountain peaks, and at the bottom [arose] the five great elements. In the middle the six realms of living beings developed.[142] In order to preserve all views, he ranges in a variety of forms. He sometimes takes on the form of a Vajradhara, Buddha, Heruka, Tathāgata or Bodhisattva. Sometimes he takes on the semblance of the audience, propounder, reader or author of the Tantras and *śāstras*. [His forms] are too numerous to state, as many as are needed. This is the teaching on the sovereign Vajrapāṇi."[143]

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[141] For a discussion of Vajrapāṇi's rise in position in Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna traditions see Snellgrove 1987, pp. 134 ff.

[142] This describe the development of the maṇḍala qua *cakravāḍa* cosmos, which is composed of the elemental disks, topped by Mt. Sumeru, on which are positioned the five Tathāgatas.

[143] / de nas bcom ldan 'das mas ma mchu'i bdud rtsi'i ro phul te / nyi ma dang zla ba'i me tog gis mchod nas / bcom ldan 'das rab tu tshim par mdzad nas 'di skad ces gsol to // kyai bcom ldan 'das ma 'ongs pa'i dus su yang dag par gsang ba'i rgyud 'di skal pa dang ldan pa'i sems can rnams la sus 'chad par 'gyur / bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa / dpal phyag na rdo rje mgon pos bshad par byed do // bcom ldan 'das ma gsol pa / ye shes bdud rtsi char pa che // mgon po kyod kyis rmad 'byung sbyin // phyag na rdo rje mgon po che // de yi bskyed pa ji ltar lags // rgyal ba'i mnga' bdag ye shes rgyal // de ni tshig gcig bka' stsol cig / bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa // gang zhig khyod kyis yongs zhus pa // bcom ldan ma de yang dag nyon // phyag na rdo rje mgon chen po // rdo rje 'dzin pa kun gyi bdag / mtha' yas pa yi 'jig rten khams // skye dang 'dzin pa'i rgyu yin no // de las skye ba gang yang med // rang byung mchog gi dbang phyug go // de yi phyag na rdo rje ni // ye shes bcu gnyis skye ba med // thog ma yi ni rva lnga las // de bzhin gshegs pa lnga 'byung ngo // mtha' nas 'byung ba chen po lnga // dbus nas 'gro ba'i ris drug 'byung // lta ba kun ni bskung don phyir // sna tshogs pa yi gzugs su spyod // la lar rdo rje 'dzin pa dang // la lar sangs rgyas kyi ni gzugs // la lar he ru ka yi gzugs // la lar de bzhin gshegs pa dang // la lar byang chub sems dpa'i gzugs // la lar nyan pa lta bur bzhugs // la lar 'chad do dgyes padma // la lar klog pa'i

Vajrapāṇi is depicted in the *Mūlasarvāstavāda*, a text compiled during the early centuries of the common era,[144] as subduing the Nāga Apalāla.[145] This myth was recounted by Fa-xian, who journeyed in India and Central Asia from 399-414 CE.[146] He reported that the conversion took place in Udhyāna in Northwest India, a region later associated with Tantric traditions.[147]

A common strategy in Buddhist Tantras is to demonize Hindu deities, especially Śiva, which was not a difficult task given the numerous acts of violence associated with him in Hindu mythology. He is then violently converted, often by being killed and then revived, before finally submitting to the superior power of the Buddhas. These myths attempt to create a hierarchy, one in which the Buddhas are in the highest position, and Hindu deities are downgraded via their association with the demonic, which comprises the violent, unordered "lower level" of reality that needs to be kept in its place, and which is inescapable counterpart to the mastery represented by the Buddhas.[148] A famous example of the "killing" of Śiva which results in his conversion and reconstitution as a Buddhist deity occurs in the fifteenth chapter of the TS, and which has received much attention elsewhere.[149]

The Awakened Buddha counterpart to the bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi is Vajradhara, who likewise could take a fierce form to subdue demonic deities. The *Āryavidyottama-*

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tshul du bzhugs // la lar rgyud dang bstan bcos ni // mdzad pa dang ni la lar 'dzin // mang du brjod lta ci zhig dgos // de ston phyag na rdo rje rgyal / (DK fols. 134b-35a)

[144] It is thus datable due to references in the text to the Kuṣāṇa King Kaniṣka, who reigned in North India c. 135-158 CE. See Strong 1992, p. 24.

[145] For an account of this myth see Strong 1992, pp. 26 ff.

[146] Concerning Fa-xian see Ch'en 1964, pp. 89-93.

[147] See Legge 1886, p. 29.

[148] Concerning this hierarchy and the dialectical opposition between the Buddhas and the demonic within it see Kapferer 1983, pp. 172-78.

[149] This passage has been translated and analyzed by Snellgrove (1987:134-141), and retranslated by Davidson (1991a:198-202).

mahātantra depicts him in a way which combines both the myths of Vajrapāṇi's conversion of the *nāga* and of Śiva, as follows: "on the northern side of Mount Sumeru is the furious Mahāvajradhara who holds the great *dharmanāga.* He has a vajra in his powerful hand. His left foot presses Maheśvara, and his right foot presses Umā."[150]

Vajradhara is depicted disciplining Bhūtapati along with the host of Hindu gods and spirits in the *Bhūtaḍāmaramahātantrarāja,* as follows:

> Then the Great God Maheśvara bowed his head to the foot of the Blessed Lord, and made the following supplication to the Blessed Lord: "Lord of the Fierce, I beg that you explain how to kill those who are evil and deranged. Having said, "Good, good" to the Great God Maheśvara, He taught the mantra for killing all spirits, which is: *oṃ vajrajvali hana hana sarvabhūtān hūṃ phaṭ.* As soon as this was spoken, a multitude of blazing vajras emerged from Vajradhara's pores, parching the bodies of all of the spirits, and killing all of the gods such as Indra, Brahmā and Viṣṇu. All of the Tathāgatas, full of wonder, said, "Excellent, Oh Glorious Vajradhara, Lord of the Fierce, it is good that in future times and future ages all spirits will be annihilated." Then he stated the mantra for summoning the consciousness to the corpse: *Oṃ vajra āyuṣe sara sārāsmin.* As soon as this was spoken a great wind from Vajradhara's anus revived their corpses, and only then could the spirits reenter their bodies. The spirits arose, and quaking with terror they begged that the Sugata protect them, saying "We will do as the Blessed Lord commands."
>
> Then the "Invincible" Bhūtapati (Lord of Spirits) bowed his head to the feet of the Blessed Lord in this maṇḍala, and begged the protection of the Great Lord of the Fierce, the Sugata who is Victorious throughout the Three Worlds *(Trailokavijaya).* The Blessed Lord replied: "Bhūteśvara, give all of the powers to all of the people of the four continents. Produce the mercurial and alchemical substances and give them to the people of Jambudvipa. Give them coral, gold, silver, pearls, beryl (*vaidūrya*), ruby *(padmarāga),* fire and water crystals, incense and divine robes. Accomplish the fruit of [mantra] repetition, and of worship. Offer without obstruction jeweled crowns, garments, scents, incense, flowers, and all foods and articles to all Tathāgatas. Turn away all fear of kings, enemies, lions and tigers. Hey Invincible Great Lord of Spirits, pay attention! Give the powers to the lazy, the undisciplined, the sinners, and the liars. If you do not give the powers to the Knowledge Holders (*vidhyādhara),* I will cleave with my adamantine vajra the heads of the serpent girls *(nāgini),* dryads *(yakṣi),* the world conqueresses, female titans *(asuri),* horse-headed women *(kinnari),* bird women *(garuḍi),* dragon ladies *(mahoragi),* fiendesses *(piśācikā),* female spirits *(bhūtāni)* and celestial nymphs *(apsarā),* and I will cast them into the eight great hells."[151]

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[150] / ri rab kyi byang phyogs su // chos kyi klu chen 'dzin pa yi // rdo rje 'dzin chen rab gtum pa // stobs chen lag ni rdo rje gzhag / de yi rkang pa g.yon pa yis // dbang phyug chen po mnan par bya // g.yas pa yis ni rkang pa yis // lha mo dka' zlog mnan par bya / (DK fol. 200b)

[151] /de nas dbang phyug chen po'i lha chen pos bcom ldan 'das kyi zhabs la spyi bos phyag 'tshal te / bcom ldan 'das la 'di skad ces gsol to // khro bo'i bdag po gdug pa dang ma rungs pa rnams gsod par byed pa bshad du gsol / de nas dbang phyug chen po'i lha chen po la legs so legs so zhes bya ba byin nas 'byung po thams cad gsod pa'i sngags kyi tshig gsungs pa / oṃ vajrajvali hana hana sarva bhūtān hūṃ

This passage is interesting for several reasons. The scatological element may have been intended to be humorous, indicating perhaps that it was not intended to be taken seriously. It is also interesting that the slaughter of Bhūtapati is depicted as being instigated by Maheśvara, who is usually considered to be identical to him.[152] It is also interesting that Vajradhara commands Bhūtapati, following his conversion, to teach the arts of mercurial alchemy and bestow the powers *(siddhi)* to people in the world. This appears to be an acknowledgment of the Śaiva mastery of the mercurial alchemy, which, as White has shown, was never the provenance of the Buddhists.[153] The "need" for subdual may reflect violence and other abuses on the part of the Śaivas as the Buddhist sources suggest, but it may also reflect the credibility of their threat as a competing tradition. As White suggested, "we may attribute the uncanny parallels between the Buddhist and Hindu tantrism of this

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phaṭ / de nas 'di gsungs pa tsam gyis dpal rdo rje 'chang gi ba spu'i bu ga rnams nas rdo rje 'bar ba du ma byung bar gyur te / 'byung po dang 'byung mo thams cad kyi lus bskams shing brgya byin dang / tshangs pa dang / khyab 'jug la sogs pa lha thams cad bsad par gyur to // de nas de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyis ngo mtshar ba dang bcas pas 'di skad ces gsungs so // legs so dpal ldan rdo rje 'chang khro bo'i bdag po chen po m 'ongs pa'i tshe ma 'ongs pa'i dus na 'byung po dang byung mo tshar gcod par byed pa ni legs so // de nas yang slar ro'i rnam par shes pa 'gugs pa'i sngags gsungs pa / oṃ vajra āyuṣe sara sārāsmin / de nas gsungs pa tsam gyis dpal rdo rje 'chang gi shangs kyi bu ga nas rlung chen po ro 'tsho bar byed pa byung par gyur te / de byung ba tsam gyis 'byung pa dang 'byung mo rnams kyi lus la bzhugs so // zhugs pa tsam gyis 'byung po dang 'byung mo rnams langs te cher 'jigs shing rab tu 'dar bar gyur pas bcom ldan 'das bskyab tu gsol / bde bar gshegs pa bskyab tu gsol / bcom ldan 'das kyi bka' bzhin bgyid do zhes smras so // de nas 'byung po'i bdag po gzhan gyis mi thub pa 'khor gyi dkyil 'khor der bcom ldan 'das kyi zhabs gnyis la spyi bos phyag 'tshal nas bcom ldan 'das khro bo'i bdag po chen po dpal srid pa gsum las rnam par rgyal ba bde bar gshegs pa bskyab tu gsol / bcom ldan 'das yongs su bskyab tu gsol / de nas bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa / 'byung po'i bdag po gling bzhi pa thams cad kyi mi rnams la dngos grub rdzogs par byin cig / 'dzam bu'i gling pa'i mi rnams la dngul chu dang bcud kyis len pa'i rdzas rnams sgrub cing bde bar byin cig / dbyig dang / gser dang / dngul dang / mu tig dang / vaiḍūrya dang / padmarāga dang / me dang chu'i shel dang / spos dang lha'i na bza' rnams byin cig / 'di zlos pa'i 'bras bu 'grub par gyis shig / bsnyen bskur gyis shig / de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad zlos pa'i rin po che'i cod pan dang / gos dang / dri dang / bdug pa dang / me tog la sogs pa dang / yo byad dang / rdzas thams cad bgegs med par byin cig / rgyal po'i 'jigs pa dang / dgra'i 'jigs pa dang / dgra'i 'jigs pa dang / seng ge'i 'jigs pa dang / stag gi 'jigs pa thams cad zlog cig / kye kye gzhan gyis mi thub pa 'byung po'i dbang phyug chen po myur du myur du nyon cig nyon cig / le lo can dang / tshul khrims 'chal ba dang / sdig pa byed pa dang / brdzun smra ba rnams la nges par dngos grub byin cig / gal te rig sngags 'chang la dngos grub mi sbyin na klu mo dang / dnod sbyin mo dang / sa la 'joms ma dang / lha ma yin mo / mi 'am ci mo dang / nam mkha' lding mo dang / lto 'phye chen mo dang / sha za mo dang / 'byung mo dang / dri za mo rnams kyi spyi bo mi phyed pa'i rdo rjes dags par bya zhing dmyal ba chen po brgyad du ltung bar bya'o / (DK fol. 238a-239a)

[152] See Long 1970, pp. 145-51.

[153] See White 1996a, p. 71.

pivotal [i.e., early medieval,] period to the simple fact that the two traditions were, in spite of their professed mutual animosity, so close to one another."[154]

In chapter three it was hypothesized that Tantric traditions, both Hindu and Buddhist, developed in an interrelated fashion, and that the mutual hostility, reflected in myths such as the above, that developed between them arose once distinct traditions were institutionalized, and thus competed for patronage. Some myths depict scenarios of considerable violence, such as dismemberment and/or consumption. A relatively mild example is the myth of Vairocana *qua* Mahākāla's conversion of the *ḍākini*, in which he consumed and partially digested them without apparently killing them. A more graphic scenario is depicted in the *Śriguhyagarbhatattvaviniścaya*, in which Heruka is depicted as killing Maheśvara and his band and then processing and consuming them with cannibalistic efficiency, as follows:

> Then the Blessed Lord Great Delight, existing in a [form with] nine heads, eighteen arms and eight legs, very fiercely through the art of disciplining out of compassion in a terrible voice said: "Hūṃ Hūṃ Hūṃ Ha Ha Ha Khāhi Khāhi Khāhi". Thereby Maheśvara and his great host of evil doers all lost their minds and senses. Releasing from within he drew them all out, he cut and chopped all of their limbs, drank all of their blood, and split all of their bones.[155]

The violence is less pronounced in the myth of Heruka's subdual of Bhairava, but still present. This myth also appears to be a rather elaborate attempt to explain the obvious Śaiva appearance of Heruka and his retinue.

Interestingly, this myth appears to be quite late, suggesting that it is not the product of the yogic renunciant communities, but rather the monastic communities in which the tradition was adopted, where the obvious Śaiva elements would more likely require explanation. There is no mention of the myth in the CST, which only contains a relatively innocuous comparison of Heruka and Bhairava, describing Heruka as the "terror of the

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[154] White 1996a, p. 73, insert mine.

[155] / de nas bcom ldan 'das dgyas pa chen po dbu dgu phyag bcwa brgyad zhabs brgyad du gnas nas thugs rjes 'dul ba'i thabs kyis shin tu khros nas rngam pa'i skad kyis / hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ ha ha ha khā hi khā hi khā hi zhes brjod pas / dbang phyug chen po la sogs pa gdug pa chen po'i tshogs chen po de dag gi snying dang dbang po kun phyung / nang grol kun drangs yang lag kun bcad gtubs nas khrag kun 'thungs nas rus pa kun 'chos so / (DK fol. 26a,b)

Great Terrifier" *(mahābhairavabhīṣaṇaṃ).*[156] Nor is there a clear presentation of this myth in any of the Explanatory Tantras or commentaries, although there are references to it in several texts.[157] The only coherent narrations of it are in Tibetan sources, two of which have been taken into consideration here, namely, Bu-ston's *Illumination of the General Meaning of the Laghusaṃvara Tantra* (DS) and Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan's *The Origination of Heruka* (HB).[158] This suggests that this myth derives not from the yogic milieu in which the Cakrasaṃvara tradition evidently originated, but in the monastic milieu into which it was eventually accepted.

This myth describes the origination of the sixty-two deity Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala. This maṇḍala centers around Heruka and Vajravārāhi, who are surrounded by the four "essence yoginis". They in turn are surrounded by three wheels *(cakra)* corresponding to body, speech and mind, each of which is inhabited by eight Hero-Heroine *(viravirā)* couples, for a total of twenty-four couples, forty-eight deities. The final eight deities are a group of fierce goddesses who guard the directions and quarters.[159]

The myth posits that the original basis of this maṇḍala was an arrangement of Śaiva deities. The hypothetical "Śaiva maṇḍala" consisted of Maheśvara and his wife Umā in union on the top of Mount Sumeru. They emanated twenty-four Bhairavas and their female

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[156] CST ch. 2 v. 14b; see appendix A below.

[157] See DM ch. 52, and Abhayākaragupta's *Śrisamputatantrarājaṭikāmnāyamañjari* ch. 17. Although no complete Indian versions of the myth survive, there is little doubt the myth was developed in India, given its focus on the Indian landscape. That it was composed in India is suggested by the existence of a rival Śiva counter-myth, which will be discussed below.

[158] Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan's account is summarized in Davidson 1991a, pp. 204 ff. Davidson also summarizes several other Sa-skya accounts of this myth. Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan's version is the most complete among these, however.

[159] This is the maṇḍala as presented in Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya.* The layout of this maṇḍala is presented by Tsongkhapa in his *dpal 'khor lo bde mchog lūipa'i mngon rtogs ngag 'don gyi cho ga'i rim pa.* A much more extensive discussion occurs in his *bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi mngon par rtogs pa'i rgya cher bshad pa 'dod pa 'jo ba.*

counter-parts, as well as four Umā devis and eight Mātrikā, fierce goddesses who correspond to the guardian goddesses of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala.[160]

Bu-ston narrates that these twenty-four Bhairavas and their consorts seized the twenty-four sacred sites.[161] These sites are scattered across the greater sub-continent, i.e., Jambudvipa. According to Bu-ston, the Bhairavas, following their seizure of these sites,

> All of them invited and made offerings to the god Maheśvara as they desired to gain control over the three realms of existence. Maheśvara, embracing Umā in love play, did not have time to go, so he emanated as his likeness twenty four stone liṅga in the likeness of a head, etc., and placed each one in each of the regions as objects of worship. They considered them as such and worshipped them and performed *gaṇacakra* rites there. On account of their preponderance of desire, the behavior of these gods was such that they embraced their wives during the four times [of the day]. Due to their overabundance of anger their killed many humans and played with their flesh and blood. And because of their preponderance of ignorance they were deluded regarding the cause and effect of their actions and the import of reality. Each one of them was surrounded by a retinue of evil doers. They engaged wantonly in the five objects of passion.[162] Having brought all of Jambudvipa into their control, the spoke haughty boasts. Performing perverse actions themselves, they also caused others to do so.[163]

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[160] For a description of the maṇḍala in English see Dawa-Samdup 1919, pp. 10-12, and Huntington and Huntington 1990, pp. 535-39.

[161] These 24 sacred sites are listed in CST ch. 41. They are briefly decribed by Bu-ston (DS pp. 54-57), and categorized by Abhayākaragupta in AM ch. 17, DT fol. 150. From these sources I have compiled the following list. The twenty-four places are divided into ten different categories, which are listed in italics before the sites that fall under it. The first circle, which is associated with the sky and with the *cittacakra* of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala, consists of the following eight sites: *piṭha:* (1) Pulliramalaya,(2) Jālandhara, (3) Oḍḍiyāna, (4) Arbuda; *upapiṭha:* (5) Godavari, (6) Rāmeśvari, (7) Devikoṭi, (8) Mālava. The second circle, corresponding to the earth and the *vākcakra,* are: *kṣetra:* (1) Kāmarūpa, (2) Oḍre, *upakṣetra:* (3) Triśakuni, (4) Kośala, (5) *chandoha:* Kaliṅga, (6) Lampaka, *upachandoha:* (7) Kāñci, (8) Himalaya. The third circle, corresponding to the underworld and the *kāyacakra,* are: *melāpaka:* (1) Pretapuri, (2) Gṛhadevatā, *upamelāpaka:* (3) Saurāṣṭra, (4) Suvarṇadvipa, *śmaśāna:* (4) Nāgara, (5) Sindhu, *upaśmaśāna:* (7) Maru, (8) Kulūṭa.

[162] The *pañcakāmaguṇa,* which are: the objects of sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. See Rigzin 1986, p. 217.

[163] / thams cad kyang srid pa gsum la dbang du bya ba'am bdag po 'dod pas / lha dbang phyug chen po spyan drangs te mchod pa byed pa la / dbang phyug chen po u ma dang 'khyud cing rol pas 'gror mi khom ste / de'i sprul pa rdo'i liṅga mgo lta bu la sogs pa nyi shu rtsa bzhi sprul nas yul re rer rten re re bzhag go / de rnams kyang rten la dmigs nas mchod cing tshogs 'khor byed do // lha de rnams kyang 'dod chags shas che bas spyod lam dus bzhir chung ma dang 'khyud / zhe sdang shas che bas mi mang po bsad nas mi sha dang mi mi khrag la rol / gti mug shas che bas las rgyu 'bras dang de kho na'i don la rmongs / re re'ang 'khor gdug pa can mang pos ni bskor / 'dod yon lnga rang dgar spyod // 'dzam bu gling thams cad dbang du bsdus nas dregs pa'i rlom tshig smra zhing / las log pa la rang yang zhugs nas gzhan yang 'god par byed do / (DS pp. 57-58)

Clearly, the myth sets up a "demonic" maṇḍala which is to be subdued and transformed into the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala. At least one element of this myth was drawn from non-Buddhist sources, which is the twenty-four sacred pilgrimage sites. At each of these sites, according to Bu-ston, there is a stone liṅga in the shape of a different body part, which evidently derives from the myth of Satī's death and the subsequent scattering of her body parts. This version of the myth, however, is atypical in positing twenty-four sites rather than the usual fifty-one.[164] As Sanderson has shown, it derives from an atypical text, the *Tantrasadbhāva*, one of the texts which Sanderson identifies as a Kāpālika Tantra.[165]

According to both Bu-ston and Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan, the "Teacher" of this Tantra was the Dharmakāya Buddha Vajradhara. In his Sambhogakāya form, the Causal Heruka, He observed these menacing figures from the pinnacle of the universe, Akaniṣṭha heaven, and decided to subdue them. He emanated as the Nirmāṇakāya Fruitional Heruka in union with Vajravārāhi, subduing atop Mount Sumeru Maheśvara and Umā who manifested in their fierce forms of Bhairava and Kālarātri. Twenty-four bodhisattvas likewise manifested as in fierce deity-couple forms to subdue the twenty-four Bhairavas in the twenty-four places.

The motivation for this subdual was compassionate. According to Bu-ston, this act of subdual not only awakened the deities themselves,[166] but also was a display put on for the sake of their deluded followers. Bu-ston describes this as follows:

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[164] Concerning the 51 Śāktapiṭha see Sircar 1973 and Pal 1988.

[165] The major irregularity of this list of 24 places is *gṛhadevatā*, 'household deity' which does not correspond to any known place-name. Bu-ston claims that it is in Khotan in Central Asia, which seems quite speculative. According to Sanderson the *Tantrasadbhāva*, in *adhikāra* 16, lists not only the 24 places, but also a category of deities that corresponds to each. The deity class that corresponds to Saurāṣṭra is the *gṛhadevatā;* Sanderson thus speculates that the Buddhists derived this list from this or a similar source, but mistakenly included *gṛhadevatā* as a place name in place of *samudrakukṣi*, "seashore", the only name in *Tantrasadbhāva* not included in the Buddhist Yoginitantras. See Sanderson 1994a, pp. 95 and 99-100, n. 20.

[166] Bu-ston wrote that "Pressing Rudra-Bhairava and Kālarātri underfoot and taming them, Bhairava became completely, perfectly awakened in the underworld." / drag po 'jigs byed dang dus mtshan mo zhabs 'og tu mnan te btul bas 'jigs byed sa 'og tu mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas so / (DS p. 60)

> He saw all of the vessel worlds and the essence beings without exception as being completely filled with the luminosity of reality *(dharmadhātu)* which is the essence of awakening. For the sake of those to be tamed, He radiated from the hair pores of his Beatific Body *(sambhogakāya)* the various wheels of the maṇḍala within the billion worlds. By the art of taming the varities of disciples, he appeared to their eyes and ears as these deities for those disciples together with their vessel worlds, filling completely the realm of space.[167]

This "display" entailed Heruka and his entourage taking on the appearance of Bhairava and his, as a strategy *(upāya)* for the conversion of their followers. Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan gives a detailed description of this conversion process, which involves three stages, "enjoyment", "dissolution" and "control". The first, enjoyment, entailed taking on the forms and behavior of the deities to be subdued. He wrote that Heruka and his host

> enjoyed both their food and their ornaments. Since they enjoyed their food, flesh and blood, in the *gaṇacakra* they are called the 'Glorious Host of Blood Drinking Deities'.[168] Moreover, they stole their ornaments, which is the reason why Heruka and his retinue took as their ornaments the six insignia *(ṣaṇmudrā)*, the human head necklace, the tiger hide undergarment and so forth.[169]

Bu-ston adds that they also forcibly stole the girls *(kumāri)* of the subdued gods, and enjoyed with them the "four joys" *(caturānanda)*, i.e., the sexual yogas.[170]

With regard to their "dissolution", this is basically a form of what might be called "compassionate killing". Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan wrote that Heruka and his host "dissolved the consciousnesses of Mahādeva's annihilated deity host into clear light. The Buddha predicted that in the future [Mahādeva would become] the Tathāgata Lord of

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[167] / snod kyi 'jig rten ma lus shing / bcud kyi sems can lus pa med pa'i sems can byang chub kyi snying po can gyi chos kyi dbyings kyi snang ba kun tu gang bar gzigs nas / gdul bya de'i don du longs spyod rdzogs pa'i sku'i rang gi ba spu'i bu ga nas gling bzhi pa bye ba phrag brgyar dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo sna tshogs pa spros te / gdul bya sna tshogs pa 'dul ba'i thabs kyis nam mkha'i khams yongs su gang bar gdul bya snod dang ldan pa rnams la / lha'i mig dang rna ba la snang bar gyur to / (DS p. 62)

[168] Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan is making a pun on a common Tibetan "translation" of Śriheruka, which is "Glorious Blood Drinker". For a discussion of this translation see section III.C.1.a of Tsongkhapa's text in appendix C.

[169] / dang po ni kha zas dang rgyan cha gnyid la longs spyod de / khong rnams kyi kha zas sha dron khrag dron du khrag dron du bcas pa de rnams tshogs kyi 'khor lor longs spyad pas dpal khrag 'thung gi lha tshogs zhes bya'o // gzhan yang rgyan cha phrog nas he ru ka gtso 'khor gyi rgyan cha byas pas phyag rgya drug dang mi mgo'i do shal dang / stag lpags kyi sham thabs la sogs pa'i rgyu mtshan yang de yin no / (HB p. 299.4)

[170] See DS p. 63.

Ashes."[171] Finally, their "control" over these deities is symbolized by their use of their bodies as seats.[172]

This myth on the one hand represents the adoption of non-Buddhist elements while at the same time representing the subordination of these elements within a Buddhist cosmic hierarchy, graphically represented by the placement of the Śaiva deities under the feet of their Buddhist vanquisher. The myth provides a quite elaborate tripartite scheme for this process of appropriation and subordination of a non-Buddhist tradition, a thus is a Buddhist version of the Hindu myth of the destruction of the Triple Cities *(tripurāntaka)*, which depicts the Buddhist or Jain heresy as a delusive strategy produced by a Hindu deity.[173] It should be of no surprise that this contentious myth of the tradition's origin attracted attract negative attention. In fact, this Buddhist myth of Heruka inspired a Śaiva counter-myth, which was based upon the Hindu model of the *tripurāntaka.*[174]

One might wonder what the "origin" of this origin myth is. As suggested above, this myth is a *bricolage*, as Lévi-Strauss argues all myths are. This myth was composed in a setting where the Śaivas were a strongly felt presence, and the myth itself may have Śaiva prototypes.[175] It also follows a long lineage of Buddhist myths of the subdual and conversion of chthonic deities such as the *nāgas*, an early example being Vajrapāṇi's subdual of the Nāga Apalāla, discussed above. Clearly, its composers were *bricoleurs*,

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[171] / lha chen po gtso 'khor rnams tshar bcad de rnam par shes pa 'od gsal du bstim nas / ma 'ongs pa'i dus su de bzhin gshegs pa thal ba'i dbang po zhes bya bar sangs rgyas par lung bstan no / (HB pp. 299.4-330.1)

[172] See HB p. 300.1.

[173] Concerning the myth of the Triple City see O'Flaherty 1976, pp. 180-204.

[174] The thirteenth century Kashmir author Jayadratha recorded this Śaiva counter-myth in his *Haracaritacintāmaṇi*. This myth involves the typical *tripurāntaka* scenario. The gods are being oppressed by demons who are invincible due to their devotion to Śiva. Bṛhaspati thus devises the heresy of the Buddhist Tantras, replete with their images of Buddhist deities trampling Hindu deities, which causes the demons to lose their faith in Śiva. This, of course, gives Śiva the opportunity to destroy them. See Sanderson 1994a, pp. 93-94.

[175] Iyanaga, in his study of Sino-Japanese accounts of the subdual of Maheśvara by Trailokyavijaya and Vajrapāṇi, concluded that one source for these legends is the legend of Durgā's subdual of Śumbha and Niśumbha, which he argues was a legend that developed in a Śaiva-Śākta milieu. See Iyanaga 1985, p. 730. These Buddhist myths were in turn, it seems, prototypes of Heruka's.

drawing from diverse sources to create a new mythic tapestry, one quite astounding in laying claim that all of Jambudvīpa, centered on its pivot of mastery, Mount Sumeru, was a worldly manifestation of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala. The late and fragmented appearance of the myth in the Indic literature suggests that it was composed in a monastic context, but it is impossible to know this with any certainty. In any case, the myth illustrates perfectly the state of "hostile interdependency" which, as argued above, characterized the Buddhist-Śaiva relationship in early medieval India, and thus dramatizes the tensions which Buddhist communities faced during this period.

The spaces depicted in this myth were contested spaces; the myth depicts the entire Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala as hard-wired into the Indian sub-continent, with its nerve center at Kailash in Tibet. Most if not all of these spaces are also claimed by non-Buddhists, and it appears quite common for different traditions to claim the same sacred site, each interpreting it differently; it appears in this case the Buddhist claim to most of them was quite weak.[176] While the Buddhist presence has largely faded in India, the situation is different in Nepal, where the sacred spaces are still very much contested and where it is often very difficult to distinguish Buddhist and Hindu deities such as Saṃvara and Bhairava. Within these contested spaces, often the same image is worshipped as different deities by practitioners of different religions.

Slusser noted that many of the deities in Nepal are iconographically ambiguous, and that, "iconographically, even the famous Kāla Bhairava of the Kathmandu Darbar Square conforms as much to Saṃvara as to Bhairava."[177] Chalier-Visuvalingam notes that "the spontaneity with which Tibetan pilgrims make it a point to venerate this Kāla Bhairab at Hanumān Dhoka is no doubt due to this identification," (1989:209) i.e., of Bhairava and Saṃvara.

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[176] None of the *piṭha* are associated, for example, with any of the classical Buddhist sacred sites, such as Bodhgaya.

[177] M. S. Slusser (1982), *Nepal Mandala*, (Princeton University Press), cited in Chalier-Visuvalingam 1989, p. 209.

This myth justifies the worship of clearly Hindu deities by Buddhists, such as the Paśupati and Guhyeśvarī at Paśupatināth in Kathmandu. Such was argued by the eighteenth century Tibetan master Kham-sprul Chos-kyi-nyi-ma, who wrote the following concerning this site:

> If one concentrates on the vanquished here (i.e. at Guhyeṣorī) is the *liṅga* of Śiva and the *yoni* of Kālī. They are here. If one concentrates on the vanquisher, here are the *liṅga* of Heruka and the *yoni* of Vajravārāhī. The reason why these are found in important places is because, formerly, in the twenty-four countries, the terrible Bhairava and the goddess Kālī having each produced and installed *liṅga* and *mudrā* of the lotus as supports, the glorious Heruka, with his consort, followers and their emanations, totally overcame them. At the same time of the construction of the *maṇḍala*, these were blessed as supports of Heruka... the basic supports (in Nepal)... are two in number: Paśupati and Guhyeṣorī. That is why, at the present time, Hindus, firmly attached to their own modes of thought, consider that these are the supports of Śiva and his śakti and make their offerings there. And we Buddhists, judging that the victorious ṣubdued the defeated, also make offerings. Moreover, if one considers that Śiva and the others grouped together in these places, and if one makes offerings there and if one takes refuge there, the refuge will be destroyed or, sometimes, certain of its aspects will be harmed.[178]

Buddhist and Hindu deities can co-exist in what Macdonald calls a "state of equilibrium" *(l'état d'équilibre)*, but it is an uneasy equilibrium, particularly when the majority view is that the sites are Hindu. Hence, a Buddhist *can* worship there provided that he or she *sees* the site in terms of the Buddhist myth, but if Buddhists lose their perspective and subscribe to the dominant view and still worship there, they risk losing their Buddhist identity, which is ritually affirmed through the act of taking *refuge* in the three jewels, the Buddha, Dharma and Saṃgha, *not* Śiva. Hence, widespread worship of these sites would not be an effective strategy for a minority Buddhist community, since only the literate elite familiar with the myth would be able to maintain Buddhist identity under such circumstances.

It is thus not surprising that while Indian Buddhists recognized that the twenty-four sacred places together constituted a pan-Indian pilgrimage route, they tended to downplay the practice of pilgrimage instead, and focus instead on the internalization of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala. Tsuda has claimed that this withdrawal from the actual practice of

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[178] Tranlated in Macdonald 1990, p. 205.

the pilgrimage in favor of its internalization represents a degeneration away from the ideals of the Mahāyāna. He argued that

> After the theory of the *piṭhas* was established, they substituted the yogic practice of making humours circulate within the body for the Mahāyānic practice of doing the pilgrimage along the lengthy path of the three great uncountable eons, or at least going on pilgrimage all over the Indian subcontinent, though pilgrimage itself was already a deed symbolizing the former... They should not have attempted to solve this problem through the Tantric logic; they should not have made the practice of pilgrimage internal. In doing so, they crushed the Mahāyānic practice which was needed to realize the truth shown in the fourth consecration. (1978:230)

His argument is unwarranted for several reasons. First, while Buddhists have long practiced pilgrimage, this particular pilgrimage route is clearly not Buddhist, so its non-practice is not discordant with Buddhist precedent. In addition, Buddhists have long had a focus on meditation which entails an internalization of one's perspective. Often there are elite and popular modes of practice within a given tradition. For example, a Buddhist lay person might recite Avalokiteśvara's mantra while circumambulating a stūpa in hope of gaining merit, while a more advanced practitioner might recite the same mantra in the process of doing the complex visualizations that commonly occur in the Tantric *sādhana.*

It is true that Tantric practitioners reject aspects of the Mahāyāna methodology, but they remained within the same conceptual space of the Mahāyāna. That is, they claimed to have a more efficacious methodology which would effect the same goal of complete awakening, allowing the practitioner to dramatically accelerate the process of evolution, in effect leaping over the three incalculable eons in as short as one lifetime, as discussed in section 3.3 below. This tendency, however, is common to all Buddhist Tantric traditions and has nothing to do with the *piṭha,* a specific feature of the *yoginitantra* traditions. Tsuda also errs in assuming that pilgrimage is required in the Mahāyāna traditions but rejected in the Vajrayāna; in both traditions it is in fact a popular but not compulsory practice.

Abhayākaragupta certainly would not have agreed with Tsuda. In chapter seventeen of the *Āmnāyamañjari,* following a description of the twenty-four *piṭha,* Abhayākaragupta compiled a taxonomy of the five levels of disciples on the basis of the

manner in which they engage with the *piṭha.* As one ascends the levels one moves toward greater degrees of internalization, which Abhayākara understood as achieving the classical Mahāyāna goals of complete awakening via the path of the bodhisattva. He wrote that:

> There are five types of disciples, distinguished as the lesser, the middling, the lesser amongst the great, the middling amongst the great, and the greatest of the great. In terms of the lesser, the outer regions such as the *piṭha,* etc. are taught. This is stated in the *Vimalaprābha.* Here the *piṭha,* etc. such as Jālandhara are taught so that the childish might wander the land; this is not applicable to everyone. This is because the Vajrayoginis who are born among the brahman, kṣatriya, vaiśya and śudra castes and among the outcastes live also in the city, and they also exist in lands such as Tibet and China. This is not taught in the Concise Tantras, but it does say in the Extensive Tantras that the *piṭha* etc. are in all countries and in all cities.
>
> Taken in terms of the middling, the *piṭha* etc. of the goddesses of the maṇḍala are arranged as the foundation of the mansion.[179]
>
> In terms of the lesser amongst the great, the *piṭha* etc. are shown to be in the body in the head, etc., by the process wherein the pilgrimage circuit of the childish is completely transformed by the syllables *puṃ* etc. The channels which run between them are also referred to as the goddesses.[180]
>
> In terms of the middling amongst the great, Vajradevis are placed in the *piṭha* etc., that is the head, etc., which exist thus in the body, and in their natural actuality of the channels which run between them, even without the [use of] seed syllables, etc., by means of the Perfection Stage, in order [to achieve the station of] aspirational practice *(adhimukticaryāvihāra).*[181]
>
> The greatest of the great who abide in the perfection stage create magical power from all of the wheels of the maṇḍala, which are the reality of the Stages *(bhūmi)* and Transcendences *(pāramitā),*[182] by means of the *piṭha* etc. which are the natural actuality of the eyes etc. in the body, the bodhicitta of voidness and compassion inseparable. With regard to them it has been said "Great Intuition abides in one's own body, free of all fancy," and so forth.[183] "Thus, he

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[179] This refers to the visualization of the *piṭha* in the maṇḍala.

[180] This refers to the "body maṇḍala" practices of the Creation Stage, wherein the maṇḍala is visualized within the body, which each of the deities assigned to a different part of the body.

[181] Abhayākara refers here to the preliminary stage of the aspiring bodhisattva before he or she enters actual bodhisattva path, and precedes the first *bhūmi.* See Dayal 1932, pp. 53-54.

[182] These are the stages and practices of the bodhisattvas, discussed at length in Dayal 1932.

[183] Abhayākara here quotes HV, I.i.12.a,b: *dehastaṃ ca mahājñānaṃ sarvasaṃkalpavarjitaṃ* (Snellgrove 1959a, vol. 2, p. 2)

> is called none other than Master of the Ten Stages and Lord",[184] i.e., the principle one.[185]

The internalized of the twenty-four *piṭha*, etc., by means of the assignment of seed syllables to the body parts *(bija-nyāsa)* is in fact a practice commonly found within the Cakrasaṃvara practice traditions. It occurs, for example, in Lūipa's influential *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya*, and in many later Indian and Tibetan *sādhana*s.[186]

It is in the internalization of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala and the identification of the meditator with Heruka, Vajravārāhi and their retinue that the tradition becomes constituted as distinctly Buddhist. Despite the disparity of origins, the Cakrasaṃvara as practiced as a living tradition in Tibet is Buddhist in function if not in form.

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[184] Abhayākara here refers to HV I.vii.11.c,d: *daśabhūmiśvaro nātha ebhir anyair na kathyate* (Snellgrove 1959a, vol. 2, p. 22)

[185] / gdul bya'i sems can rnams kyang rnam pa lnga ste / chung ngu dang 'bring dang chen po'i chung ngu dang chen po'i 'bring dang chen po'i chen po'i dbye ba las so // de la chung ngu'i dbang du byas nas phyi rol gyi gnas la sogs pa'i yul bstan to // de skad du yang dri ma med pa'i 'od du gsung pa / 'dir thun mong du byis pa rnams yul du 'khyam pa'i don du dzā landha ra la sogs par gsungs shing / de yang thams cad la khyab par byed par mi 'gyur ro // bram ze dang rgyal rigs dang rje rigs dang dmangs rigs mtha'i rigs rnams su skyes pa'i rdo rje rnal 'byor ma rnams ni grong khyer gcig na yang gnas pa'i phyir na / bod dang rgya nag la sogs pa'i yul rnams na yang gnas pa la sogs pa rnams yod do // de rnams ni bsdus pa'i rgyud gzhan du ma bstan pa rnams so // rgyas pa'i rgyud gzhan du ni yul thams cad grong khyer thams cad du gnas la sogs pa rnams su gsungs so zhes so // 'bring gi dbang du byas nas khang pa brtsegs pa'i sa gzhi la dkyil 'khor pa'i lha mo rnams kyi gnas la sogs pa rnam par gzhag pa'o // chen po'i chung ngu'i dbang du byas nas puṃ yig la sogs pa yongs su gyur pa'i byis pa'i 'khor lo'i tshul gyis gnas la sogs pa rnams lus la mgo bo la sogs pa rnams la bstan cing / de dang der son pa'i rtsa rnams kyang lha mo rnams zhes par ro // chen po'i 'bring po'i dbang du byas pa las rdzogs pa'i rim pas sa bon gyi yi ge la sogs pa med par yang lus la ji ltar gnas pa'i spyis bo la sogs pa rnams gnas la sogs pa rnams su dang / de dang der son pa'i rtsa'i rang bzhin ngo bo rnams su rdo rje lha mo rnams zhes par lhag par mos pa'i don du rnam par gzhag go // chen po'i chen po rdzogs pa'i rim pa la gnas pa na ni / stong pa nyid dang snying rje dbyer med pa'i byang chub kyi sems lus la sogs pa'i mig yor gyi ngo bo'i rang bzhin gnas la sogs pas sa dang pha rol tu phyin pa'i bdag nyid dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo kun nas sgyu rtsal du byed do // de'i dbang du byas nas snar gsungs te / ye shes chen po rang lus gnas // kun du rtog pa thams cad spang / zhes pa la sogs pa'o // mgon po sa bcu'i dbang phyug ste // 'dis te gzhan gyis brjod mi bya / (AM, DT fol. 152a,d)

[186] See for example, Padma dkar-po's *snyan rgyud yid bzhin nor bu'i bskyed pa'i rim pa rgyas pa 'dod pa'i re skong zhes bya ba*, trans. in Beyer 1974, pp. 140-53. See esp. p. 148.

6.3.2 The Purification of Heruka

Śraddhākaravarma, a Kaśmiri pandit who traveled to Tibet in the late tenth century and collaborated with the great Tibetan translator Rin-chen bZang-po,[187] wrote a curious little text called the "Purification of Śriheruka" (*Heruka'i rnam par dag pa, *Herukaviśuddhi)*. This text provides his readers with a symbolic explanation of Heruka, his implements and subsidiary elements in his maṇḍalic environment, in which all of the non-Buddhist ornaments and so forth, depicted in the origin myth as deriving from the cult of Bhairava, are explained in terms of normative Mahāyāna Buddhist categories, namely in terms of the stages *(bhūmi)* and trancendences *(pāramitā)* of a bodhisattva's practice, just as we encountered above in Abhayākara's writing. The text begins as follows:

> The teaching on the purification of the Reverend Blessed Lord Śriheruka has the nature of the purity of true concentration (*saṃyaksamādhi*). It is true, that is, unerring, because it is not common to the disciples (*śrāvaka*) and so forth, and because mind as the [five wisdoms] such as the individually discerning *(pratyavekṣanājñāna)*, in the form of the moon and vajra, the five clans or the single host, is the very nature of consciousness. It is the stage for practice by means of devotion, devotion meaning in particular, the practice of taking as the self the experiential uniformity *(ekarasa)* of the aids to awakening *(bodhipakṣikadharma)* in meditation on the deity through great devotion, because this is the antidote to misknowledge. The purification of each thing is none other than this.
>
> His four faces have the nature of the four joys, because he is the nature of the joys which arise from contact with the four great elements, and of the fruit, the exalted doors of liberation such as voidness.[188] The double drum *(ḍamaru)* in the first of his twelve hands is the purification of the Transcendence of Generosity because it continually sounds the teaching of the maṇḍala's wheel of the inseparability of self and other. It is the antidote for the jealousy which steals the happiness of others. It is the Stage of Delight *(pramūditabhūmi)*, because it gives rise to the enjoyment of the great bliss of the inseparability of self and other.
>
> His battle axe *(paraśu)* is the purity of the Transcendence of Discipline *(śilapāramitā)* , as it cuts off with discipline the disorder of breaking the commitments of eating and so forth, as well as the non-virtuous actions such as killing. It is the Stage of Stainlessness *(vimalabhūmi)*, because it turns one

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[187] See Tucci 1932, p. 49.

[188] He refers here to the *trivimokṣamukha:* Voidness *(śūnyatā)*, Signlessness *(animittatā)*, and Wishlessness *(apraṇihitatā)*.

> away from all sins. His flaying knife *(kartari)* is the purification of the Transcendence of Patience, because it completely cuts away impatience and disturbance of consciousness brought about by being struck with a sword, staff, cudgel and so forth by someone thoroughly agitated. It is the Stage of Luminosity *(prabhākaribhūmi)*. This means that one rests one's mind without disturbance, and by thus resting one destroys misknowledge. Lacking that, stainless intuition *(anāvilajñāna)* shines.[189]

What are we to make of this? Concerning its title, it should probably be understand as referring to a method of purification involving the identification of oneself as the Tantric deity Heruka. The ambiguity of the term *viśuddhi*, however, also permits another interpretation, which is the purification *of* Heruka, in the sense of sanitizing the deity of the non-Buddhist elements with which he was associated.[190]

Here it is important to understand the context into which it had been written. The translation of Tantric texts, and presumably the dissemination of Tantric practices, were controlled during the imperial period, and the Unexcelled Yogatantras were particularly singled out for proscription. (Karmay 1980a:151) Later, such widespread transgressive

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[189] / bcom 'ldan 'rje btsun dpal he ru ka'i rnam par dag pa gsungs pa ni / yang dag pa'i ting nge 'dzin rnam par dag pa'i rang bzhin can no // yang dag pa ni phyin ci ma log pa ste / nyan thos la sogs pa dang thun mong ma yin pa'i phyir ro // sems so sor rig pa la sogs pa zla ba dang / rdo rje rnam pa dang / rigs lnga dang / phung po gcig gis rnams par shes pa'i rang bzhin nyid yin pa'i phyir / de nyid mos pas spyod pa' sa yin la / mos pa ni lhag par mos pas te / khyad par can gyis lha'i rnam par bsgom pa'i byang chub kyi phyogs kyi chos ma lus pa ro cig pa'i bdag nyid can gyi spyod pa ni / ma rig pa'i gnyen po yin pa'i phyir ro zhes bya ba'i don to // yang na dngos po so so'i rnam par dag pa gzhan dang gzhan ma yin te / zhal bzhi ni dga' ba bzhi'i rang bzhin can te / 'byung ba chen po bzhi 'dus te reg pa las 'byung ba'i dga' ba dang / stong pa nyid la sogs pa rnam par thar pa'i sgo'i khyad par can gyi 'bras bu'i rang bzhin yin pa'i phyir ro // de la phyag bcu gnyis kyi dang pos da ma ru ni sbyin pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa'i rnam par dag pa yin te / 'di ltar rang dang gzhan dbyer med pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo'i rnam pa rtag tu chos kyi sgra nyan pa'i phyir ro // ser sna dang gzhan gyi bde ba 'phrog pa'i gnyen po yin no // de nyid ni sa rab tu dga' ba ste / bdag dang gzhan dbyer med pa'i bde ba chen po'i dga' ba de skyed par byed pa nyid yin pa'i phyir ro // dgra sta ni tshul khrims kyi pha rol tu phyin pa rnam par dag pa yin te / 'di ltar srog gcod pa la sogs pa mi dge ba dang / bza' bar bya ba'i dam tshig las 'das pa la sogs pa 'chal ba'i tshul khrims kyis 'dus byas gcod par byed pa'phyir ro // de nyid ni sa dri ma med pa ste / sdig pa thams cad las ldog par byed pa nyid yin pa'i phyir ro // gri gug ni bzod pa'i pha rol tu phyin pa rnam par dag pa ste / pha rol kun nas 'khrug pas mtshon dang dbyig pa dang / phag dum la sogs pas bsnun pas rnam par shes pa 'khrug cing mi bzod pa kun nas gcod par byed pa yin pa'i phyir ro // de nyid sa 'og byed pa yin te / mi 'khrugs pas sems la gnas shing / gnas pas mi shes pa rnam par 'jig la / de med pas ye shes myogs pa med pa rab tu gsal bar byed pa zhes bya ba'i don no / (DT fol. 125a,b)

[190] Sferra comments that an implication of the term *viṣuddhi* is that it "deals with the crucial theme of the essential nature of things, not merely as aiming at theoretical definitions, but also as a starting point of the practice that leads to awakening. In this second context we see the term "purification" is used in two different ways. One the one hand it indicates pureness, Buddha's nature itself, the ever shining and pure condition that is always present in all things. This pureness represents one of the foundations on which the practice and doctrine of the Buddhist Tantras is based and which can be exemplified by the formulas *viśuddhis tathatā* and *tathatātmikā śuddhiḥ*. On the other hand, the term indicates "purification" and therefore a process or a means: *yayā sarvabhāvā nirdoṣā bhavanti sā viśuddhiḥ*." (1999:85-86)

practices, including sexual rites, sacrifice, and offerings of impure substances was strongly criticized by the Tibetan king Lha bla-ma Ye-shes-'od,[191] who sent Rinchen bzang-po to India to learn if such teachings were orthodox or not, and whose efforts to improve the lapsed state of monasticism in Tibet earned him much esteem later as the instigator of the second transmission of the Dharma into Tibet. This transmission, however, was dominated by the very transgressive type of texts of which Ye-shes-'od was suspicious. Undoubtedly, Rin-chen bzang-po discovered that these traditions were all the rage in India, and proceeded, with the help of Śraddhākāravarma and others, to translate and transmit them into Tibet.

Śraddhākaravarma's text goes on to associate all of the major iconographic elements of Heruka with normative Mahāyāna concepts such as the Transcendences and Stages of the bodhisattva path. His strategy appears to have been to attempt what Thurman calls the integration of the *sūtra*s within the Tantras (1985:382), i.e., the manner in which Tantric exegetes drew upon classical Mahāyāna *sūtric* categories to thoroughly render the Tantras Buddhist in function. This may have had the result of easing Tibetan anxieties concerning the orthodoxy of the tradition.

King Ye-she-'od and his countrymen were particularly concerned about the transgressions, particularly sexual transgressions but also those involving violence and sorcery, that were allegedly being practiced by some Tantrikas in Tibet.[192] Śraddhākara may have had such doubts in mind when he wrote that, for example, Heruka's axe "cuts off with of discipline the disorder of breaking the commitments of eating and so forth, as well as the non-virtuous actions such as killing." His audience might have wondered if such fierce aggressive behavior attributed to deities such as Heruka befits an Awakened deity.

Evidently, this question was asked in India, and the Buddhists had an answer. In effect, they bifurcated ferocity *(krodha)* into two distinct forms, into what might be termed

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[191] See Karmay 1980a p. 154.

[192] See Ruegg 1984, pp. 377-78.

"wrath", a secondary addiction *(upakleśa)* associated with anger, and the other into a form of "fierce compassion". The latter is not related to anger at all, the Buddhists claim, but is an form of liberative art, what we might term "tough love", in which one manifests the appearance of wrath in order to discipline those who are unresponsive to more peaceful pedagogical methods. This reasoning was invoked by Buddhaśrijñāna in his *Śriherukasādhanavṛtti*, as follows:

> If ferocity *(krodha)* is a virtue which arises in the compassionate mind, yet as is it [one of the twenty] secondary addictions *(upakleśa)*, classified with anger, how can it be called "compassionate ferocity"? It is generated preceded by compassion, just as the son is of the mother. Thus, it is prescribed as a method of ferocity which is an effect proceeding from the cause which is compassion, and it is like fire. As for the other, it arises from the cause of the "me" and the "mine", and it is an effect which manifests in having an afflicted mind... It is on account of this that it is said that [he] "blazes like the Destroying Fire", for he manifests the appearance of that. He is a "Terrifier" because he terrifies Mahādeva and so forth. Since he is unusually terrifying he is "Great" *(mahābhairava)*.[193]

Buddhists considered Heruka and his entourage as embodiments of the Dharmakāya Buddha Vajradhara, and their embodiment in such fierce forms was thus considered a manifestation of awakened compassion, albeit a relatively extreme form. It thus is a dramatization of a uniquely Tantric soteriology, which is that even the most evil of beings can be awakened, and that this awakening is achieved by the very means of their sources of bondage. Davidson argued, concerning this myth, that "as soteriology, it implies that no depravity is irredeemable; indeed, it affirms that that the defiled condition will be answered by the insistent movement towards awakening, becoming finally the stuff of enlightenment itself." (1991a:227)

There is no doubt whatsoever that Śraddhākara was completely successful in this attempt at "purification", for not only was Heruka "purified" in the eyes of most Tibetans,

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[193] / gal te snying rje sems las byung ba dge ba yin la / khro bo ni nye ba'i nyon mongs la zhe sdang gi cha la gtogs pa yin na ji ltar snying rje'i khro bo zhes bya zhe na / 'di ni snying rje sngon du song bas bskyed pa yin te / dper na ma yi bu lta bu'o // de bas na rgyu snying rje las byung ba 'bras bu khro bo'i tshul de yang bsnyen pa yin me lta bu'o // cig shos ni rgyu bdag dang gi las byung ba / 'bras bu yang mnar sems dang ldan par 'byung ste /.../ de phyir / 'jig pa'i me dang 'bar mnyam pa // zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos so // de cha lugs bstan pa'i phyir // 'jigs byed ces bya ste / ma hā de ba la sogs par 'jigs par byed pa'o // phal pas kyang de ltar 'jigs pa yod pas de'i chen po'o / (DT fol. 45a)

but he also became a preeminent means of purification. His application of what I have called "creative commentary" should not be viewed as simply a negative attempt to obscure Heruka's heterodox associations. It was that, but much more; it was also an attempt to reinterpret and reposition Heruka and the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, to recreate them in and for a new cultural context. In this light it is worth recalling Smith's argument concerning the importance of such acts of interpretation. In contradistinction to the scholarly tradition that privileges the origins, Smith proposes

> an enterprise that would insist on the value of the prosaic, the expository, the articulate. It is to explore the creativity of what I have termed in another context, 'exegetical ingenuity,' as a basic constituent to human culture. It is to gain an appreciation of the complex dynamics of tradition and its necessary dialectics of self-limitation and freedom. To do these things....is to give expression to what I believe is the central contribution that religious studies might make,.... the realization that, in culture, there is no text, it is all commentary; that there is no primordium, it is all history; that all is application. The realization that, regardless of whether we are dealing with 'texts' from literate or non-literate cultures, we are dealing with historical processes of reinterpretation, with tradition. That, for a given group at a given time to choose this or that way of interpreting their tradition is to opt for a particular way of relating themselves to their historical past and their social present. (1987a:196)

Through the efforts of commentators such as Śraddhākaravarma and Tsongkhapa, the Cakrasaṃvara became one of the most popular Tantric traditions in Tibet, and Tantric practices centering on him became quite widespread. One *sādhana* focusing on Heruka which is very popular among practitioners of the dGe-lugs-pa school today is entitled "The Śrī Cakrasaṃvara Yoga of Triple Purification". This triple purification is enacted by identifying one's body, speech, and mind with the body, speech and mind of Heruka and Vajravārāhi. This is effected by visualizing oneself in their forms, reciting their mantras, and contemplating the esoteric significance of the syllables *śri he ru ka.*[194]

There seems to be two important lessons to be learned here. The first is that the one should be careful to balance textual research with research on the ground. In studying the *texts* of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition it is not difficult to be impressed with the terrible and

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[194] This *sādhana* is entitled *dpal 'khor lo sdom pa'i dag pa gsum gyi rnal 'byor.* It is contained in a popular book of *sādhanas* entitled *bla ma'i rnal 'byor dang yi dam khag gi bdag bskyed sogs zhal 'don gces btus* (Dharamsala:Tibetan Cultural Printing Press, 1994).

terrifying imagery associated with fierce Tantric deities such as Heruka, and to be led into speculation concerning their heretical origins. These impressions are valid; the texts do contain such passages, and the myth of Heruka is striking in its exhibition of aggression and its admission of the non-Buddhist origins of important elements of his cult. It should be noted that most Tibetans, on the other hand, do not see Heruka in this fashion.

While many of the more scholarly and/or dedicated practitioners are aware of the myth that surrounds Heruka and his awesome attributes, a large number of Tibetans with whom I spoke viewed him as a powerful but almost benevolent figure, who watches over and guards Tibet from the top of Mount Kailash, and who is thoroughly associated with Buddhism. Such persons might view to Heruka as a powerful and important deity, but tend not to be deeply involved in Tantric practice; their engagement with Heruka is typically manifested in pilgrimage to one or more of the many pilgrimage sites dedicated to Heruka that are scattered across Tibet, pilgrimages that are viewed as liberating provided that one's motivation is pure and devotion strong. Among Tibetans, then, there appears to be a bifurcation between popular devotional practice and the more intense and involved levels of Tantric practice, similar perhaps to the different approaches to Kālī taken by the *bhaktas* and *sādhakas* in Bengal, according to McDermott.[195]

A second point concerns the way in which the Cakrasaṃvara tradition was naturalized to a Tibetan context. Just as one can become "buddhified", i.e., awakened, via the visualization of oneself and one's immediate environment as a maṇḍala, so too was the terrain of Tibet sacralized via the creative imposition of the Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala upon the terrain of Tibet, a process which Macdonald called its "Buddha-isation" of the landscape.[196] The maṇḍala of the Cakrasaṃvara was imaginatively imposed upon the landscape of Tibet, with various sites associated with the twenty-four *pīṭha* in the myth, and with the body, speech and mind wheels of the maṇḍala associated with three sacred peaks in Tibet, Ti-se

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[195] See McDermott 1996.

[196] See Macdonald 1990, p. 203.

(alias Kailash) in Western Tibet, La-phyi in South-central Tibet, and Tsari in the Southeast.[197] These three sites are among the most important and popular of pilgrimage sites in Tibet, and are the object of both devotional, *bhakta*-oriented practitioners as well as serious Tantric *sādhaka*s, who tend to view the sites as sources of tremendous spiritual power, practice places par excellence which are also places of great danger for the spiritually unprepared.[198] Even Tsongkhapa, an extremely well-prepared scholar and practitioner, is supposed to have encountered difficulties in his pilgrimage and practice at Tsari.[199] According to Aziz, for Tibetans "pilgrimage is a cultural idiom for 'becoming the hero/heroine'– a means for negotiating a divine connection with the legends of a people and a place providing specific heroic or valorous ideals." (1987b:257)

These sites were highly invested with symbolic power by Tibetans, and were considered to be maṇḍalas, so it is perhaps not surprising that they served as a "map" of Tibetan social hierarchies which were projected onto the sacred space, reproducing cultural patterns. Huber wrote that

> It is already obvious that a person's ritual rank or status correlated with the definition and use of the space around the mountain. But this correlation was not based purely on what type of practitioner a person might be and what level of cognitive abilities they were [sic.] held to possess; it also related to Tibetan notions of essential gender differences and the body. Just by being born in a female body, all women automatically ranked lower than all men in relation to the mountain. Therefore all of them–whether laywomen, nuns or yoginis, local residents or pilgrims–were banned from performing the peak circuit and much of the middle circuit, excluding them from a large area of the mountain coinciding with its main places of power. (1999:120)

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[197] Concerning Kailash and La-phyi see de Rossi Filibeck 1988. Concerning Tsari see Huber 1993 and 1999.

[198] This point is stressed by Huber, who wrote that in the traditional narratives it is stressed that the spiritual power at places like Tsari is tremendous but very difficult to access. "Even for many of these Tantric superheroes the task [of accessing this power] is extremely challenging, as the place itself is so powerful... any disrespect or doubt regarding the *néri* [sacred mountains... creates instant problems; ritual impropriety there... leads to failures; human jealousy at the site... unleashes natural disasters elsewhere; failure to heed local omens and signs... results in bad fortune and tragedy; and so on. The message to human visitors is clear – this place is supercharged with power, handle it with care!" (1999:61)

[199] See Huber 1999, p. 109.

It appears somewhat surprising that women would be prohibited from full participation in the pilgrimage at places like Tsari, envisioned as a earthly manifestation of the gynocentric Cakrasaṃvara maṇḍala, was thought to teem with celestial feminine beings, the *ḍākini* whose favor the heroic *sādhaka* must court.[200] The feminine, however, was bifurcated at Tsari.[201] Women, the earthly embodiments of the feminine, in Tibetan culture are viewed as inferior to men, and are literally called 'low-born' *(skyes dman)* in colloquial parlance.[202] It is thus not surprising that the 'low-born' are limited to the lower rung of the Tsari pilgrimage route, and are restricted from ascending the higher and more holy reaches of the sacred mountain. This bifurcation, made by men, appears to represent an attempt to appropriate the spiritual side of the feminine, and calls into question the view that the valorization of the feminine in Tantric texts represents anything other than an androcentric perspective.

The myth of Heruka's conversion of Bhairava played an essential role in the dissemination of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition to Tibet, as it provided a mythic template through which the landscape of Tibet could be re-imagined in a maṇḍalic form; just as one's body and immediate environment is re-imagined in Tantric meditation. As such, the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra was perhaps particularly well suited to Tibet given the fact that its center, Kailash, was already located there. This process of the "conversion" of Tibet follows an ancient pattern; wherever Buddhists established themselves, Buddhists, Faure claims, "felt compelled to convert or subdue the local deities, to erase the memory of the places, to reconvert or desacralize spaces, to decode and re-encode legends." (1987:351)

The Buddhist in Tibet used the myth of Cakrasaṃvara as a sacred narrative through which the very landscape could be sacralized. Important features of the landscape were

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[200] See Huber 1999, pp. 181 ff.

[201] Concerning the bifurcation of the feminine with regard to Tibetan views of the *ḍākinī* see Willis 1987.

[202] See Aziz 1987a for a discussion of this term and the perception of women in Tibetan society; see also Aziz 1988.

associated with elements of Heruka's maṇḍala, which could be materialized through the construction of landmarks such as stūpas and temples, "thereby creating new centers, new sacred spaces or places that were protected by the local gods and in due time tended to be identified with them. This phenomenon, however, had its source in highly literate monastic circles and should not be read as (merely) the subversion of a larger tradition by local cults." (Faure 1992:161)

Faure's last point is an important one; one of the major functions of the commentators in the Cakrasaṃvara tradition has been to transform it into a thoroughly Buddhist phenomenon, a process which Buddhist authors symbolize as a "conversion". This process was undertaken by monks in India and perfected by monks in Tibet, who extended their efforts beyond the textual, "reading" the texts of myth into the landscape itself, and in the process subsuming the chthonic Tibetan into the maṇḍala. They thus constructed the tradition as a uniquely Tibetan phenomenon, even as they faithfully reproduced the Indian patterns of practice and exegesis, but in a quite different cultural context.

In short, Heruka for the Tibetans is a thoroughly Buddhist and Tibetan deity; the syncretism that is so readily apparent when viewing the tradition diachronically is not evident nor relevant when it is viewed synchronically, i.e., from the perspective of contemporary Tibetan Buddhists and their practice of the Cakrasaṃvara today. Heruka has been thoroughly naturalized to the Tibetan Buddhist context, as has "Buddhist" goddesses such as Tārā to the Tantric Hindu context; they are in effect Buddhist and Hindu deities, respectively; it is not historical origins but context that correctly determines their identity.

In effect, all religious traditions are *bricolages* in the sense that they develop in relationship with their social contexts which are never free of contention and competition; there are no inviolable origins, for religious traditions or anything else. Religious symbols, mythical elements, rites and deities are appropriated, but they are also transformed in the process, such that Bhairava and Heruka, the Buddhist and Hindu Tārās are not the same,

and no doubt never were the same, but are the products of history, and the products of the ever changing demands of ever changing societies.

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Abbreviations

Tsongkhapa usually refers to works by abbreviated versions of their names, using, for example, the term *mkha' 'gro rgya mtsho (ḍākārṇava)* to refer to the *Śri-ḍākārṇava-mahāyogini-tantrarāja-nāma.* In the text which follows as well as in my translation I generally give the abbreviated names, but as this will not be too helpful for those unfamiliar with these conventions, the abbreviation will follow in the notes. Below the full names as listed in the bibliography are given, allowing rapid access to the bibliographic information. Note that texts in the Kanjur are listed alphabetically under their full name, while texts in the Tanjur are listed under the authors' names.

AD *Abhidhānottaratantra*

AM Abhayākaragupta. *Śrisampuṭatantrarājaṭikāmnāyamañjari-nāma.*

AN Vilāsavajra. *Ārya-Nāmasaṃgitiṭikā-mantrārthāvalokini-nāma*

AP *Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā*

AS Lakṣmiṃkarā's *Advayasiddhi*

AV Atiśa Dipaṅkaraśrijñāna's *Abhisamayavibhaṅga*

BC Śāntideva's *Bodhicaryāvatāra*

CST *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*

CP Bhavabhadra's *Śri Cakrasamvarapañjikā*

CS *Caturyoginisaṃpuṭatantra*

CV Āryadeva's *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa*

DM *Śriḍākārṇava-mahāyogini-tantrarāja*

DP *Āryaḍākinivajrapañjara Mahātantrarājakalpa*

DS Bu-ston's *bde mchog nyung ngu rgyud kyi spyi rnam don gsal*

EC *Ekavirākhyāśricaṇḍamahāroṣaṇa-tantrarāja*

GST *Sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittarahasya-guhyasamāja-nāma-mahākalparāja*

HA *Śriherukābhyudaya-nāma*

HB Grags-pa rGyal-mtshan's *dpal he ru ka'i byung tshul.*

HV *Śrihevajra Mahātantrarājā*

JS *Śrisarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasamvara-nāma-uttaratantra*

KS Tsongkhapa's *bde mchog bsdus pa'i rgyud kyi rgya cher bshad pa sbas pa'i don kun gsal ba*

KV *Khyāvajravārāhi-abhidhāna-tantrottara-vārāhi-abhibodhiya*

LA Sumatikirti's *Laghusamvaratantrapaṭalābhisandhi*

LH Lhasa edition of Tsongkhapa's Collected Works

LL Vajrapaṇi's *Lakṣābhidhānāduddhṛta Laghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa*

LS *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*

MMK Nāgārjuna's *Prajñā-nāma-mūlamadhyamakakārikā*

MNS *Mañjuśrijñānasattvasya paramārthanāmasaṃgiti*

MP Jayabhadra's *Śricakrasamvara-mūlatantra-pañjikā*

MT *Śrimahāmudrātilakaṃ-nāma-mahāyogini-tantrarāja-adhipati.*

MV *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulyasūtrendrarāja-nāma-dharmaparyāya*

MVV Buddhaguhya's *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhitantravikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-mahātantravṛtti*

NGB rNying-ma rGyud-'bum (mTshem-brag edition, Thimphu, 1982.)

NL Ron-zom Chos-kyi-bzang-po's *gsang sngags rdo rje theg pa'i tshul las snang ba lhar sgrub pa*

NRC Tsongkhapa's *rgyal ba khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang chen po'i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad rnam par phye ba* (aka *sngags rim chen mo*)

NS Bu-ston's *bde mchog rtsa rgyud kyi rnam bshad gsang ba'i de kho na nyid gsal bar byed pa*

NT Tripiṭakamāla's *Nyayatrayapradipa*

PA *Śriparamādya-nāma-mahāyānakalparāja*

PD Viravajra's *dpal bde mchog gi rtsa rgyud kyi rgya chen bshad pa tshig don rab tu gsal ba shes bya ba*

PG Sachen Kun-dga' snying-po's *dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi ṭika mu tig phreng ba*

PN *Prajñāpāramitā-naya-śatapañcāśatikā*

PV Dharmakirti's *Pramāṇavārttikakārikā*

RG Durjayacandra's *Ratnagaṇa-nāma-pañjika*

RP Bu-stons's *rgyud sde spyi'i rnam par gzhag pa rgyud sde rin po che'i mdzes rgyan zhes bya ba*

SM Bhavyakirti's *Śricakrasamvarapañjikā-śūramanojñā*

SN Kambalipa's *Sādhananidāna-śricakrasamvara-nāma-pañjikā*

SP *Sampuṭa-nāma-mahātantra*

SS Devagupta's *Śricakrasamvara-sarvasādhanaṃ-sanna-nāma-ṭikā*

ST Viravajra's *Samantaguṇaśālina-nāma-ṭika*

SV *Samvarodaya Tantra*

TL Tashilhunpo edition of Tsongkhapa's Collected Works, reproduced from the texts in the library of klu-'khyil monastery in Ladakh. Ngawang Gelek Demo, ed. New Delhi, 1975

TP Kāṇhapa's *Guhyatattva-prakāśa-nāma*

TS *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha-nāma-mahāyāna-sūtra*

VD *Śri-Vajraḍāka-nāma-mahātantrarāja*

VP *Āryaḍākinivajrapañjara-mahātantrarājakalpa*

VS Nāgabodhi's *Samājasādhanavyavasthāna*

YS *Yoginisaṃcārya*

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Abbreviations

AA: *American Anthropologist*

BCS: *Buddhist-Christian Studies*

BSOAS: *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*

CIS: *Contributions to Indian Sociology*

EB: *The Eastern Buddhist*

EW: *East and West*

HJAS: *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies.*

HR: *History of Relgions*

IIJ: *Indo-Iranian Journal*

JA: *Journal Asiatique*

JAAR: *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*

JAOS: *Journal of the American Oriental Society*

JAS: *Journal of Asian Studies*

JIABS: *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*

JIP: *Journal of Indian Philosophy*

JOR: *Journal of Religion*

JTS: *Journal of the Tibet Society*

MRDTB: *Memoirs of the Research Department of the Toyo Bunko*

SOR: *Serie Orientale Roma*

StII: *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik*

TICOJ: *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan*

WZKS: *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens*

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APPENDIX A

An Edition of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* Chapters One to Four

Introduction

This edition resulted from my work on Tsongkhapa's *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning,* a lengthy commentary on the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra.* This commentary quotes almost all of the verses in the *mūlatantra,* which necessitated the production of an edition and translation of the *mūlatantra* itself. While studying at the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, I learned that scholars participating in the Rare Buddhist Text Project there had unearthed three manuscript copies of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra in Sanskrit, which they were in the process of editing. As the manuscripts were incomplete, they were also engaged with the difficult task of reconstructing the missing portions. By this point in time I had decided to base my dissertation of the first four chapters of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, which deal with the topics of rites of maṇḍala creation and initiation therein, as Tsongkhapa's commentary on that portion of the text consisted of approximately seventy folios, or about one hundred and fifty pages in annotated English translation. The Tibetan translations of the Root Tantra itself, however, were often quite ambiguous, so I decided to acquire copies of the three manuscripts myself and edit the first four chapters as an appendix to this work, simply to provide myself and my readers with a richer understanding of the text and its interpretation.

I hesitate in labeling this edition "critical", simply because there are so few manuscripts on which it is based. Basically, it is an edition of the oldest palm-leaf manuscript. there is only one manuscript, the Nevāri palm leaf manuscript described in section 6.1.1 above; the other two Sanskrit manuscripts are simply later and often unreliable copies of it. It is definitely an act of textual criticism, in that any edition always involves

exercises in judgment, as Housman pointed out. [1] But it is not a "critical edition" in the sense that I do not claim here to be able to reconstitute the "original" version of the text which best reflects the author's "intention". Texts are inherently unstable, and even under the best of conditions such a task would be challenging. Even if one considered such a reconstitution possible in theory, in practice in the case of this text it is impossible simply because there are insufficient texts from which to undertake such a task.

Generally, my edition represents as closely as possible the oldest manuscript. However, as this text is itself damaged, I do not necessarily take it as the ultimate authority, and I do not refrain from attempting to correct, or perhaps I should say rebuild the text. Hence I take the oldest manuscript as the basis of this edition, and note significant variants in the notes, and on occasion emend the text when there is sufficient evidence from the commentaries or Tibetan translations to suggest a better reading.

Regarding the Sanskrit commentaries, two have come to light. First, there is a late (1910) copy of Jayabhadra's *Cakrasaṃvarapañjikā*, a commentary which comments on the entire text, and which quotes selected verses. Extant Sanskrit manuscripts of Vajrapāṇi's *Lakṣābhidhānāduddhṛta Laghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa*, a commentary on the first chapter of the CST only, have been edited by Cicuzza, whose edition of the relevant verses have been taken into consideration.

The Tibetan translation of each verse is reproduced following the Sanskrit of each verse. This is not an edition, but simply a representation of one version of the text, that preserved in the sDe-dge Kanjur. Important variations in the Phug-brag and sTog manuscript Kanjurs have been noted.

Not listed in the notes are minor misspellings in the later manuscripts, as well as the omissions that occur in those texts. I have also normalized the text to fit modern conventions. For example, the MSS double the consonant following a superscribed *r*, but I

[1] See Houseman 1961, pp. 132

read these as a single consonants. The MSS often within a *śloka* assimilate nasals to the *varṇa* of the consonant of the following word; I read these nasals as an *anusvāra.*

Any insertions to the text that are not present or readable in the Sanskrit text are placed in square brackets. Words that *are* present in the text, but which obviously violate the metre and appear to be later additions to the text are placed in round brackets. Please note that not all "verses" have four *pāda;* sometimes I break up the text on the basis of the Tibetan translation, which occasionally results in incomplete Sanskrit verses. These editorial decisions are of course tentative and may need to be revised.

The Tibetan translation of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra* is generally speaking quite accurate, close to the extant Sanskrit that has come down to us. The numerous places where the texts do diverge, however, are attributable to several different causes. Naturally, the Sanskrit is not free from errors; the one palm leaf manuscript and the two copies made from it on Nepali paper contain corruptions and scribal errors. However, the editorial policy here has been to consider this possibility only after considering the other possible causes for divergence.

One cause is that while the Tibetans usually translated quite literally, on occasion they translated loosely, particularly, it seems, when encountering difficult passages. An example of this phenomena can be seen in the translation of *murdhaja,* literally 'hair', as *sbyi bor brgyan pa,* literally 'ornamented on the head', in verses five and six of Chapter Two. I was unsure how to account for this until I found Bu-ston Rinpoche's comments on these verses, in which he indicated that it was an interpretative translation of an enigmatic Sanskrit passage. Sometimes the divergence seems to be due to euphemistic translation. An example of this might include the translation of *mṛtakasūtreṇa,* 'with the thread of a corpse', with *sems med sred bu,* 'mindless thread'.

Conspectus Siglorum

A This manuscript of the *Śriherukābhidhāna* is in the collection of the Oriental Institute in Vadodara (ms. #13290). It is a palm-leaf manuscript written in the Bhujjimol variety of the Nevāri script, and probably dates to the twelfth to thirteenth century. It consisted of thirty-eight folios, eleven of which are lost (fols. 15, 18-22, 28-31 and 36). The remaining folios are generally in good shape, although there are some areas of relatively minor damage.

B This is a Nepali paper manuscript also in the Oriental Institute collection (ms. #13285). It is a copy of manuscript A written in Devanagari script. It is dated N. S. 1050, 1930 CE. It follows the pagination of manuscript A.

C This is a Nepali paper manuscript in devanagari script in the collection of the Kesar Library in Kathmandu (ms. #410, Moriguchi #607). It is also a copy of manuscript A. It has no colophon but it appears to have been written by the same hand as the former manuscript, and it also follows the pagination of manuscript A, and it is most certainly a twentieth century copy.

CC Vajrapāṇi's *Lakṣābhidhānāduddhṛta Laghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa*, which quotes the first ten and one half verses of the CST. The Sanskrit manuscripts of this text has been edited by Claudio Cicuzza, who published an edition of these verses in Cicuzza and Sferra 1997, pp. 119-120.

D Jayabhadra. *Cakrasaṃvarapañjikā*. Moriguchi #136; Institute for Advanced Study of World Religions (Carmel, NY) microfiche no. MBB-II-75. Paper, Devanagari script. Dated N. S. 1031, 1911 CE. This is a commentary on the entire CST, which quotes selected passages from the text.

Tibetan:

E *Tantrarāja-śrīlaghusaṃvara-nāma. rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal bde mchog nyung ngu zhes bya ba.* Trans. Padmākara and Rinchen bZang-po, revs. Prajñākirti and Marpa Chos-kyi dbang-phyug. Tōh. 368, sDe-dge Kanjur rgyud 'bum vol. ka, 213b-246b; facsimile edition of the 18th century redaction of Situ Chos-kyi 'byung-gnas, Delhi, 1978.

F *Laghusaṃvara-tantrarāja, bde mchog nyung ngu rgyud kyi rgyal po.* Trans. Padmākara and Rinchen bZang-po, revs. Sumatikirti and Locāna bLo-gros-grags. Phug-brag manuscript bka' 'gyur, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (Dharamsala, H.P.); Institute for Advanced Study of World Religions (Carmel, NY) microfiche no. Lmpj 016,901; vol. nga, 145a-191a.

G *Tantrarāja-śrīlaghusaṃvara-nāma. rgyud kyi rgyal po dpal bde mchog nyung ngu zhes bya ba.* Trans. Padmākara and Rinchen bZang-po, revs. Prajñākirti and Marpa Chos-kyi dbang-phyug . sTog Palace Manuscript Kanjur, rgyud 'bum vol. ja, fol. 1-55b; facsimile edition, Leh 1978.

Chapter One

Preface

namaḥ śrīcakrasaṃvarāya /[2]

F: dpal bde mchog 'khor lo la chag 'tshal lo /[3]

Verse 1

athāto rahasyaṃ vakṣye samāsān na tu[4] vistarāt /

śriherukasaṃyogaṃ sarvakāmārthasādhakam //

/ de nas gsang ba bshad par bya // mdor bsdud pa ste rgyas par min // dpal he ru ka yang dag sbyor // 'dod pa'i don kun sgrub byed yin[5] /

Verse 2

uttarād[6] api cottaraṃ ḍākinijālasaṃvaraṃ /

rahasye[7] parame[8] ramye[9] sarvātmani sadā sthitaḥ //

/ bla ma las kyang bla ma ste // mkha' 'gro ma yi dra ba sdom // gsang ba mchog gi dgyes pa na // thams cad bdag nyid rtag tu bzhugs /

Verse 3

sarvaḍākinimayaḥ[10] sattvo vajrasattvaḥ paraṃ sukham /

asau hi[11] svayambhūr[12] bhagavān viro[13] ḍākinijālasaṃvaram //

---

[2] C prefaces this with *oṃ*.

[3] E: bcom ldan 'das dpal rdo rje sems dpa' la chag 'tshal lo; G omits *dpal*

[4] B,C: *nanta*.

[5] F: byed la

[6] B,C: *uttarod*.

[7] C: *rahasya*.

[8] A: *paramye*.

[9] C: *ramya*.

[10] CC: *sarvadūtimayaḥ*

[11] CC omits *hi*

[12] B: *svayambhū*

[13] CC omits

/ mkha' 'gro kun dngos sems dpa' ni // rdo rje sems dpa' bde ba'i mchog / 'di ni rang byung bcom ldan dpa' // mkha' 'gro dra ba'i sdom pa yin /

Verse 4

sambhavān[14] nādarūpāt[15] vinikrāntāḥ samayācāragocarāḥ //

durlabhaṃ[16] triṣu lokeṣu ādimadhyāntasaṃsthitam //

/ sgra yi tshul las nges 'byung rnams // dam tshig spyod pa'i spyod yul yin // 'jig rten gsum du rnyed dka' pa // thog ma dbus mthar yang dag gnas /

Verse 5

manthamanthāna saṃyogaṃ (yathā tathā) mantra(jāpa)dhyānādibhir[17] yuktam /

yogaṃ[18] caiva vidhijñānaṃ tantre nigaditaṃ śṛṇu //

/ bsrub bya srub byed yang dag sbyor[19] // ji lta ba ni de bzhin du // snags bzlas bsam gtan la sogs ldan // sbyor nyid chog ga'i ye shes ni // rnal 'byor bla na med pa yi /[20] / rgyud las gsung pa mnyan par gyis /

Verse 6

madhyamottamasvāsena gandhodakasahitena tu /

kulikāṃ pūjayen nityaṃ kālaviśeṣeṇa tu[21] //

/dbugs 'byin bar ma mchog dag dang // dri yi chu dang bcas pas kyang // rnal 'byor pas dus khyad par du // rigs ldan rtag tu mchod par bya //

Verse 7

dūtayaḥ[22] sahajāḥ siddhā adhamottamamadhyamāḥ /

---

[14] CC omits

[15] A: *nādaropāt*. This ending would not be permitted before *vinikrāntāḥ*, but it would be before *samayācāra-*, and it seems likely that *vinikrāntāḥ* is a later insertion, both on the basis of meter, as well as the fact that the Tibetan text lacks an equivalent to *vinikrāntāḥ*, and also has *nādarūpa* in the ablative case.

[16] C: *dulabhaṃ*

[17] C: *-dhyānādi yuktaṃ.*

[18] CC; A, B, C: *yogaś*

[19] F; E: D: *sbyar*

[20] F, G omit

[21] CC omits *tu*, has *dūtikāḥ*

[22] CC: dūtikāḥ

antargatena manasā kāmasiddhiṃ tu bhāvayet //

/ pho nya lhan cig skyes grub ma // mchog dang 'bring dang tha ma ste // yid ni nang du chud pa yis // 'dod pa yi ni dngos grub bya /

Verse 8

svaretobindubhir buddhān bodhisattvāṃś ca pūjayet //

darśanasparśanābhyāś[23] ca śravaṇasmaraṇena[24] ca //

/ rang rdzas thing les sang rgyas dang // byang chub sems dpa' mchod par bya // mthong ba dang ni reg pa dang // thos pa 'am ni dran pa yis /

Verse 9

mucyate sarvapāpais tu evaṃ eva na saṃśayaḥ[25] /

yogitvaṃ paramaṃ puṇyaṃ pavitraṃ pāpanāśanaṃ //

/ sdig pa kun las grol 'gyur ba // de ltar nyid du the tshom med // rnal 'byor pa nyid bsod nams mchog / dag byed sdig pa 'joms byed pa /

Verse 10

sidhyate (japaṃ) mantraṃ japena[26] dhyānena[27] ca [sukhena ca][28] //

samayān pālayen nityaṃ sādhakaḥ susamāhitaḥ //

/ gsang sngag zlos dang bsam gtan dang // bde bas kyang ni 'grub par 'gyur // dam tshig rtag tu bskyang bar bya // shin tu mnyam gzhag sgrub pa pos /

---

[23] C: *darśanasparśanātyāś.*

[24] B: *śravaṇe śravaṇena.*

[25] C: *śaṃśayaḥ.*

[26] CC: *mantrajāpena*

[27]. C: *dhyānaṃ eva*

[28] This addition is based upon both CC and the Tibetan text, which includes the equivalent to *sukhena*, bde bas. This would supply the syllables missing in the Sanskrit manuscripts. The term *japaṃ* is round bracketed because it is a redundancy more characteristic of a commentary, and because it lacks an equivalent in the Tibetan text.

Verse 11

bhedena samayānāṃ tu na dikṣā (maṇḍale)[29] siddhir avāpyate[30] /

madhuraktaṃ sakarpūraṃ raktacandanayojitaṃ //

/ dam tshig nyams pas dkyil 'khor du // dbang bskur dngos grub thob mi 'gyur // sbrang rtsi mar dang ga pur bcas // tsanda na dmar po dang sbyar ba /

Verse 12

gaṇamadhye pratiṣṭhaṃ tu sarvavajrāṅkacihnadhṛk[31] /

anāmāṅguṣṭhavaktrābhyāṃ lehayed yogavit sadā //

/ tshogs kyi nang du bzhag pa ni // thams cad rdor mtshan mtshan ma 'dzin // ming med mthe bong[32] rtse sbyar bas // rnal 'byor rig pas rtag tu spyad /

Verse 13

somapānavad āsvādya[33] siddhiṃ āpnoti śāśvatim /

pañcāmṛtam bhaved etat[34] sarvasiddhipravartakam //

/ myangs pas zhi ba'i btung ba bzhin // dngos grub rtag pa thob par 'gyur // 'di ni mi 'chi bcu phyed 'gyur // dngos grub thams cad 'jug byed yin /

Verse 14

catuḥpūjā tathā yoginyo vīrā /

dvayendriyasamāpatti[35] samāpannaś ca tattvadhṛk //

/ mchod bzhi dpa' bo chen po ni // yid la 'dod pa byed pa ste // dbang gnyid snyoms par 'jug pa yi // snyom par zhugs pa'ng de nyid 'dzin //

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[29] Although the equivalent to *maṇḍale* is also found in the Tibetan, it is bracketed here given the fact that its removal restores the meter; it is possible that it is an early gloss on *dikṣā*.

[30] CC: *neṣṭasiddhir avāpyate*

[31] B: *sarvavajrāṅga-*.

[32] G; D: mthe bo

[33] B,C: *āśvādya*.

[34] C lacks a syllable here, with *bhave_tat*. B has *bhaved atra*.

[35] D: dvendriyasamāpatti; A: dvayasamāpatti

Verse 15

divyamānuṣakaṃ[36] saukhyaṃ piṇḍikṛtya vajrakaṇikayā //

kalā nārghanti ṣodaśīm //

/ lha dang mi yi bde ba ni // bsdus byas rdor rje 'dzin pa yis // de lta bur ni byed pa yi // bcu drug char ni mi phod do /

Verse 16

girigahvarakuñjeṣu mahodadhitaṭeṣu[37] vā //

ādisiddhaśmaśāne ca tatra maṇḍalaṃ ālikhet //

/ ri bo tshang tshing sman ljongs sam // chu bo che rnams ngogs dag dang // gdong nas grub pa'i dur khrod du // der ni dkyil 'khor bri bar bya /

iti herukābhidhāne maṇḍalāvattārapaṭalaḥ prathamaḥ /

/dpal heruka'i nges par brjod pa las dkyil 'khor du 'jug pa'i le'u ste dang po'o /

---

[36] D: A, B, C has divyamanuṣyaṇāṃ.

[37] B: taṭoṣu; C: tatoṣu.

Chapter Two

Verse 1

tatrāpātagomayena[38] maṇḍalabhūmiṃ[39] pralepayet /

śmaśānabhasmanāyuktaṃ[40] pañcāmṛtasamanvitam //

/ der ni lci ba ma lhung bas // dkyil 'khor sa ni nye bar byug / dur khrod thal bar ldan pa dang // bdud rtsi lnga dang bcas pa yis /

Verse 2

upalipya tato bhūmiṃ tatra maṇḍalaṃ ārabhet /

śmaśānaṃ tu[41] samācaret //

/ dkyil 'khor sa ni nyer byugs te // der ni dkyil 'khor yang dag brtsam / / gnas de ru ni bsgoms pa yis /[42] / dur khrod du ni kun tu brtag /

Verse 3

cityāṅgāracūrṇena śmaśāneṣṭakasaṃyuktam /

ālikhen[43] maṇḍalaṃ divyaṃ ācāryaśubhalakṣaṇaḥ[44] //

/ ro bsregs sol ba'i phye ma dang // dur khrod so phag ldan pa yis // dkyil 'khor bzang po bri bar bya // slob dpon dge ba'i mtshan nyid can /

---

[38] A: *tatra pātagomayena*, B: *tatra yāna-*, C: *eva yāna-*

[39] A,B,C: omit *anusvāra*

[40] B: *muktaṃ*

[41] A: *śmaśāntu*

[42] E,F omit

[43] A,B,C: *āliket*

[44] A,B,C: *-susalakṣaṇaḥ*

Verse 4

samyagjñānatantrajñaḥ[45] śrīherukamantrajñaḥ[46] /

akrodhaś ca śu[c]ir-dakṣaḥ yogajño jñānapāragaḥ //

/ yang dag shes shing rgyud shes pa // dpal ldan khrag 'thung gsang sngags shes // khro med gtsang zhing mkhas pa dang // sbyor shes ye shes pha rol 'gro /

Verse 5

kapālakṛtamūrdhajā bhasmānuliptāṅgasambhavān /

mātrair vibhuṣitagātra asthimālāsaṃsthitaś ca //

/ thod pas spyi bor brgyan byas shing /[47] / yan lag thal bas byugs pa dang // gug skyed dag gis lus brgyan cing // rus pa'i phreng ba yang dag gnas /[48]

Verse 6

ekakhaṇḍīmūrdhajaḥ asthimālāvalambi ca //

khaṭvāṅgakarasaṃsthitaḥ atmānaṃ śriherukaṃ kṛtvā //

/ dum gcig sbyi bor brgyan pa dang // rus pa'i 'phreng ba rnam par 'phyang // kha ṭvaṃ ga ni lag na gnas // bdag nyid khrag 'thung dpal byas nas /

Verse 7

śriherukaṃ[49] tataḥ smaret cakraṃ asya hṛdi nyaset /

evaṃ sannadham ātmānaṃ prakāraṃ tu diśā nyaset[50] //

/ de 'og khrag 'thung dpal dran bya // 'khor lo 'di ni snying khar dgod // bdag nyid de ltar go bgos nas // ra ba rnams ni phyogs su dgod /

Verse 8

evam sannahyaṃ ātmānaṃ adho hyarthaṃ viniveśayet /

cakrasya susamātmānaṃ ūrdhvaṃ tu sarajālakaṃ //

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[45] A,B,C: *samyak-*; B: *-tattvajñaḥ*

[46] B:*-sarvajñaḥ*, C: *-manvajñaḥ*

[47] SS fol. 75b: *sphyi bor skyes pa'i thod byas shing*

[48] SM fol. 12b; F: *rus phreng rus par yang dag ldan*; E: *rus pa'i 'phreng la sogs pas brgyan /*

[49] A,C:*śriherukatvaṃ*

[50] B,C corrupt here.

/ de ltar bdag nyid go bgos nas /[51]/ 'og tu yang ni mtshon cha dgod // 'khor gnas pa yi bdag nyid mnyam /[52] / steng du mda' yi dra ba nyid /

Verse 9

atmanaḥ khecaraṃ pañjaraṃ kṛtvātmānaṃ susaṃāhitaḥ /

evaṃ sannaddha sakavaco[53] 'bhedyas tridarśair[54] api //

/ slar yang dag ni mkha' spyod du // gur byas de ni go char 'gyur // de ltar go cha de bgos nas // sum cu pas kyang mi phyed do /

Verse 10

evaṃ surakṣamātmānaṃ mudrāmantrair alaṃkṛtaṃ /

ālikhet maṇḍalaṃ ghoraṃ mahāsiddhipradāyakaṃ //

/ de ltar bdag nyid rab bsrung shing // sngags dang phyag rgyas rnam brgyan nas // dngos grub chen po rab ster ba'i // dkyil 'khor 'jigs pa bri bar bya /

Verse 11

tato mṛtakasūtreṇa mahārudhirarañjitena vā //

sūtrayet maṇḍalaṃ ghoraṃ herukasya paraṃ puraṃ[55] //

/ de nas sems med sred bu'am // ru dhi ra ni chen pos brlan // he ru ka dpal grong khyer mchog / dkyil 'khor 'jigs pa thig gdab bya /

Verse 12

ekahastaṃ catur aṣṭaṃ [56] vā caturasraṃ tu samantataḥ[57] //

caturdvārasamākirṇaṃ catustoraṇabhūṣitaṃ //

/ khru gang khru bzhi'am khru brgyad pa / sgo bzhi kun nas zur bzhi pa // rta babs bzhi yis rnam par brgyan // sngags pas nyis 'gyur rnam par spyad /

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[51] F; E omits

[52] F; E: *:'khor lo mtshon cha'i 'phreng ba dag.* Tsongkhapa mentions an alternative to this line, from "Lochen": *'khor lo'i bdag nyid bkod nas ni*

[53] B, C: *sakavaṣā*

[54] B,C: *'bhedyam vidarśair*

[55] B,C: *paraṃ paraṃ*

[56] B: *catur aṣṭeṃ*, C: *catur aṣṭaṃ*

[57] B: caturasrasamantataḥ

Verse 13

vicare dviguṇaṃ mantri jāpeḍ[58] ḍākinījālasaṃvaraṃ /

tasya madhye pratiṣṭhāpya sapatraṃ karṇiko jvalaṃ /

puṣkaraiś-ca keśārānvita //

/ mkha' 'gro dra ba'i bde mchog mchod // de yi dbus su pad ma ni // 'dab bcas lte ba 'bar dang bcas // ge sar yang dag ldan par bzhag /

Verse 14

karṇikāyāṃ[59] nyased viraṃ mahābhairavabhīṣaṇaṃ /

tejaḥskandhasudiptāṅgaṃ[60] aṭṭahāsamahāravaṃ[61] //

/ lde bar dgod bya dpa' bo ni // 'jigs byed kyang ni 'jigs par mdzad // mdangs dang ldan zhing rab tu 'bar // ha ha zhes pa'i sgra cher bzhad /

Verse 15

kapālamālābharaṇaṃ divyatrinetraṃ caturmukhaṃ /

hasticarmaviruddhaṃ ca vajrasambhinnasubhravaṃ[62] //

/ thod pa'i 'phreng ba'i rgyan dang ldan // bzang po spyan gsum zhal bzhi mnga' // glang po'i pags pa rnam par bgos // smin ma bzang po rdo rje dbyes /

Verse 16

khaṭvāṅgakṛtahastaṃ tu śatamālārdhabhūṣitaṃ[63] /

tasyāliṅgatā sthitā devi vajravārāhi sughorā //

/ phag na kha traṃ ga bsnams shing /[64] / brgya phed 'phreng bas rnam par rgyan // de mdun gnas pa'i lha mo ni // rdo rje phag mo rab 'jigs ma /

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[58] All texts have *japet*, but from the Tibetan *pūjayet* would seem more appropriate. Perhaps the transformation of the latter to the former was facilitated by the presence of the word 'mantri' beforehand.

[59] C: *kaṇikāyāṃ*

[60] A,B,C: *tejaskandha-*

[61] A,B,C: *aṭṭaṭṭa*

[62] A: *sabhrava*; B: *sabhuvaṃ;* C: *sadhruvaṃ*. From the Tibetan we'd expect something like *subhrūṃ*, to make it a bahuvrihi. On the other hand *bravaṃ* could be nom. plur., so perhaps we should read *subhravaṃ*, hypothesizing that the vowel marker is shifted in both texts, but then it would not be a bahuvrihi. su-brū is attested in Apte, p.991 col.1.

[63] B, C: *-bhūṣaṇaṃ*

[64] E; F, D: *phyag na kha ṭvām mi thod bsnams*

Verse 17

śrīherukadevābhimukhā kṛtvā[65] tu trinetrā raudrarūpiṇīṃ /

kapālāṃ tu sampūrṇāṃ śravantīṃ rudhira[66] mukhāt //

/ he ru ka dpal che la phyogs // spyan gsum drag po'i gzung can yin // ka pā la ni antras bkang // kha nas ru dhi ra 'dzag cing /

Verse 18

tarjjayantīṃ diśā sarvāṃ sadevāsuramānuṣān[67] /

ḍākinyaś caturviṃśā vārāhyā kulasaṃbhavāḥ[68] //

/ lha dang lha min mir bcas pa // phyogs kun tu ni sdigs mdzub byed // mkha' 'gro ma ni nyi shu bzhi // phag mo yi ni rigs las byung /

Verse 19

cakrasabhe[69] tu pūjayet diśāsu vidiśāsu ca /

virāñ caiva tathaiveha cakre śaṃsthāpya pūjayed //

/ phyogs dang phyogs kyi mtshams rnams dang // 'khor lo'i dbus su mchod par bya // de bzhin 'dir ni dpa' bo yang // 'khor lor yang dag gnas pa mchod /

Verse 20

[pūjayed][70] vīram advayaṃ yad icchet siddhisādhakaḥ /

kalaśāṃś-ca tataḥ kūryāt [mū]lakālādivarjitā //

/ sgrub po gal te dngos grub 'dod // gnyis med dpa' bo mchod par bya // de nas bum pa bya ba ni // rtsa ba nag po la sogs med /

---

[65] B: *kṛtvaṃ*

[66] C: *kavira*

[67] (B: *sadevāmānuṣān*, retaining only the 'a' of 'asura')

[68] B:*samādhāḥ*, C: *kulasa_dhā*

[69] A is corrupt here, but can be read with difficulty, and thus without certainty. 'sabhe' seems to be the locutive form of sabha, an unusual masculine form of sabhā, attested by Monier Williams, p. 1151 col. 2, hence 'in the midst' or 'in the assembly'. This is probably incorrect, however.

[70] This *pūjayed* is the same as in verse 19 above, 4th pāda.

Verse 21

mauktikair-hemaratnaiś-ca pravāḍarajatais[71] tāmraiḥ /

sarvabhakṣais tu sampūrṇāṅ kapāloparisaṃsthitaiḥ //

/ mu tig gser dang rin chen dang // byu ru dngul dang zangs ma ste // bza' ba kun gyis legs bkang ba'i // snod ni steng du gzhag par bya /

Verse 22

sūtreṇa veṣṭayet[72] tataḥ kaṇṭhaṃ parṇavātre eva samanvitān /

aṣṭau dvareṣu vinyasya[73] vastrayugmaiḥ[74] suveṣṭitān //

/ mgrin pa srad bus dkri ba dang // kha ni 'dab mas brgyan par bya // gos zung gis ni legs dkris pa // brgyad ni sgo ru rnam par dgod /

Verse 23

navamam madhyataḥ kalaśaṃ[75] vastrayugmena[76] veṣṭitaṃ /

kṛtvā rajataṃ hiraṇyam[77] vā ratnamauktikaśobhitān[78] //

/ gos zung gis ni legs dkris pa'i // bum pa dgu pa dbus su gzhag / gser ram dngul lam rin chen nam // mu tig rnams kyis mdzes par bya /

Verse 24

vikiren[79] maṇḍalaṃ sarvān ratnasauvarṇaśobhatān //

pūjayet[80] puravaraṃ ramyaṃ siddhir eva na saṃśayaḥ //

---

[71] B,C: *pravādu-*

[72] B: *veyet*

[73] A,B,C: *vinisya*

[74] C: *vastuyugmaiḥ*

[75] C: *kalasaṃ*

[76] C: *vastu-*

[77] C: *hiraṇyem*

[78] C: *ratnā-*

[79] A, C: *vikiren*

[80] C: *pūjaye*

/ dkyil 'khor kun tu rin chen dang // gser gyis mdzes par spras par bya // grong mchog yid 'ong mchod na ni // grub pa nyid du the tshom med /

Verse 25

gandhodakena saṃsidhyātmānaṃ sarvatomukhaṃ /

dīpānāṃ śataṃ dadyād yad icchet-siddhiṃ uttamaṃ //

/ bdag nyid kun nas sgo la ni // dri yi chu yis legs par gdab // gal te dngos grub mchog 'dod na // mar me brgya ni dbul bar bya /

Verse 26

ākāśe ḍākinyaḥ sarvā manasā ūrdhvato nyaset /

bhūloke ḍākinyo[81] yāś ca maṇḍale sarvato nyaset //

/ nam mkha'i mkha' 'gro ma rnams ni // yid kyis thams cad steng du dgod // sa steng mkha' 'gro ma gang yin // dkyil 'khor kun tu dgod par bya /

Verse 27

pātāle ḍākinyaḥ kāścit[82] pātāle tāṃś ca vinyaset //

diśāsu mātaraḥ[83] sarvavidiśāsu[84] ca niyojayet //

/ gang yang sa 'og mkha' 'gro ma // de ni sa 'og rnams su dgod // ma mo thams cad phyogs dang ni // phyogs mtsham rnams su dgod par bya /

Verse 28

puṣpair gandhais tathā dhūpai dīpānāṃ tu śataṃ dadyād //

yat icchet siddhisādhakaḥ //[85]

/ gal te dngos grub mchog 'dod na // dri dang me tog de bzhin spos // cho ga bzhin du de bzhin mchod /[86] / mar me brgya yang dbul bya zhing /

---

[81] B: *śādinyo*

[82] A: *ḍākinya yā kā cit*

[83] A,B,C: *mātarāḥ*

[84] A,B: *sarvā*

[85] This verse appears to be missing one pāda, corresponding to the Tibetan *cho ga bzhin du de bzhin mchod*, although KK has *dadyāt*.

[86] F omits, and according to Tsongkhapa it is not in Lochen or Mal's translation either.

Verse 29

pūjayed[87] yoginyo vīrān śrīherukasya maṇḍale sthitān /

dhvajai raktais-tathā pitaiḥ śvetair kṛṣṇaiś[88] [ca] piṅgalaiḥ //
/ dpal he ru ka'i dkyil 'khor gnas // dpa' bo rnal 'byor ma rnams mchod // rgyal mtshan dmar dang de bzhin ser // dkar dang gnag dang ser skya (S:cha) dang /

Verse 30

śragdāmair dvividhaiś caiva vastrair nānāvidhais tathā /

vitānaiś ca kāṇḍapaṭṭakaiḥ suśobhanais tathā //

/ me tog 'phreng ba du ma dang // de bzhin gos ni sna tshogs dang // bla re dang ni yol ba dag / mdzes pa ji lta de bzhin te /

Verse 31

bhakṣyabhojyakhādyapānaiś ca kuryāt[89] susamāhitaḥ /

/ de bzhin bza' bca' btung ba yis // rab mnyam bzhag ste mchod par bya /

iti śrīherukābhidhāne cakrapūjā vidhi-paṭalo dvitīyaḥ /

/dpal heruka'i nges par brjod pa las 'khor lo mchod pa'i cho ga'i le'u ste gnyis pa'o //

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[87] C: *pūjādi*

[88] A, B, C: *kṛṣṇā*

[89] C: kūryāt

Chapter Three

Verse 1

tata ācāryaṃ toṣayet pūrvaṃ sarvabhāvena sādhakaḥ /

yathā śaktyā pūjayed guruṃ siddhikāmaḥ susamāhitaḥ //

/ de nas sgrub pos dngos kun gyis // dang por slob dpon mnyes par bya // grub 'dod shin tu mnyan bzhag pas // ci nus pas ni bla ma mchod /

Verse 2

ghaṇṭānādam ālambya puṣpadhūpair alaṃkṛtāṃ /

ghaṇṭāṃ vādayet susvarāṃ paṭāhikāṃ vāpi sādhakaḥ //

/dril bu sgra ldan dpyangs pa dang // me tog spos rnams kyis brgyan cing // shin tu sgra snyan dril bu dkrol // sgrub pa po yis rnga brdung zhing /

Verse 3

hāhākāraṃ ca kārayed evaṃ vidhivat sampūjya /

maṇḍalaṃ sarvakāmikaṃ //

/ ha ha zhes ni brjod par bya // de ltar cho ga bzhin dkyil 'khor // 'dod pa kun ldan mchod nas ni /

Verse 4

saṃchādya paṭāvastreṇa mukhaṃ teṣāṃ tu putrakānāṃ //

puṣpapūrṇāñjaliṃ prakṣipet sādhakaḥ susamāhitaḥ //[90]

/ bu sdug de dag gdong ba la // dar ras legs par bkab nas su // thal mo me tog gis bkang ste // yang dag par ni zhugs pa dag[91] / sgrub po shin tu mnyam bzhag pas /

---

[90] The Sanskrit texts is a bit jumbled here; the third foot of the preceding verse, *pradakṣiṇañ ca tataḥ kṛtvā*, clearly belongs at the beginning of this verse, if we follow the Tibetan. We are then missing a line in Sanskrit, but it may have become assimilated to *sādhakaḥ susamāhitaḥ*, as it was most likely something like *sumati samāhitaḥ*. The last pāda of v. 4 and first 2 pāda of v. 5 occur as follows: *pradakṣiṇaṃ ca tataḥ kṛtvā sādhakaḥ susamāhitaḥ praveśayet.*

[91] *yang dag par zhugs* seems to correspond to *prakṣipet*, which the Tibetan strangely translates with an extra pada. F has / de yi bu sdug gdong ba la ni // dar gyis legs par bkab nas ni // me tog gis thal mo dag // yang dag par ni zhugs pa dag / sgrub po shin tu mnyam bzhag pas / rab tu gtor nas bskor ba ni // shin tu mnyam par bzhag pa yis /. This is in certain aspects closer to the Sanskrit, correctly and clearly translating the bahuvrihi *puṣpapūrṇāñjalin* (which, apparently incorrectly, occurs in the singular case as *puṣpapūrṇāñjaliṃ* in the Sanskrit texts). However, it translates *prakṣipet* as *rab tu gtor*, which is a mistranslation if the commentaries are correct. Evidently this section of chapter three, which is jumbled in the Sanskrit, was disordered as far back as the eleventh century.

Verse 5

pradakṣiṇaṃ ca tataḥ kṛtvā [sādhakaḥ] praveśayet /

tata puravaraṃ ramyaṃ dakṣiṇāmūrtim[92] āśritya //

/ de nas bskor ba byas nas ni // slo bzang yid ni mnyam bzhag pa // pho brang nyams dgar gzhug par bya // lho yi phyogs su lus brten la /

Verse 6

puṣpāñjaliṃ tataḥ kṣipet maṇḍalasyopari[93] yasmai /

patati tat[94] puṣpakulaṃ tatra vinirdiśet //

/ thal mo'i me tog de nas dor // dkyil 'khor steng du dor bar bya // gang du me tog de lhung ba /

Verse 7

śriherukādiṃ[95] pīṭhaṃ darśayet /

tataḥ[96] pūjayet mudrām ācāryaḥ[97] susamāhitaḥ //

/ shri he ru ka'i gnas sogs bstan // de yi rigs ni rna bstan / (/ de ni rigs de'i ming 'gyur bar // slon dpon gyis ni ming bstan to /)[98] / de nas slob dpon legs par ni // mnyam par bzhag ste phyag rgya mchod /

Verse 8

śiṣyāṇāṃ tu dvitiye ahani raktena trijaptena tilakaṃ tasya kārayet //

de nas slob ma phyi de nyin / (las ni yang dag spyad par bya /)[99] / mtshal chen lan gsum bzlas pa yis // de rnams su ni thig le bya /

---

[92] B: *sūttiṃ*

[93] B: *maṇḍasyopari*

[94] C: *yatra ti tat*

[95] C: *śriherukādi*

[96] C: *tatraḥ*

[97] A: *mudrācāryya*, B: *muḍācārya*, C: *mūdrā vācārya*

[98] There is Sanskrit equivalent to these 2 lines.

[99] F, G omit

Verse 9

mukham uddhatya śiṣyaṃ darśayen maṇḍalaṃ tataḥ /

yo yasya devatāsthānaṃ tatra tān[100] darśayet //

/ slob ma yi ni gdong phye la // de nas dkyil 'khor bstan par bya // lha gang gi gnas gang yin // der de yang dag bstan par bya /

Verse 10

samyak praṇipatya tataḥ[101] paścād ācāryasahitaṃ /

puraṃ pradakṣiṇaṃ ca punaḥ kṛtvā pratyārambheṇa vāmataḥ //

F: / de nas slob dpon dang bcas pas // rab tu 'dud pa byas nas ni // g.yon nas brtsams pa'i bya ba yis // de nas bskor ba rab tu bya /[102]

Verse 11

maṇḍalaṃ gurave praṇipatya yathā vidhiḥ /

tatas tu gurave dadyāt tathāgatoktadakṣiṇāṃ niryātya //

/ dkyil 'khor dang ni bla ma la // ji bzhin cho gas phyag bya'o // de nas bla ma dag la yon // de bzhin gshegs pas gsung pa dbul /

Verse 12

suvarṇaśatasahasraṃ[103] ratnāni vividhāni ca /

vastrayugmaśataṃ caiva gajavājirāṣṭram[104] eva ca //

/ gser ni brgya stong dbul ba dang // rin chen rnam pa sna tshogs dang // ras ni zung gyur brgya nyid dang // glang po rta dang yul 'khor dang /

---

[100] B: *tut tatrān*

[101] B: *praṇipatyataḥ;* C: *praṇipatyena taḥ*

[102] E: */ slob dpon dang bcas pho brang la // de nas slob mas rab btud nas // phyir yang g.yon nas brtsams pa yis // de nas bskor ba byas nas ni /*

[103] B: *-saṃhasraṃ*

[104] A, B: *rāṣṭaṃ,* C: *rājam*

Verse 13

karṇābharaṇakaṭākaṃ ca kaṇṭhikāṅgurikāṃś ca[105] samuttamāṃ //

/ rna rgyan dang ni / du bu dang // mgul gdub sor gdub dam pa dang /

Verse 14

yajñopavitasauvarṇaṃ svabhāryyāṃ duhitām api /

dāsadāsibhagnim[106] vāpi praṇipatya nivedayet //

/gser las byas pa'i mchod phyir thogs // chung ma bzang dang bu mo nyid // bran pho bran mo sring mo rnams // phyag btsal nas ni dbul bar bya /

Verse 15

ātmānaṃ sarvabhāvena nivedayed buddhimān guroḥ //

ji skad gsungs bzhin slob ma ni // blo dang ldan pas bla ma la // dngos po kun gyis bdag nyid ni // de bzhin du ni dbul bar bya /

Verse 16

adya prabhṛti dāso 'haṃ samarpitam mayā tava /

evaṃvidhis tataḥ kṛtvā sādhakena suniścitaḥ //

/ deng nas brtsams te bran du bdag / khyed la bdag gis phul ba lags // de nas sgrub pos rab nges par // de ltar cho ga byas na ni /

Verse 17

tataḥ tasya tuṣyanti[107] ḍākinyo yogamātarāḥ /

ḍākinyo lāmayaś caiva khaṇḍarohā tu rūpiṇi //

/ de nas de la mkha' 'gro ma // rnal 'byor ma mo rnams mnyes 'gyur // mkha' 'gro ma dang lā ma dang // khaṇḍa ro hā gzugs can ma /

Verse 18

etair vicarej jagata sarvaḍākinyaiḥ saha sādhakaḥ /

sarvā kiṅkarī tasya sādhakasya na saṃśayaḥ //

---

[105] C: *kaṇṭhikāṃ gurikāṃś ca*

[106] A, B, C: *-bhagniṃ*

[107] B,C: *tuṣyanti*

/ sgrub po mkha' 'gro ma lhan cig / de dang rnam spyod kun tu 'gro // thams cad sgrub po de yi ni // ci bgyi byed par the tshom med /

Verse 19

yogasiddhir bhaved eṣāṃ trailokyam anivāritaṃ /

antardhānabilottiṣṭhaṃ[108] khecaratvaṃ pādalepo 'tha[109] rasāyanaṃ //

/ rnal 'byor 'di ni sgrub 'gyur na // 'jig rten gsum du mi bzlogs shing // mi snang phug[110] dang nam mkhar rgyu // rkang mgyogs de bzhin bcud nkyis len /

Verse 20

jāyate tu sadā nityam icchayā[111] sādhakasya tu /

rūpāṇy anekāni kurute ākāśena tu gacchati //

/ sgrub pa po ni 'dod tsam gyis // rtag par rgyun du bskyed par 'gyur // gzugs ni du ma byed pa dang // nam mkha' la ni 'gro bar 'gyur /

Verse 21

ḍākini viśeṣataḥ niśumbhayati[112] ca sarvajantūnāṃ /

sakṛddṛṣṭena yogena yogitvaṃ jāyate kṣaṇāt //

/ mkha' 'gro rnams kyang khyad par du // skad cig de la sbyor bskyed de // 'gro ba rnams kyang nges gnon par // lan cig bltas bas rnal 'byor pas /

Verse 22

adṛṣṭamaṇḍalo yogi yogitvaṃ yaḥ samihate /

hanyate muṣṭināākāśaṃ pivate mṛgatṛptikāṃ //

/ snags pa dkyil 'khor ma mthong bar // gang zhig rnal 'byor pa nyid 'dod // mkha' la khu tshur gyis brdeg dang // smig rgyu'i chu ni 'thungs dang mtshungs /

---

[108] B: *vilotiṣṭha*; C: *vilotiṣṭhe*

[109] C: *pādalepai tha*

[110] E,G: *'og*

[111] C: *nityaṃ micchayā*

[112] A,B: *niśumbhayati*; C: *nisumbha pattri*

Verse 23

eṣa yogavaraḥ śreṣṭhaḥ sarvayogeṣu cottamaḥ /

yaḥ[113] kāṃ kṣipyate kaścit sadevāsuramānuṣān //

/ rnal 'byor 'di ni mchog rab dang // sbyor ba kun gyi dam pa yin // gang zhig rtag tu 'dod gyur pa // lha dang lha min mi rnams te /

Verse 24

abhibhūya gamiṣyaty atra maṇḍale yo 'bhiṣiktaḥ[114] /

sarvatantroktasādhakaḥ //

/ 'di dag zil gyis gnon par 'gyur // rgyud 'di ru ni dbang bskur bas // thams cad kyi ni sgrub pa po / /

Verse 25

hāsya[115] ikṣaṇapāṇiṃ tu āliṅga dvandvam ādikam /

abhiṣikto bhavet tatra sarvatantraikam uttaraṃ //

/ rgod dang lta dang lag bcangs dang // gnyis gnyis 'khyud pa la sogs dag /[116] / dbang bkur bar ni gyur pa yin // thams cad rgyud las dam pa'o /

Verse 26

tattvasaṃgrahe[117] saṃvare vāpi guhye vā vajrabhairave /

ayam maṇḍalarājā[118] na bhūto na bhaviṣyati[119] //

(/ 'di ni lha mi zil gnon 'gro /)[120] / de nyid bsdus pa'm sdom pa'm // gsang ba'm rdo rje 'jigs byed las // dkyil 'khor rnams kyi rgyal po 'di // ma byung 'byung bar mi 'gyur ro //

---

[113] B: *ya*

[114] B: *maṇḍala yo 'bhiṣiktaḥ;* C: *maṇḍale 'bhiṣiktaḥ*

[115] A, B, C: *gopya.* This is certainly a corruption of *hāsya,* which is a member in this well-known list.

[116] E:/ *rgod dang lta dang lag 'dzin gyis // 'khyud dang gnyis sprad la sogs la /*

[117] A,B: *tatvasaṃgrahe*; C: *tatra-*

[118] C: *ayamaṇḍalarājā*

[119] B: *na viṣyati*

[120] Not attested in Sanskrit

Verse 27

uktānuktaṃ ca yat kiṃcit tat sarvaṃ śrīheruke sthitaḥ //

/ bshad dang ma bshad gang ci'ang rung // de kun he ru ka la gnas /

iti śrīherukābhidhāne dakṣiṇābhiṣeka vidhi-paṭalas tṛtīyaḥ /

/dpal heruka'i nges par brjod pa las yon tan dang bcas pa'i dbang bskur ba'i cho ga'i le'u ste gsum pa'o //

Chapter Four

Verse 1

tato ḍākinyo bhuvanāni[121] vijṛmbhayanti /

mahāviryā cakravartini mahābalā suvirā cakravarmiṇi //

/ de nas mkha' 'gro ma rnams ni // gnas na rnam par 'gying ba ste // brtson chen 'khor lo sgyur ma dang // stobs chen ma dang rab dpa' mo /

Verse 2

śauṇḍini[122] khaṇḍarohā cakravegā khagānanā /

hayakarṇi[123] subhadrā ca śyāmādevi[124] tathaiva ca //

/ 'khor lo'i go cha chang 'tshong ma // khaṇḍa ro he 'khor lo'i shugs // bya gdong ma dang rta rna mo // shin tu bzang mo ljang lha mo /

Verse 3

surābhakṣi vāyuvegā tathā mahābhairavā /

airāvati drumacchāyā laṅkeśvari kharvari[125] tathā //

/ chang 'thung ma dang rlung shugs ma // de bzhin 'jigs byed chen mo dang // sa srung ma dang shing grub ma // lang ka'i dbang phyug mi'u thung ma /

Verse 4

viramati mahānāsā[126] prabhāvati caiva caṇḍākṣi /

pracaṇḍā ca sādhakaḥ etāḥ[127] siddhās tu vai pūrvaṃ //

/ dpa' bo'i blo ma sna chen ma // 'od ldan ma dang gtum mig ma // rab gtum ma ste sgrub byed yin // mkha' 'gro ma ni nyi shu bzhi // 'di dag sngon nyid grub pa yin //

---

[121] B: *-ntuvāni*, C: *-nnavāni*

[122] A,B,C: *sauṇḍini*

[123] C: *hayavarṇi*; B: *hayavarṇā*

[124] A,B: *syāmādevi* B: *myāmadevi*

[125] B: *khaṇḍari*

[126] C: *mahānāśā*

[127] B: *tatrāḥ*

Verse 5

caturviñśati ḍākinyaḥ svanāmodiraṇamantrānāṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ kārānta yojitāḥ /

dṛṣṭvā yogavaraṃ śreṣṭhaṃ[128] jvalam[129] anyat palālavat //

/ rang ming brjod pa'i sngags la ni // mthar ni hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ sbyar te // rnal 'byor rab mchog / 'di mthong na // me ste gzhan dag sog mar mtshung /

Verse 6

oṃ kāra dipakāḥ sarve[130] siddhidaṃ sarvakāmikaṃ

viratvaṃ gatāḥ siddhāḥ gṛhe dṛṣṭvā ca maṇḍalaṃ //

/ oṃ ni kun la gsal byed de // grub stsol 'dod pa thams cad byed // dpa' bo nyid 'gyur grub pa ni // khyim du dkyil 'khor mthong ba yin /

Verse 7

tato jñātvā bhāvayen nityaṃ siddhis tathāgatavaco yathā //

/ de shes rtag tu[131] bsgom par bya // dnos grub de bshin gshegs gsung bzhin /

iti śriherukābhidhāne virayoginyādvayaṃ nāma vidhi paṭalaś caturthaḥ //

/ heruka'i mngon par brjod pa las dpa' bo dang rnal 'byor ma gnyis su med par bkod pa'i cho ga'i le'u ste bzhi pa'o //

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[128] B: yogavaraśreṣṭaṃ

[129] B, C: *puṇam.*

[130] B: *sarva*

[131] F; E: *de nas de rtag*

APPENDIX B

An Translation of the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra,* Chapters One to Four

Chapter One

Homage to Śricakrasaṃvara.

And now I will explain the secret, concisely, not extensively. Union with Śriheruka is the means of achieving all desired aims. It is higher than the highest, the binding of the Ḍākinis' Net. The being made of all ḍākinis, Vajrasattva, Supreme Bliss, always abides in the secret supreme delighted, the Universal Self. He is the Original Blessed Lord Hero, the Binding of the Ḍākinis' Net. Having emerged from the form of sound, his scope is the performance of the commitments, existing in the beginning, middle and end, difficult to obtain in the triple world.

Listen to what is taught in the Tantra, the yoga which is endowed with mantra repetition, contemplation, etc., just like the union of the churned and the churner, along with the knowledge of the rites. The kinswoman indeed should always be worshipped at the special occasion, with the middle and superior breaths, and also with scented water. The messengers who are innately achieved, the lesser, middling and supreme, bring about the desired success by means of the mind gone within. Worship the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with the one's own seminal drops, and with sight and touch, and with hearing and thought. One will be thus liberated from all sins, have no doubt; the state of being a yogin is the supreme purifying merit which destroys sin. The well equipoised adept is successful with mantra repetition, contemplation, and [with joy], and should always protect the commitments. Due to the breaking of the commitments, success will not be gained in initiation and in the maṇḍala. Mix honey with vermilion, camphor and red sandalwood. Go amidst the retinue, bearing the sign of the Universal Vajra mark; join the tips of the thumb and ringfinger, always knowing yoga. Success is always attained as sweet as

drinking soma; this should be the five ambrosias, the originator of all successes. The four offerings, that is, the yoginis or heroines: being equipoised in the equipoise of the two organs is the holding of reality. If the bliss of the heavens and humans were taken together, it would not amount to one sixteenth of that of Vajrasattva. If the bliss of the heavens and humans were taken together, it would not amount to one sixteenth of that of Vajrasattva.[1] On mountains, in thickets, in groves, on riverbanks, or in the primordially established charnal ground, there one should draw the maṇḍala.

The first chapter of the Heruka Abhidhāna on the Descent of the Maṇḍala.

[1] Following the Tibetan; Sanskrit has Vajrakaṇika

Chapter Two

The maṇḍala ground should be anointed there with unfallen cow products, with charnel ground ash together with the five ambrosias. Anointing thus the ground, there the maṇḍala should be undertaken. One should practice in the charnel ground. One well endowed with a master's qualities should draw the divine maṇḍala with charnel char powder and with charnel ground brick. He has the proper knowledge, understands Tantra and Śrī Heruka's mantra. He is not angry, is pure and competent, and he understands yoga and is perfected in knowledge. His hair is marked with a skull, his limbs are smeared with ash. His body is decorated with ornaments, and has a bone rosary. His hair has a seamless [skull],[2] hung with a bone garland.

A skull staff placed in the hand, one becomes Śrī Heruka, then think of Śriheruka, and place the wheel in the heart. Having thus armed oneself, place the fences [in] the directions. Having thus armoured oneself, surely place the wards below. Similar to the essence of the wheel, above is the net of arrows. Making yourself a sky-going tent, you are well-positioned. Thus armed, the one who has this armour is unbreakable even by the Thirty.

Well-protecting oneself thus, ornamented with mudrās and mantras, draw the terrifying maṇḍala which bestows great power. Then, with a corpse thread, or one coloured with human blood *(mahārudhira)*, lay out the terrifying maṇḍala, Heruka's mansion supreme. [Of] a single cubit, four [or] eight, [with] four corners all around, covered with four doors, adorned with four arches. The mantrin measuring doubles [them]. Worship the Binding of the Ḍākinīs' Net. Placing in the middle of that, a luminous lotus with petals, endowed with filaments. Place in the center the Hero who is the terror of the Great Terrifier, of shining shoulders and body brilliant, who has the tremendous noise

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[2] Here I am translating literally from the Sanskrit; the Tibetan commentaries make it clear that this verse is not translated literally from the Sanskrit, and that *murdhaja* refers to the yogin's *jaṭa*, which are ornamented with skulls.

of very loud laughter. Wearing a skull rosary, divine his three eyes and four faces; covered with an elephant hide, [his] eyebrows beautiful, vajra-cleft. His hand wields a skull staff, [and he is] ornamented with a half a hundred garland.

The goddess who stands embraced by him is the truly awesome Vajravārāhi. Facing the God Śrīheruka, with three eyes and of fierce form. Her skull bowl filled [with entrails],[3] blood trickles from her mouth. Threatening the gods, titans and humans in all directions. The twenty four ḍākinis comprising Vārāhi's clan should be worshipped amidst the wheels in the directions and in the quarters. And here thus the heroes as well , being placed in the wheel, should be worshipped. If the adept desires success, [he] should worship the non-dual hero.

Then, make the jars, avoiding bases, black [colour], etc. Brimming with pearls gold and jewels, and with coral, silver and copper, and with all foods, with skull bowls placed upon them. Then wind the neck with thread, the mouth adorned with leaves. Place the eight at the doors, well wound with a pair of cloths. The ninth vase in the center is wound with a pair of cloths, decorated with gold, silver, jewels or pearls. One should create maṇḍalas fully decorated with jewels and gold. Were one to worship the delightful supreme abode, there will definitely be success. Oneself facing in all directions being satisfied with scented water, were one to desire the ultimate power, offer one hundred lamps.

The ḍākinis in space should all be mentally placed above. The ḍākinis in the earth realm should be entirely placed in the maṇḍala. Any of the ḍākinis in the underworld, place her in the underworld. The Mothers should be employed in all of the directions and quarters. If the adept desires success, he should offer one hundred butter lamps, likewise with flowers, scent and incense. Worship the yoginis and heros who stand in the maṇḍala of Śrīheruka, with banners of red and likewise yellow, white, black and tawny brown, well

[3] This is provided by the Tibetan.

adorned thus with various kinds of wreaths and sundry cloths, with canopies and with curtains. Make [offerings] well equipoised with all sorts of food and drink.

The second chapter of the Śriheruka Abhidhāna on the Rite of Wheel Worship.

Chapter Three

After that the adept should first please the Master with all things. One who desires success, well-equipoised, should worship the guru to the extent of his ability. Having hung sounding bells, decorated with flowers and incense, the adept should sound a melodious bell or drum. One should make the sound 'ha ha', worshipping the maṇḍala of all that is desired, in accordance with the rites. The well equipoised adept should then, covering with a cloth the face of these lads, cause them to enter with their palms full of flowers. Then, equipoised one, circumambulating should enter the pleasing palace supreme, resting one's body to the south. Then the flower in the palm should be cast above the maṇḍala, and wherever that flower falls one is assigned to that clan. [They] should be shown the place of Śriheruka and so forth.

The master, well equipoised, should worship the consort. The next day [they] should make the drop for the disciples with the blood thrice recited. Having released his face, the maṇḍala should then be shown to the student. [He] should be shown the place where his deity resides. Then, bowing correctly to the palace along with the master, afterwards, circumambulate the palace, doing so again beginning from the left.

Saluting the maṇḍala for the guru in accordance with the rite, then give to the guru, paying the fee spoken by the Tathāgata: a hundred thousand gold, and a variety of treasures; also one hundred pairs of clothing, and even elephants, horses and territory; earrings, bracelets, necklaces, and an excellent ring; a golden sacrificial thread, and also one's wife and daughters, servants and maids, or even one's sister, should be offered, bowing. The intelligent one should give himself with all of [his] things to the guru, [saying,] "Henceforward I am given over to you as a servant." Doing thus the ritual procedure [things] are well settled by the adept.

Due to that the ḍākinis and Mothers of yoga are pleased with him, along with Ḍākini, Lāmā, Khaṇḍarohā and Rūpiṇi. The adept should wander the world with all of those ḍākinis. There is no doubt in the doing of all that is done by that adept. Were one to be accomplished in this yoga, and the adept will always, continually give rise, as desired, to [the powers of] being unhindered in the three worlds, invisibility, penetrating cavities, space travel, foot unguent, and alchemy. The adept will always without fail be born as he wills, and will take on many forms, and will travel by means of space. Ḍākini especially destroys all beings by the yoga of a single glance; and [s/he] gives rise to the state of being a yogin in an instant.

The yogin who has not seen the maṇḍala, and who longs after the yoga itself, [is like one who] punches at the sky, or drinks the water of a mirage. This yoga is the most excellent, the highest among all yogas, which can kill anyone, gods, titans or men. The adept whom has been taught all Tantras, and who has been initiated in the maṇḍala will go forth, conquering. Smiling, looking, hand-holding, coupling, etc.: one should be initiated in that, the supreme of all Tantras. This king of maṇḍalas does not occur, nor will it occur, in the *Tattvasaṃgraha, Saṃvara, Guhyasamāja,* or *Vajrabhairava.* All things spoken or unspoken exist in Śriheruka.

The Third Chapter of the Śri Heruka Abhidhāna on the Rite of Initiation.

Chapter Four

Then the ḍākinis pervade the worlds: Mahāvīryā, Cakravartini, Mahābalā, Suvīrā, Cakravarmiṇi, Śauṇḍini, Khaṇḍarohā, Cakravegā, Khagānanā, Hayakarṇi, Subhadrā, Śyāmādevi, Surābhakṣi, Vāyuvegā, Mahābhairavā, Airāvati, Drumacchāyā, Laṅkeśvari, Kharvari, Viramati, Mahānāsā, Prabhāvatḥi, Caṇḍākṣi, and Pracaṇḍā; they are the achievers, the twenty four ḍākinis previously established. Affix the syllables *hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ* to the mantras in which are uttered each one's name.

Seeing this excellent yoga supreme; it is fire while the others are straw. The syllable *oṃ* illumines everything. It is the giver of the powers, all that is desired. One is established in the state of being a hero, having seen the maṇḍala in the house. Knowing thus always meditate on the powers taught by the Tathāgata.

The Fourth chapter of the Śrī Heruka Abhidhāna called The Nonduality of the Heroes and Yoginis.

Extensive Explanation of the Concise Supreme Bliss Tantra known as the *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning*

Introduction

[What follows is] an extensive explanation of the Concise Cakrasamvara Supreme Bliss Tantra, which is called the *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning.* I bow respectfully to and take refuge in the lotus feet of His Holiness the Guru Mañjughoṣa. I bow respectfully to the lotus feet of Her Holiness [Vajravārāhi] and Great Glorious Heruka who are like a rose dawn cloud embracing a great sapphire mountain. I bow to the essence yoginis, who, moved by love, befriend always the practitioner of this path, visiting him wherever he abides, by means of the force of their magic powers. Bless me, heroes and yoginis, who always bless the practitioner, never withdrawing the appearance of your emanation bodies from the twenty four supreme places such as Pulli.[1] I respectfully bow to the door guardianesses[2] who with their inconceivably great power defeat the demons who harass practitioners. May they enable me to accomplish the aims which I desire.

May my mentor Mañjughoṣa bless me, who refreshes beings with his wondrous deeds, whose mind plays in the delight and bliss in administering the kingdom of the Dharma which is to be found within the teachings of the Buddha, and who, out of great compassion, pierces the heart with a flicker of his glance, breaking the bonds of the net of confusion in which we have been embroiled since beginninglessness. I bow to the wise mentors of India and Tibet, such as Nārotapa, who upheld properly the system of the great saints who have touched [their heads] to the feet of the Glorious Heruka.

The treasure of all the jewelled successes is arrayed as series of waves of the many personal instructions in the ocean of the hidden currents of supreme bliss. How

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[1] That is, Pullīramalaya, one of the twenty-four sites mentioned in the CST.

[2] They are Kākāsyā, Ulūkāsyā, Śvānāsyā, Śūkarāsyā, Yamadāḍhi, Yamadūti Yamadaṃṣṭri, Yamamathani.

could one such as I ever cross it? However I found a little bit of intellectual brilliance concerning how to connect the root and explanatory tantras, through the excellent explanation which descended to me through the lineage from the wise, so I feel some enthusiasm about this. For those who have ambition for investigating this method, I will expand on this which is an elixer for their eyes, the a sweet message for their ears, and miraculous delight for their mind, a mirror for viewing the meaning of the hidden tantra.

Since the emantion of the maṇḍala which emanates the hero and heroine Īśvaris still abide here in the twenty four places of this very land of Jambudvipa, one might rapidly attain their powers and virtues, for they still arise without any obstruction and without any decline in power, even up to the end of time.

The concise Supreme Bliss Tantra, called the *Śri Cakrasamvara* is famous as having blessings. In order to come to determination concerning this tantra, there are three things: (I) the general arrangement of all scriptures, (II) the arrangement of the Great Bliss tantras in particular, and finally, (III) the explanation of how one precisely engages the explanation of the abbreviated root tantra.

First, (I) as for demonstrating that the teaching of the Victor is the sole entrance for those who desire liberation, and also, as for the teachings on the various ways of entering that, I have extensively explained this in the *Stages of the Path of Vajradhara.*[3] I have already taught extensively the arrangement of Father and Mother tantras in books such as *The General Meaning of the Final Analysis of Guhyasamaja*[4] and so forth, so I will not bother with them here.

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[3] That is, his *snags rim chen mo.*

[4] LH, at 2b.4, has the correct *mtha'-dpyod*, TL, at 2b.6, has *mtha'-gcod.*

II. The particular arrangement of the Great Bliss Tantras.
A. Identifying the Root Tantra, Explanatory Tantras and Corresponding Portion Tantras.
1. Identifying the non-controversial Tantras.

If we speak roughly about the arrangement of the uncontroversial tantras of the literature of the *Śrī Cakrasamvara Tantra*, Ācāryavajra explained that "there is a one hundred thousand chapter Root Tantra, a hundred thousand verse *Khasama Compendium*, and the *Subsequent Compendium* is the fifty one chaptered, seven hundred verse version."[5] Some of the Tibetan lamas accepted that, however, there does not seem to be any proof based on an authorative source.

Now, in the *Ḍākārnava* it says, "In the *Laghu Samvara*, which is derived from the three hundred verse *Abhidhāna*, the chapters are linked to reality in accordance with the letters, from *A* until letter *Kṣ*."[6] This indicates that the *Laghu Samvara Tantra* is derived from the three hundred thousand verse *Abhidhāna*.

In the *Saṃcāra* it says "the *Saṃvara* which is abridged from the Tantra stated in one hundred thousand [verses], is also said to be from within the *Khasama Tantra* of one hundred thousand."[7] This explanation that the *Khasama Tantra* is a one hundred thousand

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[5] This is in reference to passages from Virāvajra's commentary on the root tantra called the *dpal bde mchog gi rtsa rgyud kyi rgya chen bshad pa tshig don rab tu gsal ba shes bya ba*, made in the context of commenting upon the first chapter. A statement which closely matches Tsongkhapa's statement occurs as commentary to v.2.a, *uttarādapi-cottaraṃ*. Now, *uttara* implies distance in time or space, in the former case implying something which come afterward or later, and in the fomer case something which goes higher or beyond, connoting sublimity. This line is usually interpreted in the latter sense, and thus could be translated as "and even higher than the high." Virāvajra, however, takes in in the former sense as refering to an *uttaratantra*, a compendium, as follows: / ci'i phyir phyi ma'i phyi ma yin zhe na / le'u 'bum pa ni rtsa ba'i rgyud yin la / shlo ka 'bum pa nas nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i phyir phyi ma yang le'u lnga bcu rtsa gcig pa ni phyi ma'i phyi ma yin pas so / (fol. 355b) "Why is it 'later than the late'? There is the hundred thousand chaptered root tantra, and subsequent to it is the hundred thousand verse *Khasama*, and the fifty one chaptered [text] is the subsequent compendium." He makes this point in several other places in his commentary, such as in is comment upon the first word of the root tantra, *atha*, which follows: / rtsa ba'i rgyud le'u 'bum pa dang / rgyud phyi ma shlo ka 'bum pa rdzogs pa'i rjes la le'u nga gcig pa ston par bzhed nas de nas zhes bya ba la sogs pa gsungs pa yin no / (fol. 354b) " Since the fifty one chaptered [text] was taught after the hundred thousand chapter root tantra and the hundred thousand verse compendium were completed, 'and then' etc. were stated." He also makes the same argument on fol. 355a in commenting upon the line *samāsāttannavistarān* (v.1.b).

[6] This passage occurs in the *Śrī Ḍākārṇava Tantra* as follows: / de ltar nges brjod 'bum gsum las // phung ba bde mchog chung ngu ste // a yig la sogs ksaḥ yig mthar // leu rnams ji lta'i rim pa yis // de kho na nyid ldan par sbyar / (DK fol. 242b, 243a). This is identical to Tsongkhapa's quote, except for the fact that Tsongkhapa has, more accurately, *nyung ngu* rather than *chung ngu* for the Skt. *laghu*.

[7] This quote corresponds to the following passage in the *Yoginisañcārya*: / ming gi rgyud ni 'bum sde las // snying po bsdus par gyur pa yin // nam mkha' dang ni mnyam pa'i rgyud // 'bum gcig nang nas de

[verse tantra] is in accordance with the former [statement by Ācārya Vajra].. And it is explained that the *Laghu Samvara Tantra* was abridged from the *Abhidhāna* of 100,000 verses. The 100,000 verse *Abhidhāna* from which the *Laghu Samvara* was abridged and the *Khasama Tantra* are stated as being two different tantras.[8]

A comment on these two from the *Herukābhyudaya* is, "The Essence Tantra was taught abridged from a hundred and three hundred thousand [verse texts]."[9] As a commentary on this says that "there was a three hundred thousand [verse] extensive *Abhidhāna*, and an abridged one of one hundred thousand [verses], so therefore there is no contradiction."[10] Such being the case, there are two different extensive root tantras.

In the *Root Tantra* it says, "The hero stated it concisely as it is from the *Ocean of Awareness*." As for the *Ocean of Awareness* which states this, Jayabhadra and Vīravajra explain that it refers to the Mahātantra.[11] Some Tibetans say that it refers to the 100,000 verse Tantra. From among those, however, now in this area we only have this one abridged Root Tantra in fifty one [chapters].

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bzhin bshad / (DK fol.41a). Tsongkhapa has: 'bum du brjod pa'i rgyud las ni //bde mchog btus par gyur pa dang // nam mkha' dang ni mnyam pa'i rgyud // 'bum gcig na yang 'di dag bshad /

[8] Neither editions of the text which I have corroborate Tsuda's quote (p.32) of Tsongkhapa's concluding phrase here as ...rgyud gnyis so snor gsungs so, the syntax of which seems unusual. The editions consulted here both have ... rgyud gnyis so sor gsungs so. If the latter is correct, Tsongkhapa is asserting that the 100,000 verse *Abhidhāna* and the 100,000 verse *Khasama* are distinct texts, which implies that the above citations are misled or misleading, but he doesn't directly say so.

[9] This is a quote from the ninth chapter of the *Śriherukābhyudaya*. The text here as quoted by Tsongkhapa is ambigious, but the version in the DK and QK is somewhat clearer, as follows: / 'bum dang 'bum phrag gsum du gsung // rgyud kyi snying po mtha dag bsdus /. Tsongkhapa has: bum phrag bum phrag gsum las bshad // rgyud kyi snying po bsdus pa yin / (DK fol. 7a, QK p. 224.1).

[10] Tsongkhapa quotes a *Herukābhyudaya* commentary as follows: / mngon spyod rgyas pa 'bum phrag gsum pa dang // bsdus pa 'bum phrag gcig par bshad pas mi 'gal. This corresponds to the commentary on this line in Acārya zla-ba gzhon-nu's *Śriherukābhyudayamahāyogini Tantrarāja Katipayākṣarapañjikā*, which is the only commentary on the HA in the Derge Tanjur. His commentary occurs as follows: "The 'one hundred thousand' is the one hundred thousand [versed] *Abhidhāna*. And there is also an extensive *Abhidhāna* of three hundred thousand verses." / 'bum phrag ni mngon par brjod pa'i 'bum pa'o // rgyas par mngon par brjod pa 'bum phrag gsum yang ngo / (DT fol. 105a). Both editions of Tsongkhapa's text have *mngon spyod*, i.e., *abhicāra* or 'black magic', which is an obvious misprint.

[11] Tsongkhapa here is referring to a statement by Vīravajra in his commentary to the thirty fourth chapter of the Root Tantra in his *Samantaguṇaśālina-nāma-ṭika*. His statement in DT page 195.b is as follows: / ji bzhin ni zhi ba la sogs pa'i cho ga'i go rims zhes bya'o // rig pa'i rgya mtsho zhes pa ni rig pa'i rgya mtsho'i rgyud chen por dpa' bos yongs su bsdus nas ji ltar bshad pa'o // nyan pa po gsal bar bya zhes pa'i don to // yang na ni rig pa'i rgya mtsho las gang yongs su bshad ba de 'dir mdor bsdus nas byas pa ste // der ni rgyas pa zhes bya bar dgongs so /.

Many explanatory tantras as well are abridged tantras derived from their own extensive tantras, though they are not root tantras which are abridged tantras, root tantras such as [this] fifty one [chaptered text]. As for the explanatory tantras, Durjayacandra says "the four, the *Ḍāka*, the *Udaya*, the *Samcārya* and the *Tathāmahānāma Uttaratantra*, along with the *Sampuṭa Tantra*, should be understood to be explanatory tantras."[12] The *Vajraḍāka* is what he refers to as the *Ḍāka*. What he refers to as the *Uttara* is the *Abhidhānottara*. What he refers to as the *kha sbyor* is the *Sampuṭa*. In regard to the *Udaya* literature, in general there are the three, the *Herukābhyudaya*, the *Vārāhyabhyudaya*, and the *Samvarodaya*. I will explain which of the *Udaya* can be said to be explanatory tantras.

Since taken in that way there are five explanatory tantras, the expression "along with" of "along with [the *Sampuṭa*] Tantra" should be interpreted as a conjunction which separates things. Of the four explanatory tantras mentioned in the *Atiśa Commentary*, three of them are the *Udaya*, the *Abhidhāna*, and the *Vajradaka*. As for the fourth one, he thought it should be taken as the *Samcārya*.[13]

The disciple of Naropa in India, whose name was Dārika, who was the guru of the Paṇḍita Thang-chuba, says that if both the *Caturyogini Sampuṭa* and the *Dakārnava* added upon the five, this makes seven Explanatory Tantras. Some of the expert Tibetans claimed that *Samvarodaya* commentary is a Concise Tantra, a Final Tantra (Uttaratantra), or even an

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[12] This unidentified quote is from Durjayacandra's text *Ratnagaṇa-nāma Pañjikā* (Tō. #1404, Beijing #2120). Sachen Kun-'dga' sNying-po relied heavily on this text in his commentary on the *Cakrasamvara Root Tantra*, which is not surprising given Durjayacandra's important role in the development of the *lam-'bras* teachings originally attributed to Virūpa. Tsongkhapa rarely refers to it, but it is likely that he is familiar with it due to the latter's dependence upon it. This quote can be found in vol. 48 of the modern reprint of the QT, on p. 256.2, as quoted by Tsongkhapa: / mkha 'gro 'byung ba kun spyod dang // de bzhin mtshan mchog bla ma'i rgyud // kha sbyor rgyud dang bzhi po ni // bshad pa'i rgyud du shes par bya /. Tsongkhapa uses the word *Sampuṭa* (kha sbyor) to refer to the *Sampuṭa-nāma Mahātantra* (Tō. #381, Beijing #26), which is sometimes confused with the *Caturyogini-sampuṭa Tantra* (Tō. #376, Beijing #24), a totally different text.

[13] Tsongkhapa here refers to a passage from Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna's *Abhisamayavibhaṅga*, which occurs as follows: "I will explain gathering together the essential points from the *Abhidhānottara*, *Saṃvarodaya* and *Vajraḍāka*. Here the object of explanation is topic of the *Khasama Mahātantra* and the four Explanatory Tantras including the *Yoginisaṃcārya Tantra*." / nges brjod mngon 'byung mkha' 'gro las // snying po bsdus pa bdag gis bshad // de la 'dir bshad bya nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud chen po dang / 'chad byed rgyud bzhi dang ldan pa'i rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud rnams kyi brjod bya / (DT fol. 186a)

Explanatory Tantra, and that the *Samvarodaya* and the *Vārāhyabhyudaya* are Explanatory Tantras from the Tantra itself. Therefore those added to the former seven makes nine Explanatory Tantras.[14]

In that regard, in the *Supreme Bliss Tantra*, the root and explanatory tantras are not determined to be two. Alaṃkakalaśa said that the Explanatory and Auxillary Tantras are separate. Buddhaguhya also takes Explanatory and Corresponding Portion tantras as separate. Here these [comments] are not contradictory so we should take them as such. If we do this, the three, the *Vajraḍāka*, the *Sampuṭa* and the *Samcārya* are as we explained. As for the *Abhidhānottara*, in some commentaries it is an Explanatory Tantra, and in other commentaries it is taken as a Root Tantra. However, it should be taken as an Explanatory Tantra.

As for the *Vārāhyabhyudaya*, it refers to itself as the *Vārāhyabhyudaya* from the Final Explanatory Tantra. The "final explanatory tantra" is the *Abhidhānottara*. And there are a few places where they draw upon each other, such as in the case of the twelfth chapter of the *Abhidhāna* and the third chapter of the *Vārāhyabhyudaya*, meaning that it is derived frm the *Abhidānottara*. Therefore, it is not an explanatory tantra separate from the *Abhidānottara*.

As for *Samvarodaya*, it is explained as a *Sahaja Kalpa* from the three hundred thousand [verse] Extensive Tantra, and as it is said to be very important, we should take it along with the commentary as an Explanatory Tantra. Durjayacandra and Atisa, saying only "Udaya", are unclear. Several previous Tibetan lamas thought they referred to the *Herukābhyudaya*, which, although it is said to be an explanatory tantra on initiation bestowal, it does not have any presentation of the initiation which does not arise from the Root Tantra, and moreover there does not appear to be any clear reasons as to why it should be taken as an explanatory tantra, so it is better to think of it as an Parallel Tantra

[14] Nine is the number of non-controversial Tantras (of both the special and common types) listed and described by Bu-ston in his RP commentary, pp. 396-429.

(*phyogs mthun rgyud*, parallel in the sense that they are neither root nor explanatory tantras, but function along side of those). As for the *Ḍākārnava* and the *Caturyoginisampuṭa*, taking them as Parallel Tantras would, I think, be better.

Atiśa talks about four explanatory tantras, thinking of the explanatory tantras as the doors of Cakrasaṃvara. The followers of Mal and Gyo uphold five explanatory tantras following Phamthingbas and Durjayacandra, from [the latter's] quote "*Ḍāka, Udaya, Saṃcāra,*" etc. Lama Phamthingba held there to be five explanatory tantras, which is good; this is the system of not counting the *Vārāhyabhyudaya* as separate from the *Abhidānottara.*

II.A.2. Discussing the Controversial Explanatory Tantras

There are the twenty-four *Rali* Explanatory Tantras of the body, speech and mind wheels of Saṃvara, which together with the eight ancillary Tantras constitute thirty-two.[15] In regard to these eight ancillary Tantras of the Tibetan scholars, someone adds a catagory of "non-turbid Tantras", and claims that there are eight of these. This person, not counting the *Mahābalajñāna Tantrarāja*, adds the two *Rigi-arali* to the "non-turbid" ones, making

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[15] Bu-ston lists and briefly describes all thirty two of the *rali* Tantras in his RP commentary, pp. 429-36. They are divided into four groups of eight: body, speech, mind and ancillary. The Body Tantras are: *Śriguhyavajra-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 383, PTT 28), *Śriguhyasarvacchinda* (Tōh. 384, PTT 29), *Śricakrasaṃvaraguhyācintya-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 385, PTT 30), *Śrikhasama-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 386, PTT 31), *Śrimahākhā-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 387, PTT 32), *Śrikāyavākcitta-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 388, PTT 33), *Śriratnamālā-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 389, PTT 34), *Śrimahāsamaya-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 390, PTT 35). The Speech Tantras are: *Śrimahābala-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 391, PTT 36), *Śrijñānaguhya-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 392, PTT 37), *Śrijñānamālā-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 393, PTT 38), *Śrijñānajvala-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 394, PTT 39), *Śricandramālā-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 395, PTT 40), *Ratnajvala-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 396, PTT 41), *Śrisuryacakra-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 397, PTT 42), *Śrijñānarāja-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 398, PTT 43). The Mind Tantras are: *Śrivajraḍākaguhya-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 399, PTT 44), *Śrijvalāgniguhya-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 400, PTT 45), *Śri-amṛtaguhya-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 401, PTT 46), *Śriśmaśānālaṃkāra-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 402, PTT 47), *Śrivajrarāja-mahātantra* (Tōh. 403, PTT 48), *Śrijñānāśaya-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 404, PTT 49), *Śrirājarāja-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 405, PTT 50), *Śriḍākinisaṃvara-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 406, PTT 51). The eight Ancillary Tantras are: *Śriḍākiniguhyajvala-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 408, PTT 52), *Śrivajrabhairavavidāraṇa-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 409, PTT 53), *Śri-agnimālā-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 407, PTT 54), *Śrivajrasiddhajālasaṃvara-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 411, PTT 55), *Śrimahābalajñānarāja-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 410, PTT 56), *Śricakrasaṃvara-tantrarāja-adbhutaśmaśānālaṃkāra-nāna* (Tōh. 413, PTT 57), *Anāvila-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 414, PTT 58), *Sarvatathāgatacittagarbhārtha-tantra* (Tōh. 412). This list also occurs at Tsuda 1974, p. 41, with the exception of the last Tantra, which Tsuda did not identify, evidently because he only consulted the PTT photoreproduction of the QK edition of the canon, which does not contain that text.

eight. As for *Rigi-arali*, there is no reason for it to be an explanatory tantra of the Supreme Bliss. We should abandon mixing these as complements of those [actual Explanatory Tantras].[16] The [other] "non-turbid" ones seem to be real [Explanatory] Tantras. These were previously famous as controversial tantras, and some of them certainly seem to be untrue tantras. Since there seems to be a ground of doubt regarding the others, they should be investigated.

The *Khasama Tantra*[17] is also doubtful, as are ten chapters in the *Ḍākinisarvacittādvayācintyajñānavajravārāhyabhibhava-tantrarāja*, as well as two chapters in the *uttaratantra* [of that], as is the *Vārāhyabhibodhi* of twenty two chapters.[18] And it is said that there are two translations of Yeshe Zang-po which seem to be false Tantras. It is also said that the *Tied-up Topknot Tantra,*[19] which is a Mahāmāyājālā Tantra, and which emerges from the three hundred thousand verse [text], called the *Mahāmāyā*, seem to be set aside as the *laghutantra* of the *Maitri Khecara.*[20] These matters should be investigated well, with subtle intelligence, caution, and manifold understanding.

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[16] Tsongkhapa here gives a slightly abbreviated version of Bu-ston's criticism which occurs at RP p. 436, as follows: ri gi a ra li ni rgyud sde gzhan yin gyi bde mchog gi bshad rgyud yin rgyu'ang med la / 'di rnams kyi zla la bsre ru'ang phangs so /.

[17] Tsongkhapa evidently refers to the *Śrikhasama-tantrarāja* (Tōh. 386, PTT 31), one of the *rali* Tantras previously mentioned.

[18] Tsongkhapa mistakenly uses the abbreviated name *phag mo mngon 'byung,* instead of *phag mo mngon byang,* for the *Khyāvajravārāhi-abhidhāna-tantrottara-vārāhyabhibodhi.* The knickname used by Tsongkhapa would render the Sanskrit *vārāhyabhibhava,* which would more correctly refer to the *Ḍākinisarvacittādvayācintyajñānavajravārāhyabhibhava-tantrarāja,* a text which Tsongkhapa already mentioned using its full name. That Tsongkhapa's abbreviation *phag mo mngon 'byung* refers to the former text is proven by an instance in this when he uses the term to identify a quote which is in fact from that text.

[19] Perhaps the *ral-pa gyen-brjes kyi rtog-pa chen-po,* Tō. 724.

[20] Tsongkhapa here refers to the *Vidyādharivajrayoginisadhāna,* and in fact directly quotes the first, identifying line of that text, which occurs as follows: 'bum phrag gsum pa las 'byung ba'i sgyu 'phrul dra ba chen mo ral pa gyen du brdzes pa'i rgyud las sgyu ma chen mo zhes bya ba ste / (DK fol. 72b). Evidently this text was considered a "root text" of the Maitri Khecāra tradition, one of three *Khecāri/mkha' spyod* traditions attributed to Naropa, Indrabhuti and Maitri.

II.B. Showing the time and place of the original proclamation of the *Cakrasamvara Tantra.*

The commentary on the *Abhidhānottara* states that the *Samvara Tantra* was taught on the peak of Mt. Sumeru, and that the place for training disciples was Jambudvipa. According to the root tantra commentary which was said to be written by Indrabhuti, first it was stated on the peak of Mt. Sumeru, and was later stated at Dhānyakaṭaka. As for the time of the occasion, Ācārya Vajra, in his commentary, asserted that it was taught in the *Dvāparayuga* the at the time of the taming of Iśvara. Yet the Tibetan lamas claim that it was taught during the *Kaliyuga.*[21] In the *Ḍākārnava* it says "This tantra which was propagated by the Lion of the Śakyas was taught by infinite Buddhas within the world of Kaliyuga."[22] Its commentary also explains that the Lion of the Śakyas taught the extensive tantra of the *Ḍākārnava* during the Kaliyuga.[23] This should be taken as an example for [the many] other [similar passages].

While the commentaries of the root tantra do not all repeat [this account], it is preferable as above. It should understand it as explained in the *Vajrapañjara Tantra,* which says that he taught it abbreviating from the expanded root tantra in the time of the Kaliyuga, for the sake of those with short lives and intense addictions.[24] As for the teacher,

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[21] Tsongkhapa here repeats Bu-ston's comments on the subject. Bu-ston does not identitify whom these Tibetan gurus are. See RP p. 376.

[22] The following passage occurs in ch. 52. of the *Ḍākārṇava Tantra* exactly as quoted by Tsongkhapa / rtsod pa'i dus kyi sa'i nang du // bcom ldan mtha yas pas di gsungs // shākya seng ges gsung pa'i rgyud / (DM, DK fol. 264a; QK p. 135.1)

[23] Padmavajra, in his *Śriḍākārṇavamahāyogini-tantrarāja-vāhikaṭikā,* comments that "The Lion of the Śākyas taught the 3,600,000 [verse] *Abhidhāna Mahātantra* during the Kaliyuga". / slar yang rtsod pa'i dus su rgyud chen po mngon par brjod pa 'bum phrag sum cu rtsa drug pa shākya seng ges gsungs so / (DT fol. 317a)

[24] This is not a direct quote, and I was unable to find an identical passage in the VP. However I did find a passage that approximated Tsongkhapa's summary, which follows: / skyon rnams thams cad zad par mdzad // spro zhing sbyor bar bsgom par bya // bsdu ba yang ni yang dag bshad / (DK fol. 43a)

it is Heruka as is stated in the *Commentary in Praise of Samvara*.[25] The Root Tantra also says "The Hero abridged and stated it." And that same text says that the interlocutor was Vārāhi. But Acārya Kambala advocated that Vajrapaṇi made the request. The Root Tantra says, "Listen, oh hero, how they are, the secrets of form and action," in agreement with that. As for the compiler, it says in the *Ḍākārṇava* that "Those who compile and so on, achieve that which comes from me. Those which were collected by all of the Mothers (mātṛkā) were collected in the Vajra Places. They accept it from one to another, praying again and again. They delight in these words spoken by the Bhagavan."[26] It is said that the Vajra Place where it was collected by the yoginis is in Orgyen.

II.C.The Way in which the Explanatory Tantra Explains the Root Tantra
1. Identifying the Main Points by which the Explanatory Tantras Explain the Root Tantra.

Although there are many imports by which which the Explanatory Tantras explain the Root Tantra, the main one is the perfection stage. In regard to the perfection stage, in the literature of the Cakrasaṃvara, there are the systems of the six branches of yoga and the five stages of the Guhyasamaja. It says in the *Ḍākārnava*, "pratyāhāra, dhyāna, prāṇāyāma, dhāraṇā, anusmṛti and samādhi are the six types of yoga." It also says in that Tantra that "pratyāhāra (withdrawal) is Kākāsyā (Crow Face), Ulūkāsyā (Owl Face) is dhyāna (contemplation), prāṇāyāma is Śvānāsyā (Dog Face), dhāraṇā is Śūkarāsyā (Pig Face). Anusmṛti is Yamadūtī. Samādhi is Yamadāhi. Yamadaṇṣṭrī attains the expansive teaching. Yamamathani generates the lord of all fruits. [By means of all of these] one is

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[25] The *Commentary in Praise of Samvara, bde mchog stod 'grel*, is Tsongkhapa's name for the *Lakṣābhidhānāduddhṛta Laghutantrapiṇḍārthavivaraṇa* (Tō. #1402, Beijing #2117), a commentary on the first chapter of the Root Tantra by Vajrapaṇi. This highly influential work, though structually limited to the first chapter, covers a wide range of important topics, and interprets the tantra from the perspective of the Kālacakra literature. It is one of the three so-called "bodhisattva commentaries," the other two being the *Vimalaprabhā* (Tō. #845, 1347), a Kālacakra commentary attributed to Puṇḍarika, and the *Hevajrapiṇḍārthaṭikā* (Tō. #1180, Beijing #2310), attributed to Vajragarbha. In reference to Tsongkhapa's point here, see DK fol. 82a,b and PTT p. 146.5.

[26] This quote is identical to the following passage in the *Ḍākārṇava Tantra*, / sdu ba mdzad pa sogs rnam kyis // bdag las bgrod pa de thod po // ma mo thams cad 'dus rnams kyis // rdo rje gnas rnams su bsdus so // gcig la gcig gis bzhed pa ni // gsol ba 'debs shing gsol 'debs mdzad // bcom ldan 'das kyis gsung pa yi // tshig 'di la ni mngon par dga' / (DM, DK fol. 264; QK p. 202)

liberated from samsara."[27] With the exception of Śūkarāsyā, the three door guardians together with Vārāhī make four. Together with the two intermediary/ordinal [guadians], Yamadūtī and Yamadāhī, there are six, which are said to be in accordance with the six branches of Yoga. Althought this is easily understood from the commentaries, it is said that they should be understood from the personal statements of the guru.

In the commentary on Lūipa's [*Śribhagavad-abhisamaya*], known as the *Distinctively Illuminating,*[28] there is a presentation of the six branches of yoga in regard to the two stages stated in Lūipa's sadhāna. The *Ḍākārnava* also says "One's own body is like a magical illusion; this self-consecration is subtle. Vajra repitition has its own intrinsic nature, the treasury of the spirit of perfect enlightenment. Other than those the rest are integration *(yuganaddha)*."[29]

One's own body is like a magical illusion, and since this self-consecration is extremely difficult to understand, it is said to be subtle. The Stage of Self-consecration is the third stage, the magic body. The intrinsic nature of the Vajra Repetition is the process of the vajra repetition, which is the first stage. The stage of complete enlightenment *(abhisaṃbodhi)* is the fourth stage, another name of which is the Clear Light stage. As for the treasury of the spirit, it is the Mind Isolation or mind objectification stage, which is the

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[27] Both of these quotes are in Chapter 8 of the the *Ḍākārṇava Tantra* as quoted by Tsongkhapa: / so sor sdud dang de bzhin du // bsam gtan srog rtsol 'dzin pa dang // rjes su dran dang ting 'dzin te // sbyor ba'i mtshan nyid rnam drug go/, and / so sor sdud pa khva gdong ma // 'ug gdong ma ni bsam gtan 'dod // srog rtsol du ni gnas pa khyi // 'dzin pa la ni phag mo'o // rjes dran gnas pa pho nya mo // ting ne 'dzin ni brtan mar 'dod / /mche ba mo ni rgyas bstan thob // 'joms ma 'bras bu kun bdag skyes // 'khor ba las ni grol gyur pa / (DM, DK fol. 159a and QK p. 158)

[28] Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya* is perhaps the most influential Meditative Realization (Abhisamaya) text in the Cakrasamvara corpus. A great many commentaries have been written on it, including two by Atiśa Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna (Toh #1490,1492, B #2205, 2207). Tsongkhapa himself wrote a commentary on the text, entitled *bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi mngon par rtogs pa'i rgya cher bshad pa 'dod pa 'jo ba zhes bya ba bzhugs so* (Collected Works, vol. ta), which, aside from being an extensive commentary on Lūipa's root text, is an important work in and of itself on the Cakrasamvara Creation Stage. The text to which he is refering here is Tathāgatavajra's *Lūhipāda-abhisamaya-vṛtti-ṭikā-viśeṣadyota* (Tō. #1510, B. #2225). Along with Atiśa's *Abhisamayavibhaṅga,* it is the commentary on the Lūipa's *Abhisamaya* to which Tsongkhapa most often refers.

[29] This quote occurs in the the *Ḍākārṇava Tantra*, exactly as reproduced by Tsongkhapa, as follows: /rang gi sku ni sgyu ma mnyam // bdag byin brlab 'di phra mo dang // rdo rje bzlas rang mtshan nyid do // rdzogs pa'i byang chub sems kyi gter // de las lhag ma zung 'jug go / (DK fol. 159a; QK p. 158)

second stage. Beyong the previously explained four, the remaining one is the stage of integration, making five stages.[30]

Furthermore, there's the perfection stage Mahāyoga which occurs in Lūipa's treatise, and there's the *Five Stages* written by the Ghaṇṭapa, and the *Four Stages* written by Kāṇhapā.[31] An *Abhidhānottara* commentary says, "In this tantra the perfection stage is meditating on channels, winds, and drops, meditating on heat, and meditating on the spirit of enlightenment; these are five meditations which possess signs. There are three more, which are the meditation on the ultimate truth store of wisdom which is like a magical illusion, clear light voidness meditation, and integration meditation. The [former] five are contemplative meditations, which are the arts of pushing the life-force into the central channel. The [latter] three are meditations on the ultimate truth store of wisdom."

There are many explanations where the terminology of Guhyasamāja Perfection Stage is used in regard to the Samvara Perfection Stage. Here [the text] differentiates between two occasions in the Perfection Stage, these being the art of inserting the life-force into the central channel, and meditating in reliance upon it being thus inserted. One must understand that these two [occasions] are relevant not only in the Samvara [system], but also in the meditations of other Unexcelled [Yogatantra] Perfection Stages.

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[30] Tsongkhapa here goes through the list of the five stages of the Perfection Stage, *pañcakrama*, the *locus classicus* of which is Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*.

[31] The *Five Stages* (rim pa lna pa) is Ghaṇṭapā's *Śricakrasamvara Pañcakrama*, while the *Four Stages* is Kāṇhapā's *Ālicatuṣṭaya*. These texts make different by equally influential attempts to schematize the processes of meditation of the Cakrasamvara tradition.

II.C.2. How the Uncommon Explanatory Tantras Explain.
a. How the *Abhidhānottara* and *Vajraḍāka* Explain.
i. How the *Abhidhānottara* Explains.
A. How the Creation Stage is Explained.
1. The Way in which the Creation Stage is not clear in the Root Tantra

As it says in the *Samvara Pañcakrama,* "I will explain the stage/ process of consecration which is hidden in the *Cakrasamvara.*"[32] This refers not only to the hiding of the Perfection Stages in the fifty first chapter of the root tantra, but the Creation Stage is also hidden, as Kṛṣṇacārya says in his sadhana, "I'm going to explain the sadhāna here which is hidden by mleccha (barbarian) language, which collects all the secret mantras and practices, the secret import of the Cakrasamvara."[33] The *Saṃcārya* also states that many things on the topic of the Creation Stage are hidden.[34]

In this way, the second chapter of the root tantra states the placement of the four faced Heruka and Varahi couple in the navel of a lotus in the center of a measureless mansion, the placement of the twenty four heroines in the directions and quarters, and

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[32] Tsongkhapa's text is identical to the passage in Ghaṇṭapā's *Śricakrasamvara Pañcakrama*, as follows: / 'khor lo sdom par sbas pa yi // byin rlabs rim par bshad par bya / (DT has *byin brlab*). (DT fol. 224b; QT p. 176.3)

[33] This quote is from a text called the *Śricakrasaṃvara sādhana nāma*. Tsongkhapa quotes the text as follows: / 'khor lo sdom pa'i gsang ba'i don // grub pa gsang sngags kun bsdus pa // kla klo'i skad kyis sbas pa ste // de yi sgrub thabs bdag gis bshad /. The text reads in the DT (rgyud 'grel vol. wa, p.272.b) and QT (vol. 51. p. 201.2) as follows: / bde mchog 'khor lo gsang ba'i don // grub pa'i gsang sngags kun bsdus nas // brda yi skad kyis sbas pas te // sgrub pa'i thabs de bdag gis bshad /. Note that this text has "symbolic language" rather than "barbarian language". Interestingly, there was some confusion concerning the attribution of authorship to this text. The Tōhoku editors did not list an attribution for this text, while the editors of the Beijing Photographic edition attributed it to a "*Vratacārya", but the colophon actually says is *slob dpon chen po brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa'i zhal snga nas mdzad pa rdzogs so,* "written in the presence of the Great Master Vratacārya," which is distinct from the usual "written by". *Vratacārya may very well be a title rather than a proper name, and the presence in this text of the quote attributed by Tsongkhapa strongly suggests that it may have been a title of Kāṇhapā. Aside from Tsongkhapa's attribution, stylistic similarities, as well as the fact that the text is situated in the canons with Kāṇhapā's other works, such as his other sādhana, the *Saptākṣarasādhana*, indicates that this attribution is correct. Incidently, the colophon of the latter work is almost identical to the above text, differing only in name: *paṇḍita chen po nag po pa'i zhal snga nas mdzad pa rdzogs so.*

[34] The *Yoginisaṃcārya* deals largely with the topics of the Creation Stage, particularly the topic of the body maṇḍala and its relation to the macrocosmic maṇḍala. There is a statement in chapter one which generally corresponds to Tsongkhapa's claim: "Those points hidden in the Tantra will be explained as taught in the treatises." / rgyud du sbas par gnas gang de // bstan pa ru ni ji skad gsung // bshad pa yang ni de bzhin no / (DK fol. 34.a; QT.237.5)

likewise the placement of the heros and the placement of the Mothers in the quarters and directions. This is the sixty two deity maṇḍala.

As for the body colors of the principle couple, in the context of the performance [section] of the twenty seventh chapter, "They should always be naked at night, dark blue and red. "[35] The gurus claim that this shows that the Heruka's color is blue-black, and Vārāhī's color is red. Kambala's commentary also explains thus.

The thirty fourth chapter tells of the four essence yoginis surrounding the four faced lord of heroes, and the fifty first chapter teaches the meditation on the Heruka with twelve arms, together with a host of heroes and heroines. These Herukas are taken to be the fruitional Heruka. In the thirty second chapter, there are Herukas who are white, four faced, and with four to one hundred thousand arms. There is a consort Vārāhi who has the same color. Kāṇhapā says that this is a causal Heruka, though there are other ways of explaining as well.

Furthermore, in the fourth chapter, the names of the twenty four heroines are stated, but while the heroes names aren't stated until the forth eighth chapter, the hand implements and number of hands and faces of sixty deities [of the retinue] are not clear anywhere, nor are their colors clear. Likewise, there is no clarity about the consecration of the aggregates, elements and media, the accumulation of stores in the field of the stores, and the meditation of the two protection wheels,[36] the stacking up of the levels of elements, the creation of Mt. Sumeru and the measureless mansion. With the exception of statements such as "in regard to the inhabitant maṇḍala, in which the deities are created, you generate Heruka upon Sumeru, in the navel of a variegated lotus, from the vowels and consonants," the way of generating the rest of the visualisations, such as, the entry of the wisdom hero into the

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[35] CST ch. 27 v. 13.a,b: /mtshan mo rtag par gcer bu ste // gnag dang dmar bar rtag tu 'gyur / (DK fol. 231b)

[36] The common and uncommon protection wheels.

commitment hero, as well as the conferral of initiation, the sealing, the creation of the offering cakes, are all unclear, and are not explained in a well arranged manner.

II.C.2.a.i.A.
2. How this Explanatory Tantra Explains it Clearly.

The Creative Contemplation *(abhisamaya)* of the Creation Stage which is thus unclear in the root tantra is clearly explained in a well arranged manner, in the fourth chapter of the *Abhidānottara*. That chapter comments on the place were one meditates on the creation stage, and accumulating the stores by inviting the store/ host field in order to meditate there. Then the blessing by the seventeen deities of the aggregates, elements and media, both the common and uncommon protection wheels, the meditation on voidness, the stacking up of the elements, and the method of creating Mt. Sumeru, and the creation of the measureless mansion from Vairocana atop Sumeru are explained [there]. After that, from collecting the stores up to the method of generating the measurelss mansion are not explained. I think that these explanations in the fourth chapter are common to all of those [Creation Stages].

As for the way of explaining the inhabitant maṇḍala once arrangement of some sort of maṇḍala has been taught, it becomes important to understand the commentorial method of the creation stage. If we explain that a little bit, there is a maṇḍala of thirty deities, [namely] the Body Samvara divine couple who are the principle deities, the four essense yoginis, the sixteen body maṇḍala heroes and heroines, and the eight door guardianesses. Likewise, there is also a thirty deity maṇḍala consisting of the speech Samvara couple with the speech maṇḍala heroes and heroines and so on as above. The Mind Samvara divine couple, the sixteen mind maṇḍala heroes and heroines and so on also yields a thirty deity maṇḍala. The Vow Samvara divine couple, the four essence yoginis, and the eight guadianesses yield a fourteen deity maṇḍala. Then there is the five or six deity maṇḍala with the Samvara couple surrounded by the four essence yoginis, [in which] the Samvara

of intuition or great bliss is taken as the principle deity. In these five maṇḍalas, there are two kinds of Vajradharas, of cause or effect, and there is the entry of the intuition hero, initiation sequences, repetiitions of each [deities' mantra], the creation of both armours at the time of arisal, and so on, all of which are explained. And then there is explained a body maṇḍala created from the Samvara-abhisambodhi, mainly called "the maṇḍala ofthe solitary hero" in the center of the measureless mansion. There are no other deities other than a divine couple in the measureless mansion, but since those two are on one seat, it is called the solitary hero. While in the body mandal you don't meditate on the three defence perimeters, [but as] there is the medition on the creation of the measureless mansion with Mt. Sumeru and the stacked up elements, and the creation of the fundemental Heruka from the abhisambodhi, if some people think this is contradictory, that is due to their fault of understanding well the explanatory tantras.

Now, as for the sixty two deity maṇḍala, there are many different kinds, and also many Samvara maṇḍalas explained. As for the way of creating these maṇḍalas, having previously created the measureless mansion which is the habitat, the method of then generating the inhabitant deities is explained. All of the statements on these many maṇḍalas of the first stage of the Samvara in this explanatory tantra are explanations of the Creation Stage itself which is stated in the root tantra. Therefore, applying all of the occurrances of the Creation stage in the root tantra to the Creation Stage of either Lūipa or Kāṇha, is to have the fault of being very narrow.

II.C.2.a.i. B. How the Perfection Stage is Explained [in the *Abhidhānottara*]

The perfection stages of this tantra are extremely unclear, even more so than the hidden things of the creation stage. Since coming to know how the Explanatory Tantra shows the Perfection Stage in such and such an occasion in the Root Tantra, that is, understanding its method for explaining hidden things, is very difficult, I will explain this.

Regarding the way in which the perfection stage is made clear in this explanatory tantra, Ghaṇṭapā explains that the lines "always abiding in the heart" etc. teach the self-consecration stage. In the fourteenth chapter the Perfection Stage of the Fury Fire meditation, which is stated in the fourth stage, is taught. In the twenty fifth and fifty sixth chapters, there is an explanation of the Mahāyoga which is the perfection stage of Lūipa.

Furthermore, by the mode of being slightly unclear, there are many [places] where the perfection stage is only touched upon. Among those, it is necessary to know the method of inserting the life-force into the central channel *(dhūti)*, and the great bliss developed thereby. There are many ways in which it recommends the view of voidness, and the intuition of bliss-void indivisible.

II.C.2.a.ii. How the *Vajraḍāka* Explains.

In portions of the first and second chapter of the *Vajraḍāka*, and from the twelfth and fourteenth, various creation stages repeatedly stated. In the eleventh chapter there is a brief statement about the yoga of Fury Fire. In the fifteenth is an extensive explanation by the mode of depending on the four cakras. Here again, one should understand the method of inserting the life-force into the dhūti, and having been inserted, the procedures of the perfection stage that are developed thereby. Furthermore, in the first chapter, there is much reference to the art and wisdom of bliss and void. In the second chapter there is an extensive explanation of the definitive meaning of the root mantra of the father deity. In the forty ninth chapter there are many statements [on topics] such as the differentiation between the four types of consorts, the way of binding the bodhicitta fluid by the power of the different characteristics of their genitalia, the way of holding the spirit of enlightenment for a long time depending on the substance, and performance of the sexual positions (karaṇa) explained in the *Kamasūtra*. In the forty second chapter there is a detailed explanation of most of the text of the first chapter [of the root tantra]. In the forty sixth chapter expounds

the many rites which are unclear in the second chapter of the Root Tantra, as well as on the many types of ritual actions from most of the other chapters [of the Root].

II.C.2..b. How the *Samvarodaya* and the *Yoginisaṃcāra* Explain.
i. How the *Samvarodaya* Explains.

The answer to the request for the Creation Stage in first chapter of the *Samvarodaya* is explained in the second chapter. It states [the following topics]; in general the four modes of birth, the realm of enjoyment of three of the four human continents, and the realm of deeds/karma of Jambudvīpa, and Madhyadeśa which is the principle land of that, and the four methods which enlighten by the method of detachment which is dependent upon human life in Jambudvipa, that birth and death are produced by the previous deeds of those who do not understand the Illusion-like concentration, and that after death there is the Between state, that there is the method of womb birth from the union of the parents, and the method of birth from the womb into the outer world.

The Creation Stage is not shown here, but the correspondences which are meditated upon in accordance with birth, death and the Between in the Creation Stage are shown. Furthermore, this is the intention of the process of the arrangement which explains quoting from this tantra . This Creation Stage meditation which is in accordance with the three [states of] birth, death and the between is clarified by this [text] from among the Samvara Tantras. Therefore, one needs to carry on to all of the Creation Stage visualizations of the wheels of the the Samvara maṇḍala.

Due to this, at the occasion of the Samvara Perfection Stage, it is necessary to understand the meditation on clear light in accordance with the dying process, as well as the meditation on the magic body in accordance with the Between and so forth. The Creation Stage which is meditated upon in accordance with the these three correspondences is shown in the thirteenth chapter. It teaches the generation of the levels of the elements together with Mt. Sumeru, and on top of Mt. Sumeru, the universal vajra. On top of that is

a lotus, in which, from the vowels and consonants, is a Heruka with three faces and six arms. He is together with a consort, and they are surrounded by four yoginis and eight door-quarter guardianesses. [This is taught] together with the branches (other levels of maṇḍala). It is the method of generating simultaneously the habitat and inhabitants, in the manner of Lūipa. Furthermore, the literature regarding the initiation rituals are taught in the seventeenth and eighteenth chapters.

As for the Perfection Stage, in the third chapter there is the method of instantaneously visualizing the deities of the Perfection Stage, "[There is the selfless nature] universal, the arts and the power of compassion; the spontaneous non-dual integration [of these] is the supreme maṇḍala essence."[37] This is the stage of integration. And "conventionally arising, it is not non-existant, since it is ceaseless; the nature of orgasmic joy of all things, which spontaneously arise, is self-consecrated and self-arisen."[38] Since the conventional magic body arises from clear light, it is the self-consecration which abandons the extremes of non-existence and cessation, "the complete, perfect awakening of great bliss, and thus the supreme Mahāmudrā."[39] which shows the stages of clear light which is the state of being completely awakened.

In the fifth and sixth chapters, the vajra repetition is taught, through mention of both mantratattva and the wind tattvas, together with the wind of the five nāthas such as the

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[37] Tsongkhapa quotes as follows: / sna tshogs thabs dang snying rje'i stobs // zung 'jug gnyis med lhun gyis grub // dkyil 'khor snying po mchogs yin no /. This corresponds to four pādas in Tsuda's edition, the last two of verse eight and the first two of verse nine, as follows: / sna tshogs de bzhin nyid bdag med // thabs ni snying rje'i stobs yin te // // zung 'jug pa rnam rtog bral // dkyil 'khor snying po mchogs yin no / (1974:171), nairātmyā tathatā viśvam upāyaḥ karuṇābalaḥ // // yuganaddham anābhogaṁ maṇḍalaṁ sāram uttamam / (1974:78). Tsongkhapa's quote seems incomplete when compared to this edition, and my translation will reflect this.

[38] Tsongkhapa's quote is as follows: / kun rdzob skye ba 'byung ba las // dngos med kyang min chad med phyir // lhan skyes chos rnams thams cad kyi // lhan skyes dga' ba'i rang bzhin dang // rang byin brlab dang rang byung ste /. This corresponds to verse thirteen and the first pāda of verse fourteen of chapter three of Tsuda's edition, as follows: / kun rdzob skye ba 'byung bas na // chad pa min phyir dngos med min // lhan cig skyes dga'i rang dngos su // chos rnams thams cad lhan cig skyes // // bdag byin brlab pa rang 'byung ba / (p.171), na cābhāvo 'py anucchedāt saṁvṛtotpādasaṁbhavāt / sahajaṁ sarvadharmāṇāṁ nijānandasvarūpataḥ // // svādhiṣṭhānaṁ svayaṁbhūtvād (p. 78)

[39] Tsongkhapa's / bde chen mngon par rdzogs byang chub // de bzhin phyag rgya chen po mchog / corresponds to the first half of verse 16, chapter 3 in Tsuda's edition, as follows: rdzogs pa'i byang chub bde ba che // phyag rgya chen po mchog de bzhin / (1974:171), mahāsukhābhisaṁbodhir mahāmudrā parā tathā / (1974:78)

Padmanātha and so on, in accordance with the stages of vajra repetition of the *Pañcakrama*. This is the definitive meaning of the mantra repeated in the root tantra. The fifth chapter shows the Perfection Stage which visualizes the mantric drops in the heart, and the heart's vessel. The thirty first chapter teaches the great pithy points of the Fury Fire which are based upon the four wheels. It mentions the method of forcing the life-force into the central channel (dhūti) by these, following the vajra recitation. Relying on that method, the bliss-void union is extensively explained in the twenty ninth and thirty third chapters. Also taught in the thirty first chapter are the characteristics of each of the four [types of] consorts, and the different methods of playing with each of these four. The twenty first chapter extenmsively states the method of doing practices having attained warmth.

II.C.2..b.ii. How the *Saṃcārya* Explains

From the first to the tenth chapters of the *Saṃcārya*, the Creation Stage together with the branches is presented. Furthermore, from its fifth chapter , "Just as one knows the internal self, it is the sublime outer maṇḍala. The teaching on how to arrange it is the collection of all essence."[40] Accordingly, it teaches [the Creation Stage] in terms of the arrangement in both the outer and body maṇḍalas. It is teaches that one should arrange in outer maṇḍala the complete sixty two deities, and the deities in the body maṇḍala, not including the twelve Mothers and the principle couple. Regarding not arranging the fourteen deities in the body maṇḍala, since in is taught in *Saṃpuṭa* and so forth that one should arrange even these [deities], the body maṇḍala also is complete with the deities.

The lack of instruction on the number of faces and body color of Heruka is intended thus in the Root Tantra. It is said that each of the sixty deities after Vārāhi has one face and

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[40] This quote is from the fifth chapter of *Yoginisaṃcārya* as Tsongkhapa states, and reads as follows: / ji ltar nang gi bdag nyid shes // phyi yi dkyil 'khor dam pa yin // rnam dgod ji ltar sbyar ba dang // snying po thams cad bsdud pa ste / (DK fol. 36a, QT p.238.3) Tsongkhapa's version, almost identical to the above, is: ji ltar nang gi bdag nyid shes // phyi yi dkyil 'khor dam pa yin // rnam dgod ji ltar rab bstan pa // snying po thams cad bsdud pa ste /.

two arms. In the context of the twenty four heroes, Mardo's translation has, "Well embraced by their own signs," which is unclear. The translation of Rinchen Zangpo and Prajñākirti has "well embraced by vajras and bells," which is good, and it occurs likewise in the commentaries. And their implements are similar to Ghaṇṭapā's. The body color of the Divine Mother is said to be red.

The statement that "the four yoginis have various forms"[41] is not in reference to their respective body colors, but in terms of all four. Having mentally set aside the four Quarter Keepers from within the [group of] eight Door-Quarter Keepers, since one is speaking in tein terms of the form of half of the group, one is able to understand that in regard to each that the four Door Keepers are blue in color and so forth. If one understands it in this way, one is able to conclude that the four Yoginis are similiar in color to the four Door Keepers by the virtue of the statement that the four Door Keepers are like the four Yoginis.

As for the color of the deities of the three maṇḍalas, the sixth [chapter says], "thus, they all abide in the wheel. Their colors are differentiated in accordance with the stages of ritual."[42] This means that the body colors of all those who abide in the three maṇḍalas are differentiated in accordance with the stages of the ritual, that is, the clans.

It also means, as explained in the *Abhidhānottara*, that "or rather make the colors as desired, with the distinctions of body, speech and mind."[43] This is means that one should make the colors however one desires by distinguishing body, speech, and mind. One should make the gods of the body maṇḍala white, the gods of the speech maṇḍala red, and

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[41] Tsongkhapa quotes /rnal 'byor ma bzhi la sna tshogs gzugs can/. I found a similiar quote in chapter ten of the YS, in the context of discussing the yoginis, which was claimed that they were "jewel-like, having various forms," / sna tshogs gzugs can nor bu 'dra / (DK fol. 39a, QK p. 240.1)

[42] This quote is from the sixth chapter of the YS, which reads / de ltar ma lus 'khor lor gnas // mdog dbye cho ga'i rim bzhin no / (DK p. 37b, QK p. 239.2). Tsongkhapa quotes it as follows: / de ltar ma lus 'khor lor gnas // mdog dbye'i cho ga'i rim bzhin no /

[43] This quote is from the fourteenth chapter of the AD, which I found as follows: / yang na sku gsung thugs kyi ni // ci 'dod mdog ni dbye ba bya / (DK fol. 287b). Tsongkhapa's quote is identical, though the PTT has / ji 'dod... (QT p.58.4). In Kalff's Sanskrit edition it occurs as follows: ch. 14 vv. 81b5, 82a1: athavā kāyavākcittabhedena varṇaṃ kuryād yathā rucau // (1979:318)

the gods of the mind maṇḍala blue. As for the sixty deities of these [maṇḍalas], they are just like the deities of the body maṇḍala of Ghaṇṭapā.

The method of generation is explained in Tathāgatarakṣita's commentary,[44] in accordance with generation from the five abhisaṃbodhis of the system of Lūipa, the system of generating at one time the habitant and inhabitants. Therefore, it is good to do the method of generation from the abhisaṃbodhis in the manner of Lūipa in the context of Ghaṇṭapā's body maṇḍala as well.

The twelfth chapter explains the description of orgasmic intuition, and Perfection Stage Mahāyoga. Here it is necessary to understand the two Perfection Stages: the Perfection Stage of forcing the life-force into the central channel, and the Perfection Stage of creation, relying on that insertion. This I have extensively explained elsewhere. The fourteenth chapter shows the practice to be done having developed ability. Furthermore, it explains many things that are unclear in the Root Tantra.

II.C.3. How the Common Explanatory Tantras explain[45]

"Genuine Union", "Kiss", and "Kiss Drop", are synonyms of the name of the *Saṃpuṭa Tantra*. There are eleven sections (kalpa) in it together with its Uttaratantra. A certain Tibetan lama asserted that it is an Explanatory Tantra of the thirty six hundred thousand tantras by King Indrabhūti, and explain that it is a tantra which explains the sixteen tantras which identifiably exist now.

As for the first assertion, it says in the *Saṃpuṭa* commentary said to have been written by Indrabhūti that "here, so far, they said that the '*Saṃpuṭatilaka*' is a short tantra with eleven sections, extracted from the thirty six hundred thousand extensive tantras of the

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[44] This is Tathāgatarakṣita's *Yoginisaṃcāryanibandha*. See especially his commentary on the first ten chapters.

[45] This refers to Explanatory Tantras such as the *Saṃpuṭa* which are shared by two different Tantras, i.e., the CST and HT.

yogins and yoginis."[46] The meaning of "the *Sampuṭa* is extracted from the thirty six hundred thousand Tantras" is uncertain. It appears to mean that it was abridged from thirty six hundred thousand Tantras, but merely by that [fact] it is not established as an Explanatory Tantra of those. For example, it could be like the abridgement of the short root tantra from the 100,000 [verse] *Abhidhāna.*

In regard to the second assertion, it does not seem to have an authentic basis. Another Tibetan lama said, "In general, this tantra is an explanatory tantra of all tantras, and in particular the forty classes of tantra." However, this does not appear to be in any way verifiable. Particularly, in regard to the explanations of the imports of other tantras in the *Saṃpuṭa*, its serving as an Explanatory Tantra for those various tantras, the reasoning [for this] seems solely uncertain. But fearing prolixity I will not write further.

In a commentary of this tantra composed by the so-called Viravajra it says, "As this is an Explanatory Tantra, it is an Explantory Tantra of nine tantras, and furthermore it is a 'Svānanda Tantra'."[47] Regarding the nine Tantras, it is the nidāna called "the true union of the secret nidāna of all the tantras." It is secret, and it seems to produce a series of nine, which are ninefold in each of the three *Saṃpuṭa*s but it does not seem to be reliable. Thus, it is in accordance with that which was said by the previous lamas of Tibet. It is the explanatory tantra which is common to Hevajra and Samvara.

As for the Saṃvara creation stage, from the fourth chapter of the third section: "From the five enlightenments, Saṃvara Vajrasattva arises with three faces and six arms, and it is explained that he is surrounded by twenty eight retinue deities. In regard to the eight goddesses such as *Hāsavati* in the *Āmnayamañjari*, one should be aware of what is

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[46] This quote is from the beginning of Indrabhūti's massive commentary on the *Sampuṭa Tantra* called the *Śrisampuṭatilaka-nāma-yogini-tantrarājā-ṭikā-samdarśanāloka-nāma.* Tsongkhapa's quote is virtually identical to the text which follows: 'dir re zhig rnal 'byor dang rnal 'byor ma'i rgyud rgyas pa 'bum phrag cu rtsa drug pa las byung ba rgyud nyung ngu brtag pa bcu gcig gi bdag nyid can kha sbyor thig le zhes bya ba ni rjod par byed pa dang / (DT fol. 94b)

[47] Tsongkhapa here seems to be paraphrasing a passage from the introduction to Virāvajra's commentary on the *Sampuṭa Tantra* called *rgyud thams cad kyi gleng gzhi dang gsang chen dpal kun tu kha sbyor las byung ba'i rgya cher bshad pa rin po che'i phreng ba zhes bya ba.* The passage that corresponds to Tsongkhapa's abridged paraphrase can be found at DT fol. 5b.

said in other tantras. Those who know much advise this." Saying this it states the maṇḍala of the 37 deities together with the branches.

The fourth chapter of the sixth section states many things such as an explanation of sixteen letters, 'ra-ha-sya' and so forth, as well as the application of the twenty four power places to the inner body, the 'spring drop' (*Vasanta-tilaka)*, the principle letters of the four cakras, the channels and elements of the body, and the inner applications of the stacked-up elements, the burnt offerings and so forth. It mainly deals with the caṇḍāli which relies on the four cakras, and thus it reveals the arisal of the four joys and so forth. In regard to this one should know the two perfection stages, i.e. the method of urging the life-force into the central channel, and the generation which is dependent upon that process. In the final sections it also says much concerning consecration. In the previous chapter as well it also discusses the method of bestowing the superior consecration.

Thus, in regard to the many explanatory tantras of the very unclear root tantra, since there is the auto-commentary of the root tantra, it is extremely important to well unite the root and explanatory tantras.

III. Introduction to the Way in which the Concise Root Tantra is Explained

A. The explanation based on the instructions of the Mahāsiddhas

In general it is said that there are three methods of explanation relying a root tantra which has been abridged from an extensive tantra. It says in the *Commentary Praising Saṃvara* that for the sake of those who have not had the good fortune of hearing the very extensive root tantra, it should be realized following after other tantras which collect the profound vajra words of the tantras, whose teachings have been collected from the extensive tantra, or the commentaries of bodhisattvas, or the instructions of the guru.[48] The

[48] Tsongkhapa here refers to a long passage in Vajrapaṇi's LL commentary, in which he explains that the Concise Tantra was taught for the sake of beings of the current degenerate era. Following this discussion he wrote: "Furthermore, due to its abundance of vajra words, learned ones desiring liberation should know it by means of the instruction of the holy guru, the commentaries written by the bodhisattvas, and what is said in other tantras." / de yang rdo rje'i tshig mang ba nyid kyi phyir thar pa don du gnyer ba'i mkhas pa rnams kyis bla ma dam pa nye bar bsten pa dang / byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyis mdzad pa'i 'grel bshad dang rgyud ni rgyud gzhan du gsungs pa shes par bya'o / (QT p. 147.1)

first type includes explanations which rely on other explanatory tantras which were abridged from the extensive aditantra. The second type included explanations which rely on the commentaries of bodhisattvas, like the *Commentary Praising Saṃvara*. The third type includes explanations depending on the personal instructions of those such as Noble Father and his sons, and those like Lūipa, Kānhapā and Ghaṇṭapā, who are like the. Therefore, it is not intention of the bodhisattvas that you should rely only on their commentaries. In the literature on those, in regard to the the meaning of the statement that commentary should only be done by those who have attained the superknowledges, while this is not a statement concerning the many other ways of attaining such powers, there is the attainment of the five superknowledges which are realized by the power of manifesting the meaning of reality by means of Great Bliss. This is in accordance with the explanations of Ghaṇṭapā and Ḍombiheruka.

Furthermore, while it is the case that first one opens a tradition of practice of those tantras before developing a commentatorial tradition on the intention of the tantra, is not taught that it is necessary to obtain the superknowledges in order to elucidate the meaning of the tantra, having followed a tradition created by such former people. Some people say that just to comment on a tantra one must attain superknowledge, and if that you write without them, you will go to hell. But really, if you engages in tantric commentary without even having attained a trace of superknowledge, you're really just making a fool of yourself.

In that way, from among the three [styles] here, I will explain based on two of them, the first and the third. I'll put together well the root and explanations relying on the doctrines of creation and perfection of Lūipa, Kāṇha and Ghaṇṭa. Since I will explain relying on the personal instructions of Śrī Nārotapa, this is an explanation that is distinctively excellent.[49]

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[49] The purpose for this discussion seems to be the justification of Tsongkhapa's project; here he rejects the notion that one must be a superhuman being to comment on the Tantras, and he justifies his approach of relying primarily on the Explanatory Tantras and the important traditions of the Indian siddha

Although the two stages are not shown clearly by the words of the root tantra in the doctrine of Lūipa and Ghaṇṭapada, if you know well the instructions of these two, you will be able to understand, by relying on the instructions which join the root and explanations. I will explain this in the context of the meaning of the words.

From the *Vasantatilaka*, a text of Kāṇha, "Now I will explain thoroughly by the inner reality in accordance with the outer performance of the procedures such as whichever Tathāgata's body's maṇḍala, fire sacrifice, sacrificial offerings, repetition, and meditation."[50] In regard to this, as for 'the body of whichever Tathāgata', it is body of whichever adept, and the mandala of his body is a body mandala. In that way, in regard to those listed from the mandala up until meditation, there are the two stages of outer creation stage and inner perfetion stage. The term 'etc.' includes selecting mantras, in regard to which there are two topics, the basis of selecting mantras and the repetition of the selected mantras.

Furthermore, from the *Vajraḍāka*, "In order to realize the union of the essence, one should practice the constructed meditation and the constructed repetition."[51] According to that statement, both meditating and repeating, etc., have essential and constructed [varieties]. This has the same meaning as the previous [statement]. Here the pairs of inner and outer, of constructed and unconstructed, and interpretable and definitive are taken as synonomous.

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commentators, namely those Lūipa, Kāṇha, Ghaṇṭa and their followers. And he implicitly rejects the importance of the "Bodhisattva commentary", Vajrapaṇi's LL. Unlike the traditions of the Hevajra and the Kālacakra, for which Vajragarbha's *Hevajrapiṇḍārthaṭikā* and Puṇḍarīka's *Vimalaprabhā* are, respectively, of central importance, Vajrapaṇi's LL is relatively insignificant in the Cakrasamvara tradition, both because it only comments on the first of fifty one chapters, and because it is heavily influenced by the doctrines peculiar to the Kālacakra. As a result Tsongkhapa refers to it occasionally in this work, but does not rely on it to any significant extent in the development of his arguments.

[50] Tsongkhapa here quotes the first verse of the eighth chapter of Kāṇha's *Vasantatilaka*, as follows: / de nas de bzhin gshegs pa gang yang rung ba'i sku'i dkyil 'khor dang / sbyin sreg dang mchod sbyin dang bzlas pa dang / bsgom pa la sogs pa'i cho ga'i bya ba phyi rol dang mthun par / nang gi ngo bos yang dag par rab tu bshad par bya'o /. This is identical to the text as it occurs at PTT p. 222.5; the text at DT p. 303a and in Samdhong and Dwivedi's edition (1990:106) has *gnod sbyin* instead of *mchod sbyin*, which doesn't make sense. The Sanskrit doesn't help here as its list includes only "maṇḍala, fire sacrifice, yoga, repetition, mediation, etc.". It occurs in Sanskrit edition as follows: athānyatamasya tathāgatakāyasya maṇḍalahomayoga japabhāvanādividhikriyāṃ sabāhyādhyātmarūpeṇa saṃpravakṣyāmi // (1990:60)

[51] Tsongkhapa quotes from the fiftieth chapter of the VD as follows: / rnal ma'i sbyor ba rtogs bya'i phyir // bcos ma yi ni bsgom pa dang // bcos ma yi bzlas pa bya / (DT fol. 124b; PTT p. 145.1)

Even though in the text of the root tantra there is no statement which reveals this inner, unartificial perfection stage by means such as these, one should understand that it is necessary to take the root tantra's references to maṇḍalas and so forth in terms of both stages.

III.B. Showing the method of explanation based on the instructions of the Mahāsiddhas.
1. Significance of the count of fifty one chapters.

In this tantra there are fifty one [chapters]. From the *Dakārnava*, "The *Laghu-Saṃvara*, extracted from the three hundred thousand verse *Abhidhāna*, is joined to reality by the sequence of chapters, from 'a' up to 'kṣa'."[52] This says that the exact process of the occurrence of the chapters in the root tantra is connected to the letters from 'a' up until 'kṣa', and it is also connected with reality.

However, if you think that there is a contradiction since there are [only] fifty vowels and consonants, and [yet] there are fifty one chapters , there is no fault, because the fifty apply to the reality of each of them, and the fifty first is connected with the reality [of them all] in general.

In regard to the method by which they are joined with the reality of the vowels and consonants, the vowels are the side of art, and the consonants are the side of wisdom. Since these two are indivisable, all of the chapters of the tantra are shown to have the non-duality of art and wisdom as their topic, and thus connect to the vowels and consonants.

Furthermore, the meaning of the vowels and consonants is relevant to the entire tantra, from beginning to end, provided that they are understood in terms of the orgasmic great bliss which is generated from the encounter of the red and white elements.. This is in the precepts that are realized. Having reflected on that, it says in the *Samcārya* that "If one desires this dharma without understanding the vowels and consonants, his labor is useless,

[52] This is from the DM passage previously quoted by Tsongkhapa. See note 6 above.

and he will not attain fruition."[53] As for the number of verses, it says in the *Commentary Praising Samvara* that there are seven hundred.[54]

II.B.2.

Applying three explanations to the fifty one chapters.

If, in this method of interpreting the concise meaning in each chapter set forth in the system of Naropa, you take the testimony of the *Intended Import of the Concise Tantra* of the sage Sumatikirti , then you will reach the very pure commentatorial style of Naropa.[55] And it says in the *Intended Import n of the Concise,* "First, all of the concise meanings with respect to the creation and perfection stages are summarized by the first chapter, extensively stated by the chapters from the second up to the fiftieth, and are brought together by the last chapter. The Bhagavan said this. This explanation which is applied threefold to the *Concise Tantra* is the intention of Nāropa."[56]

The expression "applied threefold" is the explanation which connects the first chapter's summarization, the extensive explanation of [the chapters] from second up to the

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[53] YS ch. 16: / āli kāli ma gtogs par // gal te chos 'di 'dod na ni // de yi ngal ba don med de // 'bras bu thob par mi 'gyur ro / (DK fol. 42b, PTT p. 241.3)

[54] See LL DK fol. 79a, PTT p. 145.3.

[55] Sumatikirti's *Laghusaṃvaratantrapaṭalābhisandhi* (LA), refered to by Tsongkhapa as the *Intended Import* or *Intended Import of the Concise,* is a quite short text, amounting to only one and a half folios in its Tibetan translation. Despite its brevity it is an important and influential work for the Tibetans, composed by the Kaśmiri scholar who assisted in the translation of a number of Samvara texts, and who prepared a revision of the Root Tantra itself. Tsongkhapa relied upon it so much that he directly quotes the entire text in this and the following few chapters. It is translated and edited in its entirety in appendix D.

[56] This is quote is section one (1) of Sumatikirti's LA (as edited in the appendix) following the translator's saluatation, and a brief one line statement of the authors intent. Only in last line is there significant variation between Tsongkhapa's version and the Tanjur edition. The term *kha sbyor* here is somewhat confusing, as that is often the short hand name used by Tibetans for the *Sampuṭa-nāma-mahātantra.* This evidently was a source of confusion for Tibetan commentators, as Tsongkhapa discussed below. Tsongkhapa's reading of it as a verb definitely makes more sense in the context; reading it as refering to a 'third *Sampuṭa*' really makes no sense at all.

fiftieth, and the fifty first's assemblance into one of the those chapter's meanings, brief and extensive.

Some Tibetans say that this "applied threefold" refers to Naropa's system for explaining in terms of the three *Saṃpuṭas*; this is an explanation which employs the terminology meaninglessly without ascertaining the *Intended Import's* meaning. Also, some Tibetans seem to say that "applied threefold", that is, to the summary, explanation and conclusion, occur elsewhere. They seem to explain that in the first [chapter] there are summaries of what follows starting from the second, and that [the chapters] in their own context give an extensive explanation of that, and in the end the meanings are assembled. Since the conclusion assembles the stages of the path which is the import of the fifty chapters, it clarifies what was previously extensively explained. But that is not Naropa's way of explaining it.

III.B.3.a. Showing each of the Concise Meanings
i. The Concise Meaning of Conferring Initiation and Showing Reality Therein.

It says in the *Intended Import of the Concise* that " 'Having bestowed consecration, that reality is revealed to him.' This means that in the Mantrayāna, first there is the conferral of initiation. The maṇḍala is the preliminary stage for this, thus the maṇḍala is shown by the second chapter, while consecration bestowal is shown by the third."[57] The statement in the first chapter, "in the primordially established charnel ground, one should draw the maṇḍala," is explained by the second and third chapters.

If you show the reality of the two stages to one who has not been previously consecrated, this delays the siddhis. Therefore, the statement that 'bestowing consecration, reality is revealed' shows that one must first bestow initiation in the mantra. Just as Ghaṇṭapada said that "Vajradhāra said that bestowing initiation is preceded by the

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[57] See section two (2) in appendix D.

maṇḍala,"[58] the need of the maṇḍala beforehand is shown by the second chapter. This not only shows the habitat maṇḍala, but also the inhabitant mandala is established, and offerings made to it. Thus it states the characteristics and necessity of the vases.

The third chapter shows the entry into the maṇḍala, the casting of the flower, and the bestowal of the name etc. consecrations, the secret consecration, and the third consecration.

Both the adherants of Mal's and the explanation of Mardo claim that the fourth chapter, by teaching the four realities, explains the conferral of the fourth initiation.[59] In the *Intended Import of the Concise* it says "the fourth [chapter shows] the actuality which is the meaning of initiation."[60] This means that the explanation of the four realities by the fourth chapter is the actuality of the meaning of that which is to be explained in the initiation conferral. Therefore, since they are in agreement, this [explanation] seems to be acceptable.

It also says in the *Intended Import* "The three chapters explain from *And now... the secret* (**I.1.a**) up until *Listen* (**I.5.d**)."[61] Some editions of this [text] say 'the third chapter' This refers to the third chapter of the extensive explanatory tantra.[62] That chapter explains the meanings of the two stages which are taught by [expressions] such as 'and then the secret'. Following after the expression "explains", "since the extensive explanation of the

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[58] This is a quote from a text by Ghaṇṭapa called the *Śricakrasamvaraśekaprakriya-upadeśa.* Tsongkhapa quotes it as follows: / dbang bskur dkyil 'khor sngon 'gro bar // rdo rje 'chang gis gsungs pa ste /. The passage in the Tanjur at DT fol. 216b is identical, except that it has *bshad* rather than *gsungs.*

[59] Sachen discusses this at the beginning of the PG's commentary on the fourth chapter, as follows: "The fourth chapter also shows the secret of the path, the substance, and the the fourth initiation in order to pursue the relevance of the statement 'the reality connected with that should be shown' for those thus engaged who have undergone consecration." This is due to statements such as 'And consecrate and show [him] reality' etc." / de ltar lam gyi gsang ba la 'jug pa dbang bskur ba sngon du song ba la / de dang 'brel ba'i de kho na nyid bstan par bya'o zhes 'brel pa bsnyegs pa'i don du le'u bzhi pas lam gyi gsang ba dngos dang yang dbang bzhi pa yang ston te / de yang dbang bskur nas ni de nyid bstan / zhes pa la sogs pa gsungs pas so / (PG p. 308.1,2)

[60] See section three (3) in the appendix.

[61] See section four (4) in the appendix.

[62] This statement may be in reference to the *Sampuṭa Tantra,* the third chapter of which is on the topic of the secret; it states and explains somewhat the Root Tantra's nidāna. It certainly is not in reference to the *Abhidhānottara* or *Vajraḍāka* Tantras, which are more most often the referent to the term "Explanatory Tantra" in this text.

maṇḍala which is visualized as a preliminary to 'the dried dung of the bull pen' and so forth, and which is thus explained, is apprehended by this, it is not stated elsewhere than this [text]."[63]

As for the meaning of this, although the generation of the stacked up elements is indicated by [the expression] "bull pen" etc. which is stated in the thirty second chapter, the maṇḍala visualization that proceeds it is what is explained in the second chapter. And while the explanation of the stacked-up elements visualization occurs afterwards, here he means that one should not say that it is a maṇḍala visualization separate from that in the second.

III.B.3.a.ii.

The summary of the achievement of success and the selection of mantras.

According to the meaning of the summary from *And now.... the secret* up to *Listen....*, the person who has thus properly attained initiation does repetitions which, [along with] contemplations of meditation on the two stages, are said to achieve the siddhis, as explained by the fourth chapter. [For this one] needs mantras, and thus needs to select the [appropriate] mantra. As for the method of doing this, it says in the *Intended Import* "Then, in commenting upon *....is successful with mantra repetition and contemplation* (**I.10.a,b**), one must show the selection of the mantras to be repeated which are set forth in a scrambled order in the four chapters from the fifth through the eighth and the chapters from the twenty fifth to the thirtieth. You should understand that this is for the sake of preventing someone from reciting the mantra without a master in the lineage"[64] However, the [expression] "from the twenty fifth" is not correct, because it says elsewhere that it is shown by the four chapters from the twenty sixth to the twenty ninth. Therefore, it is to come "with the twenty fifth".

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[63] See section five (**5**) in the appendix.

[64] See section six (**6**) in the appendix.

Regarding that, the consonants of the root mantra of the father deity are selected in the fifth chapter, and the root mantra's vowels are selected in the seventh. And the twenty fifth joins the initial 'Oṃ' with the final 'hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ' to the root mantra itself. The sixth chapter simply enumerates the letters of the essence and quintessence mantras of the Father deity, and the selection of the Father's armour mantras. The eighth chapter gives the selection of the Father's essence mantra and the Mother's armour mantras. The thirtieth chapter shows both the selection of the mantra of the four-faced [Mahākāla], and his collected mantra. The expression "scrambled order" has to do with things like showing the heart mantra in reverse order and so forth.

In regard to the chapter which shows the time of achieving the fruit which "will be achieved", it says in the *Intended Import* that "In this way, one should understand that the mundane successes are shown from the characteristics of the supreme and ordinary successes in repetition, from the ninth chapter until the end of the fourteenth, and from the forty third until the fiftieth. By applying the three bodies to the them, the supreme, transcendant success is revealed."[65] 'Success in repetition' is an example; success is achieved from both repetition and concentration. In regard to that, chapter nine shows the attainment of ordinary success by means of the Father's root mantra, while a single section of chapter ten shows the achievement of ritual actions with the Father's essence mantra. In chapter eleven there is an investigation of the seven births. And having taken the radiance (*rocana*) from the heart of him (a seven times born brahmin), it shows the achievement of ritual actions with the heart mantra of the Father. Chapter twelve teaches the attainment by means of the quintessence of the Father. Chapter thirteen shows attainment by means of the armour mantras. Chapter fourteen shows the attainment of the seven births from the perspective of donkey-faced Heruka. As for remedying the error in "from the forty-first",

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[65] Tsongkhapa's text reads "from the forty first until the fiftieth", which this is incorrect, but he corrects this below; the DT version has the correct reading; most likely, either the text he used contained a typographical error, or the Tanjur text has been edited. The Tanjur text reads "from initiation in them, the supreme, transecent success is revealed," but this makes somewhat less sense than Tsongkhapa's reading. See section seven (7) in the appendix.

because this is explained separately from the four chapters from the thirty-ninth up until the forty-second, it should read "from the forty-third."

Chapter forty-three teaches the achievment of ritual actions by means of the Father's quintessence, and chapter forty-four by means of the Mother's armour mantras and the Father's quintessence. Chapter forty-five shows how to achieve ritual actions by means of the heroines' armour mantras, and chapter forty-six does so relying on the five 'ha' [sounds]. Chapter forty-seven teaches the achievement of ritual actions by means of the *sarva-buddha-ḍākini* mantra.[66] Chapter forty-eight teaches continual mediation on the the four yoginis and the twenty-four heroes, as well as the actual mantra of Buddha-ḍākini. Chapter forty-nine extensively details the seven births, and chapter fifty teaches the achievements of ritual actions by the mantra Vajravairocani.[67]

The supreme success is taught by a single section of chapter ten, which demonstrates the attainment of the three bodies. This is summarized by the statement in the first chapter, *success is always attained* (**I.13.b**). And if we explain in more detail the three bodies of the path of the perfection stage, you will be able to understand that they will be attained by a process of going from peak to peak of reality.

In regard to the teaching of the two successes, although it was said that "having developed enthusiasm for common successes, when you attain them, it is for the sake of entry into the supreme," the principle disciples of Unexcelled [Yogatantra], having reached the end of the creation stage, do not seek for mundane successes, [but seek instead] entry into the perfection stage; this is explained in many treatises. Therefore, [the above statement] is not correct. The attainment of mundane successes at the end of the creation stage is the method of Unexcelled [Yogatantra] disciples who have inferior faculties.

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[66] This is the quintessence mantra of Vajravārāhī.

[67] This is the essence mantra of Vajravārāhī.

III.B.3.a.iii.The Summary of Attaining both Successes from the Kindness of the Messengers

The *Intended Import* also explains that "In that way, the [chapters] from the fifteenth until the twenty-forth explain *the messengers who are orgasmically achieved,* (**I.7.a**) etc. in order to show here tha the mundane and supramundane successes are based on the kindness of the yoginis. So that one might know the differentiation of the three yoginis, one should know the letter signs, the differentiation of the six classes, the enumeration of names, the characteristics of the ḍākinī clan, the lāma clan characteristics, the hand signs, the gazes, the gestures, the organ gestures (mtshan-ma phyag rgya), and the verbal signs. These ten particularities show the characteristics of the heralds in the ten chapters respectively."[68] This means that, for the sake of showing that both successes are achieved through the kindness of the yogini, the ten chapters from the fifteenth to the twenty-fourth are stated in order to extensively explain the summary that one achieves success in dependence upon the worhip of the kinswoman, i.e., [the verse] *the messengers who are orgasmically achieved....bring about the desired success.*

Regarding "so that one might know the differentiation of the three yoginis", although these chapters do not state the means for distinguishing each of these three individually, such as the mantra born, etc.,[69] since one depends upon meeting with these dakinis, one must know things such as "she is this one of the three yoginis" and "this is this kind of place". One must recognize those things which are explained a bit by each of the ten chapters, which were shown very concisely, such as the signs and so forth, in order to worship the ḍākinī kinswoman.. And one will need to investigate them in order to recognize them. And when one investigated them, one will have to come to understand the hero and the sister, in an investigation into chapters fifteen, twenty, twenty-two and twenty-

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[68] See section eight (**8**) in the appendix.

[69] The three types of yoginis, explained by Tsongkhapa below, are the *kṣetraja* 'womb born', the *mantraja* 'mantra born' and the *sahaja* 'orgasmic'.

four, which are the means of knowing them. The signs of each letter is shown by chapter fifteen, and the speech signs of the groups of many letters are shown by chapter twenty-four. Thus they are made known relying on speech.

In order that they be known by means of physical signs, chapter twenty focuses on the physical signs in which the hand is principle, and chapter twenty-one focuses on the physical signs of gazing. Chapter twenty two shows the physical signs that are gestures distinctive to the limbs. Thus these five chapters show how to understand the ḍākinis' gestures.

Thus, as understanding the yoginis in general is not sufficient, you need to investigate their particular clans, from among the four chapters. Chapter sixteen teaches the characteristics of the six clans, so that one might worship them with the understanding of the clan harmonious with one's own affinity. Chapter seventeen shows via the enumeration of names the two sets of seven ḍākinis who are selected [from among all] the ḍākinis, and chapter eighteen shows the distinctions of the characteristics of the ḍākini clan. Chapter nineteen shows the different qualities of the lāma clan. Although you might understand the ḍākinis by analysis, as it is not suitable to perform the worship of reality if they are not fond of you, chapter twenty-three shows the mūdras of the organ distinctive to the dakinis, the type which one desires.

In general, if all practitioners of unexcelled secret mantra are befriended by Heralds with complete characteristics, then the path is swift. And if they well understand the path of Cakrasaṃvara in particular, those practitioners are blessed by the distinguished messengers of the ḍākinis, and befriended by them the path is much swifter. And even though one might not now reach this practice directly, in another life there will be a distinctive point when there is arranged the omens of being able to directly use the signs and their responses. Therefore, one should become skilled in these methods, and one should become accustomed to them again and again.

III.B.3.a.iv. The Summary of Impact-Heightening Conduct and the Vow as a Friend on the Path

It also says in the *Intended Import* that "After that, in order to fulfill the meaning of [statements] such as ...*should always protect the commitments* (**I.10.c**), chapter twenty-six shows the vows which are guarded so as to please the messenger whom one has recognized. Chapter twenty seven shows the actions performed at the command of the pleased consort which one has achieved. as well as the contrived performance by the fulfillment of the meaning of the characteristic statements such as *the state of being a yogin* (**I.9.c**). Chapter twenty-eight and twenty-nine show the actions of the contrived performance."[70]

As for the meaning of that, in order to extensively explain the meaning of the summary in the first chapter, [that one] *should always protect the commitments*, chapter twenty-six show the eight commitments which are preserved so as to please the messengers, who are recognized in reliance upon the signs. That is just an example, as one must also preserve the pledges that protect against the root downfalls, etc. If you please the disctinctive consort, the contrived performance which is commanded by her is shown by chapters twenty-seven, twenty-eight and twenty-nine.

It also says in the *Intended Import* that "Then the thirty-eighth thoroughly shows the uncontrived and extremely uncontrived performances in order to fulfill the import of [expressions] such as *the state of being a yogin* etc."[71] It is said that the "performance" is summarized in the first chapter *by the state of being a yogin is the supreme purifying merit which destroys sin* (**I.9.c,d**).

Furthermore, it says in the *Intended Import* that "Then, as an explanation of ...*honey with vermilion, camphor* (**I.11.c**) etc., the three chapters from the thirty first show the food commitments necessary for all performances. Furthermore, one should also know the hand

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[70] See section nine (**9**) in the appendix.

[71] See section twelve (**12**) in the appendix.

offerings, the names of the distinctive substances, and the differentiation of the three types of food procedures."[72] Chapter thirty-one shows the hand offerings, chapter thirty-two the names of the distinctive substances, and chapter thirty-three the types of food procedures. These protect the food commitments. These two commitments illustrate as well the types of commitments on which one relies.

III.B.3.a.v. The Summary of the Four Mudrās such as Mahāmudrā.

It also says in the *Intended Import* that "After that, the four chapters from the thirty-fourth on, are commentaries on *the four offerings, that is, the great hero* (**I.14.a**) etc. One should investigate them in the order of *mahāmudrā, dharmamudrā* and *karmamudrā.* Samayamudrā is shown in accordance with the characteristics of visualizing the wheel of the maṇḍala. Therefore, here it is not very extensively discussed separately from them."[73]

The meaning of this is that the four chapters from the thirty-fourth up to the thirty-seventh extensively comment on the summaries of the four mudrās such as *the four offerings, the great hero.* Furthermore, chapter thirty-four teaches about mahāmudrā, and chapter thirty-five dharmamudrā. Chapter thirty-six shows the method of relying on the karmamudrā, and chapter thirty-seven the art of mastering for oneself the karmamudrā. It is said that the samayamudrā is not shown separately from that setting forth of the Heruka deity couple in the center of the maṇḍala which was previously explained. Samayamudrā is what is called the jñānamudrā in other texts; it is the goddess who is mentally visualized, such as Vajravārāhī. This does not contradict the claim by those who follow the systems of both Lama Mardo and Mal that chapter thirty-six shows both the samayamudrā and

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[72] See section ten (**10**) in the appendix.

[73] Here I have translated the line from the first chapter's fourteenth verse as it occurs in the LA, Tsongkhapa's text, and the Kanjur. Elsewhere, however, I have translated it as it occurs in the Sanskrit manuscript, as well as in Kampala's SN commentary, as follows: *the four offerings, that is, the yoginis.* This actually makes more sense in this context, as it makes more clear the connection between the four offerings and the four mudrās. See section eleven (**11**) in the appendix.

karmamudrā. This is because, as it is said, "while it is not that it does not show samayamudrā in general, it does not do so in detail." This is the meaning of the statement that "it is not clearly shown separately from karmamudrā." (this is because only the superior disciples can use the samayamūdra; most require a physical karmamūdra).

III.B.3.a.vi. The Summary which Examines the Rapid Attainment of Siddhi

It also says in the *Intended Import* "And then, the signs of the successes common to the three yogas are taught from chapter thirty-nine up until chapter forty-two."[74] The signs or indications of the rapid attainment of the supreme fruit common to the three yogas, i.e. practices, are shown by the four chapter from the thirty-ninth up to the forty-second.

How is it that the meanings of the summary and the meaning of the fifty-first chapter are made to accord? It also says in the *Intended Import* that "The characteristics of the meanings which were shown thus both in summary and in detail are brought together by the fifty-first chapter, and were taught by the Lord. [This] is the personal instruction of the guru."[75] The method whereby chapter fifty-one condenses into one the stages of realization will be explained on the occasion of [commenting on] that [chapter] itself. As for 'making it accord with the summarized meanings', that is shown to be the personal instructions of His Great Holiness Nārotapa.

III.B.3.b. The Arrangement in one of the Stages of the Path.

Knowing to take as a path the imports of the root tantra from beginning to end with regard to the stages of practice is the supreme essence of the many explanations. Therefore, if we arrange them all as one and explain them, then [for example] one could well attain the

[74] See section thirteen (**13**) in the appendix.

[75] See section fourteen (**14**) in the appendix.

initiation, the topics of which occur in the second and third chapters, and are filled out by the two explanatory tantras. For this is the holy art of becoming a suitable vessel, one who listens, contemplates and meditates upon the two stages of the path along with their components.

When you have become such a suitable vessel, having brought together well the Root and Explanatory [Tantras], [connecting] the meaning of *And now I will explain the secret* (**I.1.a**) and the meaning of the fourth chapter and the chapters on the four mudrās, then one should meditate on the two stages. That is sticking to the center of the path. You should also have a guide on this path who adheres to the commitments.

When you find power by meditating on that and adhering [to the commitments], you will come to meet with a distinctive messenger. At that time, if relying on her, you practice according to her command, that is the holy art of heightening impact on the path. When you elevate that impact by practicing in the individual contexts of the two stages, then you will rapidly attain both the ordinary and supreme siddhis. Since the personal instructions of the saints explain the thoroughly mixed-up and unclear root tantra, they seem to be the fascination of the sages, since they give unexcelled certainty on the path. Later scholars who rely on Nāropa's commentatorial tradition should explain in accordance with only that.

III.B.3.c. The Method of the Lineage from Nāropa.

The superiority of this commentatorial tradition is due to Śrī Nāropa. Although he had many students, he had four principle disciples of Cakrasaṃvara. [They were] called Mānakaśrījñāna, Prajñārakṣita, Phitoṅhaṃdu and Phaṃtiṅpa. Regarding the first of them, Mardo says that he was known as the Northern door guardian [of Nālandā], having become the door guardian after Nāropa. The third, [Phitoṅhaṃdu], was the elder brother of Phaṃtingpa, called *Dharmamati (chos kyi blo gros). Having remained for twelve years in

the presence of Nāropa, he evidently went to Mt. Wu-tai-shan in China. The fourth is the Nepali Phaṃtiṅpa. In Nepal he was known as A-ñes-pa chen-po. He was also known as *Abhayakīrti Bhikṣu ('jigs med grags pa). He remained in the presence of Nāropa for nine years. Through Cakrasaṃvara he obtained inferior and middling siddhis. His younger brother, Kālacakrapa, served Nāropa for five years. His younger brother, Thaṅchupa,[76] studied Cakrasaṃvara with Nāropa. The Kaśmiri Bodhibhadra, having served Nāropa, studied Cakrasaṃvara.[77] Kanakaśrī studied with Phamtingpa and the first two of the previous four. He was also called the Nepali Batanta.[78] Sumatikirti of Lesser Omnicience also studied with him, and also to Mānakaśrī and Phamtingpa. The Nepali Mahākaruṇa studied with Kanakaśrī.

Although there are many ways in which lineages in Tibet derive from them, there were two, those who most benefitted Tibet were the Mal-gyo translator bLo-gros Grags-pa and the translator known as Marpa Dopa, whose real name was Chos-kyi dbang-chug and whose secret name was Mañjuśrīvajra. Of them, Malgyo studied with thee three Phamtingpa brothers, the Kaśmiri Bodhibhadra, Sumatikirti and the Nepali Mahākaruṇaka. Mardo listened to both Phamtingpa and Sumatikirti. The Venerable Sa-skya Chen-po, who studied Cakrasaṃvara with the translator Mal, the Translator of rMa, and the Lesser Translator of Pu-rangs, considered Mal's system to be authoritative. Mal and Sachen did not write about the root tantra, but Sachen's explanations in conferrence with Mal subtly edited by a certain disciple of theirs called Puṇyevajra in an extensive commentary on the

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[76] His name is listed as Thaṅ-chuṅ-pa in Roerich's trans. of gZhun-nu-dpal's *Blue Annals*. See Roerich 1949, p. 381.

[77] He is most likely the same person as the Kaśmiri Paṇḍita Śri Bhadra who is said to be a disciple of Nāropa in gTsang-smyon Heruka's biography of Marpa Lho-brag-pa (Trungpa 1982:58).

[78] Batanta or Bhadanta was, according to gZhon-nu-dpal, a servant to to Phaṃtingpa's younger brother Thaṅ-chuṅ-pa, who was instructed by Phaṃtingpa to meditate on Vāgiśvara. He did this and afterwards threw a flower into a stream as a test of his attainment. He did so thrice, and all three times it flowed upstream. He only noticed this, however, on the last throw, and hence attained only middling success. His servant, however, drank of the water downstream, and hence gained the success that his master failed to acquire. (Roerich 1949:381) Bhadanta evidently became a successful adept of the Cakrasamvara, and was known as Kanakaśrī.

root tantra called the *Pearl Garland (Muktāvali).* Mardo wrote a commentary on the root tantra, and his disciples bDemChok rDorJe of gZe, Nam-mKha' dbang-chug of India and Chos-kyi rGyal-mTshan of Tsog-ro greatly propagated Cakrasaṃvara.

Lama 'Phags-pa-'od gave the initiations, instructions and explanations of the system of Sa-skya, the Lesser Translator (lo-chung), Sachen as well as the system of Atiśa to the Omniscient Bu-ston. Since he also received the summit of the explanations and scriptural transmissions of Mardo's system, he mastered the Nāropa's explanatory style through the lineage of both the translators and the sages. I myself heard the explanatory-transmission of the *Great Commentary on the Root Tantra (rtsa-gyud kyi rnam-bshad chen-mo),* from his disciple, the great Cakrasamvara Lama[79].

Chapter One

III.C. The Actual Method of Explaining the Root Tantra.
1. The Meaning of the Name
    a. The Translation of the Name.

This tantra's name from "śrī" to "nāma" is in the Sanskrit language, one of the four classes of language in India. When this is translated into Tibetan, *śrī* is *dpal,* "glory". *Heruka* means "blood drinker". Some take the *ru* [in Heruka] as *rudhira*, which means "blood".[80] As [this interpretation] relies on the mere portion of a word, some people say it is not good to translate it as "blood drinker". The adherents of the system of Mardo make an etymological explanation wherein they add syllables to each of the three syllables [of *Heruka*], by which they arrive at "blood drinker", which is good. For example, ***helā*** means

[79] This may have been Khyung-po Lhas-pa, a disciple of Bu-ston's with whom Tsongkhapa studied Tantra, including the *Cakrasamvara Tantra.*

[80] Tsongkhapa repeatedly writes **rutira* for *rudhira.*

"dalliance,"[81] *rudhira* "blood" and *kapāla* "skull bowl". In brief, because he dallies in skull-bowl blood, [Heruka] is translated as "blood drinker".

Rāja means "king", and *cakra*, "wheel". *Samvara* means "binding," and *abhidhāna*, "text".[82] *Yogini* is "yogini"; *uttara*, "highest"; *sarvatantra*, "all tantras". The 'o' vowel of the 'tro' [of tantrottara] forms from the sandhi of *-tra* with *-ut*. *Uttara* means 'highest'. *Samvara* means "supreme bliss"; *samgraha* means "compilation"., and *nāma* means "called". Although there are many names, Mardo alone translates it thus.

III.C.1.b. The Explanation of the Name.

In the *Samcārya* it says that "*śri* means 'non-dual intuition'."[83] As non-dual intuition is to be desired and relied upon, it is glorious. I already explained *Heruka*, but I'll give some other explanations. The "king" is the lord of all those who dally in skull bowl blood. "Binding" means "supreme communion". That which is to be bound is the deeds of the three secrets of the body, speech and mind of all Buddhas. And that itself is the wheel of body, speech and mind. Regarding the manner in which they are bound, all of the things to be bound are bound as one, inseparably. It is the binding of bliss and void as one, and the binding of body, speech and mind into the actuality of the unique, orgasmic Heruka.

In the *Samvarodaya* it says "the deeds of body, speech and mind are the sole binding of all actions. That binding is the supreme bliss awakening. It cannot be spoken nor seen. [It is the secret of all Buddhas,] their communion, their binding supreme."[84]

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[81] Tsongkhapa writes *hela*, no doubt refering to the Skt. term *helā*, meaning "amorous sport or daliance" (Apte p.1031,col.2)

[82] Tsongkhapa's text has **bhidhana* for *abhidhāna*.

[83] YS ch. 46: / shri ni gnyis med ye shes te / (DK fol. 38b; QK p.239.4)

[84] This quote corresponds to verse 18 and first two pādas of v. 19 of Tsuda's edition of the SV, which are as follows: /sku dang gsung dang thugs kyi las // rnam kun mchog gi sdom pa'o // sdom pa byang chub bde mchog ste // bltar med brjod du med pa'o // sang rgyas kun gyi gsang ba ni // 'dus pa bde ba'i mchog yin te / (1974:171,2), // kāyavākcetasāṁ karma sarvākāraikasaṁvaram / saṁvaraṁ sukhavaraṁ bodhir avācyam anidarśanam // // rahasyaṁ sarvabuddhānāṁ milanaṁ saṁvaraṁ varam / (1974: 79)

The text is known as *Cakrasamvara*. "Unexcelled yogini" shows that it is a Mother Tantra, that it is the highest of all Tantras, lofty and supreme. As for "Tantra", in the *Samājottara* is says that "*tantra* is known as a 'continuum', and it has the three aspects of basis, nature, and non-deprivation. Its nature aspect is the cause, and non-deprivation is the fruit, and the base is the means. These three comprise the meanings of the [term] *tantra*."[85]

The verbal meaning of tantra is continuity. In regard to that, "nature", refers to causal tantra, which is the nature of jewel-like person who is an achiever. "Base" refers to the art tantra, which are the four branches of service and practice of the two stages. The body of the unlocalated nirvaṇa, Vajradhara, or integration, which cannot be deprived by any other, is the fruitional tantra. This was said by Naropa. Actual tantras thus has three divisions. Shantipa and Abhayakara say that the causal tantra is the nature of the mind. The word which shows [the subject] of those three is also called tantra, and here [we use] the latter [usage].

Finally, the translation of *Saṃvara*, as "supreme bliss" would mean taking *śaṃ* as *sukha*, 'bliss', and *vara* as "supreme". Just as it says in the *Samputa-uttaratantra*, "What is being said here by the word *Saṃvara*? *Śaṃ* should be taken as 'bliss' and *bara* as 'particularly noble'",[86] it is necessary that one knows both this and the former meaning of

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Tsongkhapa's quote differs from the above at several points, as follows: / sku gsung thugs yi yang dag las // mam pa thams cad gcig sdom pa // sdom pa bde mchog byang chub ste // brjod par bya min bstan du med // 'dus pa sdom pa dag gi mchog /

[85] This quote is from the *Uttaratantra, rgyud phyi ma*, which is considered to be the eighteenth chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. The Sanskrit occurs as follows in Matsunaga's (1978) edition: prabandhaṃ tantram ākhyātaṃ tat prabandhaṃ tridhā bhavet / ādhāraḥ prakṛtiś caiva asaṃhāryaprabhedataḥ // prakṛtiś cākṛter hetur asaṃhāryaphalaṃ tathā / ādhāras tad upāyaś ca tribhis tantrārthasaṃgrahaḥ // (vs. 34-35, p. 115) It alsi occurs as follows in the Kanjur: / rgyud ni rgyun zhe bya bar grags // rgyud de rnam pa gsum 'gyur te // gzhi dang de bzhin rang bzhin dang // mi 'phrog pa yis rab phye ba // rnam pa rang bzhin rgyu yin te // de bzhin mi 'phrogs 'bras bu'o // gzhi ni thabs shes bya ba ste // gsum gyis rgyud kyi don bsdus pa'o /. (DK fol. 150a) Tsongkhapa's quote is identical, adding only an instrumental post-suffix: / mi 'phogs pa yis...

[86] This quote occurs as follows in the *Mahātantrarāja-śrisamputatilaka:* / de nas sdom pa'i sgra brjod par bya ste / sam zhe bya ba ni bde ba'o / bara zhes pa ni khyad par du 'phags pa zhes bya'i don to / (DK fol. 163a) The same passage, with minor mistakes, occurs at QK p. 283.3,4.

saṃvara. As for "abbreviated", it means that it was stated by collecting words from the extensive Root Tantra.

III.C.2. The Salutation of the Translators.

Bhagavan and *śri* are easily understood. It says in the *Samāyoga* that "*vajra* is said to mean voidness, and *sattva* is simply intuition. The achievement of the nature of these is called Vajrasattva."[87] Accordingly, the salutation of the translator is "I bow down to the achievement of the entrance into the single-taste (or experiential unity) of the two, the *vajra* which is ultimate voidness and the *sattva* (mind hero) which is intuition."

III.C.

3. The meaning of the text.

a. The reason why 'thus have I heard' is not stated in the beginning.

Why does it not state "thus have I heard" in the beginning of this tantra? Bhavyakīrti gives [the following assertions] (1) that this tantra was extracted from a one hundred thousand verse extensive tantra, and since *evaṃ* etc. is stated in that text, it is not stated in the [text which is] a Further Tantra (uttaratantra) of that . Others assert (2) that it is not mentioned in order to show that the Buddha is in the unlocated nirvaṇa. Another says (3) it is not said in order to show that the teacher and that which is taught are one in regard to the unteachable reality, or that it was done [this way] (4) to teach the Mahāyāna in

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[87] Tsongkhapa attributes this quote to the *mnyam sbyor,* in Sanskrit *samāyoga,* which is an abbreviation for the *Srisarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasaṃvara-nāma-uttaratantra.* Although this text focuses on Vajrasattva, I did not find an equivalent passage to Tsongkhapa's quote, which occurs as follows: / rdo rje stong pa nyid du brjod // sems dpa' ye shes tsam nyid de // de dag bdag nyid grub pa ni // rdo rje sems dpa' zhes brjod do /. However, I did find a passage very close to this in Advayavajra's *Pañcatathāgatamudrāvivaraṇa.* It occurs as follows in Shastri's (1927) edition: vajreṇa śūnyatā proktā sattvena jñānamātratā / tād ātmyamanayoḥ siddhiṃ vajrasattvasvabhāvataḥ / (p. 24 lines 5,6). I have not identified Tsongkhapa's source for this passage, but it does seem to be a standard definition, which may be present in a number of different works.

the manner of the *Mañjuśrināmasaṁgiti*, which lacks 'thus have I heard.' Thus I set up the four systems asserted by others. In [Bhavyakīrti's] own system, it is [not stated] because the primal Buddhas know no cessation, and this dharma formulation has a beginningless continuum, existing before Śakyamuṇi, the ten million Buddhas and ten million heros stated this well. That's how it's said.

This means that, the *Prajñapāramitā* and such teachings disappear by the power of time and by the aeon of conflagration and so forth , and Śakyamuṇi again states them. *Saṃvara* is not like that, since it is practiced without interruption in the inexpressible Buddhalands, so it is said.[88]

In regard to the first claim, it is refuted by a certain Tibetan, [who said] "just as it says *evaṃ* etc. in the *Dvikalpa* which was taught separately having been extracted from an extensive five hundred thousand verse *Hevajra Tantra*, if it also says it in this tantra which was taught separately having been extracted from the hundred thousand verse version, then

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[88] Tsongkhapa here closely paraphrases a long passage from Bhavyakirti's SM commentary, which could be translated as follows: "Now, someone holds that this [text] was selected from the One Hundred Thousand Verse Root Tantra, and since that Root Tantra states 'evaṃ mayā' etc., there is no statement of 'evaṃ mayā' etc. in this Uttaratantra. Additionally, someone claims that it is because the Lord is in the non-located nirvāṇa, which is why [the text] says *the universal nature always abides*. Furthermore, it is held that it shows that in the unteachable Teaching the teacher and what is to be taught are one, and hence it is said that the mantric body is the Buddha Lord. Others assert that it teaches the Mahāyāna in the same manner as the *Mañjuśrināmasamgiti* and so forth, which also lack 'evaṃ mayā'. "I, Bhavyakirti, hold that since the primal buddhas know no cessation, this teaching formulation has a beginningless continuum, existing even before Sākyamuni, as has been well stated by tens of millions of buddhas and spiritual heros. This means that when the *Prajñāpāramitā* and so forth wane due to the the power of Time, the burning aeon and so forth, the Lord Śākyamuni teaches them again. The *Śri Cakrasamvara* is not like that, for it exists without interruption in inexpressible Buddhalands, and it is experienced with contemplations etc. by the Spiritual Heros and Heroines such as Iśvari. This is the significance of text such as 'and then'." This occurs in the Tanjur as follows: 'di ni rtsa ba'i rgyud 'bum sde las btus pa yin pa'i phyir rtsa ba'i rgyud de nyid du dang por di skad bdag gis zhes bya ba la sogs pa smos pas rgyud phyi ma 'dir 'di skad gis zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i nye bar dgod pa'ng ma byas pa yin no zhes kha cig 'dod do // yang na bcom ldan 'das ni mi gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa yin no zhes bstan pa'i phyir te // de nyid kyis na / thams cad bdag nyid rtag tu bzhugs // zhes gsung pa'i phyir ro zhes kha cig 'dod do // yang na bstan du med pa'i chos nyid la ni bstan par bya ba dang ston pa po gcig pa nyid du bstan pa yin te / sngags kyi sku ni sangs rgyas bcom ldan 'das yin no zhes kyang gsung pa'i phyir ro zhes 'dod do // gzhan dag ni 'di skad bdag gis zhes bya med par yang mtshan yang dag par brjod pa la sogs pa bzhin du theg pa chen po ston par mdzad pa yin no zhes 'dod do // skal ldan grags pa ni dang po sangs rgyas rnams ni rgyun mi chad pa mi mnga' ba'i phyir chos kyi rnam grangs 'di ni thogs ma med pa'i rgyun can yin te / bcom ldan 'das shākya thub pa las snga nyid du gnas pa yin no zhes 'dod de / de yang / sang rgyas bya ba dpa' bo ni / bye ba nyid kyis legs pa gsungs // zhes gang bshad pa lta bu'o // 'di dgong pa ni 'di yin te // dus kyi dbang gis sreg pa'i bskal pa la sogs pas shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la sog pa nub pa na bcom ldan 'das shākya thub pas ni yang gsungs pa yin no // dpal bde mchog 'di ni de lta ma yin te / sangs rgyas kyi zhing brjod du med pa rnams na gnas la sogs pa rgyun mi 'jig pa nyid kyis dpa' bo dang dpa' mo'i dbang phyug ma la sogs pa rnams gyis bsam gtan la sogs pas nyams su blang pas gnas pa yin phyir ro // de nas zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i gzhung ni tshigs go /. (DT fols. 2b,3a)

what is the contradiction?" In regard to this, if you take its mere abbreviation from an extensive tantra to be the reason, and you assert that 'thus' etc. is not taught separately from the extensive [version], although [you acknowledge] the fault there, that [reason] alone is not sufficient.

What, then [is the reason]? The Tantra begins with "and now I will explain the secret." The occurrence of the term 'and then' (*atha*) in the beginning in an abbreviated tantra like this [shows that it is] a continuation of the previous tantra. While this means that it does not show 'thus' etc., if it is indeed a tantra selected from an extensive one, I won't accept that "there is no mention of 'thus'etc."

It also says in Kambalika's commentary that the expression 'and then' indicates that it was taught subsequently to the previous Tantra.[89] Therefore, if you refute as above in this system, then you do so without understanding the opponent's position (pūrvapakṣa). Someone said that, according to Kambala " 'thus have I heard' is stated in the three hundred thousand verse *Cakrasaṃvara* Root Tantra, and since this is a Further Tantra (uttaratantra) extracted from that, it does not state it. This is unacceptable, for the *Vimalaprabhā* states that the extensive Root Tantra lacks 'thus have I heard'."[90] As for the argument that here 'thus have I heard' is not stated because this is an Further Tantra (uttaratantra) that is condensed from an extensive tantra which has the expression, this position is completely without understanding in view of the opponent's position. This is

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[89] Tsongkhapa here paraphrases the following passage from Kambala's SN commentary: " 'And then' etc. [shows] that this Tantra is the ending of another Tantra. The word 'and then' looks on to the previous Tantra." / de nas zhes bya ba la sogs pa ni // rgyud 'di rgyud gzhan gyi mtha' dang yang dag par ldan pa ste / de nas zhes bya ba'i sgra ni sngon gyi rgyud la bltos pa yin no / (PTT p. 174.1). Both this passage and the one below are quoted, without attribution, by Sachen at PG p. 293.3,4.

[90] Tsongkhapa here is directly quoting a passage written by Bu-ston, which occurs in his NS commentary as follows: / bde mchog rtsa ba'i rgyud 'bum phrag gsum par / 'di skad bdag gis thos pa zhes smos / 'di de las bsdus pa'i don yin pas so zer ba mi 'thad de / dri med 'od du / rtsa rgyud rgyas pa na / 'di skad bdag thos med par bshad pa'i phyir ro / (NS p. 147). The passage referred to by Bu-ston from Kambala's SN commentary occurs as follows: "Since the so-called [Tantra of] Three Hundred Thousand Verses states 'Thus have I heard', the context verses are not used at the beginning of this [text], since it was used previously." / gang gi phyir 'bum phrag gsum pa zhes bya bar 'di skad bdag gis zhes gsung te / 'di nyid kyis na / dang po gleng gzhi'i tshig rab tu sbyor ba med de / sngon rab tu sbyar ba'i phyir / (QT p. 174.1). In his comments which follow, Tsongkhapa criticizes Bu-ston for confusing the one hundred and three hundred thousand verse versions of the *Abhidhāna*, i.e., Root Tantra, the existence of which Tsongkhapa already argued in the beginning of his introduction, section II.A.1.

because *Vimalaprabhā* explains that there is no 'thus have I heard' etc. in the one hundred thousand verse *Abhidhāna*, while it is in the three hundred thousand verse *Abhidhāna*, and there is no contradiction in those two statements. We have already explained the sources in which there are two different extensive tantras. Thus, it is totally unadvisable to seek for errors in the great saints of India, such as Kambali the 'Blanketed'. While there is also no clear expression of 'thus have I heard' in the this concise tantra, I will explain that it exists spoken by the Bhagavan himself in an indirect way.

The second assertion is also not viable. Although according to the position of the philosophic sūtras 'thus have I heard' indicates that it was compiled by a compiler after the Teacher's parinirvāṇa, here I'll follow what is said in texts such as the *Vajramālā* explanatory tantra and the *Sandhivyakaraṇa*, etc.[91] They write 'thus have I heard' etc. to indicate it was spoken by the Teacher himself. Thus [the use of the expression] is not necessarily limited to [the instances of] gathering the texts after the [pari]nirvāṇa. And as the Teacher in traditions such as the Guhyasamāja and so forth indeed is the Teacher to be found in non-abiding Nirvana, there would be the consequence that "thus" etc. would not be stated in them, [while in fact it is.]

The third claim is also not viable. It says in the *Hevajra*, "I am the teacher and also the teaching."[92] Since it says this, 'thus have I heard' would not be shown there [according to this claim, but it is.]

The fourth claim is also not tenable, for if you teach that it is like the *Mañjuśrināmasamgiti* in which 'thus have I heard' is not mentioned, there is also doubt in regard to that, as the point of disputation here is taken as an answer.

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[91] The *Vajramāla* (Tō.445) and the *Sandhivyakaraṇa* (Tō. 444) are both important Explanatory Tantras for the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, on which Tsongkhapa relied in his elucidation of the *Guhyasamāja*, and from which he draws in the elucidation of other Tantras such as the *Cakrasaṃvara*.

[92] Tsongkhapa here quotes the famous verse from the second chapter of the second section of the *Hevajra Tantra*, verse 39 in Snellgrove's edition (Snellgrove 1959) as follows: vyākhyātāhaṃ ahaṃ dharmaḥ śrotāhaṃ suganair yutaḥ // sādhyo 'haṃ jagataḥ śāstā loko 'haṃ laukiko 'py ahaṃ// 'chad pa po nga chos kyang nga // rang gi tshogs ldan nyan pa nga // 'jig rten ston pa bsgrub bya nga // 'jig rten 'jig rten 'das pa nga / (pp.48-51).

The arrangement of my own system is also unacceptable, because I am unable to prove that there was no 'thus' etc. in the teaching of Buddhas earlier than Śakyamūṇi, and also because there are many Tantras with the statement "thus' etc. which were spoken by the ten million Buddhas and so forth. Furthermore, there are also sūtras and so forth such as the *Prajñāparamitā*, the *Samvarodaya*, and the *Abhidhāna*, which are continually practiced in the infinite Buddhalands of the ten directions. 'Thus' etc. would not be stated in them as well [according to my theory.]

III.C.3.b The actual explanation of the text's meaning.
i. The summarization of all of of the meanings of the tantra by the first chapter.
A. The actual text.
1. The promise to explain the secret.

The term *and then* (**v.1**) is the equivalent to the [Sanskrit] term *atha.*[93] Naropa explained that as/in the four procedures (of Tantric interpretation). Its verbal meaning is [that it is a term] used on the occasion of, having completed the previous Root Tantra, expounding the Further/ Uttaratantra of that. Its general meaning is the store of intuition which is the realization of the intrinsic birthlessness of all things, *akāro mukhaṃ sarvadharmaṇam,* [which is signified] by the augment 'a', while the the store of merit is [signified by] its match 'tha'. (See rgyal-tshab rje's Guhyasamaja commentary for a discussion of *atha*) 'A' is the lotus of insight, and 'tha' is the vajra of art, which is the hidden [meaning], from within which is the hidden reality of passion. 'A' is perfectly pure insight; 'tha' is great bliss of unobjectifying compassion- this is the ultimate [meaning].

In addition to these four meaning of 'atha', it also has the meaning of auspiciousness, of a copulative, of a continuative (tadantara), and the meaning of topicality. As for the first, this term is used as a blessing. Secondly this is [used as a copulative in contexts] such as "and then, at that very time when the Bhagavan passed into Nirvana". It means here that having stated the extensive tantra, he then stated the abbreviated one. As for

[93] The text here and below spells *atha* as **ātha.*

the third, just as in the [context of statements such as] "and then, all doubts were immediately cut off", here just after having taught the extensive root tantra, he taught this one. He elucidated it without interruption. As for the fourth, it shows that the entire tantra from head to foot is about the inseparability of the void and compassion. Here [all] four are applicable as explained.

Since these are not disclosed to those who do not have an affiliation with this vehicle, it is a great *secret* (**v.1.a**). The reason it is not disclosed is that it ought to be hidden. Furthermore, there are seven types [of hidden things]. "The first secret is objective reality, the second the conqueror's wheel; the third is hidden truth, while the fourth is the secret lotus. The fifth secret is joy by means of the seeds, the sixth is total union The final secret is uninterrupted bliss." This is quoted from the commentary of Kambalipa, and with the exception of a few instances, they are also explained in this way in the *Sampuṭa Uttaratantra.*[94]

As for their meanings, the first is the object of wisdom, reality itself. The second is the deity's wheel. As for the third, as it says in the *Uttarasampuṭa*, "the secret is the hidden holy thing" (see note 11), hence it is the supreme hidden thing. In regard to the fourth, the channel wheel is explained as the lotus, the lotus of the consort. The fifth is the joy which arises from the dripping of bodhicitta from the seed syllable 'ham' of the crown, while the sixth is the union of secrets such as the vajra and lotus. The seventh is the uninterrupted involvement in experiential unity of both subjective and objective reality.

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[94] Tsongkhapa indeed quotes this from Kambalipa's commentary, the *Sādhananidāna-śricakrasamvara-nāma-pañjikā* (Tō.1401, PTT. 2118). Tsongkhapa's quote is as follows: / gsang ba de nyid wul dang ni // gsang ba rgyal ba'i 'khor lo'o // gsang ba sbas pa bden pa ste // gsang ba gsang ba'i padma'o // gsang ba sa bon gyis dga' ba // gsang ba bar chad med bde'o /. This passage is present in Kambalipa's text as Tsongkhapa quotes it, with only minor variation, in DT p. 2.b, QT p. 174.2. And, as Tsongkhapa said, it can be found in the *Sampuṭa Uttaratantra* called the *Mahātantrarāja śrīsampuṭatilaka-nāma* (Tō.382, PTT.27), with significant variation, but with commentary, as follows: / gsang ba zhes bya ba ni don rnam pa 'dun te // brgyad pa ni brjod du med pa'i mtshan nyid do // gsang ba zhes bya ba ni mi gsal ba'o // der gsang ba de nyid phyogs yin te // de kho na nyid mdor bstan pa'o // gsang ba ni sa bon lnga'o // gsang ba ni dam pa'i dngos po sbas pa'o // gsang ba ni gsang ba'i padma'o // gsang ba ni lte ba'i dga' ba'o // gsang ba ni thams cad du 'gro ba'o // gsang ba ni bde ba thams cad mtha' yas pa ste // rgyud kyi gzhung gis bshad do // gsang ba yang ni byang chub sems // gnyid pa thabs dang shes rab nyid // gsum pa yang ni snying rje ste // bzhi pa snying po dam pa nyid // lnga pa mnyam pa nyid du gsung // drug pa yang ni byams pa nyid // bdun pa chos nyid ye shes te / (from QK p. 283.3,4.)

There are two explanations, namely, [the above] along with the explanation of Master Koṅkana, who took the secrets as the qualified base applies them to the particular quality of the four feet beginning with 'Śriheruka' (**v.1.c-2.b**). There is also the statements of the [Tibetan] lamas, that the secret here should be understood as applicable to both the path and fruition secrets; these are not discordant.

What sort of text states a commitment, such as "*I will explain the secret*" (**v.1.a**)? It is an *abbreviated* text (**v.1.b**) selected from the extensive root tantra, while its meaning is not abbreviated but extensive, which explains the import of *not extensive*. From what root tantra [is it selected]? Laṅka Jinabhadra, Viravajra and so forth say that it was selected from the hundred thousand verse *Khasāma Tantra*. In the *Samcārya* it says that the hundred thousand verse root tantra from which this tantra is selected and the *Khasāma* are distinct.[95] Kambalipa said, in agreement with the *Ḍākārnava*, that it is abbreviated from the three hundred verse root tantra.[96]

In a certain edition it says '*and then, from that I will explain the secret*', indicating that it was extracted from that extensive tantra. Another edition has '*and then, for the sake of that the secret is explained*', as if it is explained for the sake of or because of a request by an interlocutor.[97]

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[95] See above, Introduction section II.A.1.

[96] See Introduction, note 4.

[97] Tsongkhapa seems to be discussing here variant Tibetan translations or editions there of. Interestingly, the surving Sanskrit manuscripts correspond more closely with these than with the canonical translation. For they begin with *athāto rahasyam*, with *atha* the equivalent of the Tibetan *de nas*, while *ato* or *ataḥ* would be the equivalent of either *de las* or *de phyir*, 'from that' or 'because of/ for the sake of that.' *de nas de las* and *de nas de phyir* could be variant Tibetan translations of the Sanskrit *athāto*. That neither are present in the translation of Padmakara and Rinchen bZang-po, as revised by Prajñākirti and Chos-kyi dbang-phyug suggests the possibilty that there may have been a Sanskrit version lacking *-ato*.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2. The Exhortation to Listen to the Secret.
a. The Secret which Should be Heard.
i. Showing the Brief Formulation of the Secret.
A. Explaining the Interpretable Meaning.

The practitioner him/herself is the Divine Couple,which is principally characterized by the divine body of Mahāmudrā, in which is *united Śri*, i.e. Glorious, *Heruka* (**v.1.c**), who has a form with face and hands, together with the Vidyā Vajravārāhi. Within their retinue, the perfected host, is the *ḍākini*, namely the thirty six yoginis, including the four essence yoginis. Also represented by them are the twenty four heros; the *net* is the host of them. The *sam* or *śam* of *Samvara* (**v.2.b**) is 'bliss', and *vara* means 'supreme'. *Saṃvara* is so explained because that entire host is in each moment delighted with bliss. The connection of previous verse to the retinue is the explanation of Kambala, and it is good to apply it to the commentatorial tradition of the previous lamas. Here the secret is connected to the Creation Stage.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.i.B. Explaining the definitive meaning.

First, in other commentaries of the root tantra which are on textual passages such as the "union with Śrī Heruka" (**v.1.c**) there usually are not any explanations of the definitive meaning which concerns the arts of inserting the life-force into the central channel. In Vīravajra's commentary he wrote: "Here I will not write on the details of the Perfection Stage, in order to protect both the great practice instructions and those who have not served the lama. Therefore, once you have investigated and delighted the guru, you will realize it following after the *Śriheruka Abhidhāna*."[98] It seems that he thought that one should learn the personal instructions on these [matters] elsewhere.

[98] I did not find a statement to this effect in any of Vīravajra's commentaries, although in his *Padārthaprakāśikā-nāma-śrisaṃvaramūlatantraṭikā* he does discuss the Perfection Stage in the context of commenting on this verse, but without any of the reservation which Tsongkhapa attributes to him here. See DK fol. 355b-356a.

In this commentatorial tradition of Nāropa the Perfection Stage [import] of these passages also occurs a bit, roughly, at the occasion of the explanation of the Tantra, but it is actually given elsewhere. Here it is explained as in that system. Certain previous [Tibetan lamas] connected the four syllables beginning with *śri (śri-he-ru-ka)* to many things such as the four channel-wheels, the four joys, the four yogas, the four consecrations, etc. Now, in explaining the personal instructions, authoritative textual sources are not needed in every case [such as those above]. However, they seem to have explained the personal instructions in a speculative way by claiming that there is no authentic source text in regard to the most important meanings. In regard to all these semblant explanations it seems that they say that "my lineage is a personal instruction passed down from the Buddha." Since the differences [between them and real teachings] cannot be distinguished, they should be abandoned as they serve as conditions for the decline of the True Teachings.

However, granted that you have an authentic source of the tantras and commentaries, to the extent to which they exist, even explanations winnowed from them can have the fault of extreme over-explanation. Thus they should be explained in a measured way.

Here Lama Mardo's connection [of this verse] with the fourth stage (clear light), taking Heruka with Spring (*vasanta*) and Vārāhī with Drop (*tilaka*), is good. As it says in the *Samputatilaka* Explanatory Tantra, and as is explained in the *Vasantatilaka*, Heruka is 'spring', which is *vasanta*, which is the [syllable] 'hūṃ' shown upside-down in the center of the heart channel-wheel. Vārāhī is the drop, *tilaka*, which is the [syllable] 'aṃ', the Furor (Caṇḍalī) blood drop in the middle of the navel channel-wheel. Those two exist in the aspect of kissing, the upper one upside down, and the lower one shown directed upward; they are *united.*[99] Having relied on the Explanatory Tantra, together with this sort of

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[99] The first ten verses in the sixth chapter of Kāṇha's *Vasantatilaka* covers most but not all of the points to which Tsongkhapa referred. These verses are edited in the Samdhong and Dwivedi's edition (1990) of this text. See pp. 37-40 and pp. 65-69. These are explicated in Vanaratna's *Rahasyadipa* commentary, in the same edition.

explanation, one could also understand the union of the upper and lower as being the letter 'oṃ' of the throat channel wheel and the letter 'haṁ' of the crown channel wheel. Thus the tantric process is revealed by the first verse.

The *Ḍākiṇi* are the thirty-six channels, and the *net* is the host of channels. The intuition which arises from the descent of the spirit of awakening which is impelled by the wind that moves within these channels is the supreme of bliss called *saṃvara* (v.2.b). Thus, it also says in the *Tattvaprakāśa* that "the yoginis are the thirty-six channels, and the channels are said to arise from the head. The intuition impelled by them is the reality of the supreme joy *(paramānanda)*."[100] Furthermore, the *he* is empty with respect to the cause of things in reality, *ru* is empty with respect to the lack of self-nature, and *ka* is non-locality. *Śri Heruka* also means *union*, which is the union of the intuition of great bliss, the meaning of *śri*, with the emptiness which is like that.

It says in the *Tattvaprakāśa* that "*he* is causeless, *ru* lacks [self-] nature, *ka* does not abide anywhere. and *śri* exists non-dually."[101] Furthermore, regarding Śrī Heruka having the meaning of *union*, it also says in the *Tattvaprakāśa* that "*śri* signifies the vagina (*bhaga*), and Heruka the mind. *Śri Heruka* is said to mean that very abiding in the space realm. The agent of the process is intuition *(jñāna)*, which is said to be "born from that," and which is in the place of glory of the *Jālandhara*, which well gathers the yoginis."[102]

As for the meaning of those [terms], *bhaga* is the place on which one depends during the descent of the spirit of awakening *(bodhicitta)*. *Śri* means glory, and the 'place

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[100] Tsongkhapa's quote is exactly as found in Kāṇhapa's *Guhyatattva-prakāśa-nāma*, as follows: / rnal 'byor ma rtsa sum cu drug / rtsa ni rngo las skyes zhes brjod // de yis bskul ba'i ye shes ni // mchog tu dga' ba'i ngo bo ste / (DT 355a, QT p.228.1)

[101] Tsongkhapa quotes Kāṇhapa as follows: / he ni rgyu dang bral ba ste // ru ni ngo bo nyams pas so // ka ni gang na'ang mi gnas pa // shri ni gnyis su med par gnas. It occurs in the *Guhyatattva-prakāśa-nāma* as follows: / shri ni gnyis su med par gnas // he ni rgyud dang bral ba ste // ru ni ngo bo nyams pas so // ka ni gang du'ang mi gnas pa/. (DT 354.b; QT ends with ...du'ang mi gnas/, p. 227.5)

[102] Tsongkhapa quotes again from *Guhyatattva-prakāśa-nāma*, wherein the quote is found differing only slightly from Tsongkhapa's verson, as follows: / shri zhes bya ba bhagar brjod // he ru ka zhes bya ba'i sems // mkha dbyings gnas pa de nyid ni // he ru ka dpal zhes byar brjod // rgyud byed pa ni ye shes te // de la skye ba zhes kyang bya // rnal 'byor ma rnams legs 'dus pa // dzā lan dha ra'i dpal gnas su'o/ (DT fol. 354.b; for a slightly different version see QT p.227.3.)

of glory' is the *bhaga*. *Jāladhara* is the crown [of the head] which is one of twenty four places within which the yoginis, i.e., the channels, are well collected, and the spirit of awakening descends from the syllable *haṃ* of this place. Since it is from there in the beginning that the spirit of awakening descends at the time of descent, and since at the time of ascent, if the spirit of awakening ascends there then bliss is stabilized, it is called the 'place of glory'

Relatively speaking, Heruka, taken as the spirit of awakening, is like white jasmine (*kunda*). Its application is that when you fuse it in the center of the channel wheel, the joys are generated. Taken in terms of the ultimate, it is great bliss, the union of that [bodhicitta] with sky-realm voidness, which is the meaning of *union (saṃyoga)*. The performer of the this process, the agent, is the definitive meaning of Heruka, which is the orgasmic intuition. The meaning of *śri* is that which arises from the vagina.

Regarding the the two feet that are applicable to the Perfection Stage (**v.1.c** & **v.2.b**), there are three explanations of the first line. The first of these explanations, the Heruka portion of the third, and also *śri*, which is a method for deriving the great bliss of the Perfection Stage, the second, and the Heruka portion of the third explanation, and also the explanation of the final (i.e., second) line [all] teach the indivisible bliss-void, the union of void and bliss developed by that method.[103]

All those that arise with the bodily forms of Heruka, Vārāhi and so forth, are applicable either to the Creation Stage, or at the occassion of fruition. Not applying them to the Perfection Stage seems to indicate the fault of not distinguishing well the distinctions such as that between the mantric body of the deity created through the creation stage, and the intuition body of the deity created through the perfection stage, or that between the creation of the imaginatively constructed divine body or the creation of the divine body in reality from mere wind mind which is not artificial.

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[103] Tsongkhapa evidently refers to the three explantions discussed in this section, namely, that of Mardo, that in the *Vasantatilaka*, and that in the *Tattvaprakāśa*.

Therefore, in the Explanatory Tantra it says "The yoga of creation is maṇḍala visualization. This should be contemplated by dull, middling ones. The sharp ones contemplate the maṇḍala of mere mind itself by the aspect of instantaneity. One should meditate on the perfection stage with the yoga of instantaneity. The nature of the three realms is the measureless mansion, and sentient beings are maṇḍala beings. And amidst them, [the yogin] is the Lord of the Maṇḍala by the aspect of instantaneity."[104] It also says, "The wheel which is stamped by the seal of Suchness is thus sky-like voidness. The effortless non-dual integration of selflessness and Suchness with the various arts and the power of compassion is the supreme essence of the mandala."[105]

The [above quote] states distinctly the two kinds of deities of the wheels of the maṇḍalas of the creation and perfection stages. "[contemplate] the maṇḍala of mere mind by the aspect of instantaneity ", shows process of rising in a split second into the wheel of the mandala from the mere wind-mind of clear light, just as a fish leaps up from the water; it does not mean a [Creation Stage] instantaneous generation. Therefore, while the dull, middling ones can only go up to the limit of the creation stage, the sharp ones, having already gone to that limit, are able to visualize the intuition body of the perfection stage. However, Acārya Abhyakara and Ratnarakṣita claimed that if you take this in terms of two

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[104] Tsongkhapa's quote here, from the third chapter of the *Samvarodaya Tantra*, corresponds to verses 3 and four of Tsuda's edition, which are as follows: // utpattiṁ mṛdumadhyo yogi dhyāyād maṇḍalabhāvanā / adhimātro jhaṭitākāraṁ maṇḍalaṁ cittamātrataḥ / jhaṭitākārayogena utpannakramabhāvanā // traidhātukamayaṁ kūṭaṁ prāṇino māṇḍaleyakāḥ/ tanmadhye jhaṭitākāraṁ yogi syād maṇḍalādhipaḥ // (1974:77); dbang po dman pas bskyed rim gyi // dkyil 'khor bsgom shing bsam par bya // dbang po rnon pos skad cig gi // rnam pas sems tsam dkyil 'khor bsam // skad cig rnam pa'i rnal 'byor gyis // rdzogs pa'i rim pa bsgom pa ni // khams gsum gshal yas khang bdag nyid // srog chags rnam ni dkyil 'khor pa // de dbus skad cig rnam pa yis // dkyil 'khor bdag po rnal 'byor pa'o / (1974:170). Tsongkhapa's version is similiar, but with different verse and word order: / bskyed pa'i rnal 'byor dkyil 'khor bsgom // rtul 'bring dag gis bsam par bya // rnon po skad cig rnam pa yis // sems tsam nyid kyi dkyil 'khor te // skad cig rnam pa'i rnal 'byor gyis // rdzogs pa'i rim pa bsgom par bya // khams gsum rang bzhin gshal yas khang // srog chags rnam ni dkyil 'khor pa // skad cig rnam pa'i rnal 'byor gyis // de dbus dkyil 'khor bdag po'o .

[105] This quote contains the smaller passage quoted by Tsongkhapa in his Introduction above. Here Tsongkhapa quotes as follows: / de bzhin nyid rgyas btab 'khor lo // mkha' bzhin stong nyid de bzhin no // bdag med dang ni de bzhin nyid // sna tshogs thabs dang snying rje'i stobs // zung 'jug gnyis med lhun gyis grub // dkyil 'khor snying po mchogs yin no /. This corresponds to verse eight and the first half of verse nine in Tsuda's edition, as follows: / dkyil 'khor de bzhin nyid rgyas btab // de bzhin mkha' mnyam stong pa nyid // sna tshogs de bzhin nyid bdag med // thabs ni snying rje'i stobs yin te // // zung 'jug pa rnam rtog bral // dkyil 'khor snying po mchogs yin no / (1974:171), // tathatāmudritaṁ cakraṁ kham iva śūnyatā tathā / nairātmyā tathatā viśvam upāyaḥ karuṇābalaḥ // yuganaddham anābhogaṁ maṇḍalaṁ sāram uttamam / (1974:78).

stages of a path for a single person, then they are accepted as separate stages of faculties. (that is, by completing the completion stage one becomes a sharp person, who is qualified to begin the perfection stage.) There is the wisdom of objective clear light of the space-like void, universal selflessness and suchness, and the art of the wheels of the deities of various body color, who have the various powers of compassion, which is indivisible from and sealed by that wisdom. This union is said to be the deity mandala of integration.

The magic body of the perfection stage of the sight side is of very great importance in the system of this tantra as well. In the *Ḍākārnava* it says "the Lord Yogin, who manifests instantaneously in a divine form, creates his form by the yoga of a cast image, etc. The yoga emptiness is natural form. It is the characteristic of self-consecration. As for the yogin who lacks self-consecration, know him to be like a heap of chaff. This sort of supreme characteristic is not known by beast-like beings. Therefore, if you meditate on this magic emanation, you will attain unexcelled awakening."[106]

The yogin who has the nature of the yoga of the divine form creates a manifestation in just an instant. The yoga of voidness and clear light is the form which has the nature or actuality of the the intuition of clear light united indivisibly with that [form]. That is definition of self-consecration. Such identifies the magic body.

What is the aspect of the form which is called "aspect and form of the deity"? This is shown by the two lines beginning with "cast image". It is the body-like form which is meditated on by visualizing the body of the deity as cast or painted on cloth, etc. Those who lack that magic body are lack substance, like a heap of chaff. And that supreme

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[106] Tsongkhapa quotes the DM as follows: / lha yi rnam pa'i rnal 'byor bdag / skad cig mngon sum byed pa po // lugs ma la sogs rnal 'byor gyis // rnam par byas pa'i dbyibs su 'gyur // stong nyid rnal 'byor rang bzhin gzugs // bdag byin brlab pa'i mtshan nyid do // bdag byin brlab bral rnal 'byor pa // spun kogs dum bu bzhin shes bya // 'di 'dra'i mtshan nyid mchog gyur pa // skye bo phyugs rnams kyis mi shes // de phyir sgyu 'phrul 'di bsgoms na // bla na med pa'i byang chub 'thob /. This corresponds closely to the following passage from the DM: / lha yi rnam pa'i rnal 'byor bdag / skad cig mngon sum byed pa'o // lugs ma la sogs rnal 'byor gyis // rnam par byas pa'i dbyibs su 'gyur // stong nyid rang bzhin gzugs rnal 'byor // rang byin rlabs pa'i mtshan nyid do // bdag byin brlab dang bral rnal 'byor // spun skogs rum bu bzhin shes bya // 'di 'dra'i mtshan nyid mchog gyur pa // skye bo phyugs rnams kyis mi shes // de phyir sgyu 'phrul 'di bsgoms na // byang chub bla na med pa 'thob / (DK fol. 139b). The QK version is identical to the DK version, with the following exceptions: / sbum logs dum bu.... and ....bla na med pa thob / (p.150.1).

characteristic is not known by the beast-like. It says that if you meditate on the magic emanation, i.e. magic body, you will quickly attain enlightenment. If you do not know how to create this body, then you do not know even half of the two principles of the perfection stage.[107] As this method occurs in the Perfection Stages of Lūipa and Ghaṇṭapada, I have explained in my commentaries on their [systems].[108]

Therefore, one should understand both Herukas in the perfection stage context: the Void-side Heruka of the indivisibile bliss-void,and the Vision-side Heruka of the magic body of the two truths indivisible.[109] One should keep this in mind in later contexts, again and again. They are applicable to the secret perfection stage. If you explain the demonstration of the particulars of the secret path by second and third lines in a way common to both stages, the functional distinction is that it is *the means for achieving all of the desired aims*, (**v.1.d**) impartially and without exception. Its profound disctinction is such that it is *higher*(**v.2.a**), i.e. loftier, than the *Prajñāpāramitā*, and also than the three lower classes of tantra. It is the path of the scriptures which is high, lofty and unexcelled. By the implication of saying that it is "*the means of achieving all desired aims*", it teaches the means of attaining the two accomplishments, and thus it teaches the secret of fruition. This is what the lofty ones said.

These scriptural passages show the aim and relevance[110] of the tantra. The three secrets together with the branch [subjects] are the topic of this [tantra]. Understanding that [topic] exactly in reliance on this [text] is the immediate aim. Obtaining ability in each of the two stages, depending on that [understanding], is the further aim. The ultimate aim [consists of] the powers *(siddhi)*, the supreme of which is Awakening, and the ordinary of

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[107] These are the stages of clear light and the magic body.

[108] Tsongkhapa refers to his commentaries on Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya* and Ghaṇṭapa's *Pañcakrama.*

[109] These correspond to the clear light and magic body stages respectively.

[110] Tsongkhapa here uses the technical term *dgos-'brel*, which I am taking as a compound. For more on this term see Broido 1983 and Schoening 1996.

which is the worldly successes. The relevance is the dependence of the immediate aim on both the text and on the essential, ultimate aim.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a. ii. Explaining a Slightly More Detailed Formulation.
A. Their Actual Meaning.
1. Explaining the Two Lines that Begin 'the Secret Supreme'.
a. Explaining in terms of the Interpretable Meaning.
i. Explaining as Applicable to Context of 'Thus Have I Heard'.
A. Stating the exact words of the Context.

The application of the two feet that begin with *secret* (**v.2.c,d**) to the context *(nidāna)* occurs in the commentatorial system of the two translators. Although it does not occur in other *Saṃvara* commentaries, it does occur in the commentaries of Kambalipa and Devagupta, and it is very good.[111] In the *Vajraḍāka* its says that since, in response to the request, especially in regard to the 'secret' etc. which is explained in *Uttarasamvara*, he taught the context as applied to 'secret' etc. It also says in the *Vajraḍāka* that " [regarding] '*existing in the beginning, middle and end*' (**v.4.d**),. The 'beginning' is the *secret*, the awareness of the previous source of 'thus'. The 'end' is that which is *delighted*; which depends on that which is 'heard'. The middle is *supreme*; 'by me' is very holy. 'Existing' is the *universal nature*, and it is 'at one time'."[112]

In regard to this, Devagupta applies this seventh "in the universal nature" to the third 'by me'. Therefore it is said that [his application] is not sequential. This also seems to be the Kambala's idea.[113] Thus, although 'at one time by the universal nature' is

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[111] See VD ch.42.

[112] This quote, also from VD ch. 42, occurs as quotes by Tsongkhapa as follows: / thog ma dbus mthar yang dag gnas pa'o // de la thog ma ni gsang ba sde / 'di skad ces bya ba sngar 'byung gnas su gyur pa'i rig pa'o // mtha' zhes bya ba ni dgyes pa ste / thos pa zhes bya ba bstan par bya ba'o // dbus zhes bya ba ni mchog ste / bdag gis zhes bya ba shin tu dam par gyur pa'o // yang dag gnas ni thams cad bdag nyid de / dus gcig na zhes bya ba'o /. (DK 90a, QK p.130.4,5.). This is an intersting quote, as it connects **v.2.c,d** (rahasyaparame-ramye sarvātmani-sadāsthitaḥ, gsang ba mchog gi dgyes pa na // thams cad bdag nyid rtag tu bzhugs) with **v.4.d** (ādimadhyāntasaṃsthitaṃ thog ma dbus mthar yang dag gnas), and then connects them both with the unspoken nidāna, *evam mayā śrutaṃ ekasmin samaye.* This support Tsongkhapa's theory that the nidāna is spoken in the tantra in an indirect, hidden manner.

[113] For example, Kambala wrote "The *secret* is 'thus', *supreme* 'by me', *delight* 'was heard'. *In the nature of all* is the seventh with the meaning of the third, and it is not with any other." / gsang ba zhes pa ni 'di skad do // mchog ni bdag gis so // dgyes pa ni thos pas so // thams cad bdag nyid du ni gsum pa'i don

apparently stated in the immediate occurance of the Tantra, it is like Kambalipa's explanation that the eternally present manifest time.[114] He takes *existing* as the meaning of *always abides*, and the meaning of *universal nature* should be taken as was previously [explained]. This means that it was heard directly from the Teacher by the compiler of all of these tantras. The place in which he resides is the place of great bliss. Who is the teacher who resides there? Kambalipa says he is the *self-arisen Lord.* (**v.3.c**)[115]

If you take it in that way, then there is in this tantra a context that 'at one time there was a Bhagavan who was heard thus by me.' [The rest of it] from "all Tathāgatas" onward is not explicit in the explanatory tantras. In the two commentaries it is also not unclear. However, if you need [commentary on the context] from that onward here,; you can apply statements such as that [which begins with] "the body of all Tathāgatas" to "resides in the young woman's vagina (yośidbhaga)" as in the *Sampuṭa* or *Samvarodaya* Explanatory Tantras.[116] Or, you can apply statements such as the following in the *Abhidhāna*, "the Lord dwells in the secret essence (guhyagarbha) of the net of the vajraḍākas and vajraḍākinis of all Tathāgatas."[117]

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gyis bdun pa ste // gshan dang gshan gyis ma yin no / (SN QT p. 175.1). It is not at all clear, however, by what method of reckoning *mayā* is 'third' and *sarvātmani* is 'seventh'. They are certainly not so ordered by means of word or syllable count. Devagupta's SS has a lengthy commentary on the CST "nidāna" verses, but has no such statement concerning the ordering.

[114] This is in reference to a statement in the first chapter of the SN, that "the time is when one always abides," / dus nam gyi tshe zhe na / rtag tu bzhugs pa'i tshe na'o / (DK fol. 4a; QK p. 175.1)

[115] See SN chapter one, DK fol. 3b, QK p.174.5. This is in reference to the third pāda of the third verse, which is *asau hi svayambhūbhagavān-viro,* / 'di ni rang byung bcom ldan dpa' /

[116] SP kalpa 1, ch. 4 states this immediately following its discussion of the meaning of the term *bhagavan,* as follows: sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittānyeva hṛdayaṃ tad eva vajraṃ saiva yoṣit tasya bhagas tatra vijahāra / (Elder 1978:115); / de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi sku dang / gsung dang / thugs rnams dang / de rnams nyid kyi snying po dang / de nyid kyi rdo rje dang / de nyid kyi btsun mo dang / de'i bha ga de la bzhugs so / (DK 82a)

[117] Tsongkhapa's quote from the first chapter of the AD is as follows: / bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi rdo rje mkha' 'gro dang / mkha' 'gro ma rnams kyi dra ba gsang ba'i snying po la bzhugs te / is very close to the passage as currently found in the Kanjur, except that the Kanjur passage adds "Vajrakrodhas" to the list of "vajraḍākas and vajraḍākinis," and it eliminates the term "net", as follows: / bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi rdo rje khro bo dang / rdo rje mkha' 'gro dang mkha' 'gro ma rnams kyi gsang ba'i snying po la bzhugs te /. (DK fol. 287b, QK p. 40.5)

The *Tattvaprakāśa* says that the perfection stage which is shown in the by the expression 'thus' etc. in the Art Tantras is shown by *secret* and so forth in mother tantras.[118] This is mainly in regard to Cakrasaṃvara. After explaining 'Bhagavan' there, there is an explanation of the meaning of 'the ḍākas and ḍākinis of all Tathāgatas'. Although there is no great distinction in meaning, the wording should be like that in the *Abhidhāna.* In the commentatorial tradition of the two translators, 'at one time' is like the above. It is shown to exist by the universal nature. It is said that the perfected retinue is shown by the four lines that begin with *made of all ḍākinis* (**v.3**) and by the two lines beginning with "source".[119]

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.1.a.i.B. Explaining their meaning.

The term 'thus' which is shown by *secret*, is a conjunction of words which show that it was heard without addition or omission, just exactly as it occurs here in the entire assembly of the Tantra, from "And then the secret..." up to "there is joy in that and that."[120] It is *evaṃ* in Sanskrit, and the term *secret* is said to be a sign for the Tathāgata, a sign for the hero and a sign for the yogini, which is not in any of the grammarian texts or colloquial languages, and it is called 'barbarian language', meaning it is a symbolic language. One should know the following things.

'Previously' signifies the semen and blood which previously generated the skandhas, dhātus and āyatanas (aggregates, elements and sense media). And since supreme bliss arises from them, they are the source. [*Evaṁ* thus] indicates the awareness of

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[118] See TP chapter two, especially DK 349b, 350a.

[119] Tsongkhapa here must have been referring to another edition of the root text. For the Sanskrit edition does begin with the equivalent of *'byung ba,* which is *sambhavāt,* "from a source", while the corresponding Tibetan line is /sgra yi tshul las nges 'byung rnams/, which actually does not closely correspond to the extant Sanskrit texts.

[120] These are, respectively, the first and last lines of the Root Tantra, verses I.1.a and LI.22.d. In this section Tsongkhapa explicates the VD passage of the previous section.

supreme bliss which arises from the source of semen and blood. This is the meaning of 'thus' and 'secret'.

The [term] 'by me' which is indicated by the [term] *supreme* is *mayā*, [meaning] it was heard directly by the compiler himself from the *universal nature*, and not indirectly. That which is 'very holy' is the Teaching, which is the import of greatly *supreme*. Regarding the [term] 'heard' which is indicated by *delighted*, while it is hearing by means of the wisdom of hearing, it is not the direct realization of all of the meanings of the tantra. If this were not so, then there would be no difference in degree of superiority between the Teacher and the compiler. Furthermore, here I do not accept the context as literally explained.

That on which one should rely is aural wisdom, which is *śruta*, 'heard'. [The expression] *in the beginning, middle and end* (**v.4.d**) is connected to the first, middle and final words of the expression "when the Secret Supreme is delighted." The [expression] "at one time" which is indicated by *always abides* and also by *existing*. "This is heard at only one time; at other times other tantras were heard" shows the compiler's multiple hearings. [The phrase] "he heard it at one occasion, not at another" reveals that this [Tantra] is rare, and "he heard it in a instant of time" shows that the compiler had excellent wisdom. It occurs in the Tantra in Sanskrit as *ekāsmin samaye*.[121]

Bhaga of *bhagavan*, which is the equivalent term of *bcom-ldan-'das*, means 'fortune', while *van* means 'possessed of', hence the meaning of *Bhagavan* is 'fortunate one'. There are six types of fortune. The *Sampuṭa* defines it as fortune in the six perfections, as follows: "lordship, good form, glory, fame, intuition, and dilligence should be taken to be the six fortunes."[122] And 'possessed of' means that one has those six. By

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[121] The text here reads has **ekasmin samaya.*

[122] Tsongkhapa quotes SP kalpa 1 ch. 4 as follows: aiśvaryasya samagrasya rūpasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ jñānasyārtha prayatnasya ṣaṇṇāṃbhaga iti śrutiḥ // (Elder 1978:114); dbang phyug dang ni gzugs bzang dang // dpal dang grags dang ye shes dang // brtson 'grus phun sum tshogs pa ste // drug po rnams la skal zhes bya /. It occurs in the text of the SP as follows: dbang phyug dang / gzugs dang / grags pa dang / dpal dang / ye shes dang / brtson 'grus phun sum tshogs pa ste // bha ga drug ces gsung so /. (DK fol. 82a, PTT p. 249.4. This seems to be a standard and longstanding interpretation of the term *bhagavan*.

the method of etymology, 'bhaga' also means 'to destroy', the destruction of the the devil of the addictions *(kleṣamāra)* and so forth. Since he possesses each of these destructive [powers], *(bhagna)*, thus *bhagavan*. As for *'das* ("to pass beyond"), since [the appellation] *Bhagavan* is also applied to the great worldly gods, the former translators added [the term *'das*] in order to show that He has transcended them.

Since they come (āgata) to the ultimate subjective intuition of exact objective reality *(tathā)*, they are Tathāgatas. The teacher of the tantra is the actuality of all Tathāgatas, and hence is universal. Their 'net' is the host of Vajraḍākas, who are the heroes, and ḍākinīs, who are the heroines. Their 'secret essence' has the same meaning as the vagina of a young woman. Therefore, they reside in the measureless mansion which is in the center of the triangle.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.1.a.ii. The Explanation Applicable to the Creation Stage.

As it says in the *Sampuṭa*, and as is explained in the *Tattvaprakāśa*, "*secret* is the element of earth, and likewise *supreme* is water. *Delighted* is fire, and wind is the *universal nature*. Space *always abides*, and is the nature of great bliss."[123] Therefore, you should also know the stacking-up of the elements visualization on the occasion of creation stage visualization as shown by the *Abhidhāna*, *Samcāra* and *Samvarodaya*. By '*always abides*' the element of space is shown to be great bliss, as in the quote from *Hevajra*, "the

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For example, in Haribhadra's commentary on the nidāna of the *Aṣṭasāhsrikā Prajñāpāramitā* he cites an identical passage from the *Buddhabhūmi-śāstram*, as follows: aiśvaryasya samagrasya rūpasya yaśasaḥ śriyaḥ / jñānasyārtha prayatnasya ṣaṇṇāṃ bhaga iti śrutiḥ // (Vaidya 1960:272).

[123] Tsongkhapa here quotes the SP as follows: gsang ba sa yi khams yin te // de bzhin mchog ni chu yin no // dgyes pa zhes pa me yin te // rlung ni thams cad bdag nyid gnas // rtag tu bzhugs ni nam mkha' ste // bde ba chen po'i rang bzhin no /. With the exception of the last line, this corresponds closely to the following text from the SP: gsang ba la ni sa yi khams // mchog la de bzhin du ni chu // dgyes pa la ni me ru bshad // thams cad bdag nyid ni rlung la gnas // rtag tu bzhugs par brjod pa 'di // sangs rgyas kun gyi sdom pa bdag /. (DK 117b, QT p.263.4)

element of space is bliss".[124] The quotation by Lama Mardo and others from the *Sampuṭa* that "*always abides* is Mt. Sumeru" does not appear to be in that text.

Great bliss indicates the deity generation from the perspective of the five complete awakenings which signify great bliss. It is also taught that the thus stacked-up elements and so forth are to be imagined as having the nature of great bliss. Deity generation from the moon is explained in the context of the complete awakening of the Yogatantras, wherein they are stated as being only white in color. Here, however, it is necessary to show that the vowels and consonants are white and red, and that the moon and sun are white and red, or, when there is just the moon, that it is white with a reddish tinge. This is for the sake of signifying the arisal of great bliss from the conjunction of the red and white elements.

At the end of the explanation of the stacked-up elements in the thirty-second chapter of this (root text?) it says " should be taken as the nature of the great conch (dung-chen)", it is should be 'the nature of great bliss.' The equivalent term for 'conch' is *śaṅkha*, and concerning the sound *śaṃ*, it says in the *Āmnāyamañjari* that "*śaṃ* is bliss, and since it is transcends the three realms, it is supreme."[125] Therefore, since *śaṃsukha* or *saṃsukha* is bliss, that is the meaning of "it should be taken as the nature of great bliss." The way of doing this is as previously explained.

When explaining the stacked-up elements of the creation stage, in the elaboration of that there is the generation of the vowels and consonants from Mt. Sumeru and the the lotus. This is clear in chapter fifty-one, [where it is stated that] "the vowels and consonants arise in the center of the universal lotus atop Mt. Sumeru." The measureless mansion is clear in the second chapter. As for the remainder of these [topics], they can be known relying on explanatory tantras such as the *Abhidhāna*.

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[124] This occurs as the first line of verse 40, Part I chapter 10 in Snellgrove's edition, as follows: saukhyam ākāśadhātus ca (p. 40), / bde ba nam mkha' nyid kyi khams / (p. 41).

[125] This is a quote from Abhayākara's *Śrisampuṭatantrarājaṭikāmnāyamañjari*, in which it occurs as follows: / sham ni bde ba ste / khams gsum las 'das pa'i phyir mchog go / (DT fol. 8a).

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.1.b.i. The Definitive Meaning as Applied to the Context.

In regard to the [above] explanation of the definitive meaning of the *secret supreme* as applied to *evaṃ mayā* etc. in the *Vajraḍāka*, in *Sampuṭa* it says " *e* should be known as earth. It is the karma mudrā, Locanā herself."[126] And also "in the center, in universal lotus, lies the wheel of emanation."[127] The four syllables *(e-vaṁ-ma-yā),* the four channel-wheels, four [goddesses] such as Locanā, and so forth, are applications to the many groups of four. Here I'll bring up applications to the channel wheels, Locanā and so forth in a short while. Regarding the first, (the four letters) the two explanatory tantras show the arrangement of each one in the petals and center of each wheel, and show the process of the tantra of the fourth stage. As for adding the three remaining stages to that, they should be known from *Āli-catuṣṭaya*, the art of drawing forth orgasmic bliss by means of Fury Fire which depends on the four wheels.

In regard to the application to the Locanā and so forth, it says in the *Mukhāgama* that "the *mudrā* of the magic woman is particularly more noble than all magic. That magic is also in this world; and Locanā etc. are pure. The clans have four aspects."[128] In that way the four consorts such as Padmamati (padma chan) etc., and the four [goddesses] such as Locanā are said to be pure. That is the art of drawing forth orgasmic joy relying on outer

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[126] Tsongkhapa's quote is identical that found in the text of SP kalpa 1 ch. 4: e ni sa ru shes par bya // las kyi phyag rgya spyan ma nyid/ (DK fol. 81a, QK p.249.2). The Lhasa edition of Tsongkhapa's text drops the vowel sign from *e*, resulting in *a ni sa ru*.....(32a). The Sanskrit occurs as follows in Elder's edition: ekāraḥ pṛthivi jñeyā karmamudrā tu locanā / (1978:106)

[127] Tsongkhapa quotes here a passage from SP kalpa 1, ch. 4: lte bar sna tshogs 'dam skyes la // sprul pa'i 'khor lo rnam par gnas / (DK fol. 81a, QK p.249.2); sthitā nirmāṇacakre vai nābhau catuḥsaṣṭhāmbuje (Elder 1978:107)

[128] This quote is from Buddhaśrījñānapāda's *Dvikrama-tattva-bhāvana-nāma-mukhāgama* (and not from the text which immediately follows it in the DT, which is simply called *Mukhāgama*, or *zhal gyi lung* in Tibetan. Tsongkhapa's quote exactly matches that in the DT, and is as follows: bud med sgyu ma'i phyag rgya ni // sgyu ma kun las khyad par 'phags // sgyu ma de yang 'jig rten 'dir // spyan la sogs par rnam dag par // rigs ni rnam pa bzhir 'gyur te/. (DT fol. 4a)

consort. By that one should also know the demonstration of the four types of intuition consorts.

The [Sanskrit] term *śruta* is the equivalent for the word 'heard'. In regard to its meaning, it says in the *Sampuṭa* "*śru* is said to mean 'trickle', and *ta* is the lord of great bliss."[129] Relying on the instigation by the fire of caṇḍalī meditation, bodhicitta trickles from the crown and through the four wheels down to the tip of the secret place. Depending on that one gives rise to the joys of great bliss, and to the lord of those, the principle orgasmic joy.

The definitive meaning of 'at one time' (ekasamaye) is stated in the *Sampuṭa*. In the *Tattvaprakāśa* it says "*samaya* is said to be time, and time has three aspects, good time, bad time, and inconceivable time. Coming from the very orifice of the nose is good time, while going is bad time. These, said to be one, become one, matchless. Inconceivable time is free of life-force and effort, and abandons the inhalation and exhalation of breath. (reference to vase breathing technique) It is liberated from coming and going. That is said to be 'at one time'."[130]

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[129] This quote is identical to a passage in SP kalpa 1 ch.4, as follows: śru śravaṇaṃ nidiṣṭaṃ tam yaś ca mahāsukho nāthaḥ / (Elder 1978:110); / shru zhes bya ba ni 'dzag par gsungs so // ta zhes bya ba ni gang yang bde ba chen po'i mgon po'o / (DK 81b, QK p.249.3); This interpretation of *sru*, normally considered the root of the verb 'to hear' seems to have some basis; one of the meanings of *sru* listed by Apte include "to go, move" (p.932 col.1), which he suggests is from the root *śu*, which Monier Williams defines as "to go" (p.1079 col.2). Just below that, Monier Williams defines the root *śuk* as "to go, move." What we may be seeing here is a folk etymology connecting *sru* with the term *śukra*, 'semen'.

[130] This interesting passage from the TP is quoted by Tsongkhapa as follows: sa ma ya ni dus gsung te // dus na rnam pa gsum du brjod // dus bzang dang ni dus ngan dang // bsam gyis mi khyab dus nyid do // sna yi bu ga'i sgo nyid nas // 'ong ba dus bzang zhes bya ste // 'gro ba nyid ni dus ngan no // de dag gcig tu brjod ba ste // gcig tu zla med par gyur pa // dus ni bsam gyis mi khyab gyur // srog dang rtsal ba bral ba ste // dbugs 'byung rngub pa rnams spang pa'o // 'gro dang 'ong ba las grol ba // dus gcig na zhes brjod pa yin /. With only minor differences it occurs as follows in the Tanjur: sa ma ya ni dus gsung te // dus ni rnam pa gsum du 'dod // dus bzang dang ni dus ngan dang // bsam gyis mi khyab dus nyid do // sna yi bu ga'i sgo gnyis nas // 'ong ba dus bzang zhes bya ste // 'gro ba nyid ni dus ngan no // de dag gcig tu brjod ba ste // gcig pu zla med par gyur pa // dus ni bsam gyis mi khyab 'gyur // srog dang rtsol ba bral ba ste // dbugs 'byung rngub pa rnam spang pa'o // 'gro dang 'ong ba las grol ba // dus gcig na zhes brjod pa yin /. (DT fol. 351b). The QT version is identical to the DT, differing only at two points, where the DT has misprints: / gcig tu zla med... and ....rnams spangs pa'o / (QT p.226.1,2). Kāṇhapa here is most likely drawing from the SP, particularly a passage in kalpa 1, chapter 4, which follows: samaye kāla ityuktam kālo hi trividho mataḥ / sukālaś caiva duḥkālo acintyakāla eva ca // kṣiradhārāvat nāsāpuṭarandhreṇā- gataḥ sukāla ucyate / gataś caiva bahnirūpeṇa duḥkālas tayor ekasya kirtitaḥ / asahāyo bhaved ekaḥ kālas tvacintyataṃ gataḥ // na rāgo na virāgaś ca madhyamā nopalabhyate / tatra rāga āśaktilakṣaṇo virāgo nirodho mataḥ // ābhyāṃ rahitā madhyamā na pratiyate etat trayan nopalabhyate / rāgaś caiva virāga ca miśrībhūtam anāvilaṃ // tathā rāgavirāgabhyām ekaḥ samarasaḥ kṣanaḥ /samarasaṃ sarvabhāvānāṃ (Elder 1978:113); dus zhes bya ba ni dus tshad ces gsungs so // dus ni rnam pa gsum du brjod // bde ba'i dus

The 'nose' here is the lower tip of the dhūti, known as the 'human nose'. The human nose is also the nose of both of the male and female, because it is said to be the nose that starts from the root of the vajra of the male. That which 'comes' in that nose is bodhicitta which is like a stream of milk. 'Good time' is the time of the three joys. 'Going' is the going outside of the drop; since one is agitated like fire at that time, it is 'bad time'. 'These, said to be one' is the orgasmic occasion when each of those two previous times are abandoned, in short, inconceivable time. They are explained relying on the *Āmnāyamañjari*.

There is another explanation of 'at one time', which involves the four lines [beginnning with] 'life-force and'. The meaning of the first line, explained by the second, is that it is the time free of the coming and going of wind. By that, relying on Fury Fire meditation one is free of the going or coming of wind in the left or right channels, as it is inserted into the central channel. It shows that the central channel is also free of coming and going.

It also says in the *Āli-catuṣṭaya* that " 'at one time' is a time and a measure of time. It is the time of obstruction, and the time of spring. This is the meaning of 'the wind that enters to some extent the left and right nostrils is obstructed'."[131] This 'time of obstruction' refers to the obstruction of the in and out movement of wind. The 'time of spring' is the time when joy is augmented, as in springtime.

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dang sdug bsngal dus // bsam gyis mi khyab dus nyid do // 'o ma'i rgyun ltar sna bug du // 'ong ba bde ba'i dus su gsungs // me'i gzugs kyis 'gro ba nyid // sdug bsngal dus dang de gcig grags // gcig ni lhan cig med pa yin // dus ni bsam gyis mi khyab 'gyur // 'dod chags med cing chags bral med dbu mar dmigs par mi 'gyur ro // de la 'dod chags nus mtshan nyid // 'dod chags bral ba 'gog par gsungs // 'di bral dbu mar mi rtog pas // 'di gsum dmigs par mi 'gyur ro // 'dod chags nyid dang chags bral nyid // 'dres par gyur pa rnyog pa med // de bzhin 'dod chags chags bral las // ro mnyam gcig bu'i skad cig ma // dngos po kun gyi ro mnyam po /. (DK 81b, 82a).

[131] This quote is from Kāṇhapa's *Āli-catuṣṭaya*. Tsongkhapa's quote is as follows: dus gcig na zhes bya ba ni dus gcig dang / dus tshod gcig go / 'gog pa'i dus dang dpyid kyi dus zhes bya ba ste / ji srid du gyas dang gyon pa'i sna bug tu song ba'i rlung 'gags par gyur pa'o zhes bya ba'i don no /. The DT version is as follows: dus gcig na zhes bya ba lan gcig gi tshe de dus gcig na ste / 'bog pa'i dus dang dpyid kyi dus zhes bya ba ste / ji srid du gyas dang gyon pa'i rlung sna sbubs su son pa'i rlung 'gogs pa na zhes bya ba'i tha tshig no/ (fol. 358b). The QT version corrects one of the DT's misprints, having 'gog pa instead of *'bog pa. (p.229.4,5)

Before that, their "ladies" exist with human forms. That is the meaning of 'in their vaginas'.[132] It is also necessary to apply that meaning to 'at one time'. This shows the essential points for the placement of the life-force into the central channel, also relying on the outer consort. The orgasmic joy of the Perfection Stage arises from the placement, abiding and dissolution of the life-force into the central channel. Since the essential points are very important, one must know well all of the personal instructions on pressing the essential points in the body from the beginning.

The meaning of *bhagavan* is stated in the *Tattvaprakāśa* as "those who are the reality of supreme joy, who alone are self-arisen, are said to be Bhagavans."[133] They are possessed of fortune in the orgasmic intuition of the joy supreme, and they also have the various types of power of destroying foes who disagree with them. In regard to 'all Tathāgatas' it says in the *Tattvaprakāśa* that " 'all' means well renowned, like a heap of Buddhas and so forth,"[134] and " 'like a heap of Buddhas and so forth' indicates their elements and media."[135] All Buddhas means all Tathāgatas, and they have five aggregates. The media which are assembled from them are designated as media in regard to the elements of the aggregates.

Continuing from the the previous, "due to the conception of women and men, thought is said to have two aspects."[136] Due to the conception that 'this one is a woman, this one is a man', by that thought there are also two aspects to the object of thought.

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[132] Tsongkhapa refers to the passage already quoted from the SP; see note 116 above.

[133] Tsongkhapa wrote: mchog tu dga' ba'i ngo bo ste // 'di de rang 'byung gcig bu nyid // 'di ni bcom ldan 'das su gsung /. This quote from the TP is basically identical to the text of the DT and QT, except that the latter two reverse the order of the second and third lines. See DT 355a and QT p. 228.1.

[134] Tsongkhapa quotes the TP as follows: thams cad ces byar rnam grags pa // sangs rgyas phung sogs de bzhin te /. The DT and QT both have: kun zhes rnam par bshad pa ste// sangs rgyas phung po de bzhin te /. (DT fol. 355a, PTT p. 228.1)

[135] Tsongkhapa's quote is as follows: sangs rgyas phung po la sogs te // de yi 'byung ba khams zhes btags /. The Tanjur version is: sangs rgyas phung po la sogs dang // de yi 'byung ba khams zhes brtags / (DT fol. 355a, QT p.228.1)

[136] Tsongkhapa quotes the TP as follows: bud med mi sogs rnam rtog phyir // rnam rtog pa gnyis su gsung /. This is basically the same as that in the Tanjur (see DT fol. 355a, QT p. 228.1)

'Men' are the heros and Vajraḍākas, while 'women' are the ḍākinīs. Furthermore, if you explain with regard to the inner [reality], the vajraḍākas are the inner dhātu (realm, elements) of channels. As for the ḍākinis, they are the thirty-six channels, just as it says in the *Tattvaprakāśa*, that "these ḍākinis are like a heap of Buddhas, and they are thirty six channels."[137] The *secret* is the consort's vagina which has a triangular shape. "Residing in the place of great bliss" refers to that place. As for 'essence' (*garbha*), it great bliss which is created relying on that. This applies to the perfection stage which is developed from the injection of the life-force into the central channel in reliance upon the physical consort (*karmamudrā*).

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.1.b.ii: The Definitive Meaning as Applied to the Perfection Stage.

Although there are many occasions where the perfection stage is concealed in the root tantra, the more important ones are, it is said, at the occasion of the creation stage, such as the four words such as *secret* etc., and the four words such as 'bull pen', [which are connected to] the visualization of the stacked-up elements, the mediation on Mt. Sumeru, the visualization of Mt. Sumeru in which the vowels and consonants are generated within the universal lotus atop the mountain, and the generation of Heruka from the vowels and consonants within that lotus on top of it. The explanatory tantras clearly elucidate [some of these] hidden matters; it says in the *Sampuṭa* "In the sole of the foot the wind of great effort/energy abides in the shape of a bow. In that way the triangle blazes within the forked valley (sum-mdo, śaṅkāḍaka). Water abides in the navel with a circular form. Earth itself is in the heart, it being completely square. Mt. Sumeru, king of mountains [exists] with the

[137] Tsongkhapa quotes as follows: sangs rgyas phung songs de bzhin te // de yi mkha' 'gro ma de dag // rtsa ni sum cu rtsa drug nyid /. The text of the TP is as follows: sangs rgyas phung songs de bzhin te // bde ba'i mkha' 'gro ma de dag // rtsa ni sum cu rtsa drug nyid / (DT fol. 355a, QT p. 228.1)

form of the spinal column"[138] And also "In such a way, by the processes of the art of Superior/ Guru's time, and the process of 'great effort', etc., that is the state of the perfected mandala."[139]

If you explain Mt. Sumeru and the stacked up elements from an inner perspective, they are evident in the body, from head to foot. That futhermore is said to be the perfection stage body maṇḍala, which is the vajra body whereon the perfection stage practitioner presses the vital points. As for 'outer' of Kāṇhapa's explanation of both outer and inner in regard to the body maṇḍala, it is like Ghaṇṭapa's application of Mt. Sumeru and the elements to the body visualized as the creation stage body mandala.

The 'inner' will be explained immediately. As for the particularities of striking the essential points of the vajra body, since the four words of 'evam' etc. of the context apply to the four channel wheels, they should be known from the *Sampuṭa*.[140] If you take literally the two lines 'atop Mt. [Sumeru]' etc., they can be applied to the simultaneous generation of habitat and inhabitants in the manner of Lūipa. If it is joined with the outer generation of Heruka from the vowels and consonants within the lotus, in the middle of the previously created measureless mansion atop Sumeru, then the body is equalized here and there, above and below. It becomes a four-doored, equal-sided measureless mansion, and therefore should show the inhabitant body which is the place where you strike the essential points in the perfection stage.

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[138] Tsongkhapa quotes the SP as follows: rkang pa'i mthil du rtsom chen rlung // gzhu yi dbyibs su rnam par gnas // sum mdo yi ni gnas su ni // de bzhin gru gsum 'bar ba nyid // zlum po'i rnam pa'i gzugs kyis ni // chu ni lto bar rnam par gnas // snying khar yang ni sa nyid do // kun nas gru bzhi pa nyid do // sgal tshigs dbyig gu'i gzugs kyis ni // ri rab ri rgyal de bzhin no /. This is virtually identical to the passage as found in kalp 6, ch. 3 of the SP, with the exception of a few minor differences in terminology, such as / zlum po'i rnam pa'i *dbyibs*... and / chu ni *lte bar*... (DK fol. 113b, QK p.261.1)

[139] This passage is also from in SP kalpa 6, ch. 3, as follows: ji ltar rtsom chen la sogs rim // bla ma'i dus thabs rim nyid kyis // de ni rdzogs pa'i dkyil 'khor gnas / (DK 113b, QK p.261.1). Tsongkhapa's quote is identical.

[140] SP kalpa 1 ch. 4 links the four syllables *e-vaṃ-ma-yā* to various sets of four such as the four elements, the four channel wheels, the four mudrās, and the four yoginis such as Locanā. See DK 81a,b.

Kāṇhapa explains the definitive meanings of the lotus, vowels and consonants are as stated in the *Sampuṭa*.[141] In the *Tattvaprakāśa* he said "it is said the thirty-two petaled lotus is in the top of the head",[142] and "in the center of that is the letter 'ham'. Emanated from the vowels and consonants, the enjoyment of the state of the indestructible [drop] is said to be great bliss. In the great wheel of great bliss is the the final class that takes leave of names."[143]

As for the definitive meaning of that, although in the emanation from the vowels and consonants there is also a moon, in regard to the principle one it is necessary to explain here the passage in the root tantra that Heruka is generated from both of them.

In regard to the meaning of the last two lines, the crown is where the wheel of great bliss exists. When you drop off the letter *kṣa* from the final class of constants, you get *ha*, to which a drop is affixed. The orgasmic state which arises from the jasmine-like [drop] (kunta=kunda) which descends from that letter *haṃ*, the meaning of "indestructable", is the definitive meaning of the generation of Heruka from the vowels and consonants.

It also says in the *Sampuṭa* that "that which trickles in the form of ambrosia abides day and night",[144] meaning that bodhicitta trickles from the letter *haṃ* in the crown. This is recognized as the life of the path of orgasmic great bliss by the system of both tantras.[145] In the *Tattvaprakāśa* it says "It is said in the yogatantras that *tathāgata* is *evam mayā*. That is

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[141] These topics are covered in the fourth chapter of the first section of the SP. See especially DK 81, 82.

[142] This passage from the TP is the same as quoted by Tsongkhapa and as it occurs in the Tanjur, as follows: de yi rtse mo mgor gsung te // 'dam skyes 'dab ma sum cu gnyis / (DT fol. 355a, QT p.227.5)

[143] Tsongkhapa quotes this passage from the TP as follows: de yi dbus su ham yin te // ā li kā li las sprul pa // m shigs go 'phang nyams dga' ba // bde ba chen po zhes byar brjod // bde chen 'khor lo chen po na // sde tshan tha ma ming spangs pa/. The same passage with but minor variation can be found at DT fol. 355a, QT p.227.5.

[144] Tsongkhapa quotes from the SP as follows: bdud rtsi'i gzugs kyi 'dzag pa ni // nyin dang mtshan du mam par gnas /. This occurs with the following variation in the Kanjur ...'dzag par ni / (DK fol. 114a, QK p.262.2.

[145] That is, of the Cakrasaṃvara and Hevajra.

called 'the supreme of bliss' in the yoginitantras. The 'yogatantras and yoginitantras', the supreme intuition of great bliss, are called 'fire'."[146]

In order to generate that great bliss, white bodhicitta must trickle from the *haṃ* of the crown down to the tip if the secret place. And the bodhicitta must melt by the blazing fire of caṇḍalī. It says in the *Abhidhāna* that "Equalizing the vowels and consonants [they] should be joined as a line; the line blazing above causes trickling below, trickling in the form of semen into the form of the ambrosial drop."[147] Although this text also occurs in the *Mahāmāyā,* and is explained elsewhere by Śāntipa, here it is not like that.[148] The vowels signify the left channel through which white bodhicitta descends, while the consonants signify the right channel through which red bodhicitta descends. Regarding

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[146] Tsongkhapa's quote is as follows: rnal 'byor rgyud du de bzhin gshegs // 'di skad bdag gis zhes bya ba gsung // de nyid rnal 'byor ma rgyud du // bde ba'i mchog tu brjod pa yin // 'di nyid rnal 'byor rgyud dang ni // rnal 'byor ma rgyud ces byar yang // bde ba chen po'i ye shes mchog // me zhes bya bar mngon par brjod /. This is almost identical to the passage found in the TP at DT fol. 355b, QT p.228.2.

[147] Tsongkhapa quotes the fourteenth chapter of the AD as follows: ā li kā li mnyam byas te / der ni ri mo'i sbyor ba yis // steng du 'bar ba'i ri mo ni // 'og tu 'dzag par byed pa yin // 'dzag pa khu ba'i tshul can no // 'chi med thigs pa'i gzugs su 'gyur /. This is basically the same as the passage as found in the Kanjur; see DK fol. 291b, QT p.60.3. The Sanskrit occurs as follows in Kalff's edition: ālikālisamāṃ kṛtvā rekhāṃ tatra niyojayet // jvalitārdharekhā tvadhaḥ śravati kāriṇi // śravate śukrarūpena amṛtabindusvarūpiṇaṃ // (p.327, v.89b3). This evidently is a cryptic account of the Perfection Stage process of insertion of the winds into the central channel. According to Śūraṅgavajra's commentary on the *Abhidhānottara,* this passage refers to the unification of winds in the central channel, with the resulting development of heat which melts the drop at the crown, the descent of which gives rise to the four joys. See Kalff 1979, vol.1 p.211.

[148] Tsongkhapa here refers to the *Mahāmāyā Tantra,* and Ratnākaraśānti's *Guṇavatiṭikā,* a commentary thereon. The *Mahāmāyā* does contain a passage almost identical to the passage from the AD quoted above. The passage corresponds to verses 20 and 21 in Samdhong and Dwivedi's (1992) edition, occuring as follows: ālikālisamāṃ kṛtvā tatra rekhātrisaṃpuṭāṃ // jvalitordhvamukhī rekhā tadādhaḥ srutikāriṇi // śukrarūpena sravati amṛtaṃ bindusvarūpiṇaṃ // (1992:16,7). The Tibetan occurs in this edition as follows: ā li kā li mnyam byas te / ri mo de la sbyar bar bya // ri mo steng du 'bar ba mthar // 'og tu 'bab par byed pa'o // khu ba'i tshul gyis 'bab pa ste // bdud rtsi'i thigs pa'i gzugs las so / (1992:105-7). The same volume contains Ratnākaraśānti's commentary, which occurs on the same pages as the passages from the *Mahāmāyā* quoted above. His comments are brief, but he does seem to differ from Tsongkhapa on at least one point. Tsongkhapa below identifies the vowels and consonants with the left and right channels respectively. Ratnākaraśāntī, on the other hand, seems to imply that the vowels and consonants are what are joined at the place where the right and left channels join the central channel. Commenting on the same line, wrote: " It is said that 'the vowels and consonants' etc. are 'joined', that is, united by means of restraint (*niyamana*), 'there' in the junction (*saṃpuṭa*) of the sun and the moon." tam evāha ālikālityādinā tatreti ravicandrasaṃpuṭe niyojiteti niyamanāya yojitā (p. 16); / de nyid ālikāli zhes bya la sogs pa gsungs pa ste / de la zhes bya ba ni nges par bcing ba'i phyir sbyar ba'o / (p. 106). This passage is interesting, in part because he makes use of the verb *ni+√yuj,* which implies that he was familiar with the AD version of this passage. Also, his commentary implies that what is being discussed here is the third and fourth stages of the *ṣaḍaṅgayoga* (*prāṇāyāma* and *dhāraṇā*), in which the winds, restrained (*niyamana*) through the process of breath control, and unified and inserted into the central channel at the *ravicandrasaṃpuṭa,* the junction of the three vessels below the navel. A good discussion of this process in English occurs in Bentor 1997; se esp. p. 55.

their equalization, it is said that the winds of those two mix in the central channel at the center of the navel. By these [winds] entering there, they blaze from the lines of fire up to the crown at the top. By that blazing the ambrosial fluid trickles down from the letter *haṃ*. In order for there to be trickling from the letter *haṃ* in the middle of the lotus of the crown, the blazing fire must arrive there. This explains the 'vowels and consonants'.

In order for caṇḍali to blaze by the injection the life-force into the central channel, it is necessary to press on the essential points of the body, which are places on the central channel. [These include] the wheel of great bliss of the crown, where exists the greater portion of white bodhicitta, the wheel of emanation of the navel where exists the greater portion of red bodhicitta, the secret place bliss protection (bde-skyong=kapāla, skull bowl) wheel, and the dharma wheel of the heart where the white and red [bodhicittas] exist in equal proportion. And there are many openings which are essential points to be pressed, such as the upper and lower nostrils of the central channel and so forth.

In regard to these, in the system of Lūipa both the drop visualization and vajra repetition are performed from the navel. According to Ghaṇṭapa, both self-consecrations are performed from the heart, and the two stages/processes of the universal vajra are performed from both of the upper and lower nostrils of the central channel. The Jāladhara process is performed in the secret place, and the inconceivable process in the heart. In the system of Kāṇhapa it is as he states in the *Āli-catuṣṭaya*. Generally, one strikes the essential points on the four wheels, particularly the navel.

Therefore, in regard to the statement in the Explanatory Tantra[149] the crown root wheel, the lotus of which is the basis of the vowel and consonant arrangement, is considered to be the place from which bodhicitta trickles. In the art of drawing forth bodhicitta from that place you press the essential points on the body, and since you need the

[149] Tsongkhapa is here refering to a passage in AD ch. 14, a small portion of which he quoted above. This passage corresponds to verses 89b2 to 90a3 in Kalff's edition.

lotuses of the other wheels, these also serve as bases for the vowel and consonants arrangements.

The definitive meaning of the creation of Heruka from the vowels and consonants is the import of Heruka creation, from the assembly of red and white bodhicittas there, which is definitive. Furthermore, Heruka is created by pressing not only on the crown, but also on other parts of the body. In regard to the Heruka of definitive meaning, one should know that there are two Herukas, of the Vision Side and Void Side. As for the method of there being other perfection stages in the import of the root tantra, I will comment on this from time to time. If you know how to explain by the method previously discussed, you will come to know well the essential points of the personal instructions of the three great saints who explained the very secret points of the root tantra, relying on the explanatory tantra. If you do not know to explain like that, although there seems to be some little explanation in Kāṇhapa's *Āli-catuṣṭaya*, as for the perfection stage of Lūipa and Ghaṇṭapa, it does not seem that you could know how to explain the hidden points anywhere in the root tantra.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.1.b.iii. Explaining the Sixteen Syllables as Applied to Alchemy.

The *Vajraḍāka* states, in answer to the request concerning the sixteen syllables stated in the *Uttarasamvara*, that the alchemical substances were taught corresponding to the sixteen syllables. The sixteen syllables are as follows: *rahasye parame ramye sarvatmani sadāsthitaḥ*.[150] These are the Sanskrit equivalent to the two lines that [begin with] the *secret supreme* (**v.2.c,d**). The meaning of each separate syllable is stated in the *Vajraḍāka*. They occur in Kambalipa's commentary, as follows "*ra* is the element of great vermillion. *ha* is 'that which is mountain born', that is, head born. *Sye* is vessel/organ of scent. It is like the scent in a body. *Pa* is said to be wind (pavana), and *ra* is said to be the

[150] This is a paraphrase of a passage in chapter 42 of the VD; see esp. DK fol. 89a,b; QK p. 1302,3. The syllables as as listed in Tsongkhapa's text. It differs from the Sanskrit edition only in the shortening of the *ā* in *ātmani* to *a*, and in the lack of the a locutive case marker, *parama* rather than *parame*.

scent itself. The syllable *ma* is a flower, and *ra* is salt. It is accepted that *mye* is the 'great flesh'. *Sa* is union itself (saha), and *rva* is said to be the head. The goddess is the marrow of fire. *Ni* is the smelly lower fluid, and *sa* is the teeth and fingernails. *Dā* is that which is ocean-born. *Sthi* is the essence of the mouth, and *taḥ* is camphor."[151]

In regard to that, *ra* is the menses which descend periodically. *Ha* is human brain which is not rancid. *Sye* is the scent of the body. In regard to the fourth one, in another translation it says "*pa* is said to be skin." This is said to be the finely cleaned skin of a young child. *Ra* is feces which is not the product of greasy food. *Ma* is evident in the statement "the blood arising from play with an eight year old girl." *Ra* is urine [collected] at dawn. *Mye* is the great flesh which expells the yellow water all at once. *Sa* is rendered human fat. *Rva* is the salt and fluid of hair. *Tma* is the fluid of stool. *Ni* is the marrow, and *sa* is clear. *Dā* is the middle urine, and *sthi* is saliva. *Taḥ* is explained as the semen of an adult man. Although in that way there are eighteen, both substances of *rva* are counted as one, as well as the teeth and fingernails. Therefore, there are sixteen.

The essense of these collected is the five ambrosias. It says in the *Vajraḍāka* "the substances of the yogin, the 'secret' etc., are taken to be the five such as feces, urine, etc. The series of collected elements is the teaching on alchemy."[152] This applies the five words from *secret* to *always abides* to the five ambrosias. It also occurs like that in the *Samputa*. If you wish to know the system of attaining the 'hair oil', 'fecal oil' and urine, as well as

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[151] Tsongkhapa quotes this passage from the SN as follows: ra ni mtshal chen po yi khams // ha ni ri las skyes pa ste // ri skyes zhes bya mgo skyes so // sye ni dri yi snod yin te // lus la dri ni ji lta ba'o // pa ni rlung du gsung pa ste // ra ni dri nyid yin par gsungs // yi ge ma ni me tog ste // ra ni de bzhin lan tshwa'o // mye ni sha chen por 'dod de // sa ni rab tu sbyor ba nyid // rva ni mgo por rab tu gsungs // lha mo me yi rkang yin te // ni ni dri yi mar khu'o // sa ni so dang sen mo ste // dā ni rgya mtsho las skyes pa'o // sthi ni kha yi snying po ste // taḥ ni ga pur bstan pa'o /. This differs only slightly from the versions in the Tanjur (see DT fol. 3a and QT p. 174.3,4). The only substantive variation is the QT version, but not the DT, has *yi ge me ni me tog ste*, from which we can reconstruct the Sanskrit *parame*. This agrees with all three of the extant Sanskrit manuscripts, and makes better grammatical sense as well.

[152] Tsongkhapa here quotes the forty second chapter of the VD as follows: gsang sogs rnal 'byor pa yi tdzas // bshang dang gci sogs lnga la bya / khams rnams sdud pa'i sde tshan ni // de ltar bcud len bstan pa yin /. The same passage with trivial differences can be found in DK fol. 89b, QK p. 130.3.

the method of relying on the substances, you should know it from the *Great Saṃvara Commentary.*[153]

On this path great bliss is of principle importance, and in order to augment the power of the body, depending on the increase of the body's passion/ semen ('lily-like' *kun-ta lta-bu*), there is the previous alchemy. If you rely on the bliss which arises through dependence on the alchemy of the five ambrosias and sixteen substances, even though there is non-correspondence in parts of the sixteen with the alchemy of the outer substances, then it is said that bliss increases, and by relying on the union of that bliss with the dharmadhātu, one will always be given bliss.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.2. Explaining the Four Lines that Begin 'Made of all Ḍākinis'.
a. The Explanation Applied to the Goal.

In regard to the latter of the two explanations of *made of all ḍākinis* (**v.3.a**) etc. in the *Vajraḍāka*, if you explain as applied to the goal, then 'all dakinis' are Pracaṇḍi and so forth. *Made of* means that Heruka is the nature or actuality composed of the extremely subtle particles of those dakinis. Since he is empowered in the aims of sentient beings, he is a *being* (*sattva).* Since the intuition of Heruka destroys the mountain of ignorance, it is the *vajra* (**v.3.b**). The meaning of the latter *hero* is not explained as it is considered to be similiar in meaning to the former *hero.*

Here it says in the *Vajraḍāka* that "it is said that there are two types of *sattva*, the worlds of vessel and essence. Essence is explained as animate beings, and in that way the vessel is their support. Each of them also has two types, the well-destined and evil-

[153] Tsongkhapa is here refering to Bu-ston's monumental NS commentary on the Cakrasamvara Root Tantra. In commenting on this section Tsongkhapa draws heavily on this text. His quote from the VD above is actually a small portion of a much larger passage quoted by Bu-ston, and Bu-ston goes further, fully showing the connection between the words of this verse and the elements, the levels of interection between the deities (laughing, gazing, hand-holding and intercourse) and so forth. (See NS pp.183-195.) Buston actually quotes the passage in the SP to which Tsongkhapa refers; this passage was previously quoted by Tsongkhapa. See note 123 above.

destined. They exist in the fourfold forms of earth and water, fire and wind."[154] As for that statement, in the explanation of 'empowered in the aims of beings', the term 'empowered' is connected to the sentient beings for whom there is this power. From that perspective, this term is also connected to the 'vessel' which is the abode of sentient beings. The term is applied directly to discipliner who has that ability. In that way, both the purified vessel and essence of the discipliner are called the well-destined, while the impure vessel and essence are called the evildestined. Their form has the aspect of the four elements.

The *supreme bliss* is superlative. The term *only* of *only this* (**v.3.c**) is a delimitor. Since the *Lord* arises in the actuality of the entire purified animate and inanimate worlds in just this way, he is *self-arising*. I've already explained Lord. *Hero* means one who is victorious over all discordant tendencies. *Ḍākini* (**v.3.d**) refers to the heros and heroines. The the *net* is the host of them. As for *binding*, they are bound in the actuality of the one Heruka. This sort of Lord speaks the tantra. The gurus claim that these four lines show the perfection of the Teacher of the Tantra, which seems to be in agreement with Kambala.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.2..b. The Explanation Applied to the Perfection Stage of the Path

Here we should explain somewhat the connection between [the line beginning] *made of all dakinis* (**v.3.a**) and and the previous two lines. Those two lines showed that by relying on the elixer you can augment the body.

Then one relies upon the inner art of perfection stage meditation, which in turn relies on both the general vajra body shown by the stacked up elements and so forth, as well as the group of four channel wheels which is shown by the four syllables *e vaṃ ma yā*

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[154] This quote is from the forty second chapter of the VD, and it occurs in the Kanjur as follows: sems dpa' rnam pa gnyis gsungs te // snod dang bcud kyi 'jig rten no // bcud ni rgyu ba zhes bshad la // de bzhin snod ni brtan pa'o // re re zhing yang gnyis gnyis te // skal pa bzang dang skal ngan no // sa dang chu dang med rlung gi / gzugs ni rnam pa bzhi ru gnas / (DK fol. 89b. See also QK p.130.3,4). With the exception of two typographical errors, Tsongkhapa's quotation is identical to the above.

connected to *secret supreme.* One also relies upon the outer art of the four *karmamudrās* of the clans of Locanā etc. who are also shown by the four syllables. One also relies upon the ceasing of respiration by both the injection of life force into the central channel which is the definitive meaning of "at one time", and the blazing of Fury Fire by wind as previously quoted from the *Abhidhāna.* And, as in my explanation of the definitive meaning of *śruta,* which means "heard", the great bliss which arises from the trickling of bodhicitta from the crown to the tip of the secret place, is stated by the terms from "Padmanarteśvara" up to "Heruka", as in the statement that "Vajrasattva Heruka is expressed as the term *all ḍākinis.*", meaning that he is made of, i.e., has the actuality of, all ḍākini who are the inner heros and heroines.

It also says in the *Tattvaprakāśa,* "since *ḍākini*s are the nature of everything, [he] is made of them.", and it says, "the heroes in the retinue are the actuality of supreme joy."[155] And "the retinue refers to great bliss, which is the art here. That's what the *sattva* of *Vajrasattva* means. *Vajra* [means] that that bliss is engaged indivisibly with voidness. For that reason, in the root tantra after Vajrasattva is supreme bliss. (**v.3.b**) Great bliss abides as the subjectivity of voidness, the realm of space, and since it is superior to all other blisses, and because the spirit of awakening is not broken, it is called Vajrasattva. Therefore, after that, supreme bliss is stated in the tantra. Since it abides in the realm of space, it is said to be the supreme bliss."

This supreme joy is *self arising* (**v.3.c**) because it emerges as the body of Vairocana etc. in the experience of each disciple. Or, it is *self arising* because it accords with reality. It is called *Lord* because it is endowed with a perfect destiny, and it is a *hero* because it is endowed with the power to extract and eradicate disharmonious tendencies.

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[155] Tsongkhapa quotes the TP here as follows: / mkha' 'gro ma ni thams cad kyi // rang bzhin nyid phyir de yi dngos /. It occurs in an almost identical manner in the Tanjur as follows: / mkha' 'gro ma ni kun gyis te // rang bzhin nyid phyir de yi dngos /. (DT fol. 355a. It occurs also thus in the QT, with an additional error, on p. 228.1.)

The *ḍākini* (**v.3.d**) are the thirty-six channels, and the elements within them. The *net* is the group [of them]. The intuition which arises from the excitation of the bodhicitta by the wind that moves within them is *binding*, i.e. Samvara, supreme bliss. In that way, the bliss which is the import of the four lines *all dakinis* etc. refers to the two groups of four joys, descending from above and stabilizing from below. They are the four joys which emerge from the entry, abiding and dissolving of the winds in the central channel. In regard to them, it says in the *Mahāmudrātilaka* that the four joys are also four [states of] luminence, radiance and immanence, together with clear light, "because joy is luminance, and the supreme [joy] is luminant radiance. The distinctive joy is immanence, and orgasmic [joy] is clear light."[156]

Furthermore, it says in the *Abhidhānottara*, "the first joy is intuition, and the supreme joy is union, joy in bliss is the great achievement, and orgasmic joy is unexcelled. The stages of the rites are yoga, atiyoga, mahāyoga and jñānayoga. If you know the yoga of the central drop, you should behold it by means of the subtle yogas."[157] The process of the four joys stated there is the process of descending from above. The meaning of the two latter lines is that by knowing the central meaning of meditating on the yoga of the drop, and meditating on the yoga which is the union of the subtle letters and drops, you will see how the four joys are produced. These are stated in the commentary to refer to the intuition rites of *yoga, anuyoga, atiyoga and mahāyoga*.[158] These stages should be applied respectively to the four joys.

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[156] Tsongkhapa here quotes the *Śrīmahāmudrātilakaṃ* as follows: gang phyir dga' ba de snang ba // snang ba mched pa mchog tu bshad // kyad dga' nye bar thob par shes // lhan cig skyes de 'od gsal ba'o /. It occurs as follows in the Kanjur: / dga' ba zhes bya snang ba yin // mchog dga' snang ba mched par bstan // dga' bral snang ba thob ces bya // lhan skyes de ni yang dag 'od / (DK fol. 70b; see also QK p. 241.1.)

[157] This passage occurs in chapter 63 of the AD, exactly as quoted by Tsongkhapa, with the exception of two minor variations, as follows: / dga' ba dang po ye shes te // mchog tu dga' ba mnyam par sbyor // bde bar dga' ba grub pa che // lhan cig skyes dga' bla med yin // sbyor ba dang ni shin tu sbyor // sbyor ba che dang ye shes sbyor // de dag cho ga'i rim pa'o // thig le gzhung gi sbyor shes na // phra ba'i sbyor bas bsta bar bya / (DK fol. 361a, see also QK p. 81.4)

[158] Tsongkhapa refers here to a passage in the sixty third chapter of Śūraṅgavajra's *Mūlatantrahṛdaya-saṃgrahābhidhānottaratantramūlamūlavṛtti*, which occurs as follows: "The stages of the intuition rites are *yoga, anuyoga, atiyoga* and *mahāyoga*. In that way one should know the yoga of drops in which the four joys have the meaning of the vase, secret, wisdom-intuition and the fourth initiations. If both from that as

The *Abhidhānottara* also says "in the navel, in the heart lotus amidst the breast, at the root of the tongue and atop the head are joy, supreme joy, distinctive joy and orgasmic joy [respectively]. The first has sixty-four petals, the second eight supreme petals. The third has sixteen petals, and the fourth thirty-two petals. Vārāhi abides in the channel in the navel, and the supreme blood-drinker (Heruka) is orgasmic joy."[159] The process of the four joys supported from below are said to occur as follows: joy in the navel, supreme joy in the heart, 'holy' i.e., distinctive joy at the root of the tongue, namely the throat, and orgasmic joy atop the head, i.e., on the crown. The heart lotus is said to be the channel wheel in the heart center, and the other three have channel wheels as well. Vārāhi in the navel channel refers to the short 'a' fury fire. As for the explanation of the orgasmic as Blood Drinker, since he is said to be generated at the crown when the ascending bodhicitta returns upward, the letter 'ham' of the crown is said to be Heruka.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.3. Explaining the Two Lines that Begin with *Source.*
a. Explaining the interpretable meaning.

Here *sambhavān* linguistically means *source* (**v.4.a**). Here *nāda* means *sound*, and those which have its *form* include vowels, consonants and mantras. Those are also letters, not necessarily pronounced in speech, for they are called 'words' when they appear in the mind in written form. That which is *emerged* from them is the deities. Therefore, they are

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well as from the subtle yoga one realizes the sphere of reality of mind, the continuum which is the cause of omniscient intuition, then one will quickly succeed." / rnal 'byor dang rjes su rnal 'byor dang / shin tu rnal 'byor dang rnal 'byor chen pa'i ye shes kyi cho ga'i rim pa'o // de ltar dga' ba bzhi bum pa dang gsang ba dang shes rab ye shes dang dbang bzhi pa'i don thig le rnal 'byor shes pa las kyang ste / phra ma'i rnal 'byor las kyang thams cad mkhyen pa'i ye shes kyi nye bar len pa'i rgyud sems kyi chos kyi dbying rtogs na myur du 'grub par 'gyur ro / (DT fol. 227b). The stages listed by Sūraṅgavajra are identical to those listed by Nāgabodhi in a Creation Stage context, where they seem to refer to the process of generating the central deity. He wrote: "After that, generate Mahāvajradhara by means of the process of *yoga*, *anuyoga*, *atiyoga* and *mahāyoga*." / de'i 'og rnal 'byor dang / rjes su rnal 'byor dang / shin tu rnal 'byor dang / rnal 'byor chen po'i rim pas rdo rje 'chang chen po'i bdag nyid du skyed de / (from Nāgabodhi's *Samājasādhanavyavasthāli,* QT p. 7.4).

[159] Tsongkhapa quotes chapter 50 of the AD as follows: lte ba snying pad nu ma'i dbus // lce yi rtsa dang mgo steng du // dga' ba dang ni mchog dga' nyid // dam par dga' dang lhan cig skyes // dang po 'dab ma drug cu bzhi // gnyis pa brgyad pa mchog yin te // gsum pa 'dab ma bcu drug pa // bzhi pa sum cu rtsa gnyis 'dab // phag mo lte ba'i rtsar gnas pa // lhan cig skyes dga' khrag 'thung mchog /. This occurs with only minor variation at DK fol. 339b, QK p. 80.5.

the source of the deities. The commitments are the goddesses. And the practice of them is the practice. The object of the practice of that practice is the heroes. There is a way of explaining *emerged in the form of sound* as referring to that which arises from the sexual union of the two organs and the nāda of space, but this seems to be rather partial. If we follow what is written in the above mentioned *Vajradāka* commentary, this [the expression *emerged in the form of sound*] seems to apply to most of the procedures for creating the deities. The gurus apply these two stanzas to previously mentioned assembly which seems to be appropriate.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.A.3.b. Explaining the Definitive Meaning.

Here *from the source in the form of sound* refers to the arisal, that is creation, of the supreme bliss from the semen and ovum, which are explained as generating the systems (aggregates) etc. As for the things *emerged from that*, this tantra teaches that the spirits of awqkening create the great bliss, and this is also asserted in other tantras. This is the definitive meaning of *emerged.* In brief, if you meditate on the perfection stage, you generate the the Spirit of Awakening from the blazing and dripping of the white and red spirits of awakening. That very thing is that on which the yogin relies, as well as that which must be served, is the commitment *(samaya).* The object of the engagement of that practice is the enjoyment of the six types of objects by the six sense faculties.[160] The'object of engagement' is designated vis-à-vis the sense faculties because ultimately sense faculty and object are inseparable. These objects, by the process of their arising as the play of great bliss, are enjoyed and therefore cause the blazing of great bliss. Object and subject are not perceived as isolated, but rather attain to the occasion of orgasmic experiential unity. This is explained relying on the root commentary of the *Vajraḍāka.* This occurs as previously explained on all occasions of meditating on the perfection stage in which one presses the

[160] That is, sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and mind.

essential points on the body, so there is no need to explain this in a partial way, in the manner of the *Āli-catuṣṭaya.*

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.B. The Difficult to Obtain.

It seems that the explanatory systems of the two translators are also not in agreement in regard to the two verses [beginning with] 'world' (**v.4.c,d**). In the three commentaries it is explained that "heroes who dwell in the three wheels of the *beginning,* which is mind, the *middle* which is speech and the *end,* body, are *difficult to obtain in the triple world* of the heavens, human lands, and underworlds."[161] In regard to this, the first explanation from the two methods of explanation is that the meaning of *beginning*, which is the secret, the *middle* supreme, the *end* delighted and *existing*[162] is the previously explained definitive meaning of 'thus have I heard at one time'. And this is the meaning which is very *difficult to obtain*, i.e. difficult to realize, in *the triple world* of the three grounds. This is the intention of the *Vajraḍāka.*

The *Vajraḍāka* states that "difficult to attain in the triple world means that it will not be found among the three contaminated things;"[163] In this way, the three worlds should be

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[161] A passage to this effect occurs in Laṅka Jayabhadra's MP commentary, as follows: / 'jig rten gsum du rnyed dka' ba // zhes bya ba ni don ji bzhin nyid de / mtho ris dang / mi yul dang / sa 'og rnams su zhes bya ba'i bar du'o // yang na 'jig rten gsum po dag na dpa' bo la sogs pa'i 'jig rten gang yin pa de rnams kyi ye shes zhes bya bar sbyar ro / thog ma dbus mthar yang dag gnas / zhes bya ba ni / thugs dang gsung dang / sku la rnam par gnas pa'm // yang na lha thams cad ro gcig pa nyid kyis cho ga'i ye shes gsungs pa yin no / (DT fol. 45a). "Regarding *difficult to obtain in the triple world,* within the heavens, human worlds and underworld, and these also apply to the knowledge of those who are of the world of the heros, etc. in the three worlds. *Existing in the beginning, middle and end* means that they exist in the mind, speech and body, or it refers to the knowledge of the rites by means of the experiential unity of all deities." Durjayacandra, on the other hand, takes *triṣu lokeṣu* as refering to the desire, form and formless realms, and states that since these are contaminated, [the yoga] is difficult to obtain therein. (see RG, QT p.257.3)

[162] This is in reference to the passage in VD ch. 42 previously quoted by Tsongkhapa. See note 112 above. See also Sachen pp. 297.4-298.1, who discusses this passage.

[163] Tsongkhapa here refers to the passage in chapter 42 of the VD which directly precedes the passage quoted above in note 112, which connects the line *the secret supreme delighted* etc. with the the line *existing in the beginning, middle and end.* Tsongkhapa's reference here is as follows: 'jig rten gsum du rnyed dka' ba'i don zag bcas kyi dngos po gsum las rnyed par mi 'gyur ba. The corresponding passage from DK fol. 90 a, QT p. 131.2 occurs as follows: / 'jig rten gsum du rnyed dka' ba zhes bya ba ni zag pa dang bcas pa'i dngos po gsum las rnyed par mi 'gyur ba'i mtshan nyid de...

taken as being bliss, supreme bliss, and distinctive bliss. These show where it is difficult to obtain. That which is difficult to attain is orgasmic intuition. The reason why it is difficult to attain is that the three joys are "contaminated".[164] The meaning of that is that the word 'world' indicates an objectified notion. Furthermore, having distinguished them into the [respective] portions of the beginning, middle and end, they are truly conceptualized. This [interpretation is of] the system of Bhavabhadra.[165] The meaning of these, in short, [is that], so long as there is no end to the appearance of duality and to the conceptualization which is dependent on that, since it is shown that there will be no experience of the actual sahaja. The sahaja which is difficult to attain is no mere sahaja.

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.ii.C. Showing an Example of the Union of Bliss and Emptiness.

While it is the case that through the combination of *the churned*, i.e. the place of rubbing, and *the churner* (**v.5.a**), which is the fire stick, and the efforts of the hand, smoke arises and fire spreads, but if you investigate this, there is no existence or arisal of fire in those three. Likewise, from the perfect *union* of the *churned* that is, the consort's vagina, and the *churner* which is the artful vajra, the ambrosia-like orgasmic intuition which is the bestower of buddhahood arises. And if you examine this, you will know that that this also does not arise from any sort of causes or conditions.[166]

Also by Kṛṣṇācārya [is the] example, "visualize a peak of flame depending upon the fire stick, the rubbing place and the effort of the hand. Examining this, it is not existant in the fire stick and so forth. Just so are beings, movement and so forth. Just as beings seem to be there separately, one has pleasure when not examining the reality of bliss and so forth.

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[164] The connection of the line *difficult to obtain in the triple world, existing in the beginning, middle and end* to the four joys is an implication of the previously quoted passage from the VD (in note 112 above), in which these lines are connected to the four parts of the nidāna, and by implication the four joys. Sachen (PG p. 298.1) quotes an unknown source to this effect.

[165] See Bhavabhadra's CP, fol. 154a.

[166] This passage seems to be drawn from Devagupta's SS commentary; see DT fol. 72a.

And expressions such as 'Thus have I heard' etc. are inconceivable and are just like this too."[167] And also, "the union of the churner and the churned, the dharmakāya is likewise just so."[168] If we thoroughly examine animate and inanimate beings, we don't find them, and, in particular, if we don't examine the great bliss stated by the text of the context, it exists there just as a joyous experience. It should be understood to be just like the fire [produced by] rubbing. If bliss is generated from union with the consort and from the art of pressing the essential points on the body, and you connect that with the view of realizing the voidness of intrinsic reality status, it is taught that you should understand that you can just enjoy the experience without examination, the illusion-like aftermath. Although there are many methods of elucidating this, I've explained here in accordance with the traditions of Kṛṣṇācārya and Kambalika.[169]

III.C.3.b.i.A.2.b. The Actual Exhortation to Hear it.

Many [topics] are explained by Lwa-ba-pa Na-bza'-can, etc., such as "The Lord said to the Lord of Secrets (Guhyapati), '*Listen to what is taught in the Tantra* (**v.5.d**)

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[167] This unidentified quote is from the third chapter of Kāṇha's TP, which Tsongkhapa quotes as follows: / dper na gtsub shing gtsub stan lag pa yi // rtsol ba la brten me yi rtse dmigs pa // brtags na gtsub shing la sogs la yod min // de bzhin 'gro ba gyo ba la sogs pa'o // 'gro ba mtha' dag so sor snang ba tsam // bde sogs ngo bo ma brtags nyams dga' ba // 'di skad bdag gis zhes bya la sogs dag / bsam mi khyab ste ji lta de lta'o /. The passage occurs with only minor variation from the above at DT fol. 354b.

[168] Kāṇha uses the image of the churning in many of his works, but I have not found it compared to the dharmakāya in any of them.

[169] In addition to Kāṇhapa's writings quoted above, Tsongkhapa did indeed draw upon Kambalipa's SN, in which there is the following commentary on v.5.a, as follows: "*Just like the union of the churner and the churned* is as follows. Although from the kindling, fire stick and the person's hands smoke rises and fire is kindled, there is no fire in the kindling, fire stick or the person's hands, and if we investigate them it doesn't exist in any one. And just as in the case of fire, likewise the *churned* is said to be the vagina, and the *churner* the vajra. Likewise, from their *union* arises the ambrosial intuition, which produces complete awakening. The intuition which arises in the wisdom body is the art of *khasama*, instantaneous, and is the sole form of great bliss; this should be known from the true initiation."/bsrub bya bsrub bya'i sbyor ba bzhin // de bzhin zhes bya ba 'di lta ste / gtsubs gtan dang gtsubs shing dang skyes bu'i lag pa'i rtsol ba las du ba rab tu skye zhing me mngon par mched mod kyi / me de yang gtsubs shing la yang med gtsubs gtan la yang med skyes bu'i lag pa dag la yang med / yongs su brtag na gcig la'ang mi gnas so // me 'di ji lta ba bzhin du / 'dir yang bsrub bya'i chos 'byung rab tu gsung / bsrub pa rdo rje brjod pa'o // de yang dag par sbyor ba las / de bzhin du bdud rtsi lta bu'i ye shes 'byung ba ni / mngon par sangs rgyas pa nyid kyi byed pa po ste / shes rab lus 'byung ye shes ni // mkha' mnyam thabs dang lhan cig nyid // bde chen rnam pa gcig bu ni // yang dag dbang bskur las shes bya/. (QT p. 175.2)

which summarizes the teachings of the extensive Unexcelled Yogini Samvara Root Tantra, [namely] the knowledge of procedures of the sadhāna and ritual applications: the repetition of the Essence and so forth for the purpose of mantra repetition, Vajra repetition and so forth, and moreover the contemplations of both the Creation and Perfection Stages, and those [steps] included within the drawing of the maṇḍala, the fire sacrifices, commitments and vows, etc. And having [mastered] repetition and contemplation, there is the achievement of the four ritual application of pacifying, prospering,etc., as well as the intuition of procedures that go beyond those."[170]

The bodhisattva commentary explains that Vajravārāhi is the supplicant.[171] There appear to be many different teachings taught, and many different arrangements of the Teacher's body with respect to the retinues [present] at each of the teaching occasions, so it may not be necessary to insist on one position or another here.[172]

The first line [starting with] "Unexcelled Yogini" and "I will explain the Tantra" does not seem to be in any of the translations, in the unrevised translation of Lochen, in Mal's translation, or in the translation revised by both Locāna Prajñākirti and Mardo.[173]

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[170] There is a similar but much briefer passage in Kambalipa's SN as follows: / sngags bzlas bsam gtan la sogs ldan // rgyud 'di bshad kyis nyan par gyis // zhes bya ba ni bcom ldan 'das kyis gsang ba pa'i bdag po la gsung pa'o / (PTT p.175.2) "The Lord said to the Lord of the Secret Ones (Guhyakapati), 'Listen to what is taught in the Tantra, with mantra recitation, contemplation, and so forth." Durjayacandra (RG, PTT p. 257.4) and Devagupta (SS, DT fol. 72a) also identify Vajrapaṇi as the addressee here. This would seem to be a contradiction to the identification of Vajravārāhi as the supplicant which follows below, unless we hold that the Tantra was taught on more than one occasion to Vajrapaṇi and Vajravārāhi respectively, which seems to be the Indian tradition. It is well established that there are two distinct traditions that hold Vajrapaṇi and Vajravārāhi to be the supplicants of this Tantra; both of these traditions are generally accepted by Tibetans, and there are two distinct lineage lists that begin with the respective supplicants. There also were attempts, however, to harmonize the two accounts; Bhavabhadra, for example, argues that Vajravārāhi is the *supplicant* and Vajrapaṇi is the *compiler,* and that the Teaching was entrusted to them in common (CP, DT fol. 141b). Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po attempts to harmonize this idea with the tradition that this exhortation is address to Vajrapaṇi *qua* compiler, saying that "the instruction was, 'Listen, Compiler Vajrapaṇi, to what was is stated in the host of Tantras, for the sake of future beings'." (PG p.298.2) This seems a somewhat awkward attempt at reconciliation, as it seems unlikely that this exhortation would be addressed to the compiler and not the supplicant.

[171] This is stated in Vajrapaṇi's LL in at least two places; see QT pp. 145.1,2 and p.146.5. It does seem, however, that the case for Vajrapaṇi as supplicant is undercut somewhat by the fact that Vajrapaṇi himself in his "Bodhisattva Commentary" (LL) states that Vajravārāhi is the interlocutor!

[172] Tsongkhapa here seems to tacitly accept the existence of the different commentatorial traditions of the CST, which are often vary considerably.

[173] Actually, this line is contained in the popular version of the Lochen's translation of the Root Tantra revised by Locāna Prajñākirti and Mardo. It is not, however, found in Sumatikīrti's revision.

Nor is it found in the commentaries. In regard to its import, however, there doesn't seem to be any fault.

III.C.b.i.A.3. The Art of Perfecting Progress in the Secret of the Path
a. Offerings to the Kulikās
i. General Kulikā Offerings

[This section] applies to [the line] *should be worshipped* (**v.6.c**) By whom? It is by the yogin who has the Lord's yoga. At what time? [It is done] *on special occasions* (**v.6.d**), namely on the tenth day of the waxing and waning fortnight of each month, or the tenth day of the waning fortnight of the mid-winter month of each year. Is it [done] on one occasion? No, it [is done] *always* (**v.6.c**), without interruption. With what offering substances? These are saliva which is "exhaled" since it emerges drawn forth by *breath* (**v.6.a**), or the great flesh which gives rise to the power of breath. Since the first does not occur with the youth and the latter does not occur with the aged, *the middle* one which occurs in between is blood. Within the elements it is supreme, which is to say it is the spirit of awakening.

Scent is the "great scent", and *water* is "vajra water". *With* (**v.6.b**) indicates the five [ambrosias] altogether, since they are together with the second one and so forth. The word *also* shows that they are together with the five enjoyments as well.

For whom [are they]? They are for the clanswomen famed in the treatises, who are members of the classes famed in the world such as the Warrior Class, or who have the clan affiliation of Akṣobhya, etc., as indicated at the time of initiation. This occurs in the commentatorial tradition of the two translators.

Breath refers to the lady who is well skilled in meditation and so forth on her chosen deity. *Middle* refers to one who menstruates who is between youth and old age. *Supreme* or "holy" refers to a "middle one" with good qualities. If we distinguish them, there are five [types of] pure consorts connected to the five pure intuitions. First, there is the eleven year old; playing in her lotus one achieves *rasāyana*. Second, the twelve year

old, playing with whom one strivse for the commitments; here the commitment is great bliss. Third is the sixteen year old; playing with her has the aim of familiarity with mantra, that is, for the sake of success. By playing with the fourth, the twenty year old, Khecāra will be achieved. Fifth is the twenty five year old. Play with her in order to be initiated. This seems to explain the meaning of the *Vajraḍāka.*[174]

These sorts of kinswomen should be annoited with excellent scented substances, and by that example they should be adorned with various flowers, clothes, ornaments and so forth. And in regard to the 'water' in the statement *with [scented] water*, she should be given various drinks of liquor which clear away the wind, bile and phlegm disorders. Enjoying them yourself, make offerings to the clanswomen. *Always* indicates that one should make the offering of the meditation on Thatness without interruption.[175] By whom [is this done]? [It is done] by the yogin who meditates on the two stages.

What is the time for the offerings? The *Vajraḍāka* says that the "special occasion" is the morning.[176] Two commentaries state that there are six times, from among which the

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[174] This passage is actually a paraphrase of and commentary on a passage in Kambalapa's SN, which occurs as follows: "Regarding *with the middle and superior breaths*, 'first, excite the lotus of an eleven year old for the sake of alchemy. Second, make pleasure with a twelve year old for the sake of the commitments. Third, meditate first on the mantra for the sake of success with the sixteen year old who has flowers. Fourth, succeed in sky travel with the twenty year old who is the embodiment of wisdom. The fifth is the twenty five year old, who is for the sake of initiation. These indicate the five intuitions in accordance with the stage of purification." / dbugs 'byung bar ma mchog dag dang / / zhes bya ba la dang por bcud kyi len gyi don du lo bcu gcig pa'i bdag nyid padma bskul ba'o // gnyis pa lo bcu gnyis pa dang dam tshig gi don du shin tu dga' ba bya // gsum pa lo bcu drug pa'i me tog dang ldan pa dang / dnos grub kyi don du sngags la dang por goms par bya'o // bzhi pa lo nyi shu ma'i shes rab kyi bdag nyid kyis / mkha' la spyod pa sgrub par byed do // lnga pa lo nyi shu rtsa lnga ma'i bdag nyid kyis ni dbang bskur ba'i don du'o // zhes bya ba'i bar du ni me long lta bu la sogs pa'i ye shes lnga / rnam par dag pa'i rim pa bzhin du bstan to / (QT p.175.3; see also Devagupta's SS DT fol. 72 a,b) Kambalapa here seems to indicate that the five types of consorts are connected with the five intuitions, which in turn would connect it to the state of mind purification (*cittaviśuddhi*) of the perfection stage. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso states that there are five types of isolated mind (Kelsang Gyatso 1994: 166); these may correspond to the five intuitions. Kumāra, in his commentary on the *Pradipoddyotana*, connects this stage to the intuitions, however, he only mentions three, rather than five. (see Wayman 1977:176). Snellgrove defines *viśuddhi* in this context as a process of 'purification' wherein the microcosm contaminated with the five 'poisons' of emotional afflictions is purified by identification of the five aspects of buddhahood, which are symbolized both by the five intuitions and the five yoginis. (Snellgrove 1959 vol.1:141).

[175] This is in reference to a passage in Devagupta's SS, which occurs as follows: / rtag tu zhes pa ni bar ma chad par de kho na nyid mchog tu bsgom pa'o / (DT fol. 72b).

[176] This reference is to the 42nd chapter of the VD, in which it states / dus kyi khyad par zhes bya ba snga dro'i dus su'o / (DK fol. 91a, QK p. 131.2).

former is taken as an example.[177] Another commentary states that it is especially the occasion of the union of the two organs.[178] In another explanation similiar to the above, the definitive meaning of the statement that one should make offerings of Thatness being equipoised in the clanswoman is that *breath* refers to the two winds of the left and right nostrils. The *the middle* refers to that which is between the rasanā and lalanā; namely being equipoised in the central channel. *Supreme* is the supreme unchanging mudrā at the time of the insertion of those two winds into the central channel at the base of the navel.[179] The meaning of this last word is that when one inserts the two winds into the central channel relying on a consort, the consort herself is the *supreme* art of drawing forth immutable bliss. *Scented water* is *sihlakaṃ*, i.e., blood.[180] *With* refers to the camphor, i.e., semen, which is offered to the clanswoman. These are explained in reliance on the commentaries of Kambalipa and Devagupta.[181]

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[177] Kambala for example states that there are six times, which are the six seasons of the hot season, the rainy season, fall, winter, late winter, and spring. These seasons in turn, are connected, respectively, to Hayagriva, Heruka, Vajrasurya, Padmanarteśvara, Vajrasattva and Vairocana.. See PTT p. 175.4,5. Bu ston also quotes this entire passage in his massive NS commentary; see pp. 213-215.

[178] Bu-ston's NS commentary states that "at the special occasion of the completion of menstruation, made special by the union of the vajra and the lotus, one should worship, i.e., give pleasure to, the kinswoman, the outer goddess with the nature of Vajravārāhi." / dus te 'bab pa'i mtha'i dus khyad par te rdo rje padma 'dus byas pa'i khyad par gyi rigs ldan ma ste rdo rje phag mo'i rang bzhin gyis phyi'i lha mo la mchod pa ste dga' ba bskyed par bya'o / (p.216)

[179] This in reference to the following passage from Devagupta's SS: "Furthermore, as for *breaths*, when the two breaths of the left and right nostrils are fully joined at the base of the navel, that is the supreme unchanging *mudrā*." / yang na dbugs 'byin pas zhes pa ni sna bug gyas gyon gnyis kyi dbugs rnams lte ba'i rtsa bar de rnams kyi yang dag par phrad pa'i dus na phyag rgya mchog nyid ma 'gyur ba'o / (DT fol. 72b)

[180] *Sihlaka* is olibanum, that is frankincense, which in the *sandhyābhāṣa* designates blood; its connection to blood is no doubt due to its dark reddish color. This is from Kampala's SN as follows: /dri'i chu ni si hla kaṃ ngo // de dang bcas pa ni ga pur te // de lta bur gyur pas rigs ldan rnams la mchod par bya zhes so / (QT p.175.4) "*Scented water* is frankincense, and camphor is *with* it; the [substance] thus produced is offered to the kinswomen." Interestingly, Kampala here makes use of the Hevajra *sandhyābhāṣa* system in "elucidating" an obscure term in the CST. In fact, his explanation may very well be a direct reference to a line in the *Hevajra Tantra* (Part II, Ch. 2 v. 18), which describes the female consort as "possessed of frankincense and camphor", *sihlakarpūrasaṃyuktāṃ*, / si hla ga pur yang dag ldan / (Snellgrove 1959 vol. 2: p. 46,7). The bodhisattva Vajragarbha explains in his Hevajra commentary that this refers to "one who has arrived at time of menstruation, who takes pleasure in the bliss of bodhicitta" (see Snellgrove 1959 vol. 1: p. 90, note 2).

[181] In this section Tsongkhapa relies heavily upon Kambalapa and Devagupta; most of this section is a paraphrase, with comments, of passages from Kambalapa's SN commentary, QT p. 175.3-5, and Devagupta's SS commentary, DT fol. 72,3. The same information also occurs in the NS (pp. 213-216) of Bu ston, who reproduces the above SN passages almost verbatim, and without attribution to their author, unlike Tsongkhapa, who does provide attribution.

III.C.b.i.A.3.a.ii. How Success is Achieved in Dependence upon the Three Clanswomen, together with the Offerings.

Bhavabhadra [holds] that they are *messengers* (**v.7.a**) since they are distressed over the suffering of sentient beings.[182] In addition to this literal [interpretation], the gurus say that the consort is called a messenger, since they are like the messengers who rapidly accomplish one's aims. This is in accordance with Kambalipa. Here Bhavyakirti says that as there are three [types of] messanger, the *orgasmically achieved* (**v.7.a**) is just an illustration. In regard to them the *supreme* (**v.7.b**) is the 'orgasmic' one. The *middling* is the 'place'-born one, who is the same as the 'womb-born' one.[183] The *lesser* type is the kind born from Mantra. The *supreme* etc. can also be understood as refering respectively to the celestial, terrestial and subterranean. Why is it necessary to accomplish these? It is explained that they *bring about the desired success by means of the mind inserted within* (**v.7.c,d**).[184] The gurus indicate the *orgasmic* with the actuality of orgasm. *Achieved* is achieving a yogini from the 'great spirit of the field', which refers to the achievement of the yogini by means of concentration, repetition, and so forth.

It is said that the first, the *supreme* is the bestower of both Successes. The second, the *middling*, is the bestower of worldly success. And while the third, the *lesser* type is unable to bestow either success, but accompanies the attainment of these two.[185] Although

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[182] This is a direct quotation of the following line in Bhavabhadra's CP commentary: / de yang sems can sdug bsngal ba la gdung bas na pho nya'o / (DT fol. 158a)

[183] I translate *kṣetraja* as 'womb born', taking *kṣetra* in its more specific sense of body. This translation is supported by the fact that *kṣetraja* has a specific meaning of a type of birth in Hindu law, although here the reference is more general. See Monier-Williams p. 332 col. 1 & 2; see also Wendy Doniger's article "Sexual Masquerades in Hindu Myths" (see O'Flaherty 1996), p. 40.

[184] Tsongkhapa here closely paraphrases a passage from Bhavyakirti's SM commentary; see DT fol. 8b, 9a.

[185] A passage similar to this occurs in Bhavyakirti's SM commentary, as follows: "The first is *supreme* because she bestows the supreme success. The second is *middling* since she bestows mundane success. The third is *lesser* as she is unable to bestow success, but is able to accompany the achievment of these two." / dang po ni mchog ste dngos grub gnyis ka ster bas so // gnyis pa ni 'bring ste 'jig rten pa'i dngos grub ster bas so // gsum pa ni tha ma ste dngos grub gnyis ster mi nus kyang de gnyis sgrub pa'i sgrogs byed pa so / (DT fol. 9b) This passage also may be drawn from a more lengthy discussion by Sachen in his *Pearl Garland Commentary*, PG pp. 299a,b.

there are many different ways of identifying the three messengers, the first, the highest attainment in one's psychosomatic continuum of the actual orgasmic, is the transcendental ḍākinī. Secondly, there are those who become yoginis since they are born in thirty two places, etc. and are raised by yoginis. Third, there are yoginis of the first stage who psychosomatic continuums are well cultivated by means of initiation and so forth. These latter two are mundane yoginis.

Since one is united in accordance with what is called the method of union with the Prajñā of the Progenitrix of all Tathāgatas by means of *the insertion of the mind within*, one is satisfied; one's mind does not wander elsewhere. Thus one will attain *the desired success.* In that way, in order to satisfy the messengers with offerings, the *Vajraḍāka* says in regard to the inferior, middling and supreme ones that the previous 'supreme' and so forth refers to a person. If we explain literally statements such as *worship the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with one's own seminal drop* (**v.8.a,b**) that arises from equipoise with the herald, then one should satisfy those of the outer mandala, along with the heros and yoginis of the host/retinue, with the nectar with is emitted in the dharmodaya and taken up by the tongue. This is like what the gurus say. If one explains in a non-literal fashion, then it has the meaning of satisfying the Buddhas, i.e., the five aggregates, and the Bodhisattvas, the [sense powers of] the eye and so forth.[186] The worship of the kinswomen within the above

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[186] A similar passage, which nonetheless differs significantly on an important point, occurs as follows in Bhavyakīrti's SM commentary: "*With one's own seminal drop* means with one's bodhicitta. The word *Buddhas* is explained as the [sense powers of] the eye and so forth, and *bodhisattvas* are the hands, feet, etc. This is as is stated in the *Śriguhyasamāja:* 'Taking up semen one should eat it with firm intent, and wide eyed. This is called the worship of the body, speech and mind of all mantras, the of those who possess the jñānavajra, the accomplisher of success in mantras." / rang rdzas thig les zhes pa ni rang gi byang chub kyi sems kyis so // sang rgyas kyi sgras ni mig la sogs pa la bya bar bshad la / byang chub sems dpa' ni lag pa dang rkang pa la sogs pa'o // de yang dpal gsang ba 'dus pa las / mig bzang brtan pa'i blo ldan pas // khu ba blang nas bza' bar bya // 'di ni sngags rnams thams cad kyi sku gsung thugs kyi mchod pa ste // ye shes rdo rje can gyis gsang // sngags rnams rnams dngos grub byed par gsung // zhes ji skad gsung ba lta bu'o / (DT fol. 9a). This *Guhyasamāja* quote is from the last two verses of chapter eight, the Sanskrit for which occurs as follows in Fremantle's edition: gṛhya śukraṃ viśālākṣe bhakṣayed dṛḍhabuddhimān // idaṃ tat sarvamantrāṇāṃ kāyavākcittapūjanam / mantrasiddhikaraṃ proktaṃ rahasyaṃ jñānavajriṇām // (Freemantle 1971:226). Interestingly, there is a passage in the seventh chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* which is quite similar to that in the CST which is being commented upon here. The first half of CST v.8 occurs as follows: *svaretobindubhir buddhān bodhisattvāṁś ca pūjayet,* "worship the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas with the one's own seminal drops." The second half of v. 26, ch. 7 of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* in Fremantle's (1971) edition is almost identical, reading *svaretobindubhir buddhān vajrasattvāṁś ca pūjayet* (p.218). Given the fact that the CST elsewhere mentions the *Guhyasamāja,* this strongly suggests that the latter was an influence on the former.

from the line *breath supreme* (**v.6.a**) is extensively explained in the gurus' oral precepts;[187] fearing prolixity, I will not write on it here.

III.C.b.i.A.3.a.iii. The Benefits of Worshipping the Clanswomen

The yogin who does this practice relying upon the herald, though he might be *seen* by other people's eyes, *touched* by their bodies, or news of him might by *heard* by their ears or *recollected* by their minds (**v.8.c,d**), if *there is no doubt* that this *yogin is thus liberated from all the sins* (**v.9.a,b**) of karmic obscuration, that they are washed away, and that such a yogin has himself gathered up *supreme* assemblies of *purifying merit* (I.35), and that he has conquered and *destroyed the sins* (**v.9.c,d**), what need is there to say more? One who thus relies on the herald will quickly attain both successes by means of the definitive and interpretable *mantra repetitions* and by means of the *contemplation* of the definitive and the interpretable. The word *even* shows that it is even attained by contemplation alone, which is taken as meaning inner absorption.

While [The line] "will be attained even by bliss" does not occur in the translations of Lochen or Mardo rKyang-pa, nor in many of the commentaries, it does occur both in the translation of Mardo and Prajñākīrti, and in Mal's translation.[188] It also says in the *Commentary Praising Samvara* that from the force of demonstrating dhāraṇā by mantra repetition, it is shown that praṇāyāma is previous to that. By the manifestation of dhyāna

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[187] Sachen, for example, devoted several pages in his *Pearl Garland* commentary to this subject; he interprets worship of the kinswomen as refering to inner body yogic mediation, in which bodhicitta is both the object of continual worship as well as the substance of the offering. (see PG pp.199.3-200.2) This sort of interpretation may seem to undermine Shaw's claim that passages such as this unambigiously refer to the worship of women by men, but I suspect that both levels of interpretation can coexist without contradiction. And while interpretations such as his tell us little about how these verses were construed, and what practices were practiced, in India when they were written, it can perhaps tell us a great deal about the Tibetans, who seemed to have priveledged the "inner" interpretations over the "outer" gymnocentric ones.

[188] The line *bde bas kyang ni 'grub par 'gyur* occurs in Lochen's translation as revised by Mardo and Prajñākirti as well as Sumatikirti. It corresponds to the first half of verse 10 in the Sanskrit, *sidhyate japaṃ mantraṃ japena dhyānena ca,* which lacks only the equivalent to *bde bas, *sukhena.*

(contemplation), it is shown that pratyāhāra (withdrawal) precedes it. By the manifestation of samadhi (concentration) with bliss, it is shown that mindfulness precedes it.[189]

There is no contradiction in explaining by means of the parameters (tshad-ldan) the many different meanings in each of the Vajra words of the Tantra; the adherents to Mal's commentatorial tradition explain "even by bliss" in terms of practice.

III.C.b.i.A.3.b. Protecting the Commitments.

i. Protecting the Commitments which are to be guarded.

The *adept* of this path who is very *well equipoised* (**v.10.d**), that is, whose three doors are unwavering, *should always* and continually *protect* without impairment the *commitments* (**v.10.c**) to be guarded, the root and branch commitments taught in other Tantras as well as the commitments taught in this Tantra.

In regard to the penalties of not guarding the commitments, by *breaking* the root *commitments* (**v.11.a**), one *will not gain success in maṇḍala* into which one was previously *initiated* (**v.11.b**), meaning one's power will be impaired. One will not attain *success even through mantra repetition* (**v.10.a,b**), etc. Aside from that, there are the very great penalties of going into the bad migrations later and so forth. After that, endeavoring from the start in not being stained by the offence, if there is a root downfall, the vow can be repaired again by the guru setting up the maṇḍala, or by Self-entry. If an excessive downfall occurs, it can be purified by the rite of renewal following confession and so forth, however it will not work if you think 'it can be remedied later' (as an excuse to consciously violate the vow). And though it may be remedied, one will not rise up from a subsequent

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[189] Tsongkhapa here paraphrases a passage in Vajrapaṇi's LL commentary which immediately follows his quotation of the passage concerning the six branched yogas in the *Uttaratantra* of the *Guhyasamāja*. It occurs in the LL as follows: "Thus, it should be known that *pratyāhāra* precedes *dhyāna*. Here, the word 'mantra repetition', which is either hermaphrodite or vajra repetition, is said to be *praṇāyāma*. Know that *anusmṛti* precedes bliss, and that *samādhi* is stated by means of the world 'bliss'. In this way the yogin will achieve buddhahood by means of these six branches." / de phyir bsam gtan gyi sngon du so sor sdud pa rig par bya'o // sngags bzlas pa'i sngon du srog rtsol rig par bya'o // 'dir sngags bzlas pa'i sgras ma ning gi bzlas pa'am rdo rje'i bzlas pa ste srog 'dzin par brjod do // bde ba'i sngon du rjes su dran par rig par bya ste 'dir bde ba'i sgras ting nge 'dzin brjod do // de ltar yan lag drug po 'di rnams kyis rnal 'byor pas sangs rgyas nyid 'grub par 'gyur ro / (DT 130a, QT p. 168.4).

offence, as one would not be worthy of the remedy in such a case, it is also said. This is the teaching of Mardo, which is excellent.

III.C.b.i.A.3.b.
ii. Protecting the Food Commitments.

In regard to the *honey* called the 'great honey'; Devagupta says that "one meaning of the 'great butter' is the 'great fat' or clot thereof. Vermillion, i.e., *blood*, is the mentruum periodically descends. *With camphor* (**v.11.c**) is said to refer to the flower that exists/occurs along with camphor. This is the flower which is together with semen, which previously refered to *blood* alone. *Red sandalwood* is the great flesh. This *mixture* (**v.11.d**), since it occurs with feces and so forth, is unequalled, the alchemy of the six great savours." The five nectars together with the 'great butter' makes six.

The total vajra of the *Universal Vajra* is Heruka who is the Lord of all deities. His *sign* is the skullcup. His *bearing* (**v.12.b**) of this emblem is grasping, i.e., enjoying, the skull by *joining the tips of the thumb and ringfinger* (**v.12.c,d**) around it. Furthermore, it is like the ocean protecting ambrosia which was made, i.e., stirred up, with a pestle or the thumb which is Mt. Meru, in the ocean which rests on the earth, or at "tip" of the little finger, and on the "back" of the ring finger. By the 'ha' of "Om ha ho hriḥ" there is color; the fault of taint is overcome by 'ho'. 'Hriḥ' augments greatly. The yogin who practices deity yoga and who repeats the mantras should always mix and consume it with the knowledge of the method of relying on the nectars.

The method of their enjoyment is as is said, "Taste the nectar prepared by the wise, but first make offerings to the Guru, and after that offer to Heruka, since he has the vajra. Offering them to the consort, one will experience them, the five-fold nectars of the essence of all yogas/applications. One will be equal to Vajrasattva via this sort of procedure."

"Amidst the retinue" (**v.12.a**) means in the middle of the three wheels, or, amidst the yogins and yoginis who alone hold the yoga of Supreme Bliss. [The word] "go" is explained in other commentaries as "stand".

Additionally, if you explain in a way other than literally, *with camphor* could be explained as "together with the spirit of awakening"; that spirit of awakening is great bliss, and "together with it" means its union with voidness, which is the definitive meaning of the white and red elements. *Go amidst the retinue* designates the communion of the retinue of the six sense powers of the eye and so forth, and in particular the host of the father and mother's organs. Retinue thus has the meaning of communion. In general, it is the communion of the six powers of art and wisdom, and in particular it is the communion of the parents' organs.[190]

What are they? The "thick one" is the artful vajra, and the "top end" is the consort's lotus; as the lotus is [at] the lower part of the body, it is [at] the "end", and as it is at the "top" of that, it is high. The meaning of the union of the tips of those two is that the two tips, known as the "lower nose" of the dhūtī of the tip of the male's secret place and the "crow's face" of the tip of the female's secret place, kiss. It says in the *Vajrapañjara* that

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[190] In the interpretation of this very interesting passage it seems that we are taken from a description of the yogin or Heruka to a description of sexual yoga, with a possible reference to the Secret Consecration. Tsongkhapa begins with a description of Heruka, with a reference to the story of the churning of ocean. And this leads, evidently, to the symbolism of the churning of the lotus by the vajra. This may relate to the Secret initiation, which, as described more directly in the third chapter of *Caṇḍamahāroṣaṇa Tantra*, involves the guru taking the sexual fluids produced from his union with the consort and placing them upon the initiate's tongue with his thumb and ring finger (see George 1974, p. 55) There seem to be Indic sources for this connection. Tsongkhapa seems here to be drawing upon a passage in Kambala's SN commentary which occurs as follows: "The *vajra mark* (*vajrāṅka*) is that which arises from the vagina (*dharmodaya*), and moreover the *sarvavajra* is the Bhagavan Śriheruka. His sign (*cihna*) is the skull bowl. Regarding *bearing* (*dhṛk*), it should be held in one's hand. The *ring finger* is taken as the earth, and the *thumb* should be applied to Mt. Sumeru. In accordance with the churning of ambrosia from the ocean, it should be understood in terms of the three kalpas. Regarding *oṃ ha hoḥ hriḥ, ha* takes away the corruptions (*kaṣāya*), the syllable *hoḥ* destroys the taints, the syllable *hriḥ* is to some extent blazing fire, but is well known to refer to wind." / rdo rje mtshan ma ni chos kyi 'byung gnas las 'byung ba'o // yang na thams cad rdo rje ni bcom ldan 'das dpal he ru ka yin la // de'i mtshan ma ni thod pa'o // 'dzin pa ni de la rang gi lag pas blang par bya ba ste / ming med sa gzhir byas la / mthe bo ni ri rab tu sbyar bar bya // rgya mtsho bsrubs pa'i bdud rtsi bzhin du / rtog pa gsum du shes par bya // oṃ ha hoḥ hriḥ'o // de la / ha zhes bya ba na snyigs ma 'phrog / yi ge hoḥ yis dri 'joms la // gang zhig me 'bar hriḥ yig ste // pa ba ka zhes rab tu bsgrags / (QT pp. 175.5-176.1). Kambala seems here to relate the three syllables to the lesser, intermediate and greater aeons (*kalpa*), which end, respectively, by means of fire, water and wind. See Vasubandu's *Abhidharmakośa*, esp. ch. 2 vs. 100-102, trans. in de la Vallée Poussin 1988, vol. 2, pp. 490-495.

"the vajra place is well excited by the excellent application of the vajra finger,"[191] and "after that, when you have the bliss of that, the vajra bodhisattva is inserted, and one well engages in the vajra offering by means of the union which binds the vajra."[192]

The finger excites the place, i.e., receptical, of the vajra, the channel tip of the lotus. After the channel is awakened, one makes, as it is said, *samāpatti* (I.28: equanimity which equals great bliss) by means of the union which "binds the vajra", i.e., which inseparably binds the the two channels. By doing this relying on the consort as previously explained, the two winds are inserted into the central channel. This seems to be the supreme essence of clanswomen worship.

It says in the *Vajraḍāka* that "*Going amidst the retinue* occurs in all of the sense powers, the savour of all of those is alchemy."[193] The import of that indicates the alchemy which extracts the savour of all of them, the spirits of awakening which arise from the communion of the powers of art and wisdom. The yogin of this sort should should be engaged in that continually by means of the pith science which delves into the mudrā praṇāyāma.

Regarding the benefit of practicing in this manner, if you *taste*, i.e., serve, the *ambrosia* (**v.13.a**) which is like the nectar of the gods as previously explained, then you will attain the success which is permanent (**v.13.b**), which will not again be reversed. Thus, by the alchemy of the 'half-ten', i.e., *five*, amṛta *ambrosia* (**v.13.c**), this service to the consort of complete characteristics who has cultivated a lily-like receptical of bliss will

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[191] Tsongkhapa quotes as follows from the fourteenth chapter of the *Āryaḍākinivajrapañjara* (AM), as follows: rdo rje sor mo'i rab sbyor gyis // rdo rje'i sa bzhi rab bskul te /. It occurs in the AM as follows: / rdo rje mdzub mo'i sbyor ba yis // rdo rje gnas ni rab bskul bya / (DK 56a, QK p.234.4).

[192] Tsongkhapa again from the fourteenth chapter of the AM, occurs as follows: phyi nas de yi bde ldan du // rdo rje sems dpa' rab bcug ste // rdo rje bcing ba'i sbyor ba yis // rdo rje mchod pa rab tu brtsam /. This passage also occurs, with a few minor differences in spelling, at DK 56a, QK p.234.4.

[193] Tsongkhapa here quotes a passage from the fourty second chapter of the VD, as follows: tshogs kyi nang du zhugs pa ni / dbang po thams cad las byung ba ste / de dag thams cad kyi bcud kyi ra sa ya na'o /. This passage occurs as above on DK 91b and QK p.131.3, with the following exception /....thams cad kyi bcud ni ra sa ya na'o /.

bring about the *origination*, i.e., achievement of, *all succesess* (**v.13.d**), both [the transcendental and the mundane].

III.C.b.i.A.3.c.The four Mudrā Meditations.

Although there are many different texts on the *four offerings* (**v.14.a**) and so forth,[194] and also many different commentatorial methods,[195] I will comment on the mudrā meditation of Nāropa's system in accordance with my previous explanation in the context of the summary of the chapters. Furthermore, the "supreme secret," with respect to the four letters which are said to be "e-vam-ma-ya," here corresponds to the four offerings which are the four mudrās stated in the *Sampuṭa*,[196] namely the karmamudrā, dharmamudrā,

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[194] Verse fourteen appears to be corrupt in our Sanskrit, as it is definitely missing some syllables; this corruption, however, may be ancient, for the verse is rendered differently in different translations as well as in the commentaries. The first line, for example, occurs in the Sanskrit as *catuḥ pūjā tathā yoginyo*. The corresponding line in the Lochen/Prajñākirti/Mardo translation is *mchod bzhi dpa' bo chen po ni*, which is not even close, missing an equivanent to *yoginyo*, though possibly translating the next word in the verse, *virādvaya*. The Lochen/Sumatikirti translation is closer, with *mchod bzhi rnal 'byor chen mo ni*, as are Kambala (SN, QT p. 176.1) and Viravajra (SG, DT fol. 157a), who have *mchod bzhi de bzhin rnal 'byor ma*. This would lead one to suspect that by the eleventh century or so there were already alternate versions of the text circulating. Bu-ston (NS p. 222) seems to resolve the enigma. He initially cites the verse as *mchod pa bzhi dpa' bo chen po*, which would be the equivalent of **catuḥ pūjā mahāvirah*. He goes on to state, however, that there is an *alternate Indian text* which has *mchod bzhi de bzhin rnal 'byor rnams*, which is the exact equivalent to *catuḥ pūjā tathā yoginyo*. He also says that *dbang gnyis*, the "two organs" is the equivalent to *dpa' bo gnyis su med, virādvaya*, which occurs in our text.

[195] Buston provides us with many of these interpretations. First, quoting Bhavabhadra, he defines the four offerings as the outer, secret, the nature of mind (*yid kyi rang bzhin*), and actual (*dngos po*). He then goes on to define them as the four creation processes, which he lists as (1) the "voidness awakening", (2) the seed (3) the form, perfected and (4) the placement of the syllables. Alterately, they can refer to four types of yoga, namely *yoga, anuyoga, atiyoga* and *mahāyoga*. He goes on to say that the word *tathā* indicates the object of creation, the four skulls placed atop the vases, or the four essence yoginis. (NS p. 222) Viravajra, in his ST commentary, gives a slightly different list of the four offerings, and then relates them to the four mudrās, as follows: "The four offerings are the outer, secret, nature of mind and the offering of reality. Moreover, they are also four mudrās, namely the mahāmudrā, samayamudrā, dharmamudrā, and karmamudrā." / mchod bzhi ni phyi dang gsang ba dang yid kyi rang bzhin dang de kho na nyid kyi mchod pa'o // yang na phyag rgya chen po dang / dam thig dang / chos dang / las kyi phyag rgya bzhi ni mchod pa bzhi'o / (DT fol. 157a).

[196] Tsongkhapa is refering to a well-known passage in the fourth chapter of the first section of the SP. "The syllable *e* should be known as earth, the *karmamudrā*, Locanā, of great compassion and great art, whose nature is the sphere of universal activity. She resides in the Emanation Center, in the sixty four [petaled] lotus in the navel. The syllable *vaṃ* should be known as water, the *dharmamudrā*, Māmaki, characterized by love and devotion, the goddess who is the source of the Vajra clan. She abides in the Reality Center, in the eight petaled lotus at the heart. The letter *ma* is said to be fire, the *mahāmudrā*, Paṇḍarā, the goddess who is the source of the Lotus clan by the yoga of rapture and power. She abides in the Beatitude Center in the sixteen petaled lotus at the throat. The syllable *yā* is the nature of wind, the breaker of all addictions. It is the *mahāsamayamudrā* and the goddess who is the source of the Karma

mahāmudrā and samayamudrā. The equivalent term of "offering" is *pūja* which is etymologically explained as "that which fills the mind", for meditation on the four mudrās at the four occasions the mind is filled with bliss.

One meditates on the mudrā which is *desired in one's mind* (**v.14.b**) with the pride of the Great Hero (**v.14,a**) Heruka. In regard to the *equipoise of the two organs* (**v.14.c**) at that time from [the perspective] of the four [mudrās], in the context of the karmamudrā it is the equipoise in the two physical organs. In the context of the samayamudrā it is the *equipoise of the two organs* visualized by the mind. In the context of the dharmamudrā it is the equipoise of the "spring" and the "drop" *(vasantatilaka),* which is merely designated/described as an equipoise of the two organs. In the context of mahāmudrā both great bliss and voidness are equipoised, which is called the "equipoise of the two organs". Equipoised in that way even the karma[mudrā] *holds reality* (**v.14.d**) with orgasmic bliss. Although this [reference to bliss &void] applies to the Mahāmudrā alone, orgasmic bliss is drawn forth by meditating on [all] four, and when it is drawn forth, there is also in all four [mudrās] the need to unite it with voidness. This will be clearly shown below.

The "vajra" is the Lord Heruka, and *the holder* (**v.14.d**) is his yogin. [Compared] to the bliss produced by him in the manner of the bliss-void union, in reliance on the four mudrās, *the bliss* enjoyed by *gods and humans* (**v.15**), if gathered in one place, would not

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clan, Tārā, the Savior of the World (saṃsāra) by means of the yoga of equanimity and intuition. She resides in in the Great Bliss Center in the lotus of thirty four petals in the head." The Tibetan occurs at DK fol. 81 a,b, and also in Elder's edition: / e ni sa ru shes par bya // las kyi phyag rgya spyan ma nyid // snying rje chen po thabs chen po // rang bzhin sna tshogs spyod yul ma // lte bar sna tshogs 'dam skyes la // sprul pa'i 'khor lor rnam par gnas // baṃ ni chu ru shes par bya // chos kyi phyag rgya mā ma ki // byams pa dang ni smon lam tshul // lha mo rdo rje'i rigs byung ma // snying khar chu skyes 'dab brgyad la // chos kyi 'khor lor yang dag gnas // ma ni me ru brjod pa ste // phyag rgya chen po gos dkar mo // dga' dang stobs kyi rnam 'byor gyis // lha mo pad ma'i rigs byung ma // lkog mar chu skyes 'dab brgyad gnyis // long spyod 'khor lor yang dag gnas // ya ni rlung gi rang bzhin te // nyon mongs thams cad rab 'joms byed // dam tshig phyag rgya chen po nges // lha mo las kyi rigs byung ma // btang snyom ye shes mal 'byor gyis // sgrol ma 'khor ba sgrol ma'o // 'dab skyes 'dam ma sum bcu gnyis // bde chen 'khor lo chen por gnas /. (Elder 1979:153,4; see also Skorupski 1996, pp. 240,1). The Sanskrit occurs as follows: ekāraḥ pṛthivījñeyā karmamudrā tu locanā // mahākṛpā mahopāyā svarūpā viśvagocarā // sthitā nirmāṇacakre vai nābhau catuḥṣaṣṭāmbuje // vaṃkāras tu jalaṃ jñeyaṃ dharmamudrā tu māmaki // maitrīpraṇidhirūpā tu devī vajrakulodbhavā // sthitā sā dharmacakre tu hṛdaye svaṣṭadalāmbuje // makāro vahnir uddhiṣṭo mahāmudrā tu pāṇḍarā // muditābalayogena devī padmakulodbhavā // sthitā saṃbhogacakre tu kaṇṭhe dvyaṣṭadalāmbuje // yākāro vāyurūpas tu sarvakleśaprabhañjakaḥ // mahāsamayamudrā vai devī karmakulodbhavā // upekṣājñānayogena tārā saṃsāratāriṇī // sthitā mahāsukhe śiraś cakre dvātriṃśadalapaṅkaje (Elder 1978: 106-8; Skorupski 1996:240).

amount to even one sixteenth of that (**v.15**), it is said. This is intended for those who have developed excellent ability in the Perfection Stage. Regarding the majority of these explanations, there is the explanation of the scholar Mardo, which seems to be a very good one in the commentatorial tradition of Nāropa.

Although many Indian commentaries explain the four offerings in terms of the four mudrās, the application of the four offerings to the Creation Stage in the *Vajraḍāka* is similiar to Kambalipa's application of the four vajras to the Creation Stage.[197] The remaining texts apply them to the Perfection Stage.

III.C.b.i.A.4. Showing the Place of Practicing the Secret.

In regard to what words refer to the places of secret practice, *thickets* (**v.16.a**) are dense forests. [The term] *groves* is not present in the translations of Lochen and Mal, but there is a substitute for that, "cave and mountain ravine".[198] *Riverbank* (**v.16.b**) means a bank/shoreline. *Primordially established* (**v.16.c**) refers to previously produced charnel grounds.

If we explain symbolically, since the female consort is unmoved by the view of self contrived by the heretics due to the Great Bliss Lord, she is a *mountain* (**v.16.a**). Since

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[197] Tsongkhapa here refers to a passage in Kambala's SN commentary which occurs as follows: "The meaning of [the line] *the four offerings, thus, the yoginis* is that one should worship the four skull bowls placed atop the vases, and likewise the four yoginis who are Ḍākini etc., and the Lord of the wheels their maṇḍala, with the four vajras, which are, first of all, the awakening of void, second, the concentration of the seed, the perfection of the reflected image, and, fourth, the arrangement of letters." / mchod bzhi de bzhin rnal 'byor ma zhes bya ba ni rdo rje bzhi yis te / dang por stong pa'i byang chub bo // gnyis pa la ni sa bon bsdu // gsum pa la ni gzugs brnyan rdzogs // bzhi pa la ni yi ge dgod // ces bya ba dang / bum pa'i steng gi thod pa bzhi rnams dang / de bzhin de mkha' 'gro ma la sogs pa'i rnal 'byor ma rnams te / de dag gi dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo'i bdag nyid mchod par bya'o // zhes bya ba'i don no / (SN QT p. 176.1,2)

[198] There evidently were at least two Sanskrit editions of this text, and Tsongkhapa had access to at least three translations into Tibetan, that by Rinchen bZang-po, that by Mal, and the revised edition of Rinchen's translation by Marpa Chos-kyi-dbang-phyug (Mardo) and Prajñākirti. Of these the latter two are currently available, as well as the Sumatikirti's revision of Rinchen's translation. Among these, the translation in the Mardo-Prajñākirti edition corresponds exactly to the first *pada* of the sixteenth verse of the Sanskrit manuscripts, which is *girigahvarakuñjeṣu*. Presuming that the other editions do not represent mis-transations, the term *ri-sul* 'mountain ravine' could be a translation of *girikandara*, a possible alternate to the above.

inferior sentient beings are unable to strike [her] depths, hence *thickets*. Since [her] cavity is filled with nectar, hence "cave". Her riverbank is vast and profound due to the union of art and wisdom. *Primordially established* is Thatness which abandons production and destruction and which has the nature of that due to the constructive imagination of Great Bliss. Since she burns the awakening of the disciples and the solitary buddhas by the flames of great desire, hence *charnel ground.*[199] Since in this place, explained literally and symbolically, the essence is extracted, it is the "maṇḍala"; *maṇḍa* is essence, and *lāti* means "to extract".[200] One should meditate on the inner and outer maṇḍalas where the essence is extracted which is drawn with lines and so forth, or drawn mentally. In this way the first chapter is connected with the second, as it is relevant like the second in the contexts of the maṇḍala meditations of the two stages.

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[199] This interesting interpretation of the "place" for drawing the maṇḍala as the consort is made by Laṅka Jayabhadra, Devagupta and Kambala, the latter of whom wrote that "the literal interpretation alone of 'mountain gorge' etc. is easy is understand. Symbolically speaking, they indicate the the secret place of the excellent 'great lotus' type of consort of the Buddha, hence 'mountain gorge'....also, the female consort is dense with forests of desire and so forth, and hence her method which is purification serves as a way toward awakening. She is pure because she goes to the supreme limit. The place is the said to be the vagina (dharmodaya), since it is the place of birth of women who have the good qualities of the Vajra clan and so forth, who are praised by all of the Buddhas; it is thus isolated. She is the lord of great bliss of reality, an immovable *mountain*, since she is not pushed by the wind arising from the evil heretics. Since inferior beings cannot strike her depths, she is a thicket. Since her cavity is filled with the Victor's ambrosia, hence 'cave'. Regarding *riverbanks*, she is a river bank since she is on the river of wisdom vast and profound due to her union of wisdom and art. She is *primordially established*, that is, continually established, as she has abandoned origination and cessation, is fully perfected and always sky-like. She is a *charnel ground* since she burns the awakening of the disciples etc. by the blazing fire of desire." / ri sul zhes bya ba la sogs pa ste / sgra ji bzhin pa ni go sla ba kho na ste / brda yis ni sangs rgyas kyi phyag rgya chu skyes chen po yon tan dang ldan pa khyad par gyi gsang ba'i gnas bstan pa'i phyir / ri sul zhes bya ba gsungs te / don ni nags tshal 'khrigs shing dben pa'i yul te / der gnas pa zhes 'dir gzung bar bya'o // 'dir gtso bo gzung bas 'khor rnams kyang gzung bar bya'o zhes so // yang bud med kyi phyag rgya ni 'dod chags la sogs pa'i nags tshal gyis 'khrigs pa'o // de nyid thabs kyi rnam par dag pa ni byang chub kyi lam du gyur pa'o // de'i rnam par dag pa ni rab kyi mthar thug par 'gro ba'i phyir ro // yul ni chos 'byung du bstan te de nyid de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyis bsngags pa'i rdo rje'i rigs la sogs pa'i khyad par can gyi bu mo skye bo las byung ba'i phyir dben pa'o // yang na de kho na nyid kyi bde ba chen po'i bdag nyid ni mi g.yo ba'i ri ste / mu steg can ngan pa las rab tu byung ba'i rlung gis mi skul ba'i phyir ro // dman pa'i sems can gyis gting dpag par mi nus pas na tshang tshing ngo // rgyal ba'i bdud rtsis yongs su gang ba'i khung bur gyur pas na phug go / chu ba chen po'i 'gram rnams zhes bya ba la de nyid thabs dang shes rab yang dag par sbyor bas zab pa rgya che ba'i shes rab kyi chu'i gnas su gyur pas na / chu yis 'gram rnams so // gdong nas grub pa ni rtag tu yongs su grub pa ste / 'char ba dang nub pa spang shing / yongs su rdzogs pa rtag tu nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'o // de yang 'dod chags kyi me 'bar bas nyan thos la sogs pa'i byang chub bsregs pas na dur khrod do / (SN, QT p. 176.3,4). Similar accounts also occur in Jayabhadra's MP, DT fols. 74b, 75a, and Devagupta's SS, DT fols. 64b, 65a.

[200] Tsongkhapa's etymology is evidently based upon the verbal root √lā, to take, grasp, the third person singular present indicative of which is *lāti*, mentioned by Tsongkhapa.

III.C.b.i.B. Showing the name of the chapter.

This is from the *Concise Śri Heruka Abhidhāna Tantra.* In this chapter there is the entry into the maṇḍalas, namely the body maṇḍala which applies to the previous four elements, etc., the vagina maṇḍala [indicated] by the "resided in the vagina" [line] of the context, and also the maṇḍala of the Spirit of Awakening. As for [the term] chapter, *paricheda* or "division", there is both the division of the meaning of that which was spoken, and the division of the text of the speaker. As for it being first, it is the first of fifty-one. This is the explanation of the first chapter from the *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning, A Vast Commentary on the Concise Supreme Bliss Tantra called the Cakrasamvara.*

Chapter Two

III.C.b.ii. The Extensive Explanation of the Meaning by the Remaining Forty-nine.
A. Becoming a Suitable Vessel for Meditating on the Two Stages and so forth.
1.Drawing the Maṇḍala and Worshipping there when it is Completed.
a. The Characteristics of the Master.

It is said that the text in this root tantra are confused in order to hinder those who have not attended to a guru from entering this tantra on their own accord. I will explain in the way that the explanatory tantras resolve this confusion. If one wonders here, just what sort of characteristics should a master who performs the maṇḍala rite possess, it is generally taught that the master of the maṇḍala is one possessed of all the qualities expounded in the tantra. In particular, he should have *proper knowledge* of reality by means of great bliss, *understanding* of the vajra words of the Tantras (**II.v.4.a**) such as the Samvara. Having well *understood the mantra of Glorious* Blood Drinking *Heruka* (**v.4.b**), he is one who has completed the preliminary practice of mantra repetition. As it

says in the *Samvarodaya,* "One who is solicited by someone or desires merit for himself, should first perform the preparatory service abiding in the wheel as one's own deity."[201] The number of recitations is one hundred thousand for the mantra of either the principle or one's own deity, and 10,000 for those of the other [deities], as it says in the *Abhidānottara.*[202]

Not angry (**v.4.c**) means that he should not be disturbed when someone causes him temporary harm. *Pure* means that s/he is not besmirched by the root downfalls and so forth, and is free of the fault of a perverse mind. Regarding *competent,* it says in the *Samvarodaya* that "he is perfected in consecration and offering cakes, understands the reality of fire sacrifice and maṇḍalas, and is learned in all fields of knowledge."[203] *Understands yoga* (**v.4.d**) refers to one who knows the ritual applications such as pacifying and so forth. *Perfected in wisdom* means that he is thus gone to the other side of knowledge. One who is endowed with characteristics such as these should perform the maṇḍala rite.

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[201] This passage is from the seventeenth chapter of the SV, which is entitled *maṇḍalasūtrapātalakṣaṇanirdeśa-paṭala.* It represents the second half of the first verse and first half of the second in Tsuda's edition. It occurs as follows in his edition, with only minor variation from Tsongkhapa's version: / 'di ltar 'ga' shig gsol 'debs pa'am // rang nyid bsod nams 'dod pa yis // dang por rang lha'i bdag nyid kyi // 'khor lo la gnas sngon bsnyen bya / (1974: 202). The Sanskrit occurs as follows: / evaṃ kaścid adhyeṣya svayaṃ vā puṇyakāmataḥ // pūrvasevā svacakrastham prathamaṃ devatātmakam / (1974:119)

[202] I could not find instructions this specific, but there is a general statement in chapter 4 of the AD that the number of repetitions should be one hundred thousand or ten thousand (DK 258b, QK p. 46.1).

[203] This passage consists of the latter three lines of the third verse of chapter seventeen of the SV in Tsuda's edition. They occur as follows: ...pratiṣṭhābalipāragaḥ // homamaṇḍalatattvajñaḥ sarvavidyāsu kovidaḥ // (1974:119). / rab gnas gtor ma'i pha rol son // sbyin sreg dkyil 'khor de nyid shes // rig pa'i gnas ni thams cad rig / (1974:202). / The first line of this verse, not quoted by Tsongkhapa, includes as his qualifications the following: "He is steadfast and understands the profound Teachings." dhīro gambhīradharmajñaḥ.../ brtan shing zab mo'i chos shes pa..., /

III.C.b.ii. A.1.b. How he performs the rite.
i. The Rites of the Ground.
A. Purifying the ground.

The *Vajraḍāka* explains the purification done once one has examined and dug the ground.[204] As purification [prior to] digging the ground, etc., is not necessary, one should purify as stated there and in the *Samvarodaya.*[205] In regard to the drawing of the maṇḍala, the *ground* on which the *maṇḍala* is made *should be annointed* (**v.1.b**) *there with cowdung* that is "suspended", i.e., *unfallen* onto the ground. (**v.1.a**) As this also indicates the remaining cow products, it is annointed with [all of] the five cow products.[206]

One might wonder, are these alone sufficient? One must also have the *ash* of a corpse burnt in a *charnel ground* (**v.1.c**). The maṇḍala ground is annointed not only with that, but also *with* the "half of ten *amṛtas*", that is, *the five ambrosias* (**v.1.d**).[207] It is taught that the ground is purified with these.

On that *annointed ground* you should *undertake* the drawing of *the maṇḍala* (**v.2.a,d**). The basis for this endeavor, moreover, is *practice in the charnel ground* (**v.2.c**). If it is not in the charnel ground, then, imagine that place also as "in the charnel ground", and undertake the maṇḍala. The second verse-half (**v.2.c,d**) does not occur in Mal's translation. Although it appears in the translations of both Lochen and Mardo, there appears to be differences among the India texts. Therefore one should not assume that it doesn't exist in the Indian texts just because it doesn't appear in one [version of] the text.[208]

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[204] See chapter 46 of the VD, which covers the preparation and drawing of the maṇḍala.

[205] This is covered in chapter 17 of the SV, which is edited and translated in Tsuda (1974).

[206] These are dung, urine, milk, butter and yogurt. The Sanskrit of the Root Tantra simply says "with cow products". The Tibetan translation, however, specifies unfallen cowdung, which according to Tsongkhapa implies the other four as well.

[207] Here the Sanskrit says quite simply *pañcāmṛta-samanvitaṃ.* The Tibetan translation in the DK, follows this with *bdud rtsi lnga dang bcas pa yis.* Tsongkhapa states this, but follows it with the more obscure translation, which most likely from Mal Lo-tsa-ba's, as this version of the verse in Tibetan is quoted by Sachen, who in his commentary on the CST uses Mal's translation. (see PG p. 302.1).

[208] According to Tsongkhapa, the second half of this verse does not occur in Mal's translation; likewise Sachen, whose PG is a line by line commentary on Mal's translation, does not comment on these lines (see PG p. 302.1) It does occur in Prajñākīrti and Mardo's revision of Rinchen bZangpo's translation,

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b. i.

B. Supporting the ground

The system of Lama Mal claims that [the lines] "skull on the crown" (**v.5.a**) "armoured" (**v.9.b**) [indicate] the upholding of the ground.[209] This is good, since it is in accordance with the two explanatory tantras. The *Samvarodaya* says that the ground is supported by the expulsion of the demons by the Master, who is entreated as the self of the deity, holding the vajra and bell.[210] The *Vajraḍāka* also says that, in the context of the ground rites, having visualized oneself as Mahākrodhaḥ, and after driving in the pegs, one should construct the vajra foundation, the vajra wall and the net of arrows. These seem to be the meaning of the text of the root tantra.[211]

Regarding the apparel which the Master should have previously put on, his *crown*, i.e., his crest of dreadlocks which grows upon his head, is ornamented with a row of *skulls* (**v.5.a**) on which are drawn the forms of the five Buddha clans.[212] All of his *limbs* are

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Tsongkhapa points out; however, Sumatikīrti's revision contains only one line of the second verse-half, which corresponds exactly to the extant Sanskrit texts. Tsongkhapa evidently was right that were different variant versions of the text in Sanskrit, which would account for differences in the Tibetan translations. Among these, the Sumatikīrti version seems closest thus far to the surving Sanskrit manuscripts from Nepal.

[209] Indeed, Sachen comments on these verses in his subsection "Upholding the Ground", PG p. 302.1-4.

[210] See chapter 17 of the *SV*, which is edited and translated in Tsuda's (1974) edition, esp. verses eight and nine, which occur as follows: "The Master who is the nature of all Buddhas, and whose self is the deity, the hero who holds the vajra and the bell, should be supplicated together with the ḍākinī. Brandishing the vajra and ringing the bell, the wise one should expell the evil ones, the gods, titans and secret ones." / devatātmaka ācāryaḥ sarvabuddhātmamūrtibhiḥ / vajraghaṇṭādharo vīro adhyeṣyo ḍākinīsaha // vajram ullālayan dhīmān ghaṇṭāvādanatatparaḥ / utsādayet praduṣṭaughān sadevāsuraguhyakān // (p. 120) / slob dpon sangs rgyas kun rang bzhin // lha yi sku yi bdag nyid can // dpa' bo rdo rje dril 'chang ba // mkha' 'gro bcas la gsol ba gdab // blo ldan rdo rje gsor byed cing // dril bu 'khrol bar brtson pa yis // lha dang lha min gsang ba dang // rab tu gdug pa'i bgegs tshogs bskrad / (p. 203)

[211] See chapter 46 of the VD, which concerns the preparation and drawing of the maṇḍala.

[212] This passage, drawn wholesale from Bu-ston's commentary (NS p. 134) is interesting in that it suggests a resolution to a problem in the interpretation of the root tantra. The manuscripts have *kapālakṛtamūrdhajā*, which does not closely correspond to the standard Tibetan translation of *thod pas spyi bor brgyan byas shing* "his head ornamented with a skull", for while *mūrdhan* means head, *mūrdhaja* means hair. While the Sanskrit, testified only by one damaged old palm-leaf manuscript and two later copies made from it, can never be assumed to be free of errors, there is also the strong possibility here that

smeared with ash (**v.5.b**) of burnt corpses and with the five ambrosias, and his body should be ornamented by mūdras of earrings, necklaces and so forth. Although a certain translation has *[his] body is adorned with ornaments* (gug skyed), it is better translated as "seal" (*phyag rgya*).[213]

Lochen translates the *bone rosary* [line] (**v.5.d**) as *has a bone rosary.*[214] It is said that this means that he is ornamented by bone ornaments, evidently it refers to a sacred thread (*yajñopavita*) of bone. His *crown* is ornamented by a disk made from a *seamless*

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the Tibetan translation is an interpretive (*don 'gyur*) translation of an oblique Sanskrit passage. This is suggested by the translation of the same *pada* in Devagupta's commentary, which is *sphyi bor skyes pa'i thod byas shing* (SS, DT fol. 75b), in which *mūrdhaja* is translated literally. The commentary of Tsongkhapa and Bu-ston make this clear, explaining that the ornament of a row of skulls is upon not simply his head, but upon the crest of dreadlocks *which grow upon his head,* (mgo la skyes pa'i ral pa'i cod pan), *mgo la skyes pa* being a literal explanation as well. The obscure compound *kapālakṛtamūrdhaja* is thus interpreted as refering a hair ornament consisting of a row of skulls. This interpretation seems to be based on Indic commentators such as Devagupta and Kambala (see his SN, QT p. 177.1), as well as Bhavabhadra, who commented quite simply that "he whose head is ornamented with five skulls is *kapālakṛtamūrdhajaḥ.* / thod pa lngas dbu la brgyan pa gang yin pa de / thod pas sphyi bo brgyan byas shing // zhes bya bas so / (CP, DT fol. 162)

[213] This verse presents an interesting and perhaps illuminating problem. The line in question is verse 5.c, which occurs in the Sanskrit as follows: *mātrair vibhuṣitagātra. Mātra* corresponds to *gug-skyed,* which occurs in all of the translations, those derived from Rinchen bZang-po's as well as Mal's. Lokesh Chandra, in his *Tibetan-Sanskrit Dictionary,* gives *mūdra* as the Sanskrit equivalent to the Tibetan *gug-skyes,* citing one occurance where it was so translated, *Hevajra* II.9.12. (Chandra 1993, vol. 2 p.339). Tsongkhapa does not seem to approve of this translation; his use of the term "a certain translation" (*'gyur kha cig*) implies that there is at least one other translation that is variant. This is possible, but if true that translation or edition is evidently no longer extant. However, Tsongkhapa is vague here; his statement "it is better translated as 'seal' " may just be his opinion. It is true that *phyag rgya* is the usual translation of *mudrā,* "seal". However, the Sanskrit has *mātra,* here meaning "ornament". While *mudrā* can also have the similiar meaning of "sign" or "badge", it usually has a different meaning in Buddhist Tantric literature. It may be the case that the translators translated it with the obscure Tibetan term *gug skyed/ skyes* to avoid the confusion that the use of the term *phyag rgya* might cause. In fact, the term *mudrā* has this variant meaning in the Hevajra passage cited above, causing Snellgrove to translate it as "symbolic adornment". (Snellgrove 1959 vol. 1 p. 117). This use of the term *mudrā* occurs in the writings of Yāmunācārya, the teacher of Rāmānuja, who describes the *kāpālikas* as wearing the *mudrikā-ṣaṭka,* which he describes as "the *karṇikā* (earring), the *rucaka* (necklace), the *kuṇḍala* (earring), the *śikhāmaṇi* (crest jewel), ashes (*bhasma*), and the sacred thread (yajñopavita)." (Lorenzen1989:234) The root text itself does not list *mātra* to be worn, although verse 5 does prescribe ash, and verses 13 and 14 of chapter 3 includes earrings, necklaces, bracelets, rings and sacred threads as gifts to be given to the guru. In the commentary, Tsongkhapa does not list all six, but only says "earrings, necklaces and so forth". Dārika, in his *Śricakrasaṃvarastotra Sarvārthasiddhiviśuddhacūḍāmaṇi,* describes him as "beautified by the six *mudrā* of the the six pāramitā" (pha rol phyin drug phyag rgya drug gis mdzes, fol. 193a). Sachen's comment on *gug skyed* is also quite interesting. He says that "the body is ornamented with the *gug skyed,* that is, with the six bone ornaments which have the mantras *namahi,* etc." (p. 302.2) This shows that indeed refers to six types of ornaments made from bone, which were associated with the six armour mantras of Cakrasamvara, one of which is *oṃ na ma hi hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ.* At this point the origins of this tradition of yogic apparel are difficult to ascertain. It is clear, however, that the Buddhists invested them with symbolic significance.

[214] The "Lochen" translation cited by Tsongkhapa as *rus 'phreng rus par yang dag gnas* is almost identical to Sumatikīrti's edition, which in turn closely approximates the Sanskrit. The Prajñākīrti- Marpa Chos kyi dbang phyug edition differs significantly from these.

skull. (**v.6.a**)[215] "Hung with a garland of bone" (**v.6.b**) refers to necklaces of fifty head garlands. *A skull staff (khatvāṅga)* is *placed* (**v.6.c**) in the crook of the left arm.

The master himself takes on the appearance of the Glorious Blood-drinker *Heruka* (**v.6.d**) in the middle of the maṇḍala. Having done that, *think of Śriheruka* (**v.7.a**) refers to his sadhāna meditation. Bhavyakirti explains that "becoming Heruka" refers to the creation of the commitment hero, and thinking of him is thinking of the wisdom hero.[216]

The body maṇḍala meditation is demonstrated by *place the wheel* (**v.7.b**) of the thirty seven goddesses in the points of the body maṇḍala which are illustrated by the *heart* of this visualization on Heruka. *Having thus armed oneself* (**v.7.c**) with the visualization of the inner and outer maṇḍalas, at the end of the meditation the demons will be vanquished and so forth. Once demons which were previously there are vanquished, vajra *fences* are *placed* in the cardinal and ordinal *directions* (**v.7.d**) so that they will not re-enter later. Not only in the directions, but also *below* the ground, *place wards* (**v.8.b**) reaching down to the golden earth.[217] The universal vajra should serve as the foundation.

In the translation of Mardo alone there occurs "the essence of the wheel is sword-like." In the translation of the two translators together there also occurs, "the wheels are

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[215] This passage is definitely in need of commentary, as the root text describes that which ornaments the head with the word *ekakhaṇḍi*, 'one-pieced' or 'seamless'; this description may complement the compound *kapālakṛta* of the previous verse which also seems to describe a head ornament, perhaps the same one. Tsongkhapa is following the Indian commentatorial tradition in explaining that it is a disk made from a seamless skull. Bhavyakirti explains that "regarding 'his head ornamented with a seamless [skull]', it means that a human skull with a universal vajra is set on his head." / dum gcig spyi bor brgyan pa dang / zhes bya ba ni spyi bo mi'i thod pa la sna tshogs rdo rje yod 'jog pa'o / (SM, DT fol. 12b, 13a.). This is also cited by Bu-ston (NS p. 234). Laṅka Jayabhadra provides and even clearer explanation. "*his hair has a seamless [skull]*" indicates that it is a garland of skulls, and it is said that a skull which is seamless is the very best." / dum cig spyi bor brgyan pa dang // zhes bya ba 'dis thod pa'i phreng ba yod par ston to // 'di nyid kyis ni dum bu gcig pa'i thod pa mchog nyid du bshad do /. (MP, DT fol. 46b)

[216] Tsongkhapa here loosely paraphrases Bhavyakirti's explanation of these two lines in his SM commentary, which occur as follows: "*One becomes Śriheruka* means, according to the oral instructions, that one undertakes the yoga of Śriheruka. *One should thereafter think of Śriheruka* means that one should invite the wheel of intuition (*jñānacakra*)." / bdag nyid shri he ru kar byas nas zhes bya ba ni man ngag ji lta bas dpal he ru ka'i rnal 'byor du byas pa'o // de 'og tu ni / dpal ldan he ru ka dran bya // zhes bya ba ni ye shes kyi 'khor lo spyan drang bar bya'o / (SM DT fol. 13a) Evidently in this maṇḍala meditation, one does not invite simply one intuition hero (*jñānasattva*), but rather a whole host of them to empower one's visualization of the multi-deity maṇḍala.

[217] This is the level of the earth element in the stacked-up elements model of the cosmos. It is the disc of golden earth which arose from the churning of the mass of waters by wind. It is the foundation of the world, the support upon which rests both the continents and the oceans. See Jamgön 1995 p. 109.

garlands of swords." "Having placed the essence of the wheel" from Lochen's translation should be taken as occurs above.[218] This seems to be the meaning of "place the *essence of the wheel* (**v.8.c**) which protects below and in the directions, make a *net of arrows above* (**v.8.d**)."

Having produced the net of arrows above, *make* again *the sky-ranging*, that is, above, the vajra *tent* (**v.9.a**), which arms *one* (**v.9.b**) so as to be unharmed by the demons. A certain commentary explains that "one should produce the tent above after inviting the wisdom hero from above, and after it is absorbed into the vow hero." But as the tent production does not occur before this, it is not acceptable. When you are *thus armed* (**v.9.c**) in the manner previously explained, as one is *unbroken* (**v.9.d**), i.e., indestructable, even by the Lord of the Thirty Three Gods, then what need is there to speak of the other demons? This shows the greatness of this divine yoga and protective wheel.

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b.ii. The Rite of Drawing and Acheiving the Maṇḍala.
A. Drawing the Maṇḍala.

It is taught in brief that *well protecting oneself thus* (**v.10.a**) as previously explained, and being *ornamented with the mudrā* of Vajravārāhi, *and* with the root *mantra*, (**v.10.b**) etc., one should *draw the terrifying*, i.e., fierce, *maṇḍala* (**v.10.c**) *which bestows* all *the powers* (**v.10.d**).

The statement in the root tantra that one first draws by color and then by lines, is jumbled. The explanatory tantra resolves the confusion, explaining in accordance with the explanation on drawing.

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[218] There evidently was several translation-editions of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra available in Tibet at Tsongkhapa's time. He cites Mardo's solo translation as *'khor lo'i bdag nyid mtshon cha mnyam.* This edition, which is now lost, is similar but not identical to Sumatikīrti's edition as it occurs in the Phug-brag Kanjur (manuscript F). This edition's translation is much closer to the Sanskrit (*cakrasya susamātmānaṃ)* than any of the other editions cited by Tsongkhapa. The translation of "the two translators together" is the Prajñākīrti-Mardo revision of Lochen (Rinchen bZangpo's translation), which is the version that occurs in all of the Tibetan Kanjur editions. The translations of this line from both the latter version, as well as of Lochen's unrevised translation, which is also now lost, are quite different from the Sanskrit.

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b.ii.A.1. Drawing with Lines

Then, after the ground rites, one plants the lines. The *thread* is *dead* (**v.11.a**), meaning a thread from a corpse. That is explained as being thread which was carried to the charnel ground together with a human corpse, and which has not fallen to the ground, or thread made of the sinew of a human corpse. *Or* indicates that if there is none of that, then, with thread *coloured with great blood* (**v.11.b**), i.e., human blood, together with the five nectars , *lay out the terrifying maṇḍala* (**v.11.c**) of Śri *Heruka's palace supreme* (**v.11.d**). There are also explanations which omit [the term] *or*.

Among the [strings], there is the action line, which is a moistened string. The wisdom line is stated in the two explanatory Tantras as being the five colored string of twenty five [threads].[219]

In regard to the size of the maṇḍala, the root line can be *of a single cubit, four or eight.* (**v.12.a**) It also says in the *Saṃvarodaya*, "Starting from half a cubit and so forth up to as much as a hundred cubits."[220] [The size is thus] uncertain, being limited by the extent of the disciples' wealth, etc. In regard to the size of that root line, the maṇḍala should be *adorned with four doors, four* edges, i.e., *corners and four arches.* (**v.12.b-d**).

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[219] Tsongkhapa here writes *ye thig* as an abbreviation of *ye shes thig skud*, which is described in the SV, verse 19 of chaper 17, as consisting of 25 threads twisted together, representing the five wisdoms. The first half Verse 20 states that it should be annointed with the five ambrosias while one recites the syllable *hūṃ*, which gives a multivalent resonance between the five wisdoms, nectars and colors. The verses occur in Tsuda's (1974) edition as follows: pañcajñānānvitaṃ sūtraṃ pañcaviṃśatibheditam / valayet sūtram anyonyaṃ sarvadharmasvabhāvataḥ // hūṃkāroccārayed yogī pañcāmṛtena lepitam / (p.121), / srad bu ye shes lnga ldan shing // nyi shu rtsa lngar rnam dbye bas // chos kun ngo bo nyid kyis ni // sras bu phang tshun bsgril bar bya // sgrub pos yi ge hūṃ brjod de // bdud rtsi lngas ni byug par bya / (p.204). It was explained to me that this line is only visualized; action line is the actual line, smeared with blood (or, these days, with chalk powder), which when snapped leaves the actual marks. The wisdom line is the multicoloured line which is visualized as entering the mark just as it is being made.

[220] This citation is corresponding to the first half of verse 23 in chapter 17 in the SV. It occurs as follows in Tsuda (1974): ardhahastādikaṃ samārabhya śatahastaṃ tu yāvat / (p.121), / khru phyed la sogs nas brtsams nas // ji srid khru ni brgya yi bar / (p.204).

[The term] *all around* means that they should be equidistant from the root line.[221] The adept drawing the maṇḍala *measures* or examines the length of the line thread as twice that of [the radius of] the maṇḍala. (**v.13.a**) It says in the *Saṃvarodaya* that "the length is twice that of the maṇḍala, [the thickness being] one twentieth of a door."[222] The *Vajramālā* explains that the line thread is twice [the distance] from root line to root line in the direction of each of the four smaller portions and twice the distance from parapet to parapet in the direction of the ninety sixth smaller portion.[223] I have already extensively explained the enumeration of these in my commentary on Lūipa's Sadhāna.[224] The statement in

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[221] Tsongkhapa is being a bit terse here, no doubt because he assumed his readers would be familiar with the basics of maṇḍala architecture. He is commenting on the term *kun nas*, which seems to translate both *samantataḥ* and *samākirṇaṃ*, from the lines *caturasrasamantataḥ caturdvarasaṃākirṇaṃ* "four corners all around, covered with four doors", which evidently means that it is square in shape. The root lines are the two lines that bisect the mandala at right angles. Bu-ston is a little clearer in writing: "The four sides which join at the end of the two root lines all around", meaning that it is at the sides of the square where the two root lines begin and end. (/ kun nas rtsa thig gnyis kyi rtse mo phrad pa'i zur bzhi pa / NS p. 238).

[222] This passage corresponds to the second half of verse 20 of chapter 17 of the SV, which Tsuda mysteriously without comment omits from his translation, but fortunately not from his edition, where it occurs as follows: cakraṃ dviguṇato dīrghaṃ dvāraviṃśatibhāgikam // (p.121), / dkyus su 'khor lo'i nyis 'gyur la // sbom su sgo yi nyi shu cha / (p.204). Tsongkhapa quotes a somewhat less clear version of the text as follows: / ring ba 'khor lo'i nyis 'gyur te // sgo yi nyi shu cha dag go /.

[223] Chapter 54 of the *Śrivajramālābhidhānamahāyogatantra sarvatantrahṛdaya-rahasyavibhaṅga* deals with the drawing of the maṇḍala, and fols. 254 and 255 therein deal with the threads, but they do not really clarify Tsongkhapa's esoteric description here, which deals with the gridwork of lines laid down as the first step in the drawing of the maṇḍala. This grid is laid down in a mathmatic way, in which the position and length of smaller lines that represent features of the maṇḍala are calculated as fractions of the original root line. The abbot of rNam-rgyal monastery in Dharamsala, India explained to me that the "root line", *rtsa thig*, is divided into four "greater portions", *cha chen*, which in turn divide into four "smaller portions", *cha chung*. These are used to measure the details within the maṇḍala, such as the size of the doors, which together make up the innermost square of the maṇḍala, or the balconies (*mda'yab*), which make up the outermost ring of the maṇḍala excluding the arches (*toraṇa*, *rta babs*-see appendix I of George 1974, pp. 86,7, which consists of a useful diagram of the maṇḍala, with its major parts identified). As before, Bu-ston is clearer, saying that that the line thread is twice the length of the root line, so that if one needs a line thread eight cubits long for a maṇḍala four cubits in size, which makes sense, given the fact that the lines are placed on the ground and snapped to leave a mark. (dkyil 'khor ni rtsa thig nas rtsa thig gi bar yin la / de;inyis 'gyur gyi thig skud ring thung ste / dkyil 'khor khru bzhi pa la thig skud brgyad pa la sogs pa'o / NS p. 238) Bhavabhadra as well is to the point in commenting "Regarding 'double measure', [one cubit is measures as] two cubits, and eight cubits as sixteen: this is a characteristic of the string, which should be made twice [as long] as the maṇḍala." / nyis 'gyur rnams dpyad cing zhes pa ni / khru gnyis dang ni khru brgyad dang // khru ni bcu drug ces pa ni / thig skud 'di yi khyad par ro // 'khor lo nyis 'gyur thig skud bya'o / (CP, DT fol. 163b)

[224] This is the text in his *gsung-'bum*, vol. ta, with the title *bcom ldan 'das dpal 'khor lo bde mchog gi mngon par rtogs pa'i rgya cher bshad pa 'dod pa 'jo ba.*

Kambalipā's commentary that "The intelligent one should lay out the maṇḍala by the process of increasing the proportion" is explained in another text.[225]

The *ḍākini* (**v.13.b**) are the heroes and heroines. The *net* is the host of them. Cakra-*saṃvara* is the principle deity. As for the statement about worshipping them, although it is explained in connection to what follows, it has the meaning of worshipping the maṇḍala which is the deity arrangement (i.e. the inhabitant maṇḍala), after having made the action lines. Thus, there is no need to order the disorder of the text. Since I have clearly explained elsewhere the means of knowing them, I will not elaborate here.

In that way, the root tantra speaks of the arrangements of both the deities and the vessels. As the remaining preparations are discussed in the explanatory tantra, the gap is filled.

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b.ii.A.2. Drawing with Color.

With what sort of colors is the maṇḍala drawn? It should be made with the five types of pigments which occur in the charnel ground. [Dark] blue pigment is made from the charcoal powder of burnt corpses. Red pigment is made with the bricks of the charnel ground. White pigment is made from human bone powder. Yellow pigment is made from tumeric mixed with human bone powder. Green pigment is human bone dust together with leaf powder; a good maṇḍala should be drawn with these. It also says in the *Saṃvarodaya* that [it is made] "with powder made of the five types of jewels, or with rice and so forth."[226] Therefore, the colors which are made from the charnel ground substances are intended in a few particular maṇḍalas.

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[225] This is a quote from chapter two of Kampala's SN commentary, which occurs as follows: / cha 'phen pa yi rim nyid kyis // blo bzang dkyil 'khor thig gdab bya / (DT fol. 8a, QT p. 177.1). Tsongkhapa's text has *cha 'phel*, which is correct.

[226] Tsongkhapa cites a passage in the SV corresponding to the first half of verse 30 of chapter 17 in Tsuda's (1974) edition, where it occurs as follows: pañcaratnamayaiś cūrṇair atha vā taṇḍulādibhiḥ / (p. 122), / rin chen lnga yi phye ma'am // yang na 'bras la sogs pa ste / (p. 205)

The colored paints are consecrated, and and with those pigments one should *place*, that is, draw, a multicolored lotus *in the middle of that* (**v.13.c**) maṇḍala which has *a corrola and* eight *petals, blazing* (**v.13.d**) with the aspect of blazing light rays. Regarding *endowed with filaments* (**v.13**), it refers to both the anthers and the filaments.[227] As for the former, they are in the center [of the lotus]. The latter should be between the center and the petals, encircled by orange lines. The body, speech and mind wheels should also be drawn as illustrated by that. This I have exhaustively explained elsewhere (in the *snags rim chenmo).*

In regard to the method of drawing the inhabitant maṇḍala upon the habitat maṇḍala thus drawn, the *Abhidānottara* says one should place the letter, i.e., the seed syllable, of each deity, their hand implements, mūdrā that each deity forms with the hand, the image of each deity and bunches of flowers [in the maṇḍala].[228] It is also said that *place in the center the hero* (**v.14.a**) and so forth are shows the drawing of the deities' forms in the maṇḍala. If we compare this with *who has the tremendous noise of very loud laughter* (**v.14.d**), since it is also clear that the vow hero is placed in the maṇḍala mentally, in general it is suitable to explain it in both ways, but [here we're] primarily [concerned with] the construction of the maṇḍala.[229]

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b.ii.B. Completing the Maṇḍala.

Then, once one has drawn suitably the characteristics of the habitat and inhabitant maṇḍalas, one simultaneously generates the habitat and the inhabitants in order to complete

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[227] The Sanskrit term is *kesara*, which refers to the filaments in the center of the lotus flower. Tsongkhapa says that this term refers not only to the filaments proper (*ge-sar*), but also to the anthers (*ze'u-'bru*), which presumably refers to the generative organs at the very center of the flower.

[228] It appears that this is explained in chapter 14 of the *AD*, which is edited and translated in Kalff's (1979) edition.

[229] That is, this verse can be interpreted as refering either to the physical construction of the maṇḍala, or its mental visualization.

the maṇḍala, in accordance with the system of Luipa, which is the intention of the *Samcārya* and the *Samvarodaya.* This accords with what is said in the fifty first chapter, ending with the generation from wind up until Mt. Sumeru and the lotus.[230] After generating the habitat and inhabitants from the total realization (mnon byang-abhisambodhi) of the vowels and consonants and so forth, visualize the palace. The deities are visualized in as explained. If one first generates the habitat and afterwards generates the inhabitants as in the *Abhidhānottara*, they are created as before up to Sumeru, each from his or her own seed syllable. After the creation of the palace from Vairocana, the deities should be created from the total realization in the middle of the central lotus.

Furthermore, the *Hero* Heruka who should be *placed in the center* (**v.14.a**) of the lotus, he *terrifies* even *Mahābhairava* (**v.14.b**), i.e., Iśvara, who is famed as a great power in the world. He is very *brilliant* (**v.14.c**) with great majesty. He *laughs* pervading space with its *tremendous noise* (**v.14.d**), and he *wears a row of* five dried *skulls* on each head (**v.15.a**). He is *divine* because he is the essence of great bliss. On of his *four faces* has *three eyes* (**v.15.b**). He is *covered with a* moist *hide* of a white *elephant* (**v.15.c**) on his back, with its head and hair showing. His *beautiful eyebrows* are *cleft*, i.e., split, all the way up to the *vajra* (**v.15.d**) garland on his forehead.[231] In his left *hand* he holds a *skull*

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[230] This is in reference to the first half of verse 14, which is garbled in the Sanskrit but which occurs as follows from the Tibetan: "The vowels and consonants are generated in the center of the universal lotus atop the mountain." / ri steng sna tshogs padma yi // lte bar â li kā li skyes /.

[231] Tsongkhapa's explanation is from a Laṅka Jayabhadra's MP commentary, but as Tsongkhapa does not acknowledge this source, it is likely that he is quoting Bu-ston's NS commentary, which quotes the MP at length. Tsongkhapa's version of the passage is: / dpral ba'i rdo rje phreng ba'i mthar thug pa'i bar du smin ma bzang po 'byes pa ste gyes pa /. The longer explanation in the NS, the likely source of the above, occurs as follows: "The equivalent term of 'split' is *bhinna*, so his eyebrows which are *vajra-cleft*, as if they were completely split by a vajra, are as if beautiful; the eyebrows in the middle and the eyes below form a three-pronged vajra. Furthermore, his eyebrows are cleft or split all the way up to the vajra garland on his forehead. Someone claimed that "regarding *vajra-cleft*, it indicates the vajra and bell, namely, that the beautuful eyebrows which are completely split by a vajra are the eyebrows of the fortunate one." / 'byes pa'i skad dod bhinna ni bcom pa la 'jug pas / rdo rje lta bus sna tshogs yang dag par bcom pas na rdo rje 'byes pa'i smin ma bzang zhing mnyam pa nyid kyi dbus lte ba smin ma dang mig dag gi 'og tu rdo rje rtse gsum pa nyid du grub pa'o // yang na dpral ba'i rdo rje phreng ba'i mthar thug pa'i bar du smin ma 'byes shing gyes pa'o // kha cig / rdo rje dang dril bu ste / do rje nyid kyis yang dag par 'byes shing brgyan pa / smin ma bzang po ni skal pa dang ldan pa'i smin ma'o zhes bzhed do / (p.240). This passage up until *kha cig*, "someone" is drawn from Laṅka Jayabhadra's MP commentary, which is somewhat clearer than Bu-ston's paraphrase. It occurs as follows: "Regarding his *eyebrows beautiful, vajra-cleft*, his eyebrows are seemingly beautiful; they are, namely,beautiful eyebrows, and the statement that they have a vajra-like cleft is applicable here. Furthermore, it means that his eyebrows are cleft or split

staff (**v.16.a**) and a human skull.[232] His neck *is adorned with a garland of half a hundred* (**v.16.b**), i.e., fifty, wet human heads strung with wet intestines.

The *goddess who stands* in front of *him*, Heruka, in the mode of being *embraced* (**v.16.c**) is *Vajravārāhi*, who is *truly awesome* (**v.16.d**) since she menaces the malicious, and who stands *facing Śriheruka* (**v.17.a**). She has *three eyes* and a *fierce form* (**v.17.b**). She holds with her left hand a *skull bowl filled* (**v.17.c**) with the *antra*, that is, intestines, and blood of demons. *Rudhira*, that is, *blood, trickles from her mouth* (**v.17.d**). With her right hand she *threatens the gods, titans, and humans in all directions* (**v.18.a.b**).

The principle couple's implements are not clearly stated. Since the meaning of the Root Tantra is explained in many different ways by the Explanatory Tantras, the complete meaning of the Root Tantra is not found in any single [source]. However, in regard to the practice of the ritual procedures of Lūipa, Kāṇha, Ghaṇṭa and so forth, I will compare their systems and explain their significance when the opportunity arises. For example, either Lūipa's explanation that Vārāhī holds a vajra in her right hand or Ghaṇṭa's explanation that she holds a chopper may be the import of the Root Tantra. And as Heruka's remaining implements are also explained in many different ways in the Explanatory Tantras, I will explain them when the occasion arises. But since these matters must be known from the sādhanas of the respective traditions, I will not explain them here. The remaining [details] should also be known in this way.

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all the way up to the vajra garland on his forehead." / smin ma bzang po rdo rje dbyes / zhes bya ba la / smin ma bzang zhing mnyam pa ni smin ma bzang po ste / rdo rje ltar dbyes pa gang la mnga' ba de la skad ces bya'o zhes bya bar sbyar ro // yang na dpral ba'i rdo rje phreng ba'i mthar thug pa'i bar du smin ma 'byes shing gyes pa mnga' ba zhes bya ba'i don to / (DT fol. 47b). Tsongkhapa in effect takes Laṅka Jayabhadra's gloss on *vajrasaṃbhinna*, and adds the word "beautiful" (*bzang-po*) in order to gloss the entire *pada*.

[232] Tsongkhapa here is following the standard translation; the Sanskrit of this line, *khaṭvāṅgakṛtahastaṃ tu*, has nothing corresponding to a human skull. Regarding this discrepency, Bu-ston, who evidently had access to (and could read) a Sanskrit manuscript, comments that "since there is no Sanskrit equivalent to 'human skull', and as the commentaries do not elucidate it, it should be understood to be a non-literal translation." / mi thod ces pa skad dod la med cing 'grel pa rnams kyis kyang ma bkral bas don 'gyur du shes par bya'o / (NS pp. 240,1). Sumatikīrti's edition, however, translates this line more literally as *phag na kha traṃ ga bsnams shing*.

The *ḍākinis* born into *Vajravārāhi's clan* are the *twenty four*(**v.18.c,d**) [goddesses] such as Pracaṇḍā.[233] They *should be worshipped* visualizing them *in the directions*, counter-clockwise starting from the east, *and in the quarters,* clockwise from the southeast. *Amidst the wheels* (**v.19.a,b**) means within the measureless mansion or within the spokes of the wheel. Are there only the twenty four heroines? In the same way that one must visualize and worship the twenty four heroines, one should visualize and *worship the* twenty four *heros as well here* in the measureless mansion. *Placed in the wheel* (**v.19.c,d**) means being placed amidst the spokes of the wheel. *If the adept desires success,* he *should worship the hero* who is *non-dual* (**v.20.a,b**) with the heroine, that is, with the principle goddess, but not separately [from her].

The previous gurus claim that the two lines concerning the 'subterranean mothers' show the placement of the twelve mothers, which is good.[234] One should place, that is, visualize from amongst *all* twelve *Mothers,* the four [essence yoginis] such as *Ḍākini in the* four *directions* at the center of the lotus, the four [gate keepers] such as Kākāsyā at the gates in the four directions, and the four [quarter keepers] such as Yamadāhi[235] *in the* four

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[233] Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po has an interesting comment on this line, which is not repeated by Bu-ston or Tsongkhapa. He wrote that "The ḍākini are the twenty four of the three wheels. What is their clan? Vārāhi is the openness (or void) of meditative quiescence, and those who arise from that are of Vārāhi's clan." / mkha' 'gro ma ni nyi shu bzhi ni 'khor lo gsum gyi mkha' 'gro ma rnams yin la / de rnams gang gi rigs yin zhe na / phag mo ni zhi gnas stong pa yin la / de las byung bas phag mo'i rigs so / (PG p. 303.4)

[234] Tsongkhapa here is commenting on the last two lines of verse 27 which deal with the twelve *mātṛ*, skipping over the intervening verses concering the vases. The Root Tantra itself only identifies them as "all the Mothers" (*mātarāḥ sarvā, ma mo thams cad*). Tsongkhapa is evidently praising Bu-ston's enumeration of them as twelve. Bu-ston in addition identifies them as consisting of the four essence yoginis and the eight gate and quarter keepers. (see NS pp. 253,4)

[235] In the CST, the four essence yoginīs, who correspond to the four elemements, are Ḍākinī, Lāmā, Khaṇḍarohā and Rūpinī. The four door keepers are Kākāsyā 'Crowface' (though she is called Khagānanā 'Birdface' in Chapter four of the CST), Ulūkāsyā, 'Owlface', Śvānāsyā 'Dogface' and Śūkarāsyā 'Sowface'. The four quarter keepers are Yamadāḍhi, Yamadūtī, Yamadaṃṣṭrī and Yamamathanī. Concerning Yamadāḍhi, Wayman, following Bhattacharyya's edition of Abhayākaragupta's *Niṣpannayogāvali*, renders her name as *Yamadāhi* (Wayman 1973:9); this evidently corresponds to the variant Tibetan translation *gshin rje bsreg ma*, which occurs in the Tibetan translations of the AD. The Sanskrit mss. of the AD, however, generally have Yamadāḍhi, which also occurs in the SV. This is generally translated as *gshin rje brtan ma*, which suggests *Yamadṛḍhi*. The Tibetan translation of Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya* gives both the Sanskrit and the Tibetan translation, *Yamadāḍhi* and *gshin rje brtan ma* (DT fol.189b), perhaps because they were uncertain how to translate it. This implies that they read *-dāḍhi* as *-dṛḍhi*. Tsuda (1974, p.285 note 4) suggests that the Sanskrit may have originally read *Yamadagdhi*, which would be translated by the Tibetan *gshin rje bsreg/ sreg ma*. This seems a likely explanation, given the fact that in a number of old Indic scripts the conjunct consonant *g-dh* looks similar to the consonant *ḍh*. As the CST

quarters (**v.27.c,d**). Likewise, the four skull bowls or four vases which have skull bowls are placed in the four quarters on the petals of the lotus. This is the creation of the commitment heroes. Concerning the deities of the retinue there is also no statement with any degree of clarity in one place in the Root Tantra, and it seems that the deities' body colours, numbers, implements and so forth are explained in many different ways in the Explanatory Tantras. In order to actually put into practice now [the traditions of] Lūipa, Ghaṇṭa and so forth, it is necessary to apply this information to that included in each of their sādhanas, but I will discuss that here. Instead I am happy to explain applying the Explanatory Tantras to the general lack of clear information, but here I will not comment on each and every point. These should can be known in other instances as well in accordance with [the above method].[236]

Regarding the entry of the Intuition Being, the *ḍākinis in space*, namely, the Intuition Beings of the heroines of the Mind Wheel, are *all placed above* (**v.26.a,b**), i.e., inserted into each Commitment Being of the Mind Wheel which ranges in space. The wisdom beings who are the *ḍākinis on earth*, that is, of the Protection Wheel, are *placed*, i.e., inserted, into the commitment beings of the Speech ḍākinis of *the maṇḍala* (**v.26.c,d**). *Any of the ḍākinis in the underworld*, that is, the wisdom beings of the ḍākinis of the Body Wheel, are *placed in the underworld*, namely, in the commitment beings of the Body Wheel. The expression *in the maṇḍala* is applicable to the preceding and following [verses] as well.[237] In addition, placement 'in the middle' should be understood by virtue

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does not itself mention the four quarter keepers by name, I will use the name *Yamadāḍhi* as it occurs in the Explanatory Tantras such as the AD, SV and YS, for although it may be a corruption of *Yamadagdhi*, if so it is definitely an ancient corruption which well preceded the translation of these texts into Tibetan.

[236] That is, Tsongkhapa is writing here a general commentary on the Root Tantra, and will not go into all of the details, especially those things one needs to know for the sake of practice that are not discussed in the Root Tantra itself. These details can be learned through a study of the sādhanas and the commentaries of the sādhanas, such as those writen by Tsongkhapa himself. Some of the Indian commentators, such as Kambala and Durjayacandra, describe in some length the various deities. And Bu-ston, in his NS commentary, does what Tsongkhapa did not want to do in his commentary, which is painstakingly describing the deities in reliance upon the Indic commentaries and sādhanas. See NS pp. 240-9.

[237] That is, it should be understood that the *ḍākinis in space* (**v.26.a**) and the *ḍākinis in the underworld* (**v.27.a**) are also placed *in the maṇḍala* (**v.26.d**).

of the terms *above* (**v.26.b**) and *under* (**v.27.a,b**). The gurus have explained in this way, and it seems to be the intention of Kambala and Devagupta as well.[238]

This illustrates as well the entry of the wisdom beings into the remaining commitment beings, and the remaining ritual procedures should be known from the *maṇḍalavidhi* [texts]. It is the placement of the sixty two deities into the maṇḍala of initiation that is taught here, and any uncertainty is in regard to that alone; and since the Explanatory Tantras also elucidate the maṇḍalas of the five, thirteen and thirty deities along with that of the solitary hero, one should also understand about initiation and so forth in those maṇḍalas.

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b.iii. Making and Placing the Flasks.

Having explained the making of the maṇḍala, *then*, I will explain the way in which one *makes the flasks* (**v.20.c**). The flask should have no *base* or stand, and it should be free of faults such as *black* colour, and, by virtue of the word *etc.* (**v.20.d**), ugliness, cracks and so forth. The substances inside of the flasks include the five treasures, namely *pearls, gold, and jewels,* i.e., beryl, *coral, silver,* and also *copper* (**v.21.a,b**), since in the *Pearl Garland* it is reckoned amongst the five treasures.[239] The *foods* [inside it] are the five nectars. The term *all* extends as well to the five grains, the five medicinal substances, and

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[238] Kambala, in his SN commentary, gives a general overview of the meditative process indicated by these verses, but does not give a word by word commentary here; hence Tsongkhapa can surmise what his intention was, but this interpretation only suggested by his text, but not confirmed by it. The relevant passage reads as follows: " The [verses] " space" etc. should be taken in terms of the invitation, entry and binding of the of the intuition wheel to the commitment wheel, in accordance with the stages of the three worlds." / nam mkha'i zhe bya ba la sogs pa la khams gsum pa go rim bzhin du ye shes kyi 'khor lo dam tshig gi 'khor lo la dgug pa dang gzhug pa dang bcing pa danf dbang du bya ba ste / (QT p. 178.4). He then goes on to describe the meditation by which this is accomplished.

[239] The identification here of *phreng ba* as Sachen's *Pearl Garland* (PG) commentary may not be correct, as his comments do not exactly match Tsongkhapa's. The corresponding passage in the PG reads as follows: "What is placed inside of the flasks? The five treasures and so forth are placed inside, illustrated by *pearls, gold, jewels* and *coral.* From what are the flasks made? They are made from precious things illustrated by *silver* and *copper.*" / bum pa de dag gi nang du bcud gang gzhug ce na / mu tig gser dang rin chen dang // byu ru zhes pas mtshon pa'i rin po che lnga la sogs pa gzhug / bum pa'i rgyu gang zhe na / dngul dang zangs ma can zhes pa ni mtshon pa ste / rin po che'am sa la sogs pa las byas pa'o / (PG p. 304.3)

so forth. They are filled[240] with water together with those [substances]. The vessels *brimming* (**v.21.c**) with scented water along with the five nectars are *skull bowls* which should be *placed upon* (**v.21.d**) the flasks.

The *neck* of the flask is *wound with thread,* and its *mouth adorned with leaves* (**v.22.a,b**), that is, fresh tree leaves. Its neck should be *well wound with a pairof* new, cotton *cloths* (**v.22.d**). The production of the flask entails 'fumigation purification', i.e., the [meditative] creation of the flasks, the creation of the deities therein, mantra recitation and so forth.

Then, regarding the placement of the flasks, *the eight* flasks are *placed* in pairs *at the* four *doors* (**v.22.c**) in the east etc. Kambala explains that the *ninth flask* is placed in front, which is explained as placement in the east. The apparent fact that the ninth is placed *in the center* (**v.23.a**) seems to be intended for the time of initial preparation.[241]

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b.iv. The Rites of Worshipping the Maṇḍala.
A. Ornamenting the Maṇḍala

It should be *decorated with gold, silver, pearls or jewels* (**v.23.c,d**) other than those. In Lochen's translation there is no *or.* Regarding the method of decoration, one *should create maṇḍalas decorating* the outer base on all sides *with jewels and gold* (**v.24.a,b**) etc. as previously explained.

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[240] The Tashilhunpo edition of Tsongkhapa's text here (p. 112) has *legs par dgang ngo,* a transitive verb roughly corresponding to the Sanskrit *sampūrṇāṅ,* which in the Root Text is translated by the intransitive *legs bkang ba.* The Lhasa edition has *legs par dgod do,* which is erronous.

[241] Tsongkhapa is refering to the following passage in the Kambala's SN commentary: "The ninth, which is the victory of all powers, should be placed in front." / dgu pa ni dngos grub thams cad rnam par rgyal ba ste / mdun du dgod par bya'o / (PTT p. 177.4) Tsongkhapa's interpretation that "in front" means in the east makes sense, since typically one views and enters the maṇḍala from the east. Both Sachen and Bu-ston, however, have a different interpretation. Sachen wrote that "that which is *wound with a pair of cloths* (**v.22.d**) is, as previously explained, the ninth flask, the flask of the victory of all powers, should be placed in the center of the maṇḍala." / gos zung gis ni dkris pa ni / sngar bshad la bum pa dgu pa ni dngos grub thams cad rnam par rgyal ba'i bum pa ste // de ni dkyil 'khor gyi dbus su dgod par bya la / (PG p. 304.4) Bu-ston wrote that "the ninth flask which is *well wound with a pair of cloths,* the victory of all powers, should be placed in the center, that is, atop the lotus." / gos zung gis legs par dkris pa'i bum pa dgu pa dngos grub thams cad rnam par rgyal ba dbus su ste lte ba'i steng du dgod par bya'o / (NS p. 251). Of interest as well is the apparent fact that each of the flasks was individually named; the name of the ninth flask seems to have been *sarvasiddhivijaya.*

III.C.b.ii. A.1. b.iv.B. Worshipping the Maṇḍala

Were one to worship the delightful supreme abode (**v.24.c**), i.e., maṇḍala, worship *without doubt concerning* the attainment of the *powers* (**v.24.d**). The master should *completely satisfy one with* delicious, *scented water,* in the mouth. *Facing in all directions* (**v.25.a,b**) refers to one who has four faces in all directions. hence it is oneself as four-faced Heruka who is satisfied. As the drawing of the maṇḍala with colored powders is completed, this is stated on the occasion of engaging in practice.

Were one to desire the ultimate power, offer one hundred lamps (**v.25.c,d**). That is, *if* one *desires* the ultimate *success* (**v.28.c**), in addition to offering *one hundred lamps*, offer as well one hundred *scents*, one hundred *flowers* and one hundred *incense* (**v.28.a,b**) sticks. The line 'n accordance with the ritual procedures' is not in the translations of Lochen or Mal. The first of the two statements concerning the hundred lamps (**v.25**) refers to lamps of sesame oil. The second (**v.28**) emphasizes the need for their placement, and, according to Bhavyakirti, "shows the central importance of the hundred lamps."[242] Someone also explains the latter literally, and the former in reference to the five fleshes.[243] Bhavabhadra also seems to explain that the former are ordinary lamps, and the latter are lamps of the "great oil".[244]

For whom are they offered? This is shown by the two lines beginning with *Heruka* (**v.29.a,b**). The worship with the five banners is also for the maṇḍala. If one does not

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[242] Tsongkhapa quotes from the following passage in Bhavyakirti's SM commentary: " The [passage] *offer one hundred butter lamps* etc. refers to lamps of sesame oil. It is repeated to emphasize the definite need for their placement, in order to show the central importance of the butter lamps." / mar me brgya ni dbul bar bya // zhes bya ba la sogs pa ni til mar gyi mar me'o // yang smos pa ni nge par gzhag dgos pa'i phyir te / mar me brgya ni gtso bo yin pa bstan pa'i phyir ro / (DT fol. 13a)

[243] This "someone" seems to have been Viravajra, who in his PD commentary wrote: "*Offer the hundred lamps* refers to one hundred vessels of the fleshes of the five heros, which are created and offered to the Goddess." / mar me brgya ni dbul bar bya // zhes bya ba ni dpa' bo lnga'i sha'i snod brgya lha mor bskyed cing dbul ba'o / (DT fol. 368a)

[244] Tsongkhapa here refers to the following passage in Bhavabhadra's CP commentary: "It is said that the former *lamps* are one hundred ordinary lamps, while the other *hundred lamps* are of the great oil." / gong gi mar me zhes pa ni thun mong gi mar me brgya bya bar gsung so // mar me brgya yang zhes pa ni mar khu chen po gyur pa'o / (DT fol. 165b)

have at one disposal *cloths* of various colours, one for each deity, then one in common [will do]. One should thus decorate with many *various* flower *wreaths* above, *canopies* above, and *curtains* (**v.30**) to the side. Likewise, *make offerings well equipoised,* that is, making one's mind one-pointed, *with* delicious *sorts of food and drink.* (**v.31**)

III.C.b.ii. A.1.c. Stating the Name of the Chapter.

This is the second chapter on the Placement of the Maṇḍala's Wheels and the Rite of its Worship, from the *Concise Śriherukābhidhāna Tantra.* This is the explanation of the second chapter in the *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning, A Vast Commentary on the Concise Supreme Bliss Tantra called 'The Cakrasaṃvara'.*

Chapter Three

III.C.b.ii.A.2. Bestowing Initiation in the Completed Maṇḍala
a. Pleasing the Guru and the Deity

[The words] *after that,* namely, after having stated the second chapter, brings us to the statement of the third. The *adept,* the disciple to be initiated, should *first,* that is, before the initiation, well *please the Master.* With what? [He should do so] *with all things* (**III.v.1.a,b**) of body, speech and mind. Furthermore, *one who desires success* who is *well equipoised,* i.e., devoted one-pointedly, *should worship the guru to the extent of his ability* (**v.1.c,d**), and should beseech him to the extent of his ability.

Having hung sounding bells from above, and being *decorated with flowers and incense, the adept should* ring *a melodious bell* and beat *a drum* (**v.2**), i.e., a hand drum (*ḍamaru*), and *should make the sound 'ha ha'* (**v.3.a**). If we explain sybolically, Kambala explains that "it is said that the bell is a girl sixteen years old, and the drum a girl of twelve

years."[245] It is said that the [term] 'adept' regarding [in its usage as] *the adept* (**v.2.d**), *the well equipoised adept* (**v.4.d**) and *...all...by that adept* (**v.18.c,d**) refers to the disciple. Therefore, it is the disciple who is the drum beater, and who should thus be taken as the bell ringer as well.

Melodious refers to a women who has the distinction of being perceived as having a pleasant voice and a beautiful body. *Sounding* (**v.2.c**) means that one should adore [her], it is said. [Words] like *sounding* etc. mean that the disciple should be equipoised in those consorts (*rig ma, vidyā*).

On what occasion does this occur? It must be done on the occasion of the bestowal of the wisdom-intuition initiation upon the disciple. This thus indicates the bestowal of the third initiation, which shows that [the text] strays from the order of the initiations. Bhavabhadra explains that the 'bell ringing' also indicates the initiation of the bell.[246]

III.C.b.ii. A.2.b. Entering the Maṇḍala and Bestowing Initiation.
i. Entering the Maṇḍala.

Applicable here is the statement that having *worshipped in accordance with the ritual* process of worshipping the *maṇḍala* (**v.3.b,c**) previously explained, one should enter into the maṇḍala of colored powder or images on cloth.[247] And, just as in the case of the symbolic explanation of "bell ringing" etc., we can apply here as well the statement that,

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[245] The passage written by Kambala from which Tsongkhapa quotes here occurs as follows in the SN commentary: "Now, it is said that the *bell* is a girl sixteen years old, and the *drum* a girl of twelve years. *Melodious* means that she has a pleasant voice, a beautiful body and a comely complexion. *Sounding* means that one should adore [her] (*anurajyet*)." / de nas dril bu ni lo grangs bcu drug pa'i bu mor gsungs la / lnga ni lo grangs bcu gnyis ma'o // shin tu sgra snyan zhes bya ba ni ngag snyan zhing gzugs mdzes pa la mdog sdug pa'o // rdul zhes bya ba ni rjes su chags par bya'o / (DT fol. 12a, QT p. 178.5)

[246] He states this in his CP commentary as follows: "*Hanging bells* etc. indicates the bell initation." / dril dpyangs zhes bya ba la sogs pas ni dril bu'i dbang ston te / (fol.166b)

[247] This seems to be a summary of a statement by Bu-ston, which he attributes to the oral transmission of Kambala, which occurs as follows in the NS commentary: "The one who has done preliminary worship with flowers and so forth as previously explained should worship and enter into the maṇḍala of coloured powder or drawn on cloth in accordance withe the rite. That is the oral transmission of Kambala." / sngar bshad pa de ltar / me tog la sogs pa'i mchod pa sngon du 'gro bas cho ga bzhin bris pa'i ras bris sam rdul tshon gyi dkyil 'khor yang dag par mchod la gzhug par bya'o // zhes pa lva wa pa'i man ngag go / (p. 259)

one should enter into the vagina maṇḍala having worshipped from the perspective of being equipoised in the body maṇḍala of the consort (*prajñā*), that is, in the women who has all of the desired virtues, who has a beautiful body, pleasant voice, delicious scent, the supreme taste, and who is soft to the touch, in accordance with the rite of being equipoised through the blessings of the vajra and lotus.[248]

The *lads* who are taken as such at the occasion of preparation in accordance with the first of those two [explanations above] are attractive and pleasing,[249] and are positioned outside the curtain, their *faces covered with* silk or cotton [*cloth*]. (**v.4.a,b**). In regard to that, "the *cloth* illustrates non-clarity, and thus *covering* illustrates the extremely secret; just so the cloth is a symbol of non-clarity, and *covering* a symbol of the secret."[250]

When the eyes are covered in this way, *fill their palms with flowers*, i.e., cause them to hold a flower garland between their palms, and enter, that is, *cause them to enter* (**v.4.c**), inside of the curtain. *Then* the *adept*, that is, the disciple,[251] who is *well equipoised* (**v.4.d**),

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[248] This as well is drawn from a passage in Bu-ston's NS commentary, attributed in this case to Durjayacandra, which occurs as follows: "The secret initiation should be bestowed once one has worshipped by means of the worship (*pūjā*) of being equipoised the body maṇḍala of the young lady (*kumari*), that is, in the women who has all of the desired virtues who has a beautiful body, pleasant voice, delicious scent, the supreme taste and who is soft to the touch, in accordance with the rite of being equipoised through the blessings of the vajra and lotus. That is the explanation of Durjayacandra which is not literal, or which hides the reality of passion." / de ltar rdo rje dang padma byin gyis brlabs nas snyoms par 'jug pa'i cho ga bzhin du gzhon nu ma'i lus kyi dkyil 'khor gzugs sdug sgra snyan dri zhim ro mchog reg bya 'jam ste 'dod pa'i yon tan kun ldan pa la snyoms 'jug gi mchod pas mchod nas gsang ba'i dbang bskur bar bya'o // mi thub zla ba'i bshad pa ste sgra ji bzhin pa ma yin pa'am 'dod chags chos kyi sbas pa'o / (p. 258)

[249] Tsongkhapa is here commenting on the word 'attractive' in the expression 'attractive boy' (*bu sdug*) which is the Tibetan translation of *putraka*. This translation seems to have been interpretative, as *bu*, 'boy' would have translated *putraka* well enough. There is a chance that the extra syllable might have been added for metrical reasons, in consultation with the commentaries perhaps.

[250] Tsongkhapa's source for this redundant passage evidently was Bu-ston, who also quotes it without identifying the source, as follows: / dar gyis mi gsal ba mtshon la des bkab pas shin tu gsang ba mtshon te / ji skad du / dar ni mi gsal mtshon pa te / bkab pa gsang ba mtshon pa'o / (p. 260) My translation follows Bu-ston, as his version of the passage is slightly less redundant. Tsongkhapa wrote: / dar ni mi gsal ba mtshon pa / bkab pa ni gsang ba mtshon pa yin te / ji skad du dar ni mi gsal mtshon pa ste / bkab pa gsang ba mtshon pa'o /.

[251] As Tsongkhapa explained above, he takes the term *adept* (*sādhaka*) here and in other instances in this chapter as refering to the disciple. It should be noted, however, that in verse four *sādhakaḥ susamāhitaḥ* is the grammatical subject while the disciples, the *putraka*, are the implicit object (of *prakṣipet*), while their faces are the object of *saṃchādya*. This calls into question Tsongkhapa's interpretation here. Tsongkhapa's interpretation would be valid, however, if we take *sādhakaḥ susamāhitaḥ* as refering to the following verse, which he seems to do.

that is, composed, *circumambulating* (**v.5.a**) the maṇḍala, *should enter* Heruka's *pleasing palace.* (**v.5.b,c**), meaning that one should visualize mentally entering into the maṇḍala. The line [beginning with] 'intelligent' is not in the translations of Lochen or Mal, and hence appears to be superfluous.[252]

Regarding *resting his body to the south* (**v.5.d**), someone explains that since Saṃvara's face is seen to the south, one enters from that side.[253] Kambala, taking *resting to the south* as an illustration of the flower casting, explains that there is also flower casting from the other three doors, and that by casting in that manner one will attain different powers.[254]

Then the flower previously held between the *palms should be cast* (**v.6.a**) *above the maṇḍala.* Then the eyes are opened, and *wherever* (**v.6.b**) *that flower* which was cast onto the maṇḍala *falls,* namely, the deity onto which it falls, indicating that "it is the deity of the disciple's *clan.*" (**v.6.c,d**) They *should be shown* the measureless mansion, *the place of*

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[252] Tsongkhapa is refering to the line *slo bzang yid ni mnyam bzhag pa,* which occurs in the Mardo-Prajñākirti version of the text, but not evidently in any other.

[253] Here again the 'someone' seems to be Bu-ston, who reports that "Since Saṃvara's face is seen to the South, it says 'abide in the South'. This means that one abides on the side of Ḍākini in front of the Blessed Lord, since Ḍākini arises as a mantra of his implement from the South." / bde mchog zhal lho bstan du yod pas / lho phyogs gnas zhes gsungs te / don la bcom ldan 'das kyi mdun mkha' 'gro ma'i ngos su gnas pa yin te / lho phyogs nas phyag 'tshal ba'i sngags la mkha' 'gro ma byung ba'i phyir ro / (p. 262). This explanation, which seems somewhat obscure, may refer to an *ekavira* or body maṇḍala-type meditation in which the various deities are visualized as occuring phonically (as mantras) and/or symbolically (as implements) on Heruka's or the adept's body. An example of the body maṇḍala type is described at DT fol. 197 of Atīśa Dipaṅkaraśrijñāna's *Abhisamayavibhaṅga,* which explicates Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya.*

[254] Tsongkhapa refers here to a passage in Kambala's SN commentary which lists the powers attained by casting the flower from the different directions. It occurs as follows: "Regarding *resting to the south,* [cast the flower] from the eastern door of the maṇḍala for the sake of liberation, intuition, being free of disease, the powers of the sword and underground [travel], and attaining a kingdom as a lord of the Earth. [Cast] from the southern door of the maṇḍala for the sake of eternal peace, auspiciousness, glory, gifts of wealth or grain, being free from disease, alchemy or the production of gold. [Cast] from the western door of the maṇḍala for the sake of an increase of sons, grandsons, etc., enticing people, augmenting, pacifying, perfecting, summoning and controlling. [Cast] from the northern door of the maṇḍala for the sake of averting and defeating enemies, and cutting off the life of the malicious to preserve the Teaching." / lho'i phyogs su brten ba ni zhes bya ba la / sa'i bdag po yul 'khor rnyed pa dang / ral gri dang sa 'og gi dngos grub rnams dang / nad med pa dang ye shes dang thar pa'i don du ni dkyil 'khor gyi shar sgor ro // gser 'gyur rtsi dang bcud kyi len pa dang / nad med pa dang / nor dang 'bru rab tu sbyin pa dang / dpal dang bkra shis dang rtag tu zhi ba'i don du ni dkyil 'khor gyi lho sgor ro // dbang dang dgug pa dang phun sum tshogs pa dang // shi ba dang rgyas pa dang / skye bo rnams kyi yid du 'ong ba dang / bu dang tsha bo la sogs 'phel ba'i don du ni dkyil 'khor gyi nub nas so // bstan pa bsrung ba'i don du gdug pa can rnams tsher bcad pa dang / dgra rnams bzlog cing pham par bya ba'i don du ni dkyil 'khor gyi byang sgor ro / (DT fol. 12a, QT p. 178.5)

Śriheruka and so forth (**v.7.a,b**), that is, the other deities. Here Kambala says that while they should be shown just that maṇḍala, they should not be shown the reality of the maṇḍala (*maṇḍalatattva*).[255]

However, how is it that Āryadeva, Nagabodhi[256] and so forth say that on this occasion the maṇḍala reality is shown? Here someone said, regarding the non-showing of reality, that it is in regard to disciples who do not uphold the vows of the five clans and who have not requested the Vajra Master initiation. He explains that reality is shown on this occasion to one who has previously upheld the vows and who has requested in verse the Master and disciple initiations.[257] However, Kambala says that after the secret initiation " 'the maṇḍala is shown,' which means that everything is apprehended, that everything such as the maṇḍala reality and so forth is completely revealed."[258]

Since it seems that [Kambala] thinks that the third initiation is indicated by "bell ringing" and so forth, and since reality is completely revealed once one has received the higher initiations, it should not be accepted that the maṇḍala reality is only shown after one has received the Master Initiation, but rather that the 'reality' taken in terms of the two stages is shown. In this way, it is not contradictory to take it both as showing the reality of

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[255] This quote is from the SN commentary as follows: / dkyil 'khor tsam de la bstan par bya'i de kho na nyid ni ma yin no / (DT fol. 12b, QT p. 179.1)

[256] This seems to the import of chapter 26 of Āryadeva's *Śricatuḥpiṭhatantrarāja-maṇḍalavidhisārasamuccaya,* which is entitled "The procedure for instructing all of the initiates." In particular he wrote that "reality is shown to all of the disciples and all sentient beings." / slob ma dag ni thams cad dang // sems can kun la de nyid bstan / (fol. 136b). See also Nāgabodhi's *Śriguhyasamājamaṇḍalaviṃśatividhi.*

[257] This quote is taken from a passage in Bu-ston's NS commentary which occurs as follows: "Here it is said that that reality is not shown to disciples who do not uphold the vows and who have not requested the the Vajrācārya initiation. A person who upholds the vows and who requests in verse the disciple and Ācārya initiations, intuition descends [to him] and he enters into the secret maṇḍala. It is necessary to reveal to him the secret maṇḍala, and since showing the secret maṇḍala is showing reality, concluding from that it is said that reality is shown to him." / des na slob ma sdom pa ma bzung zhing rdo rje slob dpon gyi dbang mi zhu ba rnams la 'dir de nyid mi bshad pa yin la / sdom pa bzung slob ma'i dbang dang slob dpon gyi dbang tshig chod du zhu ba'i gang zag ye shes babs pa ni / gsang ba'i dkyil 'khor du zhugs pa yin / de la gsang ba'i dkyil 'khor bstan dgos shing / gsang ba'i dkyil 'khor bstan pa ni de nyid bstan pa yin pas / de la dgongs nas de nyid bstan par gsung pa yin no / (p. 263)

[258] This quote is from Kambala's SN commentary, where it occurs as follows: / de nas gdong phye dkyil 'khor dstan // zhes bya ba ni thams cad zin nas dkyil 'khor gyi de kho na nyid la sogs pa thams cad rdzogs par bstan par bya'o / (DT fol. 12b, QT p 179.1,2)

the maṇḍala understood in terms of the Creation Stage on the occasion of showing the face of the deity, and completely showing reality which is completion of initiation.

III.C.b.ii. A.2.b.ii. Bestowing Initiation upon the Entrant.
A. The Actual Initiation Bestowal.
1. Bestowing the Vase Initiation.

The disciple who casts the flower comes to have the name of the deity on which the flower landed, so from the perspective of the name, i.e., secret name revealed by the Master at the time of the bestowal of the name initiation, this is the name initiation.[259] In regard to this, the *Saṃvarodaya* says "[The Master] should give the Water, Crown, Vajra, Bell and Name initiations, which are the Essence of the Five Tathāgatas, and also the Irretrogression (*avaivartya*) of Observance (*vrata*), Prediction (*vyākaraṇa*), Permission (*anujñā*) and Inspiration (*āśvāsa*), which arise from the Flask."[260] This is stated here on the occasion of the name initiation in order to state the ten [initaitions] in the Flask initiation.

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[259] Tsongkhapa is commenting here upon two lines in the Mardo/Prajñākirti edition of the Root Tantra, which occur as follows: "S/he gains the name of that clan, the name revealed by the Master." / de ni rigs de'i ming 'gyur bar // slon dpon gyis ni ming bstan to /. There is no equivalent to this, however, in the Sanskrit, or in Sumatikirti's edition. Regarding these line Bu-ston wrote: "Although this is not in two of the Tantra's commentaries, nor in the majority of Indic texts, it occurs in [Tathāgatarakṣita's] *Ubhayanibandha.*" / 'di rgyud kyi 'grel pa gnyis dang / rgya dpe phal che la med kyang gnyis ka'i bshad sbyar las byung ngo / (pp. 263,4)

[260] This passage from the SV, also quoted by Bu-ston (p. 264) occurs as verse 26 and the first half of verse 27 of chapter 18 in Tsuda's (1974) edition, as follows: (v.26) udakamakuṭavajraghaṇṭānāmābhiṣekam / pañcatathāgatātmakaṃ sekaṃ vratavyākaraṇam eva ca // (v.27) anujñāśvāsāvaivartyān dadyāt kalaśasaṃbhavān // (p.127) / chu dang cod pan rdo rje dang // dril bu dang ni ming dbang bskur // de bshin gsegs lnga'i bdag nyid dbang // brtul shugs dang ni lung bstan nyid // rjes gnang dang ni dbugs dbyung dang // phyir mi ldog pa'ang sbyin bya ste /.../ bum pa las ni byung ba'o / (p.209). Tsongkhapa's version of the text is at least in one respect closer to the Sanskrit than the version preserved in the DK, which is version reproduced by Tsuda. Tsongkhapa's version of the last two lines, which corresponds to the first half of verse 27, occurs as follows: / rjes gnang dbugs dbyung phyir mi ldog // sbyin bya bum par yang dag 'gyur /. This corresponds exactly to the Sanskrit, unlike the DK translation, which translates *anujñāśvāsāvaivartyān* as two lines, and divides *dadyāt kalaśasaṃbhavān*, relegating the latter compound to the next verse. Tsuda, in note 5 pp. 297,8, clarifies this passage based on Bu-ston's *Maṇḍalavidhi* (vol. ja). There are ten initiations, and the first five (water, crown, vajra, bell and name) are called the *vidyā* initiations, and correspond, respectively to the *pañcajina* (Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, Amoghasiddhi, Vairocana) and their respective wisdoms. The *avaivartya* initiation is another name for the *ācārya* initiation, and it includes the *vrata, vyākaraṇa, anujñā* and *āśvāsa.* The flask consecration includes both the five *vidyā* and the *ācārya* initiation, but as the former are a prerequisite of the latter, it is considered to be equivalent to the *ācārya* initiation. Thes initiations, although overlapping, constitute the ten initiations, which is one of many enumerations.

If one explains 'ringing' a *melodious bell* literally, it shows the bell initiation since it is the ringing of the bell by the disciple. The statement concerning the placement of the remaining flasks in chapter two shows, since it is for the purpose of bestowing the water initiation, the water initiation; in other words, three initiations are shown [in this Tantra].[261] Regarding the [other] seven such as the crown and vajra initiations, the Irretrogression and so forth, the Explanatory Tantra fills the gap, but those things which are not explained there must be known from the *maṇḍalavidhi* texts.

III.C.b.ii. A.2.b.ii.A.2. Bestowing the Higher Initiations

Then, after bestowing the Flask initiation, *the Master, well equipoised* in the Heruka concentration, *should* perform the *worship* of being equipoised in *the consort* (*mudrā*) (**v.7.c,d**) who is taken to be Vajravārāhi, who is qualified as a *vidyā* and who was offered by the disciple, in order to give the Secret Initiation to the disciple. After being equipoised, the Master should perform the ritual actions of the Secret Initiation bestowal.[262] At what time is [this done]? It is said that the initiation is bestowed on *the next day* (**v.8**), that is, midnight. Since many commentaries explain in terms of the second day, it should be taken as the midnight on the second day during which the preparation is attended to.[263]

The statement by the gurus that the four lines beginning with 'then' (**v.8**) shows the secret initiation accords with many of the commentaries. Regarding the 'great vermilion', it

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[261] The initiations "shown' by this text are the water, bell and name initiations as discussed below. The other initiations in the context of the CST must be understood from other sources, as stated below.

[262] Tsongkhapa here is commenting upon a line that does not attested in the Sanskrit nor in Sumatikirti's edition of the translation. It occurs in the Mardo/Prajñākirti edition as *las ni yang dag spyad par bya.* We might hypothesize that this is a translation, perhaps, of *karmaṃ tu samācāret.* Once again, however, Buston informs us that it does not occur in the Indic texts or in the commentaries. (las 'di yang dag spyad par bya // zhes pa rgya dpe dang / 'grel pa rnams la med / (NS p. 264)

[263] Kambala, for example, simply states that it is done at midnight of the next day. (/ phyi de nyin par zhes bya ba ni nam phyed na'o / SN, QT p. 179.1). Devagupta similarly comments it occurs "on the second day, which means at midnight." / nyin gnyis par zhes pa ni mtshan phyed na zhes pa'i don to / (SS, DT fol. 80b). Jayabhadra writes that "on the second day worship the maṇḍala again." / nyi ma gnyis pa la slar yang dkyil 'khor legs par mchod de / (MP, QT p. 24.3.)

is the 'great *blood*'.[264] The equivalent term of blood is *rakta*, which can also be taken as meaning 'passion'; hence it is explained as being that which "arises from the passion of the body, speech and mind" of the Divine Couple.[265] It is the *drop* which arises from the equipoise of the guru couple. It is explained that through the *threefold repetition* of the three seed syllables over it, the Mantrin *should make the drop* on the heart, eyebrow curl (*ūrṇā*), throat and head of the *disciple* (**v.8**).[266] Another commentary explains that the disciple is blindfolded at the occasion of the guru couple's union, and that the secret substance is given unto his mouth and two eyes along with the four places previously stated, as a drop over which was recited the essence, quintessence and root mantras and that it should be done at the time of bestowing the secret initiation. The disciple should

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[264] 'Great vermilion' (*mtshal chen*) is a euphemistic translation for *rakta*, which can mean vermilion, but more commonly means blood, and in particular menstruum, which it clearly means here. The word *rakta* can also mean passion, as explained below.

[265] This is a quote from a longer passage in Bu-ston's NS commentary, which unabashedly explains the secret initiation alluded to in the Root Tantra. The passage quoted by Tsongkhapa here is italicized (excluding the mantra): "Then, equipoised by means of the art of the union of the moving vajra and lotus, etc. by the application of passionate love, invited the Tathāgatas with the light rays of the Heart center's seed syllable; they enter through one's crown and are melted by the fire of passionate love. The [resulting] orgasmic bliss is stabilized at the Vajra's jewel tip, and the Buddha worshipped with that bliss. Achieving the benefit of sebtient beings, take on the divine pride with the mantra of passionate love. Recited three times *oṃ āḥ hūṃ ha ho hriḥ* over the 'great vermillion', i.e., blood, which arises from that, which is blood, namely, menstrum, since it *arises from the passion of body, speech and mind,* as well as over the semen which is illustrated by that. Alternately, recite the root, essence and quintessence mantras three times. With [this consecrated substance] form a drop on the four places, i.e., on the crown, between the eyebrows, the throat and heart, or, on the seven places, namely, on the head, brow, the two eyes, the mouth, throat and heart. In particular, it should be given unto the mouth with the thumb and ring finger, and the disciple should taste it as if it were ambrosia, saying 'Oh, what bliss!'. Then the consort also gives him the honey which exists in her lotus in the same way." / de nas rjes su chags pa'i sbyor bas rdo rje padma bskyod pa la sogs pa'i sbyor thabs kyis snyoms par zhugs pas thugs ka'i sa bon gyi 'od zer kyis de bzhin gshegs pa rnams spyan drangs sphyi bo nas zhugs te chags kyi mes zhu / rdo rje nor bu'i rtse mor lhan cig skyes pa'i bde ba brtan par byas / de'i bde bas sangs rgyas mchod / sems can gyi don byas nas rjes chags kyi sngags kyis nga rgyal bzung la / de las byung ba'i mtsal chen te khrag / *lus dang ngag dang sems chags pa las byung ba'i* phyir khrag ste zla mtshan dang des mtshon nas khu ba la / oṃ āḥ hūṃ ha ho hriḥ las gsum bzlas ba'am / yang na rtsa sngags dang snying po dang nye snying las gsum bzlas bas spyi gtsugs dang smin ma tshams dang mgrin pa dang snying ga ste / gnas bzhi'am / mgo bo dang dpral ba dang mig gnyis dang kha dang mgrin and snying ga ste / gnas 'dun du thig le bya'o // khyad par khar mthe bo srin gyis sbyin zhing / slob mas kyang bdud rtsi bzhin du myangs te / aho sukha zhes brjod par bya'o // de nas shes rab mas kyang de'i padma na gnas pa'i sprang rtsi de bzhin du sbyin no / (pp. 264,5). A good portion of this passage, including the portion quoted by Tsongkhapa, is drawn from the commentaries of Kambala (SN, QT p. 179.1) and Devagupta (SS, QT p. 39.2).

[266] Tsongkhapa again refers to Bu-ston's explanation quoted in the previous note above.

taste that which is given as if it were ambrosia.[267] It would be excellent to add this explanation to the previous one.

Releasing the face of the student (**v.9.a**) is here relevant before the *showing of the maṇḍala* (**v.9.b**) and after the bestowal of the secret initiation. Regarding the bestowal of the third initiation after the blindfold has thus been removed, I have already discussed that.[268] And I will comment on the bestowal of the fourth initiation by showing the way in which reality is shown.[269]

Then, the one who has completed all of the initiations should be completely *shown* the reality of the two maṇḍalas, taken in terms of the two stages, that of the *deity,* i.e., the inhabitants, and that of the habitat which is *the place where* they *reside* (**v.9.c,d**). The previous gurus claim that the three lines beginning with *then the maṇḍala* (**v.9.b-d**) show the secret initiation. Having entrusted the consort (*prajñā*) into the hands of the disciple, he makes known [to him] the body maṇḍala which is shown in regard to the veins of the consort's (*mudrā*) body, such as *Pracaṇḍā* etc., the vaginal *(bhaga)* maṇḍala which is shown by seeking out the channels which exist in the vagina, and the spirit of awakening maṇḍala which is shown in reference to the four joys in this context. It is said that this is the bestowal of the actual basis of the wisdom-intuition initiation. This is explained in the oral transmission.

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[267] Tsongkhapa here refers to a passage in Jayabhadra's MP commentary, which occurs as follows: "At the occasion of the release through the process of joining the vajra and lotus in this way, the essence, quintessence and root mantras are recited over the blindfolded disciple, and the initiation should be given with the vajra and lotus which abide on the head, brow, the two eyes, the mouth, the throat, and the heart. The disciple should enjoy it as if it were nectar. Then after that the blindfold is removed and he should be shown the maṇḍala. 'The place where the deity resides' refers to the place where the secret initiation is bestowed." /...de ltar rdo rje dang padmar 'dus pa'i rim gyis 'byung ba'i gnas skabs su slob ma gdong g.yogs pa la / snying po dang nye ba'i snying po dang phreng ba'i sngags brjod par byas la / sbyi bo dang dpral ba dang / mig gnyis dang / kha dang / lkog ma dang / snying gar gnas pa'i rdo rje dang padmas dbang bskur bar bya zhing / slob mas kyang bdud rtsi bzhin du longs spyad par bya'o // de nas de'i 'og tu gdong g.yogs phye la dkyil 'khor bstan par bya'o // de nas gang gi lha'i gnas gang yin pa zhes bya ba ni gsang ba'i dbang bskur ba'i gnas so / (QT p.24.3,4)

[268] Tsongkhapa interprets line 2.c of the Root Tantra (*ghaṇṭāṃ vādayet susvarāṃ*, 'should sound a melodious bell') as refering to the Wisdom-Intuition Initiation; see section III.C.b.ii.A.2.a above.

[269] He discusses this in his commentary on the fourth chapter below, which focuses on the four *tattva* of the Creation and Perfection stages, the revealment of which constitutes the Fourth Initiation, and which are the alleged import of the chapter.

III.C.b.ii. A.2.b.ii.B. The Saluation at the End of that

Then, after finishing the initiation, *bowing correctly,* that is, with great devotion, *to the palace,* i.e., maṇḍala, *along with the Master, circumambulate* the maṇḍala, then circumambulate it *again, beginning from the left* (**v.10**) of the guru and the maṇḍala. Once one has done that, *salute the maṇḍala and guru in accordance with the rite* (**v.11.a,b**), i.e., ritual procedure, of salutation.

III.C.b.ii. A.2.c. The Giving of Gifts and the Benefit [of so Doing].
i. The Giving of Gifts

[The fees] *spoken by the Tathāgata* (**v.11.d**) are those stated in the Tantras. *A hundred thousand gold* (**v.12.a**) means one hundred thousand ounces of gold. "As is said" means in accordance with what other Tantras says regarding what one should give.[270] *All things* (**v.15.a**) means all things of one's three doors. "In that way" means that they are offered in the same way that gold and so forth are offered. The method whereby they are offered is shown by the two line beginning with *henceforward* (**v.16.a,b**). The rest is easily understood.

III.C.b.ii. A.2.c.ii. The Benefit of Giving

In regard to the two [lines beginning] with *thus* (*de ltar, evam* **v.16.c,d**), it clearly occurs as "settling thus, [things] are well settled by the adept" in Lochen's translation.[271] It

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[270] Tsongkhapa here comments on a line in the Mardo/ Prajñākīrti edition of the translation, *ji skad gsungs bzhin slob ma ni,* which is neither attested in the Sanskrit nor present in Sumatikīrti's edition.

[271] It seems that we have a case here in which the Mardo/ Prajñākīrti's revised edition of Lochen's translation is closer to the Sanskrit than Sumatikīrti's edition, which evidently preserves here Lochen's translation untouched. M/P's text has *de nas sgrub pos rab nges par // de ltar cho ga byas na ni,* which corresponds pretty closely to the Sanskrit, *evam vidhis tataḥ kṛtvā sādhakena suniścitaḥ,* and which I have translated as "Doing thus the ritual procedure [things] are well settled by the adept." Tsongkhapa reports

is the offering of gifts which must be settled. The adept should well settled that which must be settled thus, i.e., as previously explained. *Due to* having done thus, i.e., from *that* cause, the twelve *ḍākini* and the twenty-four yoginī *are pleased with him* (**v.17.a,b**), that is, the disciple. And being pleased with him, *Ḍākini, Lāmā, Khaṇḍarohā and Rūpiṇi* (**v.17.c,d**), that is, the *ḍākinis* of their clans and the *adept should wander the world* (**v.18.a,b**) together. By thus going [with them], *there is no doubt* in those ḍākinis doing the *all that is to be done by the adept* (**v.18.c,d**).

Were one to be accomplished in this yoga (**v.19.a**), *the adept will always, continually give rise, as desired* (**v.20.a,d**), to the power of being *unhindered* by anyone *in the three worlds* (**v.19.b**), the *invisibilty* of not being seen by others, the power of the underworld whereby one moves into the cave or underworld *cavities, space travel,* i.e., going in the sky, speedy feet whereby one arrives at whatever place he desires through the application of prepared medicine to the *foot*, and the *alchemy* (**v.19.c,d**) of achieving an aeon-long lifespan through the consumption of several substances produced from mercury and so forth.

He *will produce* emanations *of many* different *forms,* and *will* magically *travel in space* (**v.20.c,d**). And he *especially destroys* the evil *dākini.* Lochen's translation has "destroys all beings, especially the ḍākini.".[272] Not only the ḍākini, but other beings as well are destroyed *by* just *a single glance.* That sort of yogin *gives rise to the state of* inseparable *union* of art and wisdom *in an instant.* (**v. 21**)

III.C.b.ii. A.2.d. Showing the Definite Need for Initiation

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that Lochen's translation had here *de ltar nges par bya ba ni // sgrub pa po yis rab nges bya,* which is repeated with only minor variation in Sumatikīrti's text: *de ltar nges par bya ba ni // sgrub pa po yi nges par bya.* These differences suggest that by the eleventh or twelfth centuries there were already different recensions of the Sanskrit text in circulation.

[272] Tsongkhapa reports Lochen's translation as having here *mkha' 'gro rnams kyang khyad par du // nges gnon 'gro ba thams cad kyang*, which is almost identical to Sumatikirti's edition, which differs only in replacing the two *kyang* with *dang.* In this case the Mardo-Prajñākirti version is quite similar, with *mkha' 'gro rnams kyang khyad par du* and *'gro ba rnams kyang nges gnon par*, these two lines being separated by an intervening line.

If one wonders whether or not one will achieve results by meditating on this path even if one has not obtained initiation into the maṇḍala, *the yogin who has not seen the maṇḍala* (**v.22.a**), i.e., who has not entered and been initiated in the maṇḍala, *and who longs after the yoga itself* (**v.22.b**) and the attainment of powers, is like one who, though he *punches at the sky* (**v.22.c**), does not strike it, and who, though he wishes to *drink the water of a mirage* (**v.22.d**), is unable to do so. That is, his effort is fruitless. It is most commonly said that the as a consequence of engaging [in this practice] without having been initiated the punishment is going to hell and so forth. Therefore, it is taught that it is a pointless effort for those who have entered into the mantric path, or who, even though they have entered and seen the maṇḍala, have not undergone the bestowal of the successive initiations, or who have entered into the path having received only a few aspects of initiation.

III.C.b.ii. A.2.e. Showing the Importance of Initiation
i. Showing the Supreme Bestowal

The yogin who has been initiated in the Saṃvara maṇḍala, and *this yoga* of this Tantra, *is excellent* since it is better than the others, and *is the highest*, i.e., the supreme, *amongst* the other *yogas* (**v.23.a,b**). Whoever desires it somewhat in his mind, *goes overpowering the gods, titans and humans* (**v.23.c-24.a**). In Lochen's translation it occurs as "Whoever desires it somewhat..."[273]

The person *who has been initiated in the maṇḍala* of this Saṃvara Tantra is *the adept whom has been taught all* of the four types of *Tantras* (**v.24.b,c**), such as the kriyā, etc. If one is *initiated* into *looking*, i.e., Action Tantra, "laughing", i.e., Performance

[273] The Tibetan equivalents to line 23.c all contain the verb *'dod pa*, 'to desire', while the Sanskrit has the verb *kṣipyate*, which means 'to throw, strike, kill', etc. It terms of meaning this difference is difficult to reconcile, but it could represent a textual variation in the ancient Sanskrit manuscripts.

Tantra,[274] *hand-holding,* i.e., Yoga Tantra, and *coupling* (**v.25.a-c**), i.e., Unexcelled Tantra. Therefore, as this Tantra is the *supreme of all Tantras* (**v.25.d**), the yogin of this *will go overpowering* all *gods and humans.* Mal's translation seems to have "laughing, looking, hand-holding, mutually embracing and so forth", which is good. Although someone claims that the word *etc.* here indicates the Further Unexcelled Mother Saṃvara Tantra,[275] since the Saṃvara Tantra is also a Tantra of *coupling*, there is nothing aside from that. Since it is said that an alternate meaning of [the word translated as] *etc.* is 'supreme', it means that it is the supreme of the *coupling* Tantras.[276]

The statement that if one attains initiation in this Tantra, one is adept in them all means, I think, that collected into this path are the imports of all Tantras, the primary of which is the unsuitability of lacking them. It is said here that if you are initiated into this you are initiated into the four [classes of] Tantra. While this does not mean that if you have attained this [initiation] there is no need to seek elsewhere the initiations of the other [Tantras], through the etymological explanation of the term *abhiṣeka* it is shown that

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[274] The Sanskrit text varies from the Tibetan, having "hiding", *gopya,* in place of "laughing/smiling" (*rgod pa*), the usual member of this list. *Gopya,* which occurs before *ikṣaṇa,* "looking", does make sense here, so we might have a variant list of the levels of increasing intimacy, which here are *hiding* (coyness, perhaps?), *looking, hand-holding, coupling.* On the other hand, all of the Tibetan translations of the Root Tantra and the commentaries have *rgod pa,* 'laughing', which is most likely a translation of *hāsya. Gopya* would thus seem to be a late variation, if were not for the fact that Devagupta, who normally follows Kambala closely, reports in his SS commentary BOTH *sbas,* the equivalent of *gopya,* and *rgod pa,* the equivalent of *hāsya* (PTT p. 39.2). While he offers no explanation for this, it must mean that he was aware of manuscripts that had *gopya* here, but did not want to stray from the mainstream tradition, represented by Kambala, of reading *hāsya* here. Bu-ston, in his NS commentary, reports that the Sanskrit here reads **gosya,* which has been variously translated as 'hiding', 'playing' and 'laughing' (p. 275). While there is always a possibility of misreading **gosya* does suspiciously seem to be midway between *hāsya* and *gopya.* This suggests that the original read *hāsya,* which was later miscopied as *gosya* (this is not as unlikely in some scripts as it would be in Devanagari), which in turn was "corrected" by a later copiest to *gopya.*

[275] Tsongkhapa here refers to a statement by Sachen in his PG commentary, that "The word *etc.* brings in the Mother Unexcelled [Tantras], and this Tantra is the chief of them all." / sogs kyis ma bla na med pa bsdus te / de thams cad kyi bdag po rgyud 'di yin pas so / (p.308.1).

[276] Tsongkhapa seems to be implying that the term *ādika,* translated as *etc.*, could be taken as having the same meaning as *ādi,* 'chief, primary, supreme'. This interpretation seems forced, but then Tsongkhapa was working from the Tibetan translations, and must be reporting here someone else's opinion here.

gathered within the term 'initiation' are both the explanations [that it means] 'cleansed of the taint of sin' and 'empowered'.[277]

III.C.b.ii. A.2.e.ii. Addendum on the Difficulty of Finding this Initiation

It has been said that [the line in] the Root Tantra, *in the Tattvasaṃgraha, Saṃvara* (**v.26.a**), refers to the *Khasama Tantra.*[278] This, however, contradicts the claim that it is the Extensive Tanta of this. It says in the *Saṃcārya* that its "is said to be from within the *Khasama Tantra* of one hundred thousand [verses]."[279] Therefore, it is not the case that the maṇḍala of this Tantra is not taught in that Tantra. Mardo claims that [the term *Saṃvara* in the Root Tantra] refers to the *Jālasaṃvara* known as the *Buddhasamāyoga,* which is excellent.[280] The *guhya* is the *Guhyasamāja,* and the *Vajrabhairava* (**v.26.b**) is evidently the Mahātantra of that name. (**LH 59**) And *this King of Maṇḍalas* previously *did not occur, nor will it occur* (**v.26.c,d**) later in those [other Tantras]. While it is not the case that this maṇḍala is "more supreme" than the maṇḍalas of those other ones,[281] it does mean that it is very difficult to find since it does not occur even in those other Tantras which are both profound and vast. If this were not so, then they would be more supreme than this as well, since their maṇḍalas also do not occur in this [Tantra].

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[277] Tsongkhapa here comments on the twenty fifth verse, which is somewhat ambigious to say the least.

[278] This is the claim of Sa-chen, who wrote "The *Cakrasaṃvara*, that is, the *Śrikhasama*", / 'khor lo sdom ste dpal nam mkha' dang mnyam pa dang / (PG, p. 308.1). Bu-ston repeats this attribution in his NS commentary. (/ 'khor lo sdom pa ste nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'o / p. 276). Of course, the Root Tantra has *saṃvare,* not *cakrasaṃvare.*

[279] Tsongkhapa already quoted this passage from the YS ch. 13 in section II.A.1 above (see Introduction note 5. It occurs as follows nam mkha' dang ni mnyam pa'i rgyud // 'bum gcig nang nas de bzhin bshad / (DK fol.41a)

[280] Tsongkhapa is here talking about the *Śrisarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasamvara-nāma-uttaratantra* (JS), and this theory is no doubt correct, as the JS is an earlier text to which this text, the *Laghusaṃvara,* is indebted. It is the source, among other things, of the famous "nidāna" verses of this text.

[281] Tsongkhapa here is again taking issue with Sachen, who at this point in his PG commentary made this claim. He wrote "It is the supreme of the maṇḍalas such as the *Vajrabhairava* etc." (p. 308.1)

All things, i.e., every power no matter what, which are either *spoken* in this Tantra *or unspoken* in this Tantra but spoken in other Tantras, *exist in* this yoga of the two stages of *Śriheruka* (**v.27**), the Glorious Blood-drinker, and will be attained in reliance on this. This shows that this initiation is greater than those previous ones, and that having attained initiation into this Tantra, its path of meditation is greater as well.

III.C.b.ii. A.2.f. Showing the Name of the Chapter

This is the third chapter on the Rite of Initiation Together with the Giving of Gifts to the Guru from the *Concise Śriherukābhidhāna Tantra.* This is the explanation of the third chapter in the *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning, A Vast Commentary on the Concise Supreme Bliss Tantra called 'The Cakrasaṃvara'.*

Chapter Four

III.C.3.ii.B. The Vast Explanation of the Secret to one who is a Suitable Vessel
1. The Vast Explanation of the Secret of the Path

In the Explanatory Tantra it says "As instructed, afterwards one is devoted to the practice of the commitments. In the continuum of one who has become a suitable vessel through meditation on the wheels and so forth there will be success perfected with the true Teachings, but not otherwise."[282] In accordance with the promise at the time of initiation, one who afterwards is devoted to the practice of the commitments and who has become a suitable vessel by means of the process of meditation on the wheels, etc., will have success

[282] Tsongkhapa here quotes a passage from chapter 18 of the SV, which corresponds to the last half of verse 36 and verse 37 in Tsuda's edition, where it occurs as follows: yathopadeśataḥ paścāt samayācāratatparaḥ // bhājanikṛtasaṃtāne cakrādibhāvanākramaiḥ / samyagāmnāyasampannā siddhir bhavati nānyathā // (1974: 128), and / phyi nas man ngag ji bzhin du // dam tshig spyod pa la brtson pas // snod du byas pa'i rgyun gyis ni // 'khor lo la sogs bsgom pa'i rim // yang dag man ngag phun tshogs pas // dngos grub 'gyur gyi gzhan du min / (1974: 210)

with the true Teachings. It says that if one does not act in this manner, there will be no success. Thus, one who has attained initiation should from the beginning understand and protect well the commitments.

Regarding the necessity of meditation on the path of the two stages, this is shown by the two sets of four realities of the two stages in this chapter.

III.C.3.ii.B.1.

a. The Four Realities of the Creation Stage

[The word] *then*, i.e., after stating the third chapter, brings us to the statement of the fourth. *The ḍākinis pervade*, that is, play in, their own *worlds* (**IV.v.1.a,b**), which in general means the measureless mansion, and in particular the three wheels. This indicates the reality of the habitat maṇḍala. This supports both the outer maṇḍala and the body maṇḍala. Since the characteristics of the maṇḍala were clearly shown in chapter two, here it only summarizes with *the worlds.*

In regard to *Mahāviryā* etc., it says in the *Saṃcārya* that "one will achieve everything essential through the reverse placement of the deities, the reversal of the mantric distinctions, and the reversal of the secret meditation."[283] In this way, it talks about not only reversing the arrangement of the deities, but also reversing the mantras and reversing the arrangement of the secret meditation. As for the need for this, it [is stated] in order to show one's dependence on the oral instructions of the guru.

If we explain so order this disorder, regarding those that come before *Pracaṇḍā* and after *Mahāviryā,*[284] the following four, *Pracaṇḍā, Caṇḍākṣi, Prabhāvati,* and *Mahānāsā*

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[283] This passage is from the eleventh chapter of the YS, where it occurs as follows: / lha rnams bzlog ste dgod pa dang // sngags kyi dbye ba bzlog pa dang // bsgom pa gsang ba bzlog pa ni // snying po thams cad bsgrub pa yin /. DK fol. 39b, QK p. 240.1.

[284] The list of goddesses occurs in verses one through four in the Sanskrit text of this chapter. I will italicize their names, but not give the verse numbers below, since the order they are listed by Tsongkhapa is the reverse order of that given in the text.

are arranged in the four directions of the Mind Wheel, counter-clockwise starting from the east. Likewise, *Viramati, Kharvari, Laṅkeśvari* and *Drumacchāyā* are placed in the four quarters of the Mind Wheel, clockwise, starting from the southeast. The following four, *Airāvati, Mahābhairavā, Vāyuvegā* and *Surābhakṣi*, are placed in the four directions of the Speech Wheel, counter-clockwise, starting from the east. Taking *śyāma*[285] as 'turquoise' or 'green', the four, *Śyāmādevi, Subhadrā, Kayakarṇi* and either *Khagānanā* or 'Kākāsyā', are placed in the four quarters of the Speech Wheel, clockwise starting from the southeast. The following four, *Cakravegā, Khaṇḍarohā,* either *Śauṇḍini* or 'Mahānāsā', and *Cakravarmiṇi,* are arranged in the four directions of the Body Wheel, counter-clockwise starting from the east. The next four, *Suvirā, Mahābalā, Cakravartini* and *Mahāviryā,* are arranged in the four quarters of Body Wheel, clockwise, starting from the southeast.

Regarding the statement that *achiever* (**v.4.c**) is not in the Indic texts, just because you do not see it in a single Indic text does not mean that it is not in the Indic texts.[286] It does occur in the translations of all three translators. Thus, it is said that these ḍākinis are the *achievers of* the adept's success. On this occasion the following occurs in Mal's translation: "As it is outwardly, so should it be inwardly in body, speech and mind." As this also occurs in a certain manuscript of Mardo's translation, as well as in the commentaries of Kambala and so forth, it is good.[287] In that way, just as the Pracaṇḍā etc. are placed amidst the spokes of the body, speech and mind wheels of the outer maṇḍala, so

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[285] Tsongkhapa's text has *śyema* for *śyāma.*

[286] Tsongkhapa here takes issue with Bu-ston, quite rightly it turns out, as the word in question, *sādhakaḥ,* does occur in the extant Sanskrit manuscripts. Bu-ston wrote in his NS commentary that "the word *achievment* (*sādhakaḥ*) does not occur in the Indic text or commentaries." / sgrub byed yin zhes pa rgya dpe dang / 'grel pa rnams las mi byung ste / (p. 279)

[287] These two line quoted by Tsongkhapa from Mal's translation indeed occur in Kambala's SN commentary as follows: / sku gsung thugs kyi dbus su ni // ji ltar phyi rol nang de bzhin / (QT p. 179.3) While these lines could be taken as a credo for this tradition, with its constant inward approach to meditation, it is not attested in the extant Sanskrit manuscripts, or in the Mardo/ Prajñākīrti or Sumatikīrti editions of Lochen's translation. It may have been an interpolation into the manuscript used by Mal, and was perhaps inserted as well into the manuscript of Mardo's translation used by Tsongkhapa.

too should the twenty four [goddesses] be placed in the body maṇḍala from the head down to the knees. This shows the body maṇḍala.

The name of this chapter is stated as "The Placement of the Non-dual Heros and Yoginis," and Kambala also says that the name of this chapter is "The Placement of the Nondual Heros and Heroines."[288] Since it is also like the outer maṇḍala, one should know that the remaining deities are illustrated by them. Concerning these *twenty four ḍākinis* (**v.5.a**), Kambala explains that "*they are previously established* (**v.4.d**), meaning the twenty four are the principle ones, since they are gathered from those who are held to number no less than the atoms of Mt. Sumeru."[289] This is the meaning of the statement that they are the principle ones of those *established previously*, i.e., in the beginning.[290]

Regarding the reality of the mantras having shown the reality of the deities, *join to the mantras in* the center of *which are uttered the names of each* of the sixty deities *hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ* at the end (**v.5.a,b**) and, at the beginning, *oṃ, the syllable which illuminates*, i.e., beautifies, *everything* (**v.6.a**). For example, there are mantras such as *oṃ ḍākiniye hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ, oṃ kara kara khaṇḍakapāla pracaṇḍe hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ,* and *oṃ kākāsyā hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ,* etc.[291]

If you *see* this most *excellent, supreme* (**v.5.c**) meditation on Heruka's maṇḍala and the mantra recitation which exhort's His mental continuum, it is like fire, while the *others*, that is, the deity meditations and mantra repetitions of the three other classes of Tantra, *are*

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[288] Kambala does not quote the name of the chapter in the edition of his SN commentary preserved in the Tanjur, so I am not sure of the source of this reference.

[289] This passage occurs as follows in Kambala's SN commentary: / 'di dag sngon gyi grub pa yin zhes bya ba la / nyi shu rtsa bzhi gtso bor byas pas ni ri rab kyi rdul gyi grangs snyed rnams gzung ste / de rnams bsdus so / (QT p. 179.5)

[290] Sachen gives a bit more information concerning the mythological significance of this passage. He wrote that "As for *they are previously established,* it means that the twenty four regions were established when Jambudvīpa was established, and that at that time the ḍākinīs were established." / 'di dag sngon nyid grub pa yin ni / 'dzam bu gling grub pa'i dus su yul nyi shu rtsa bzhi grub ste / grub pa'i tshe mkha' 'gro ma rnams grub pa yin no / (PG, p. 308.4)

[291] Tsongkhapa seems to have taken these examples from Bu-ston's NṢ commentary (p. 280), in which Bu-ston lists some examples taken from various sources, such as Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya*, and Bhavabhadra's and Durjayacandra's commentaries.

like straw (**v.5.b**), the exposed pith of which has been eaten, meaning that their power is lesser. Lochen's translation has 'the others are like pith-less grass'.[292] The reason for this is that the *yoga* (**v.5.c**) of this *gives all of the desired powers* (**v.6.b**).

Regarding the reality of intuition, is it only in regard to those previously described twenty four heroines? One should be *established,* i.e., perfected, *in the state of being a hero* (**v.6.c**). This is relevant in the context of the reality of the deities. *In the house* means being inside of the consort's lotus. *Seeing the maṇḍala* (**v.6.d**) is explained as worshipping the maṇḍala by means of the bliss with her at the time of being equipoised. It is good to ensure that one sees the maṇḍala of the spirit of awakening at that time. *Knowing* this method *always meditate* (**v.7.a**) If you meditate in this way you will achieve *the powers taught by the Tathāgata* (**v.7.b**).

The explanation thus applied to the four realities of the Creation Stage shows (1) the deities of the outer maṇḍala within the meditation together with the four elements, Mt. Sumeru and the measureless mansion. It also shows (2) the meditation on the inner body maṇḍala, (3) the recitation which extolls the mental continuums of the outer and inner deities thus meditated upon, and (4) the meditation in which one creates the great bliss of the Creation Stage in the male-female equipoise. These show the complete essence of the Creation Stage.

III.C.3.ii.B.1.b. The Four Realities of the Perfection Stage

The texts can also be explained in a way applicable to the four realities of the Perfection Stage. The reality of the habitat maṇḍala applies the four elements, Mt. Sumeru and the measureless mansion to the inner body. This is not taken in terms of the Creation

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[292] Tsongkhapa reports Lochen's translation as having here *gzhan dag snying po med rtsva mtshung.* This is not a very good translation, however, for the Sanskrit simply says 'straw', which is translated here unnecessary prolixically as 'pith-less grass'; it also translates as a Tibetan line only a portion of the Sanskrit *pada,* which occurs as *jvalam anyat palālavat.* The revised editions of Mardo/ Prajñākīrti and Sumatikīrti improve this. The former is best, replacing 'pith-less grass' with 'straw' (*sog ma*), while the latter keeps simply 'grass' (rtsa).

Stage body maṇḍala, it is explained as being the the Vajra body on which the essential points are pressed by means of the art of pressing the essential points of the body, as I explained in the first chapter, from the perspective of the Perfection Stage.

In regard to the reality of the inhabitant deities, it is not acceptable to apply to the body's channels [deities] such as Pracaṇḍā to the head channel, etc., because in the Creation Stage as well they are applied to the channels due to the necessity of generating the deities in the channels in the context of the Creation Stage's body maṇḍala as well. Therefore, regarding these thirty seven deities who have faces and hands, there are both the mantric body of the Creation Stage and the intuition body of the Perfection Stage. The latter is said to be the Magic Body. The yogin who lacks that is without essence, like a heap of chaff, as I explained previously with the passage from the *Ḍākārṇava.*[293]

It also says in Atīśa's Lūipa commentary that "conventionally, however, see the thirty seven deities from mere wind-mind clear and complete like a reflected image, coloured like a rainbow, and distorted like [the image of] the moon in water. They are conventional since since they arise from causes and conditions."[294] This very clearly shows the maṇḍala of the Magic Body as it occurs in the Saṃvara tradition.

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[293] Tsongkhapa is refering to the passage he quoted in section III.C.3.b.i.A.2.a.i.B of his chapter one commentary, which will repeat here given its importance. "The Lord Yogin, who manifests instantaneously in a divine form, creates his form by the yoga of a cast image, etc. The yoga emptiness is natural form. It is the characteristic of self-consecration. As for the yogin who lacks self-consecration, know him to be like a heap of chaff. This sort of supreme characteristic is not known by beast-like beings. Therefore, if you meditate on this magic emanation, you will attain unexcelled enlightenment." / lha yi rnam pa'i rnal 'byor bdag / skad cig mngon sum byed pa'o // lugs ma la sogs rnal 'byor gyis // rnam par byas pa'i dbyibs su 'gyur // stong nyid rang bzhin gzugs rnal 'byor // rang byin rlabs pa'i mtshan nyid do // bdag byin brlab dang bral rnal 'byor // spun skogs rum bu bzhin shes bya // 'di 'dra'i mtshan nyid mchog gyur pa // skye bo phyugs rnams kyis mi shes // de phyir sgyu 'phrul 'di bsgoms na // byang chub bla na med pa 'thob / (DK, fol. 139b)

[294] Tsongkhapa quotes here a passage from Atīśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna's *Abhisamayavibhaṅga,* an influential commentary on Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya.* It occurs as follows in the Tanjur: / 'on kyang kun rdzob tu rlung dang sems tsam las lha sum cu rtsa bdun me long gi gzugs brnyan ltar gsal la rdzogs pa / 'ja' tshon ltar kha dog dang bcas pa / chu zla ltar sgro skur dang bral bar ltos shig / de ni rgyu rkyen la ltos nas skyes pas kun rdzob bo / (DT fol. 197b). This varies from Tsongkhapa's text only in the last line, which occurs as follows: /de ni rgyu dang rkyen las skye bas kun rdzob bo /. My translation here follows Tsongkhapa's text.

As for the reality of mantra, the definitive meaning of mantra recitation is the Perfection Stage of pressing the essential points on the body, [the stage of] Vajra Recitation and so forth.

The reality of intuition is the orgasmic great bliss which arises from the entry, abiding and dissolution of the life-force into the central channel in reliance upon the inner arts of Vajra Recitation, etc. and the outer arts of being *in the house* (**v.6.d**).[295] It is the intuition of Clear Light which exists inseparably in the meaning of reality.

The four realities are explained as applicable to the Perfection Stage in this way. The first of these shows the vajra body which is the place where the essential points are pressed. The third shows the art of pressing the essential points on it. The fourth shows the intuition of the orgasmic joy which is drawn forth by those two arts. The second shows the body of intuition, that is, the Magic Body, which is created from the mere wind-mind of orgasmic joy and clear light. [Together these] show the entire essence of the Perfection Stage.

In this way, at the time of bestowing the fourth initiation, this import of the inseparability of reality of intuition and the reality of the deities, the very precious word initiation is attained for one who well joins the signs with the words.

In this way, Kambala the Blanketed says that "the fourth initiation which should be known from the guru's mouth assembles the perfected import of all of reality, and, since it is untroubled by discursive thought, it is non-different from the unexcelled, true awareness, The self of the maṇḍala which radiates the light of the immeasurable host of sages can be imparted by means of the word of actuality itself, which is said to be akin to the wish fulfilling jewel."[296] We might recognize that what is being stated here is similar to my

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[295] That is, the sexual yogas, since Tsongkhapa in the previous section commented that being "in the house" means "being inside of the consort's lotus".

[296] This quote is not, as we might expect from Tsongkhapa's attribution, drawn from Kambalāmbara's commentary on Lūipa's *Śribhagavad-abhisamaya*, entitled *Śricakrasamvarābhisamayaṭikā*. Rather, it is from a work attributed to Kambala called the *Śricakrasamvaramaṇḍalopāyikā-ratnapradipodyota*, which makes sense, since this latter work deals with the rites concerning the maṇḍala and initiation therein. The quote occurs as follows: / dbang bskur ba bzhi pa bla ma'i zhal nas shes par bya ba ni / 'di skad du / de

previous explanation. That which is non-different from the true awareness since it is untroubled by discursive thought is the intuition of clear light, and the self of the maṇḍala which radiates light is the previously explained maṇḍala of the Magic Body.

Atīśa wrote that "the Integration of two truths indivisable, the great spirit of awakening, is the fourth," clearly meaning that the fourth initiation concerns Integration.[297] Thus, the identification of the word initiation to the [stage of] Integration is a key point in this tradition. This explanation applicable to the two sets of four realities is based upon the commentatorial traditions of the two translators. While this is not as extensive as the explanation of the import of the first chapter of the Root Tantra by the Explanatory Tantras, if you look into the Root Tantra itself, I have extensively explained this [in my commentary on the verses] *And now...the secret* (**I.v.1**) up until *Listen...*(**I.v.5**).

III.C.3.ii.B.1.c. Showing the Name of the Chapter

This is the fourth chapter on the Non-dual Arrangement of the Heros and Yoginis of the Outer and Body Maṇḍalas from the *Concise Śriherukābhidhāna Tantra.* This is the explanation of the Fourth chapter in the *Total Illumination of the Hidden Meaning, A Vast Commentary on the Concise Supreme Bliss Tantra called 'The Cakrasaṃvara'.*

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nyid 'gro ba ma lus pa'i don du phun sum tshogs par byed pa / rtog pa'i rnyog pa dang bral ba nyid kyis bla na med pa yang dag par rig pa tha mi dad pa / thub pa'i tshogs dpag tu med pa'i 'od zer 'phro ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi bdag nyid yid bzhin nor bu lta bu lta bu bstan pa'i ngo bo nyid kyi tshig gis sbyin par bya'o / (QT p. 200.4). This differs from Tsongkhapa's text only in having *de nyid 'gro ba ma lus pa'i don du phun sum tshogs par byed pa* "it assembles the perfected for the sake of all beings"; while Tsongkhapa's text here reads *de nyid ma lus pa'i don phun sum tshogs par byed pa,* omitting *'gro ba.* My translation follows the latter, as it seems to make more sense.

[297] Tsongkhapa quotes the following passage from Atiśa Dīpaṅkaraśrījñāna's *Abhisamayavibhaṅga*: / de ltar bden pa gnyis mi phyed pa zung du 'jug pa ni byang chub kyi sems chen po ste bzhi pa'o / (DT fol. 197b). This passage immediately follows that quoted above; see note 13.

APPENDIX D

This is a translation of Sumatikirti's *Laghusaṃvaratantrapaṭalābhisandhi.*, a brief synopsis on the CST which is quoted in its entirety by Tsongkhapa in his introduction to his *Total Illumination.* My translation generally follows Tsongkhapa's text and commentary, but recognition is made of important variants between this an the sDe-dge Tanjur edition. I have also translated the translators' preface and the colophon, which is not included in Tsongkhapa's work. The translation is followed by Tibetan versions of the text, both as quoted by Tsongkhapa and as it occurs in the DT. Both the translation and editions are broken up into numbered sections, the numbers corresponding to he order in which Tsongkhapa cited them.

The text in Translation:

In Sanskrit: *Laghusamvaratantrapaṭalābhisandhi.*
The Intended Import of the Chapters of the Concise Samvara Tantra.

Homage to Śrī Vajraḍāka.

The object of discourse is the intended import of the *Concise Samvara Tantra.* (1) First, all of the concise meanings with respect to the creation and perfection stages are summarized by the first chapter, extensively stated by the chapters from the second up to the fiftieth, and are brought together by the last chapter. The Bhagavan said this. This explanation which is applied threefold to the *Concise Tantra* is the intention of Nāropa. (2) 'Having bestowed consecration, that reality is revealed to him.' This means that in the Mantrayāna, first there is the conferral of initiation. The maṇḍala is the preliminary stage for this, thus the maṇḍala is shown by the second chapter, while consecration bestowal is shown by the third. (3) The fourth [chapter shows] the actuality which is the meaning of

initiation. (4) The three chapters explain from *And now... the secret* (**I.1.a**) up until *Listen* (**I.5.d**). (5) Since the extensive explanation of the maṇḍala which is visualized as a preliminary to 'the dried dung of the bull pen' and so forth, and which is thus explained, is apprehended by this, it is not stated elsewhere than this [text]. (6) Then, in commenting upon *....is successful with contemplation and secret mantra repetition* (**I.10.a,b**), one must show the selection of the mantras to be repeated which are set forth in a scrambled order in the four chapters from the fifth through the eighth and the chapters from the twenty fifth to the thirtieth. You should understand that this is for the sake of preventing someone from reciting the mantra without a master in the lineage. (7) In this way, one should understand that the mundane successes are shown from the characteristics of the supreme and ordinary successes in repetition, from the ninth chapter until the end of the fourteenth, and from the forty third until the fiftieth. By applying the three bodies to the them, the supreme, transcendent success is revealed. (8) In that way, the [chapters] from the fifteenth until the twenty-forth explain *the messengers who are orgasmically achieved,* (**I.7.a**) etc. in order to show here that the mundane and supermundane successes are based on the kindness of the yoginis. So that one might know the differentiation of the three yoginis, one should know the letter signs, the differentiation of the six classes, the enumeration of names, the characteristics of the ḍākinī clan, the lāma clan characteristics, the hand signs, the gazes, the gestures, the symbolic and verbal signs. These ten particularities show the characteristics of the heralds in the ten chapters respectively. (9) After that, in order to fulfill the meaning of [statements] such as *...should always protect the commitments* (**I.10.c**), chapter twenty-six shows the vows which are guarded so as to please the messenger whom one has recognized. Chapter twenty seven shows the actions performed at the command of the pleased consort which one has achieved. as well as the contrived performance by the fulfillment of the meaning of the characteristic statements such as *the state of being a yogin* (**I.9.c**). Chapter twenty-eight and twenty-nine show the actions of the contrived performance. (10) Then, as an explanation of *...honey with vermilion, camphor* (**I.11.c**)

etc., the three chapters from the thirty first show the food commitments necessary for all performances. Furthermore, one should also know the hand offerings, the names of the distinctive substances, and the differentiation of the three types of food procedures. (**11**) After that, the four chapters from the thirty-fourth on, are commentaries on *the four offerings, that is, the great hero* (**I.14.a**) etc. One should investigate them in the order of mahāmudrā, dharmamudrā and karmamudrā. Samayamudrā is shown in accordance with the characteristics of visualizing the wheel of the maṇḍala. Therefore, here it is not very extensively discussed separately from them. (**12**) Then the thirty-eighth thoroughly shows the uncontrived and extremely uncontrived performances in order to fulfill the import of [expressions] such as *the state of being a yogin* etc. (**13**) And then, the signs of the successes common to the three yogas are taught from chapter thirty-nine up until chapter forty-two. (**14**) The characteristics of the meanings which were shown thus both in summary and in detail are brought together by the fifty-first chapter, and were taught by the Lord. [This] is the personal instruction of the guru.

This completes the *Intended Import of the Concise Samvara Tantra,* written by the follower of Śri Nārotapa, the Scholar Sumatikirti. Translated by the Indian Professor himself, and the Translator-monk Grags-mchog Shes-rab.

The Text as it occurs in Tsongkhapa's *Total Illumination:*

(**1**) / dang por re zhig bskyed ba dang rdzogs pa'i rim pa gnyis kyis bsdus pa'i don thams cad le'u dang pos mdor bstan nas / gnyis pa nas le'u lnga bcu pa'i bar gyis rgyas par bstan te / kun gyi tha ma'i le'u ni de rnams gcig tu mdzad de bcom ldan 'das kyis gsungs pa'o // zhes rgyud chung ngu 'di gsum du sbyar ba'i bshad pa 'di ni nā ro pa'i dgongs pa'o / (**2**) / de la dbang bskur nas ni de nyid bstan / zhes pa'i tshig gis theg pa gsang sngags la dang po dbang bskur ba'o // de la dkyil 'khor sngon du 'gro ba las le'u gnyis pas ni dkyil 'khor ro // gsum pas ni dbang bskur ba'o / (**3**) / bzhi pas ni dbang bskur ba'i don gyi ngo bo nyid do / (**4**) / de ltar le'u gsum pos ni de nas gsang ba zhes bya ba nas / mnyan par gyis zhes pa'i bar du bshad do / (**5**) / 'dis ni de ltar 'chad par 'gyur gyi / ba lang gnas kyi lci skam dang // zhes bya ba la sogs pa sngon du 'gro ba'i sgom pa'i dkyil 'khor rgyas par bshad pa yang 'di nyid yin pas / de las logs shig tu ma brjod do / (**6**) / de nas gsang sngags zlos pa'i bzlas brjod dang // bsam gtan gyis kyang 'grub par 'gyur // zhes bya ba rnam par 'grel ba la / lnga pa nas brgyad pa'i bar gyi le'u bzhi dang / nyi shu rtsa lnga pa nas sum cu pas go rim

'chol ba'i las bzlas pa'i sngags btu ba bstan te / rgyud la slob dpon med par sngags kyi bzlas pa dgag pa'i don yin par rtogs par bya'o / (7) / 'di ltar bzlas pa'i dngos grub mchog dang tha ma'i mtshan nyid las / 'jig rten pa'i dngos grub bstan pa ni / dgu pa nas bcu bzhi pa'i mthar thug pa dang / bzhi bcu rtsa gcig pa nas le'u lnga bcu pa'i bar du shes par bya'o // gong du sku gsum sbyar bas 'jig rten las 'das pa'i mchog gi dngos grub bstan to / (8) / de ltar 'di la 'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i dngos grub ni / rnal 'byor ma'i bka' drin las 'gyur ba de 'dir bstan pa'i don du / bco lnga pa nas nyi shu rtsa bzhi pa'i bar gyis ni / pho nya lhan cig skyes dngos grub / ces pa la sogs pa rnam par 'grel te / 'dis rnal 'byor ma gsum gyi dbye ba shes par bya ba'i phyir yi ge'i brda dang / rigs drug gi dbye ba dang / ming gi rnam grang dang / mkha' 'gro ma'i rigs kyi mtshan nyid dang / lā ma'i rigs kyi mtshan nyid dang / lag pa'i brda dang / lta ba'i phyag rgya dang / yan lag gi phyag rgya dang / mtshan ma'i phyag rgya dang / ngag gi brda rab tu shes par 'gyur ba 'di ni / bye brag bcus pho nya'i mtshan nyid le'u bcur go rim ji lta ba bzhin bstan to / (9) / de'i rjes la / dam tshig rtag tu bskyang bar bya // zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i don rdzogs par byed pa la / nyi shu rtsa drug pas ni yongs su shes pa'i pho nya mo mnyes par byed pa bsrung ba'i dam tshig bstan to // nyi shu rtsa bdun pas ni thob pa'i phyag rgya mnyes pa de'i bkas spyod pa bya ba ste / rnal 'byor pa nyid ces bya ba la sogs pa'i mthan nyid kyi don rdzogs par byed pa spros bcas kyi spyod pa bstan to // nyi shu brgyad pa dang nyi shu dgu pas ni spros bcas kyi spyod pa'i bya ba bstan te / (10) / sbrang rtsi mtshal dang ga bur bcas // zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i bshad pa ni sum cu rtsa gcig pa la sogs pa le'u gsum gyis spyod pa thams cad la mkho ba bza' ba'i dam tshig bstan te / de yang lag pa'i mchod pa dang / rdzas kyi khyad par gyi ming dang / kha zas kyi cho ga'i dbye ba gsum du shes par bya'o / (11) / de'i rjes la / mchod bzhi de bzhin dpa' bo che // zhes bya ba la sogs pa rnam par 'grel pa ni sum cu rtsa bzhi pa la sogs pa le'u bzhi ste / phyag rgya chen po dang chos kyi phyag rgya dang las kyi phyag rgya dbang du bya ba go rim ji lta ba bzhin du rtogs par bya'o // dam tshig gi phyag rgya ni sngar gyi dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo sgom pa'i mtshan nyid bzhin du bstan pas na / 'dir de las logs shig tu rgyas par ma bstan to / (12) /de nas sum cu rtsa brgyad pas ni yang rnal 'byor pa nyid ces bya ba la sogs pa'i don rdzogs par bya ba'i phyir / spros med dang shin tu spros med kyi spyod pa rgyas par bstan to / (13) / de nas rnal 'byor gsum gyi thun mong du gyur pa'i dngos grub kyi mtshan ma ni / sum cu rtsa dgu pa nas bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis pa'i bar gyis bstan to / (14) / de ltar mdo dang rgyas par bstan pa'i don rnams kyi mtshan nyid le'u lnga bcu rtsa gcig pas gcig tu bsdus nas / bcom ldan 'das kyis bstan to zhes bla ma'i man ngag go /.

The Text as it occurs in the rDerge Tanjur (Tō. 1411, DT vol. ma, 352a-353a):

/ rgya gar skad du / la ghu saṃ ba ra tantra pa ṭa la a bhi sandhi / bod skad du / sdom pa'i rgyud chung ngu'i mtshams sbyor / dpal rdo rje mkha' 'gro la phyags 'tshal lo // sdom pa'i rgyud chung ngu'i mtshams sbyor brjod par bya ste / (1) / dang por re zhig bskyed ba dang / rdzogs pa'i rim pa gnyis kyis bsdus pa'i don thams cad le'u dang pos mdor bstan nas gnyis pa nas le'u lnga bcu pa'i bar gyis rgyas par bstan te / kun gyi tha ma'i le'u yis ni de rnams gcig tu mdzad do / bcom ldan 'das kyis bsdus pa'i rgyud chung ngu 'di'i kha sbyor gsum pa'i bshad pa 'di ni nā ro pa'i dgongs pa'o / (2) / de la dbang bskur nas ni 'di nyid bstan / zhes pa'i tshig gis theg pa chen po gsang sngags la dang por dbang bskur ba'o // de la dkyil 'khor sngon du 'gro ba las le'u gnyis pas ni dkyil 'khor ro // gsum pas ni dbang bskur ba'o / (3) / bzhi pas ni dbang bskur ba'i don gyi ngo bo de kho na nyid do / (4) / de ltar le'u gsum pos ni de yang gsang ba zhes bya ba nas mnyan par gyis zhes pa'i bar bshad pa'o / (5) / 'dis ni de ltar 'chad par 'gyur ba'i / ba lang gnas kyi lci skam dang // zhes bya ba la sogs pa sngon du 'gro bas sgom pa'i dkyil 'khor rgyas par bshad pa yang 'di nyid kyis zin pas de las logs shig tu ma brjod do / (6) / de nas / gsang sngags zlos pa'i bzlas brjod dang // bsam gtan gyis kyang 'grub par 'gyur // zhes rnam par bshad pa'i 'grel pa las lnga pa nas brgyad pa'i bar gyi le'u bzhi dang nyi shu lnga pa dang sum cu pas ni go rims 'chol bas bzlas pa'i sngags btu ba bstan te / rgyud las slob dpon med par sngags kyi bzlas pa dgag pa'i don yin par rtogs par bya'o / (7) / 'di ltar bzlas pa'i dngos grub mchog dang /

tha ma'i mtshan nyid las 'jig rten pa'i dngos grub bstan pa ni dgu pa nas bcu bzhi pa'i mthar thug pa dang / bzhi bcu rtsa gsum pa las le'u lnga bcu pa'i bar du shes par bya'o // gang du dbang bskur nas 'jig rten las 'das pa'i mchog gi dngos grub bstan to / (**8**) / de ltar 'di la 'jig rten dang 'jig rten las 'das pa'i dngos grub ni rnal 'byor ma'i bka' drin las 'gyur ba 'dir bstan pa'i don du bco lnga pa nas nyi shu rtsa bzhi pa'i bar gyis ni / pho nyas lhan cig dngos grub ma // zhes bya ba la sogs pa rnam par 'grel te / 'dis rnal 'byor ma'i dbye ba shes par bya ba'i phyir yi ge brda dang / rigs drug gi dbye ba dang / ming gi rnam grang dang / mkha' 'gro ma'i rigs kyi mtshan nyid dang / lā ma'i rigs kyi mtshan nyid dang / lag pa'i brda dang / lta ba'i phyag rgya dang / yan lag gi phyag rgya dang / mtshan ma'i phyag rgya dang / ngag gi brdas rab tu shes par 'gyur ba'i bye brag bcus pho nya'i mtshan nyid le'u bcur go rim ji lta ba bzhin bstan to / (**9**) / de'i rjes la / dam tshig rtag tu bskyang bar bya // zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i don rdzogs par byed pa las nyi shu rtsa drug pas ni yongs su shes pa'i pho nya ma mnyes par byed pa bsrung ba'i dam tshig bstan to // nyi shu rtsa bdun pas ni thob pa'i phyag rgya mnyes pa de'i bka' spyod pa bya ste / rnal 'byor pa nyid ces bya ba la sogs pa'i mthan nyid kyi don rdzogs par byas pas spros bcas kyi spyod pa bstan to // nyi shu brgyad pa dang nyi shu dgu pas ni spros bcas kyi spyod pa bstan to / (**10**) / sbrang rtsi mtshal dang ga bur bcas // zhes bya ba la sogs pa'i bshad pa ni sum cu rtsa gcig pa la sogs pa'i le'u gsum gyis spyod pa thams cad la mkho ba bzang ba'i dam tshig bstan to // de la yang lag pa'i mchod pa dang / rdzas kyi khyad par gyi ming dang / kha zas kyi cho ga dbye bas gsum du shes par bya'o / (**11**) / de'i rjes la / mchod bzhi de bzhin dpa' bo che // zhes bya ba la sogs pa rnam par 'grel pa ni sum cu rtsa bzhi pa la sogs pa le'u bzhi ste / phyag rgya chen po dang / chos kyi phyag rgya dang / las kyi phyag rgya dang / las kyi phyag rgya dbang du bya ba go rims ji lta ba bzhin du rtogs par bya'o // dam tshig gi phyag rgya ni sngar gyi dkyil 'khor gyi 'khor lo bsgom pa'i mtshan nyid gzhan du bstan pas na 'dir de las logs shig tu rgyas par ma bstan to / (**12**) /de nas sum cu rtsa brgyad pas ni yang rnal 'byor pa nyid ces bya ba la sogs pa'i don rdzogs par bya ba'i phyir spros med dang / shin tu spros med kyi spyod pa rgyas par bstan to / (**13**) / de la rnal 'byor ma gsum gyi thun mong du gyur pa'i dngos grub kyi mtshan nyid sum cu rtsa dgu pa nas bzhi bcu rtsa gnyis pa'i bar du bstan to / (**14**) / de ltar mdo dang rgyas par bstan pa'i sgo nas le'u lnga bcu rtsa gcig tu bsdus nas bstan nas bstan to zhes bla ma'i man ngag go /

APPENDIX E

The following is an abbreviated version of the Cakrasaṃvara lineage, extracted from gZhon-nu-dPal's (1392-1481) *Blue Annals* (Roerich:380-397.) as well as from Tsongkhapa's *Total Illumination,* the relevant portion from which is translated below.

1. Vajradhara
2. Vajrapaṇi
3. Saraha
4. Śabareśvara
5. Lūipa
6. Dārika
7. Vajraghaṇṭa
8. Kurmapāda
9. Jayandhara
10. Kṛṣṇācārya
11. Vijayapāda
12. Tillipa
13. Nāropa

Nāropa (1016-1100) is the main point of dissemination from which the Tibetan lineage branches spread. On the one hand he taught Śāntipa and Maitripa, the former of whom taught Atiśa (982-1054). Atiśa in turn taught Rinchen bZangpo (958-1055), who produced the first Tibetan translation of the *Laghusaṃvara.* Atiśa also taught it to 'Gar dGe-ba of gTsang-rong and to Nag-tsho Locāna. This branch is important primarily because Rinchen bZangpo's translation resulted from it.

According to Tsongkhapa Nāropa had four primary disciples in the Cakrasaṃvara Tantra, who are Manakaśrījñāna, Prajñārakṣita, Phitonghaṃdu and Phamtingpa. There evidently were many more people who studied with him, however, judging by gZhon-nu dPal's account. Tsongkhapa says that the first of these was Nāropa's successor as the Northern Gatekeeper at Nālandā. The most important are the second two, the older two of the four Nepali brothers. These are Phamthingpa, who studied with Nāropa for nine years, and his older brother called both Phitonghaṃdu and Dharmamati, who studied with Nāropa for twelve years and then went off to Wu-tai Shan in China. There were also two younger

brothers, Kālacakrapa and Thangchunga, neither of whom achieved the supreme siddhi, though the servant of the latter, Bhadanta, did.

Phamthingpa, also known as the Great Aṅepa and Abhayakirti, was the source of an important lineage in Tibet; he taught the Tibetan Locāna kLog-skya Śes-rab-rtsegs, who taught Mal-gyo Locāna. Mal then travelled to Nepal, where also studied with Kanakaśrī, who according to Tsongkhapa is also known as Bhadanta, and was a disciple of Mānakaśrijñāna, Prajñārakṣita and Phamtingpa, as well as with Kanakaśrī's disciple Mahākaruṇa. Bhadanta/ Kanakaśrī was evidently a very important figure, as he taught the Kaśmiri Sumatikīrti.

Mal gyo produced another translation of the *Laghusaṃvara*, and in turn taught Sachen Kun-dga' sNying-po (1092-1158), who produced the important *Pearl Garland* commentary on the Cakrasaṃvara. From him descended the Sa-skya lineage, which was passed on to bSod-nams rTse-mo (1142-1182) and onward to the Sa-skya Paṇḍita Kun-dga' rGyal-mtshan (1181-1251).

Another important lineage was brought to Tibet by Marpa Dopa, from the family of Yar-'brog bla-do, a contemporary of the famous Marpa Lho-brag-pa (d. 1098). At the latter's suggestion he went to India, met Nāropa, and learned Nāropa's system via his disciples Manakaśrijñāna, Prajñārakṣita, the Kaśmiri Bodhibhadra. On the way back he traveled through Nepal and also met and studied with Phamtingpa, the Nepali Kanakaśrī, the Kaśmiri Sumatikīrti and the siddha Vajrapāṇi, a direct disciple of Maitrīpa. From Kanakaśrī/ Bhadanta he also received the transmission of an alternate lineage different from the above. It is:

1. Cakrasaṃvara
2. Vajravārāhi
3. Lūipa
4. Deṅgi-pa
5. Kambali-pa
13. Nāropa
14. Manakaśrijñāna
15. the Nepali Bhadanta
16. Marpa Dopa
17. gZe-ba blo-ldan

6. Indrabodhi/ Indrabhūti
7. Kaca-pa
8. Vajraghaṇṭa
9. Jālandhara-pa
10. Kṛṣṇācārya
11. Kuśalana
12. Tilli-pa
18. gZe-ba Jo-bde
19. Ācārya Khu-lhas-pa
20. Ācārya Lho-tshaṅ-pa
21. Locāna mChog-ldan
22. bla-ma dPal-ldan Seṅge
23.Bu-ston

Bu-ston (1290-1364) is said to have received the other lineage mentioned above as well, through both the branches coming though Atīśa and the Sa-skyas respectively. Bu-ston was one of the most important figures in the systematization of the New School Tantras, and he wrote an important commentary on the Cakrasaṃvara as well. rJe Tsongkhapa (1357-1419) also contributed tremendously to the development of this tradition, and he too received the major transmissions coming through the Sa-skyas and Bu-ston. For information concerning Tsongkhapa's education see the biography published in Thurman 1982, pp. 4-39.