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Vajrayāna and its Doubles:

**A critical historiography, exposition,
and translation of the Tantric works
of Āryadeva**

by

Christian Konrad Wedemeyer

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
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ABSTRACT

Vajrayāna and Its Doubles: A critical historiography, exposition, and translation of the Tantric writings of Āryadeva

Christian Konrad Wedemeyer

This thesis explores the historiography and contents of the esoteric Buddhist (Tantric) literature ascribed to Āryadeva and the school to which he belonged, the Ārya Tradition. Since the early nineteenth century, when modern Buddhist studies began, it has been maintained that this literature is spuriously attributed to this renowned luminary of the exoteric Mādhyamika tradition. This essay takes as its point of departure a questioning of this almost universally-accepted view. It proceeds by examining the role of meta-historical narrative structures in the imagination of Indian Buddhist history. It shows that the common historiographical model of the organic life-cycle (birth-growth-maturity-decay-death), and the kindred association of this “decay” with sensuality (and the latter with “Tantra”), necessitated that Tantrism be conceived as “degenerate” and, thus, chronologically late. It then describes in detail the actual historical arguments advanced by scholars since the first studies of Buddhist Tantrism. These arguments are shown to be inconclusive and the establishment of “late Tantrism” to be based more on scholarly conservatism than actual evidence. To further establish the truth of this claim, the range of historical data--literary, numismatic, archæological, and art historical--is discussed and evaluated. The possible conclusions which could be reached given the nature of the evidence are considered and a prognosis for the future of Tantric historiography is briefly outlined. Attention is then turned in Part Two to the exposition of the literature itself. Chapter Six first comments on some methodological problems facing Tantric Studies. It then considers some evidence which makes the existence of Tantric traditions in the early first millennium plausible. Chapter Seven is a general overview of the Indian traditions of the Guhyasamāja and a close study of the Ārya literature. The scriptures and commentaries of the tradition are described and the works of Āryadeva are analyzed. The textual record is evaluated and

suggestions given for future research. The final part, "Texts," contains full, annotated English translations of the works of Āryadeva on the Guhyasamāja Tradition. These include Āryadeva's *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*, *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa*, *Svādhiṣṭhāna-prabheda*, and *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*. Supplementary materials include supporting documents and a glossary of technical terms in English, Sanskrit, and Tibetan.

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This essay is dedicated to the memory of

Pema Losang Chogyen
(1957-1996)

with love and respect.

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It is singular that wherever we find a man higher, by a whole head, than any of his contemporaries, it is sure to come into doubt, what are his real works.

Emerson, *Representative Men*

Chapter I: Introduction

Though written in the context of a discussion of the great figures of the Western canon, Emerson's observation seems quite at home in reference to that greatest of intellectual figures of ancient India, Ārya Nāgārjuna. If tradition is at all to be credited, this man loomed well over not only his contemporaries, but all of the Buddhist scholars and saints in the intervening centuries. Few authors can approach the quantity and range (not to mention the quality) of the works which have come down to us under the name of Nāgārjuna--literally hundreds of works concerning everything from epistemology, ethics, yoga, and ritual practice, to statecraft, pharmacy, and medicine.

It is perhaps predictable, then, that the authorship by any one man of such a vast and varied *œuvre* should be called into question. Indeed, if Emerson is to be believed, it is *de rigueur*. Renaissance and post-Renaissance scholarship (of which modern Indian and Buddhist Studies are among the heirs) has long prided itself on seeking and establishing such misattributions among classical literatures--one need only think of the stir surrounding the debunking of the "Donation of Constantine" and the works of pseudo-Dionysius to get a sense of how highly such discoveries are held in Western humanist scholarship. It is not surprising, then, that the works of Nāgārjuna soon found themselves parceled out among two more manageable authors, who (for lack of more imaginative monikers) became known to the world as "Nāgārjuna I" and "Nāgārjuna II."

The criterion by which this apportionment was eventually made was a distinction of *genre*--henceforth all the exoteric Mahāyāna works were to be considered the authentic writings of (the "real") Nāgārjuna (I), and all the esoteric Vajrayāna works were to be considered the work of ("Tantric") Nāgārjuna II. This would have been a very convenient division to make, were it not for the further fact that there are also works belonging to both *genres* which are attributed to the most famous disciples of Nāgārjuna: Āryadeva,

Nāgabodhi, and Candrakīrti. Unfazed by this difficulty, however, scholars merely continued their former line of reasoning and postulated that there were also two of each of these figures. The “argument” behind this position was simple enough. Scholars claimed that, since the Tantric tradition must have been a late development in the history of Buddhism, such early authors of *sūtra* commentaries as Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and the like could not have possibly written Tantric works. Consequently, scholars must regard these works as forgeries attributed to these legendary figures in a vain attempt to legitimize the radical new teachings being propounded by Tantric sects.¹ This position has been advanced by a variety of writers.²

Today, this view is considered a commonplace of historical understanding in Indological circles--established, in all-too-real a sense, beyond question. For example, readers of the *Encyclopedia of Religion* are told without qualification that:

Scholars have identified at least two Āryadevas. The first, who shall be referred to as ‘Āryadeva I,’ was a Madhyamaka (Mādhyamika) disciple of Nāgārjuna, who lived between the third and fourth centuries C.E.. The second, ‘Āryadeva II,’ was a tantric master whose date has been variously proposed as in the seventh to tenth centuries (most probably at the beginning of the eighth century)³

The central interest of the present study is precisely the history and nature of these Tantric works attributed to Āryadeva and of the Tantric school to which they belong, the so-called Ārya Tradition of the Guhyasamāja Tantra.⁴ This school--represented by the authors mentioned above, Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Nāgabodhi, and Candrakīrti --produced a *corpus* of extremely influential works concerning the proper textual interpretation and yogic

¹ Of course, it is essential that this putative literary deception not have been in vain as far as the native tradition was concerned. Hence, we are led to believe, it took “modern European science” to discover the truth.

² Cf. the work of Alex Wayman, Katsumi Mimaki, Yūkei Matsunaga, David Snellgrove, etc.

³ Mimaki Katsumi, “Āryadeva,” in the *Encyclopedia of Religion*, (New York, 1987). 431.

⁴ *gSang-'dus 'phags-lugs*

practice of the *Esoteric Communion (Guhyasamāja) Tantra*. These writings constitute the most widely-respected authority on these issues for the entire range of traditions who practice the *anuttara*, or unexcelled, yoga of Buddhist esotericism. These works became the basis for a vast spectrum of Buddhist writings, practices, and institutions in India, Tibet, and Central Asia. A proper knowledge of this literature is thus crucial to understanding the development of Buddhism from at least the middle of the first millennium.

The roots of this project reach back to work I began in Nepal (nearly ten years ago now) on the various biographies of Nāgārjuna preserved in Tibetan and Chinese. At that time I was--as a would-be comparative philosopher--fully indoctrinated into the dogma that there were two Nāgārjunas, a “philosophical” and a “religious” Nāgārjuna, and as my work progressed I was confirmed in this prejudice by nearly every (non-indigenous) source I encountered. I say “nearly,” as there was one voice which refused to join this grand chorus, sounding instead a rather disharmonious note. It was not a loud voice (at least on the page) for it lay sequestered away in a footnote to a larger work on a different topic, but nonetheless it struck home. As a philosopher, it was enough for me that this one author had the temerity to doubt the conventional wisdom, and it made me think. He said:

I argue that evidence internal to the texts [attributed to Nāgārjuna] supports the traditional claim that one person wrote both the philosophical and Tantric books. As we cannot accept the longevity that this entails under our present system of dating the emergence of Tantrism, we should revise that patchwork of inferences.⁵

The idea was intriguing, but the seed was planted somewhat prematurely in my mind and it took some years before I was able to effectively explore this issue on my own. In the meantime, I pursued graduate study in Indian and Tibetan Buddhism with (as Fate would have it) the very author of the above quote, who soon began to steer me in the direction of the study of the Buddhist Tantras--a topic quite alien to “comparative philosophy” (or so I

⁵ R. Thurman, *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence*, (Princeton, 1984). p. 27, n. 29.

thought at the time), yet (as I subsequently discovered) absolutely essential to any but the most superficial understanding of Buddhism. When, some years later, Professor Thurman (for that is who it was) suggested that I do my dissertation work on the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*, a comprehensive work on Tantric practice attributed to Āryadeva, the circle was complete, and I found myself once again struggling with the issue of “Tantric doubles.” How pleasant it would have been if I could have trodden the well-worn paths of previous scholars, introducing my own study and translation of this work with a learned essay recapitulating the time-honored story about the “eighth or ninth century Āryadeva” who readers are warned not to confuse with the Mādhyamika author of the same name, and so forth--thus casually displaying my scholarly credentials in failing to credit this most pious fraud of the Vajrayāna tradition.

It was, however, too late for that. Ever since the doubt had been planted in my mind those many years ago, I had kept my eyes open for arguments which might decide the question one way or another. I was sorely disappointed. While I found no end of scholars anxious to repeat the conventional view, I found very little by way of concrete historical argument or evidence. It is in this context that the reader may understand Part One of this dissertation, the “Historical Essay.” In these chapters, I present the results of what has been an extended thought experiment in doubting the conventional wisdom concerning the proper attribution of this literature. I reopen the question of the historical provenance of the Ārya Tradition works, examining the historical origins of the problem itself as it has been constructed in modern⁶ scholarship, as well as detailing the various contributions which scholars have made in attempting a resolution.

In so doing, I have challenged the “certainty” with which this hypothesis has been asserted as an established fact. I contend that the received view as it stands today (endlessly recited in works on Buddhist history)--that the literature of the Ārya Tradition

⁶ Note that I am using “modern” here, rather than “Western,” so as to include the contemporary non-Western (notably Indian and Japanese) scholars who follow the
Note continued on next page. . .

was not written by the ascribed authors (who are loosely dated to between the second and the seventh centuries), but by frauds in the ninth century--is neither founded on sound evidence, nor (as is crucially important) on sound interpretation of what evidence in fact exists. As I shall demonstrate below, research on this literature has been especially subject to *a priori* assumptions about Buddhist literary history such that it has never been given adequate treatment by scholars of Buddhism. A critical examination of the relevant historical data will, I believe, demonstrate that we are by no means entitled to claim with any degree of certainty that these great Mādhyamika authors did not also write works on Tantric yoga.

I will establish this conclusion as follows. In Chapter Two, I consider the “Poetics of Indian Buddhist History.” Drawing on the work and inspiration of historiographical thinkers such as Louis Mink and Hayden White, I discuss the irreducibly linguistic, fundamentally fictive element contributed to the writing of history by its narrative structure, the indispensable “cognitive tool” of historiography. In particular, I demonstrate the pervasive influence of the model of the organic life-cycle (youth-maturity-decay-death) on the conceptualizing and writing of history since at least the time of Vico, if not Plato. I then trace the ways in which the modes of emplotment which derive from this model have informed the historiography of Indian Buddhism. I show that there are strong reasons to believe that, in the case of the esoteric traditions, the available evidence has been made to fit the Procrustean bed of a pre-established plot structure, rather than the reverse. In short, I argue that, due to the widespread association of “Tantra” with sexuality (and thus with moral degeneracy), the esoteric traditions were early on linked conceptually with a notion of the “decline and fall” of Buddhism, and on this basis was their ostensible late historical provenance “established.”

Having thus problematized the conventional emplotment of Buddhist history, in Chapter Three I discuss the actual historical processes involved in the construction of the

intellectual tradition of European, academic Buddhist Studies.

history of Tantric Buddhism by modern scholars since the early nineteenth century. I begin by showing how the earliest scholars were led to envision the Vajrayāna as a kind of Dostoevskyan double--an evil twin--of the exoteric Mahāyāna. Once they had done so, the writers of the Ārya Tradition likewise all soon found themselves doubled, even tripled, as scholars did their best to distance these writers from aspects of Buddhism deemed unworthy of such exalted pens. In the course of so analyzing the history of studies on the Ārya Tradition, I examine in close detail all of the arguments that have been advanced by those few scholars who personally conducted research into these works. The writings of authors such as Brian Hodgson and Horace Wilson (1828), Eugène Burnouf (1844), Louis de La Vallée Poussin (1898, 1925), Giuseppe Tucci (1930), Benoytosh Bhattacharyya (1931), Prabhubhai Patel (1949), Alex Wayman (1977), and Mimaki Katsumi (1987) are closely investigated. I demonstrate that none of these authors provide evidence and historical arguments sufficient to establish the certainty they claim for the hypothesis that the Ārya literature was not written by the ascribed authors.

In Chapter Four, then, I examine the various types of evidence which bear on this issue and give my own assessment of the conclusion(s) which can (and cannot) be made on their basis. I begin with the indigenous literature and interrogate its potential value as historical evidence. I discuss questions concerning both their internal consistency and the broader issue of whether and/or how such “histories” can be treated as evidence. Subsequently, I analyze the various “hard data” at our disposal. This evidence includes a wide range of archæological, linguistic, epigraphic, numismatic, bibliographical, architectural and iconographic evidence, as well as historical tracts. These data and their range of possible interpretations are evaluated. I conclude this chapter with a brief *resumé* of the those facts which can be reasonably and reliably derived from these sources.

Chapter Five concludes the Historical Essay, summarizing the preceding chapters and providing suggestions for the “Future of Tantric Historiography.” I submit that currently there is no conclusive datum or argument which can give us the desired

confidence about the history of the Ārya School. Any objective assessment of the evidence must admit that it is unavoidably ambiguous and that--unless we come to the point where we in the field have a much better understanding of the literature itself, as well as the relevant extra-textual evidence--we will not be in a position to speak with any greater confidence on this issue. I argue, however, that there is no need to prematurely fix on one interpretive paradigm before we have adequate evidence to evaluate the several plausible, competing hypotheses appropriately. This, indeed, has been a major shortcoming of work on this issue up to this point. I briefly consider the consequences of this for future historical studies of Tantrism and conclude by recommending that Tantric studies foster a pluralistic research climate such as is utilized in some post-processualist archaeological circles. In this way, we can seek to avoid the myopic *a priorism* which has limited our perspectives in the past.

As so many questions remain concerning not only the historical provenance but the very nature of the Ārya literature--and as one major obstacle to the proper appreciation of this material in its Indic context is a lack of reliable, first-hand knowledge of the tradition on the part of most Buddhological and Indological researchers--in Part Two, the "Interpretative and Literary Essay," I make a start toward systematic, primary research on this tradition. This, it is to be hoped, will be the beginning of further studies in this area and--one further hopes--a beginning to the process of bringing us to the point where we can confidently offer an educated assessment concerning the history and nature of the Ārya Tradition and Buddhist Tantrism as a whole.

In Chapter Six, I begin with some methodological reflections on the study of the Buddhist Tantric traditions in general. I make some polemical observations concerning some common interpretative models which I believe are neither appropriate to nor illuminating for the study of Buddhist Tantrism. In their place, I highlight elements which I maintain are, in fact, characteristic of these traditions. I subsequently attempt to sketch the

rough outlines of a new paradigm which would allow for the early first millennium provenance of the Ārya Tradition. I argue that all the principal features characteristic of Buddhist Tantrism were present in early Indic religion--for example, in the Upaniṣadic yogic traditions.

In Chapter Seven, then, I turn to the Guhyasamāja literature itself and discuss the extent of its canon and the nature of its interpretative schools. I enumerate the seven Indian traditions of the Guhyasamāja, and note in particular the distinction between the two most influential, the Jñānapāda and Ārya Traditions. I give a brief outline of the former and its literature before proceeding to discuss the details of the latter in greater depth. I introduce the reader to the literature of the Ārya Tradition, its contents, and its place among the Buddhist Tantric traditions, paying particular attention to the inter-relationship of the various elements of the canon--the Root Tantra, the Explanatory Tantras, and the Indian commentarial and yogic literature. In short, I present the basic literary history of the Guhyasamāja Ārya Tradition. I show that, contrary to certain current notions about the credulous attitude of Buddhist “natives” to putatively apocryphal texts, many traditional Tibetan authorities have been very serious and thorough in critiquing the authenticity of these works. The main lines of their arguments about the authenticity of the Ārya Tradition works, and their conclusions, are elucidated. I then summarize the contents of the major, authoritative Indian works of the Ārya Tradition. In the last section, I provide a special introduction and close analysis of Āryadeva’s works as an *entrée* to the annotated translations which constitute the final section of this work.

Part Three, then, presents my translations of the Tantric works attributed to Āryadeva. Included are complete and annotated translations of all the works of Āryadeva which (in my assessment) have some claim to inclusion in his authentic Tantric *œuvre*. Of especial interest is my translation of Āryadeva’s major work on the yoga of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras--the *Lamp of Integrated Practice*, or *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, which is a systematic unpacking of the system of Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama*. It also has the distinction

of being the first detailed example of a Tantric “stages of the path” treatise, giving a comprehensive soteric and praxical map of the Tantric path to enlightenment according to this tradition. I have also translated three smaller works which present themselves as brief treatments of the three median stages of the Perfection Stage: the *Cittaviśuddhi-prakaraṇa*, *Svādhiṣṭhāna-[krama]-prabheda*, and *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*. I have appended some important supplementary documents, including some passages relating to the Ārya Tradition from the *History* of Tāranātha which have hitherto escaped notice due to inadequate translation, and a chart of the “Hundred Clans” as found in the second chapter of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*. I have also appended a glossary of terms in English, Sanskrit, and Tibetan so that my translations will be more transparent to specialists wishing to work further in this area.

It is hoped that these three essays will prove of interest in providing innovative ways of thinking about this literature, and the literature and study of Tantrism as a whole. As will become clear in the pages that follow, there is much work which remains to be done, and what appears here is only the first step in (re)opening studies in this area. While there have been some few works written on the Tantric works of Nāgārjuna (all of which, however, operate entirely within the paradigm critiqued in Part One), there have been no such studies of those of Āryadeva. His works have never been given close attention, and have certainly never been translated. I hope that, in making these works available, others will see their great interest and the light they shed on the history, religious practice and literary production of the Buddhist Tantric traditions.

Part One: Historical Essay

Analogies prove nothing, that is quite true, but they can make one feel more at home.

--Sigmund Freud

Chapter II. The Poetics of Indian Buddhist History

This chapter explores the nature of historical writing on India and Buddhism. In general, Indological and Buddhological scholars have tended to be rather naïve historiographically--never seriously addressing the “poetics” of their craft. It is essential that we discern the classical scholarly prejudices concerning Tantrism. It must be understood that these judgments are critically constitutive of the histories of Tantrism. Positivistic scholars may claim for them the status of sober judgments, based on “objective” research. I claim, however, and will demonstrate, that the historical models which result from these attitudes do not derive from any data, but are purely fictive. In what follows, I consider the nature of historiography--emphasizing the interrelationship of evidential data and the essentially fictive narrative structures which give order and meaning to this data. I subsequently provide an overview of the narrative model which has preëminently informed histories of Indian Buddhism, derived substantially from *a priori* notions of the structure of historical events. Working from an understanding of the prevalence of narratives based on this metaphor--that of the individual organic life-cycle--I then consider the effects this model has had on historiographical practice. I advance the hypothesis that, in fact, a pre-critical choice of historical model has, in the case of Indian Buddhism, informed the interpretation of the historical evidence, rather than the reverse.

The Poetics of History

In coming to understand the nature of the historiography of Indian religions, it is necessary first to examine the nature of historiography itself. In particular, it must be recognized that historical accounts consist of at least two elements--a “factive” element and a “fictive” element. That is, any historical account consists of certain factual elements or “data” (which may be more or less independent of an interpretive structure) which are

structured and given meaning by a fundamentally fictive,¹ narrative structure.

Even the isolation of a given phenomenon as the subject of historical inquiry is a fictive act. When a historian chooses to write a history about, say, “Buddhism,” or “India,” or “England,” that historian *creates* an object. For example, to isolate “Nālandā,” from the vast web of contemporaneous institutions, persons, and events--the simultaneous ferments of ideas and practices in other major Buddhist institutions, Brahminical *gurukula*-s, and wandering mendicants, not to mention simultaneous events in the political discourse, economy, the arts and so forth--is a willful act of epistemic creation. In stressing the ostensible commonality of certain phenomena--their identity--it simultaneously distances them from similar or continuous phenomena which may not happen to share the aspect or quality which is privileged as the bearer of this identity. It is this willful and selective blindness to some elements of continuity (or discontinuity) at the expense of others which allows historians to constitute an object for historical study--which object, it must be stressed however, is ultimately chimerical.

In this regard, it may be said that “Buddhism” as such does not exist, until it is isolated and defined, providing a criterion by which variegated phenomena may be sorted. A recent study by Philip Almond has nicely shown the processes of epistemic creation involved in giving meaning to the newly-coined term “Buddhism” in early nineteenth century Anglophone communities. He rightly points out that “there was an imaginative creation of Buddhism in the first half of the nineteenth century. . . [which] enabled certain aspects of Eastern cultures to be defined, delimited, and classified.”² This fundamental fictive act notwithstanding, there is yet a further fictive moment in historiography which it is essential to grasp. For once “Buddhism” has been defined, the range of relevant data can

¹ Note that my use of “fictive” here does not mean to imply that such elements are “wrong,” but rather to emphasize that they are elements native to the *rhetoric* used to describe human activity, rather than such activity itself.

² P. Almond, *The British Discovery of Buddhism*, (Cambridge, 1988). 4.

be delimited with a fair degree of ease; however, no matter how much data might be collected, there can be no *history* of Buddhism until it has been given a narrative emplotment.

In this way, as a by-product of the act of discursive individuation, other fictive, rhetorical moves are potentiated. The phenomenon in question can now be conceived as having an “origin,” a “development,” and a “resolution”—that is, it now can become, in the Aristotelian sense, a story to be told. Louis Mink, in his brilliant essays on the *Historical Understanding*, has demonstrated that the narrative form is not merely an extrinsic packaging in which historians arrange their data, but an indispensable “cognitive instrument” without which we could have no concept of the “history” of a phenomenon at all. Mink argues that

Even histories that are synchronic studies of the culture of an epoch inevitably take into account the larger process of development or change in which that epoch was a stage. . . . The most ‘analytic’ historical monograph, . . . , presupposes the historian’s more general understanding, narrative in form, of patterns of historical change, and is a contribution to the correction or elaboration of that narrative understanding.³

This view belies a widespread positivistic bias in historiography which, Mink says, claims (implicitly) that “the historian, . . . , finds the story already hidden in what his data are evidence for; he is creative in the invention of research techniques to expose it, not in the art of narrative construction.”⁴ Mink, quite rightly, finds this view highly problematical. This becomes clear when it is realized that any given event can be cast rhetorically as a beginning, a middle, or an end—and, hence, its narrative role and historical “meaning” is indeterminate. This much is today widely recognized by professional historians and philosophers of history, yet its implications are often overlooked in practice. Mink’s insightful diagnosis of this situation claims that the positivistic stance in historiography is

³ Louis O. Mink, “Narrative Form as a Cognitive Instrument,” in *Historical Understanding*, (Ithaca, 1987). 184.

⁴ *ibid.* 188.

the modern secularization of the old notion of a Universal History “out there” to be discovered--a notion now out of vogue, but “implicitly presupposed as widely as it would be explicitly rejected.”⁵

The important contribution of Hayden White’s *Metahistory*--which work was highly esteemed by Mink--was to highlight the mechanics of the fictive modes of emplotment, explanation, and ideological implication operating in ostensibly “scientific” historiography. Drawing on the work of Northrop Frye, White explored the manner in which identical series of events could be rhetorically cast in either a comedic, tragic, romantic, or satiric mode. For instance, the history of any given phenomenon could be told as an instance of the “triumph of good over evil” (Romance), the “temporary triumph of man” (Comedy), the temporary defeat of man (Tragedy), or as the utter failure of man to master a world in which he is a captive to death and the spectre of meaninglessness (Satire).⁶

In general, it can be said that, in practice, the mode of emplotment of a history is coeval with the constitution of its object--in dependence on the type of ideological implication which the historian seeks to express with regard to his subject matter. As White has suggested, “historians in general, however critical they are of their sources, tend to be naïve storytellers.”⁷ What is important to note about these choices is the *irreducibly* imaginative element in them. The narrative form is nowhere found *in* the data itself. Indeed, both Mink and White are concerned to elucidate the extent to which “histories” are not ultimately the product of the facts which inspire them, but of the poetical imagination of the historian who “emplots” them--an imagination which, in short, situates these facts within one of several conventional narrative structures.

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Cf. White, *Metahistory: The Historical Imagination in Nineteenth Century Europe*, (Baltimore, 1990). 9.

⁷ *ibid.* 8.

This is not *per se* a major problem for historiographical *practice*. Rather, it has generally been understood as an issue relevant to the epistemological branch of the philosophy of history. The debates which resulted in this understanding, however, took place with regard to subjects about which the chronological data were generally well-documented and established. What has been less well-noted is the difficult questions this type of critique poses for historiography in which this is not the case--that is, in which these narrative models actually serve to structure historical hypotheses in areas of chronological obscurity. In other words, having decided (on extra-evidential grounds) the "lesson" to be derived from the history and its necessary plot, the scanty data available are then manipulated to fit the archetype. This, I argue, has especially been the case in the historiography of Asia. In what follows, we will explore the ways in which some classical narrative forms have informed the writing of the history of Buddhism.

The Poetics of Buddhist Tantrism

What modes of emplotment have typically been used for the two major Indian religions: Buddhism and Hinduism? The prejudices of colonial dominance tended to dictate a *synchronic* narrative structure for histories of the natives. That is, indigenous culture was generally cast as the inverse of the progressive, post-Enlightenment civilization of the European colonizers. It was thought to be characterized by the eternal return of the same--and incapable of development, as "native peoples" are captives of their conditions. . .brutish slaves to instinct. In short, against the progressive, comic or romantic narratives of European civilization, native histories were cast in an ironic or, alternately, tragic mode.⁸ On the other hand, while the synchronic emplotment was powerful tool to invoke in dealing with the ideological and political pretenses of a contemporary, colonized Hindu people, Indian Buddhism was, as it were, a different story. Buddhism had run its course in India,

⁸ Ronald Inden's *Imagining India* (Cambridge, 1992) has nicely discerned the discourses with which India has been represented as a timeless, changeless world.

and was thus a safely “past” phenomenon. Hence, it was generally given a diachronic narrative, with a beginning, a middle, and an end. Indeed, one of the central data of relevance to historians of Buddhism was that its demise in India was a *fait accompli*. One could thus tell the complete story of Buddhism in India from “birth” to “death.”

Without a doubt, the poetic model which has been invoked more often than any other is the metaphor of organic development. Indeed, this model was popular not only in the historiography of Buddhism, but was equally popular in historiography more generally. This use can be traced from hoary antiquity through the present, having been the model of choice among discerning authors from the very advent of Western historiography. It has been utilized by writers such as Plato, Marx, Hegel, Vico, and many others. In brief, this archetype conceives that, just as plants and animals are seen to go through a process of birth, growth, maturity, decline, and death, so all phenomena can be traced across this same trajectory. Thus, cities, nations, schools of thought, political parties, and even religions, have been conceptualized in these terms, and the events of their histories interpreted accordingly. We must insist, nevertheless, on the *metaphorical* nature of this model. While we may quite genuinely speak of the childhood, adulthood, decline, and death of individual men, we are speaking in a poetic mode when we talk of the childhood of “Man.” As with all metaphorical usage, its discursive nature is often forgotten and one imagines that these poetic projections are in fact reflective of an “objective” reality.

This metaphorical employment became codified and objectified by Vico, when his “scientific” historiography posited cycles of organic development in human history. In Vico’s historiography we see a model of historical development which holds that civilizations followed a regular cycle of eras--a heroic period, a classical period, and a decline into barbarism. Collingwood describes a further analysis into six periods thus:

Vico sometimes puts his cycle in the following way: first, the guiding principle of history is brute strength; then valiant or heroic strength; then valiant justice; then brilliant originality; then constructive reflection; and lastly a kind of

spendthrift and wasteful opulence which destroys what has been constructed.⁹

Indeed, though it became the foundation for much of the modern practice of history, this vision of determinate and regular succession of eras--eras in which conditions steadily decline--is nothing new. It is merely a refinement of the ancient poetical vision of the successive ages of man: the Golden, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages, in which the nature of man progressively declines. This trope is operative, too, in the similar theory of the four ages in India: the Kṛta, Dvāpara, Tretā, and Kali Yugas. We find a similar series of four stages, ending in decadence, in the socio-historical theories of Ibn Khaldūn.¹⁰ In more recent memory, one finds Rousseau, in a strangely Buddhistic moment, commenting that “the body politic, like the human body, begins to die from the very moment of its birth, and carries within itself the causes of its destruction.”¹¹

Again and again, one finds phenomena being likened in their historical development to the individual life cycle. The early nineteenth century, in which the historiography of Buddhism was initiated, marked the zenith of popularity for this vision. Under the influence of compelling philosophical minds such as Hegel, previous critiques of the excesses of *a priori* historiography were forgotten, and history became a quest to find the stories waiting “out there” in the data. Of these stories, at least one thing was certain: they would follow, with law-like regularity, a cycle of organic development. “Hegel,” says White, “broke down the history of any given civilization and civilization as a whole into four phases: the period of birth and original growth, that of maturity, that of ‘old age,’ and that of dissolution and death.”¹² For Hegel, not only the total structure of civilizational

⁹ R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, (London, 1956). 67.

¹⁰ Cf. Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah: an Introduction to History*, (Princeton, 1969).

¹¹ Jean-Jacques Rousseau, “On the Social Contract,” in *The Basic Political Writings*, (Indianapolis, 1987). 194.

¹² White, *op. cit.* 123.

development, but all the microcosmic histories within it, traverse the self-same four historical moments--moments which correlate to his vision of the successive transformations of human consciousness.

It is in light of this narrative structure, so characteristic of European historiographical practice, that I suggest one consider the following comment made by Cecil Bendall in the introduction to his edition of the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*, a compendium of Tantric knowledge:

Much (perhaps too much, in proportion to the published material) has been written about the glorious and vigorous youth of Indian Buddhism; something about its middle age of scholasticism and philosophy; but next to nothing about the its [*sic*] decay, decrepitude and dotage, as shown in the Tantra-literature.¹³

Bendall is right, of course, about the imbalance of attentions of scholars of Buddhism (a fact still true today), yet what is of most interest is the clarity in which the model of organic development is used to structure the history of Buddhism. Some variant of this model is almost invariably operative in the nineteenth century constructs of Indian Buddhist history which have served as the foundation of all subsequent researches.

Using this model, the following common version of Buddhist history is constructed. First there was Śākyamuni Buddha, the original propounder of “Buddhism,” (of whom most reputable scholars will admit that we really have no reliable data). The first period of Buddhism *per se*, then, is said to be that of the so-called “Hinayāna/Theravāda.” Here we see the traditions and the literature of Theravāda Buddhism, the currently-dominant school of Buddhism in Burma and Śrī Laṅka, defined as functionally equivalent to “primordial Buddhism.”¹⁴ This Buddhism, while not quite as “pure” as that taught by Śākyamuni (and certainly not its contemporary form in colonial Ceylon), is nonetheless

¹³ Cecil Bendall, ed., *Subhāṣita-Saṃgraha*, (Louvain, 1905). 2.

¹⁴ I myself have worked with a scholar who insisted on speaking about the *Dhammapāda* and related texts as if they were straight from the Buddha’s mouth.

fairly faithful to the source. Then, the story goes, the literature of the Mahāyāna began to emerge. At this point, after the “pure” ethical teachings of the early Buddhist schools (which were a “philosophy” or a “way of life,” not a “religion”), Indians were no longer able to follow the dictates of such a lofty path, and began to rationalize their instinctive, plebian bowing and scraping to idols as orthodox Buddhist practice. At the terminal end of this process, Buddhism finally goes “off the deep end.” After being continually eroded by the lazy, sensual tendencies natural to Indians (and other natives of warm climes),¹⁵ the Buddhist tradition finally decided just to give free license to do whatever one wanted and to call it “Buddhist practice.” To this end, however, it was thought necessary to fabricate apocryphal scriptures (Tantras) in which such sensual indulgences could be passed off as orthodox practice, sanctioned by the Buddha.

This is clearly the view ascribed to by Monier Williams, in his *Buddhism*. All of the foregoing models are brought together in this influential work. “The tendency of every religious movement,” claims Williams, “is towards deterioration and disintegration.”¹⁶ After the Buddha’s death, he claims, “the eternal instincts of humanity. . .insisted on making themselves felt notwithstanding the unnatural restraint to which the Buddha had subjected them,”¹⁷ and Buddhists quickly began to give up the celibacy, ethics, and other teachings enjoined by the Buddha. Then, he claims:

the Protean system called Mahā-yāna arose, and grew, by the operation of the usual laws of accretion, conglomeration, disintegration, and reintegration, into a congeries of heterogeneous doctrines, including the worship of Bodhi-sattvas, deified saints, and personal gods.¹⁸

¹⁵ Such theories of a correlation between climactic conditions and psycho-social historical determinism were an important element in conditioning the historical imagination discussed here.

¹⁶ Monier Williams, *Buddhism, in its connexion with Brāhmanism and Hindūism, and in its Contrast with Christianity*, (London, 1889). 148.

¹⁷ *ibid.* 151.

¹⁸ *ibid.* 159. [emphasis mine]

Yet, “far worse than this, Buddhism ultimately allied itself with Tāntrism or the worship of the female principle (śakti), and under its sanction encouraged the grossest violations of decency and the worst forms of profligacy.”¹⁹ Repeatedly, the same story appears in the standard works on the history of Buddhism. There is no need to multiply examples-- anyone who has read works on Buddhist history has come across this story or one very much like it. How, one wonders, did this story so quickly become authoritative?

The narrative of civilizational decline following upon moral (esp. sexual) degeneracy was well established in the classical historical tradition--and was thus readily available to the historical imagination of early scholars of Buddhism, raised and educated on a staple of classical literature.²⁰ Perhaps the paradigmatic example of this is the tale of the Etruscan decline. Here, in a significant and popular historical episode of Roman history, the fall of Etruria--a powerful neighbor of early Rome (and subsequently incorporated into the empire)--is attributed to their moral degeneracy. This was also, in some accounts, interpreted as a valid justification for the Roman invasion.

R. A. L. Fell states in his work on *Etruria and Rome*:

The decline of the Etruscan people is often ascribed to the nature of their religion, and the depravation of their morals. Greek writers have much to tell us of the luxury and the vices of the Etruscans, of their elaborate feasts and flowery coverlets, silver vessels and numerous attendants, and the Roman poets echo the taunt.²¹

It is worth noting that this trope is later coöpted by Christian historians--developing from the Roman intellectual tradition--to explain the fall of Rome itself. The decrepit civilization of paganism with its Neros and Caligulas, phallic cults and “games,” they claimed, must

¹⁹ *ibid.* 152.

²⁰ Cf. the comment of Hayden White, who states that “the normally educated historian of the nineteenth century would have been raised on a staple of classical and Christian literature. The *mythoi* contained in this literature would have provided him with a fund of story forms on which he could have drawn for narrative purposes.” White, *op cit.* 8. fn.6.

²¹ R. A. L. Fell, *Etruria and Rome*, (Cambridge, 1924). 139.

necessarily give way to the vigorous, youthful moral power of Christianity. It is clear here from whence Vico derived his final phase of “spendthrift and wasteful opulence.”

It was precisely this historical archetype which I argue was functioning in the fashioning of a Buddhist history. Given the basic datum so strikingly evident to writers of British India--the absence of a Buddhist presence and, hence, its ostensible “disappearance”--one needed to account for this fact. For many, Tantrism fit the exigencies of narrative quite nicely, providing a familiar and easily-digestible story. The idea most commonly associated with Tantra from the outset (and still widespread today) was sex. Edward Thomas put this reductionistic portrayal in its most undisguised form when he reported, in his *History of Buddhist Thought*, that Tantric Buddhism “consists in giving a religious significance to the facts of sex.”¹ This aspect of the Tantric tradition suggested to the narrative imagination of the nineteenth century the classical archetype of the “decline and fall.” The resulting tale, it should be apparent, is a familiar one, recapitulating that of Etruria: a once strong and vital culture becomes seduced by pleasure and renounces its earlier commitment to purity and virtue. In particular the lure of the “pleasures of the flesh”--so difficult to keep in check--overcomes the people and society becomes “decadent.” The ultimate outcome is the death of the once-great society. As in the case of Etruria, this model conveniently explained not only the disappearance of Buddhism in India, but further, it provided proof of the supposed moral decline used to justify the conquest and colonization of the Indian sub-continent by the British. With the schema of the three vehicles ready-made, it was a natural step, given the association of Tantrayāna with sensual indulgence, falling away from ethical behavior--in short, with sex--to appropriate this schema and reconceive it in chronological terms, thus using this tradition model itself to lend authority to the historical construct.

The fictive element of this mode of historiography becomes, however, strikingly apparent when one considers alternative emplotments. Alexander Cunningham, though aware of Tantra by this time, gives the following account of the Buddhist “decline”:

Buddhism had in fact become an old and worn-out creed, whose mendicant monks no longer begged their bread, but were supported by lands long since appropriated to the monasteries. The Srāmanas and Bhikshus were not like those of ancient days, the learned and the wise, whose bodily abstinence and contemplative devotion, combined with practical exhortations and holy example, excited the wonder of the people. The modern Buddhists had relapsed into an indolent and corrupt body, who were content to spend a passive existence in the monotonous routine of monastic life. . . .there were still the same outward signs of religion; but there was no fervent enthusiasm in the lifeless performance of such monotonous routine;²²

In fact, Cunningham betrays the extent to which he is bound to a notion of historical “laws” of development when, adumbrating Monier Williams, he makes the sage observation that, “the progress of religion is like the existence of a tree; which, after the first symptoms of decay, can neither be strengthened nor renewed.”²³ Cunningham, it may be noted, is not the only writer to attribute the axiomatic “decline and fall” of Buddhism to non-Tantric causes.²⁴ Even more interesting is that he here invokes another popular archetype of in the nineteenth century historian’s arsenal. Rather than bring us back to Etruria and Rome, we are, instead, magically transported to the era of Martin Luther.

In this narrative, one can read again the history of the Protestant Reformation. Here,

²² A. Cunningham, *The Bhilsa Topes* (London, 1854). 2-3.

²³ *ibid.* 2. It is interesting to note that John Stuart Mill, at almost precisely the same time (1859), was writing the exact opposite of American Puritanical religions, which he imagined might regain their “lost ground, as religions supposed to be declining have so often been known to do.” *On Liberty* (Indianapolis, 1978). 85.

²⁴ It is interesting (and, indeed, somewhat amusing) to consider that, in light of these competing culprits in the putative “decline” of Indian Buddhism, “Candrakīrti” becomes doubly culpable--indeed the ultra-villain in the history of Indian Buddhism. That is, if we accept both his role in promoting Tantrism and the role assigned him by such writers as D. J. Kalupahana, who sees Candrakīrti as instigating the decline of Buddhism. He claims, “A more detailed study of both Māgārjuna [*sic*] and Candrakīrti has convinced me that the former still remains faithful to the Buddha, while the latter has moved more towards a Vedāntic interpretation, thereby initiating a process that culminated in the disappearance of Buddhism as a distinct ideology from the Indian scene a few centuries later.” Cf. *Nāgārjuna: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism*, (Albany, 1986). xv. One is certainly convinced that, for all its troubles in India, there is no lack of such ideology in Sri Lanka (or, should I say, Honolulu).

the relevant connection is not sex, but ritual. “Late” Buddhism is homologized with Romish religion, as against the “pure” sermons of the Son of God. We see yet another clergy which has become pampered and luxurious, content to defraud the populace with their “priestly mummery.” The invocation of this narrative model bears witness to Cunningham’s place among the heirs of the Renaissance, the Reformation, and the Enlightenment. Given the scanty evidence he was working from, however, it is not convincing witness to actual events in India. It is an equally fictive emplotment, derived from equally wanting data--and in direct competition with those who would account for the “decline” of Indian Buddhism in terms sexual and moral, rather than ritual and ecclesiastical.

Conclusion

“Still,” some may argue, “surely there were other, objective, grounds on which it was asserted that Buddhist Tantrism came at the end of Buddhism’s career in India. What grounds have we to believe, as you claim, that our ‘knowledge’ of Indian Buddhist history derives merely from an æsthetic, narrative imagination rather than valid research?” Much of this argument will have to be developed in the succeeding chapter, in which I address in concrete detail the actual historical arguments put forward to establish this conclusion. At this point, however, we may note the following, extremely illuminating, statement of T. W. Rhys Davids which reveals in a striking way the manner in which the exigencies of plot structure far outweigh and supplant the testimony of evidence. Starting from the premise of the putative “decline and fall” of Buddhism toward the end (interestingly ignoring the resurgence of Buddhism after the dark period of Harṣa described in Chinese accounts), Rhys Davids leaves the reader of his *Buddhist India* with the following considerations:

Gibbon has shown us, in his great masterpiece, how interesting and instructive the story of such a decline and fall can be made. And it is not unreasonable to hope that, when the authorities, especially the Buddhist Sanskrit texts, shall have been made accessible, and the sites shall have been explored, the materials will be available from which some historian of the future will be able to piece together a story,

equally interesting and equally instructive, of the decline and fall of Buddhism in India.²⁵

Here Rhys Davids (in 1903) as much as admits that, before we have even collected the evidence available from literary and archæological remains, we can *a priori* assume a narrative structure along the lines of Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. It is, I believe, no coincidence that the history of Buddhism should find itself being fashioned after the model of a late Victorian morality play. This is precisely the "methodology" which characterizes the nineteenth century historiography of Indian Buddhism--historiography which, though somewhat recast in more "modern" narratives, has nonetheless established the fundamental parameters of Indian chronology through the twentieth.

One might also consider the testimony of Alex Wayman who, although he himself subscribes to the "received view" that the Ārya literature is mis-attributed, nonetheless bears witness to the fundamental circularity of the historical reasoning about Buddhist Tantrism on which this very view is based. He writes,

The Western survey-type books. . . have tended to ascribe to the Buddhist Tantras the nefarious role of contributing to, if not hastening, the demise [of Buddhism in India], through particular doctrines and practices quite at variance with the lofty ethics and practice enjoined by Gautama Buddha. *There is a kind of circular reasoning here. The Tantra is labeled "degenerative" and so destructive of Buddhism's public image; and to buttress the argument it is necessary to say that the Tantras are composed very late, close to the time when they are credited with this share in the downfall of Buddhism.*²⁶

Indeed, one of the most typical traits of the modern historiography of Buddhism, and one of the most overlooked, is the ease with which scholars have assumed that the "three vehicles" of Buddhism emerged in a sequential, chronological order. These easy lines of development allowed scholars to neatly categorize and interpret the phenomena of

²⁵ T. W. Rhys Davids, *Buddhist India*, (Delhi, 1993). 320.

²⁶ A. Wayman, "Observations on the History and Influence of the Buddhist Tantra in India and Tibet," in *History of Buddhism*, (Delhi, 1977). 361. [emphasis mine]

Buddhism without having to confront the sticky problems of an approach which might allow for the undoubtedly more nuanced interrelations among these phenomena. There is very little evidence to support such a view yet, nonetheless, it has been the most common representation of the development of Buddhism for over a century and a half, continuing to be foisted off on non-specialists to this day. In almost every book and introductory lecture course on Buddhism, one finds its history schematized in this way. Talk to anyone who has taken one Buddhism class in college, or a survey of Eastern religions, and this is (perhaps the only and certainly) the preëminent “fact” they take home with them.

We must be very careful to distinguish, then, the poetic elements which “predetermine” the choices we make deploying the data at our disposal. It is important that the myths of “degeneration” of Buddhism--and their products in the form of chronological “information” about Buddhist history--be recognized as narrative fictions layered on the available data. Once they have been bracketed, the data alone remains--data of which, as we shall see, the “received view” is only one, rather problematical, interpretation.

Having come this far, there may still be some who feel that this kind of discursive critique of the poetical aspect of the historical work on Buddhist Tantrism is frivolous. I grant that the theories of Mink and White have yet to receive universal assent from the historical profession, yet I believe they make a compelling case worthy of our attention. In this case, I can only respond by echoing the words of Mill that,

The beliefs which we have the most warrant for have no safeguard to rest on but a standing invitation to the whole world to prove them unfounded. If the challenge is not accepted, or is accepted and the attempt fails, we are far enough from certainty still, but we have done the best that the existing state of human reason admits of: we have neglected nothing that could give the truth a chance of reaching us; if the lists are kept open, we may hope that, if there is a better truth, it will be found when the human mind is capable of receiving it; and in the meantime we may rely on having attained such approach to truth as is possible in our own day. This is the amount of certainty attainable by a

fallible being, and this the sole way of attaining it.²⁷

It may be that, in the end, some readers put this essay down confirmed in their belief in the received view. Some may feel it is in urgent need of further consideration. So be it. It is not my primary concern to influence the ultimate content of people's views, but rather to insist (with Mill) that such views be well-considered and grounded in solid evidence and its interpretation. Having, then, put aside, or at least bracketed, the baggage of our narrative expectations, it is to the examination of the concrete facts and arguments regarding the Ārya Tradition and its history that we may now turn our attention.

²⁷ Mill, *On Liberty*, (Indianapolis, 1978). 20.

In Reasoning of all . . . things, he that takes up conclusions on the trust of Authors, and doth not fetch them from the first Items of every Reckoning, . . . loses his labour; and does not know any thing, but onely beleeveth.¹

--Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*

Chapter III: Analytical History of Modern Historical Arguments

Anyone who reads the literature purporting to establish the history and chronology of Tantric Buddhism with a critical mind will immediately be struck by the fact that nowhere in this literature is an argument advanced with sufficient strength to stand on its own. Even the best ultimately defer to a spectral consensus which, it is averred, has somehow already established the relative late chronological location of Tantrism. As I have suggested above, this is accompanied (and “substantiated”) more often than not by the notion that the lateness of Buddhist Tantrism is linked inseparably with its “decline” (or “degeneration/contamination/adulteration”) and supposed “disappearance”--utterly ignoring, of course, that Buddhism continued (and, in fact, flourished) in India for centuries afterward, only experiencing a “decline” due to the wholesale slaughter of many of its most eminent luminaries. In the following analyses, I will trace the historical development of modern notions concerning the Buddhist Tantric traditions. I will show that these ideas are very much the product of the contingent historical circumstances and evolution of the modern tradition of interpretation, a tradition whose origins, development, and progress will be seen to be highly problematical. I will describe the origination of the first theoretical hypotheses on the typology of Indian religions, and demonstrate the manner in which these hypotheses became the foundation for further hypotheses, historical in nature.

B. H. Hodgson & H. H. Wilson

Perhaps the most influential figure in the early formation of notions of Indian Tantric Buddhism was Brian Houghton Hodgson. During a tenure as British Resident in

¹ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, (New York, 1997). 27.

Nepal, Hodgson found diversion from the *ennui* of a post so remote from “the Court”² in the study of Nepalese Buddhism. He employed “an old Patan Bauddha” to explain to him the meaning of various Buddhist phenomena and, in particular, to expose and elucidate to him the primary Buddhist texts. During the course of his studies, Hodgson arranged to procure copies of many of these texts, which he then sent to research libraries in Bengal and Europe--most notably to Paris where they served as the foundation for the seminal researches of the legendary Eugène Burnouf.

Though best known today for this work of procuring the texts of Sanskritic Buddhism for Europe--and thus enabling the textual reification of Buddhism which potentiated much of modern Buddhist Studies--his writings on the Buddhism of Nepal were vastly influential and deeply formative of subsequent views on Buddhism and Buddhist history. Burnouf, to whom the lion’s share of the credit for first interpreting Buddhism to the West has subsequently gone, relied heavily on Hodgson’s writings (as well as the other publications of the Asiatic Societies of British India). In all fairness, Burnouf himself acknowledged the debt, calling Hodgson “like a founder of the true study of Buddhism from texts and monuments.”³ L. A. Waddell, author of influential (if highly problematical) works on Buddhism, also wrote that “the many salient points which he singled out still serve as stepping stones across many dreary wastes of Indian history,”⁴ calling him, in fact, “the father of modern critical study of Buddhist doctrine.”⁵

I emphasize the deep influence of Hodgson because I believe that it is here that we can see the beginnings of the pattern which characterizes the entire course of Tantric

² That is, Calcutta.

³ “comme un fondateur de la véritable étude du Bouddhisme par les textes et les monuments.” Cited in “Biographical Note,” by M. P. Saha, in Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* (Amsterdam, 1972). 7.

⁴ Cited in M. P. Saha, *ibid.*

⁵ L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism* (Cambridge, 1971). xli.

historiography, namely that a preliminary working hypothesis regarding the course of Buddhist history has been passed down in a continuous tradition from the first researches on Buddhism through the most contemporary works, gaining credibility from sheer force of repetition by eminent authorities. It is in Hodgson's writings that we find the first firm distinction between Buddhism as such ("real Buddhism") and forms of Buddhism which are said to be characterized by later Śaivite admixture (Tantric Buddhism). That is, Hodgson had experienced Śaivism (no doubt seeing its practice in Bengal and, later, in Nepal) and had also formed an idea of Buddhism before coming to Nepal--pieced together from the works of his colleagues which in turn were based on travelers' accounts of Ceylon, Ava and Siam (modern Sri Lanka, Burma and Thailand). Before he even set foot in Nepal, it is clear, Hodgson had an *idée fixe* that "Buddhism" did not include elements Tantric in form or nature.

Hodgson seems to have derived much of these notions from reports such as those of William Erskine who, in his early (1813) account of Elephanta, described what he considered to be the distinctive characteristics of the "three grand sects" of India--"the Brahminical, Bouddhist, and Jaina." Erskine's motivation in elaborating the main features of these three traditions was to enable subsequent progress in Indian archaeology and art history. He sought to provide an analytical framework within which to understand and classify Indian religious monuments such that, having been "identified," the work of subsequent interpretation of these monuments (and, reflexively, their associated traditions) could proceed apace. He states, "a strict attention to [these principles] will perhaps enable us to judge with ease to which of these three classes any particular temple belongs."⁶

In his subsequent discussion, Erskine gives an account of what he understands to be Buddhistical atheism. Asserting that Buddhism has a god "like the god of the Epicureans," he nonetheless insists on the fundamental anthropocentrism of the religion.

⁶ Erskine, "Account of the Cave-Temple of Elephanta," in *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, I (1819). 203.

He ends by summarizing the practical implications of this view for the study of Buddhist art and architecture, to wit:

As all the ideas of this religion relate to man, and as no incarnations or transformations of superior beings are recorded, it is obvious that in their temples we can expect to find no unnatural images, no figures compounded of man and beast, no monsters with many hands or many heads.⁷

Thus, under the guidance of Erskine's pioneering study of Indian religious architecture, early nineteenth-century colonialists-cum-amateur-archaeologists were provided with a clear and simple rule of thumb by which to distinguish a "Buddhist" from a "Brahminical" temple:

Any monster, any figure partly human partly brutal, any multiplicity of heads or hands in the object adored, indicate a Brahminical place of worship.⁸

Here, clearly, Erskine is working from a position which identifies "Buddhism" with modern Theravāda Buddhism. After mentioning the ignorance of the significance of Buddhist images among Brahminical Indians, he tells the reader that for such information "we are forced to resort to Ceylon and Siam."⁹ Indeed, that such is the source of his opinions is confirmed by the fact that he refers, in another article on a similar theme, to Simon de La Loubère's *New Historical Relation of the Kingdom of Siam* (1693), which he takes as an authoritative description of "Buddhism."¹⁰ Equally telling is another means Erskine provides for distinguishing between Buddhism and Brahmanism--this time

⁷ *ibid.* 202.

⁸ *ibid.* 203.

⁹ *ibid.* 206.

¹⁰ La Loubère, cited in Erskine, "Observations on the Remains of the Bouddhists in India," *Transactions of the Literary Society of Bombay*, III (1823, rpt. 1877). 529. This work of La Loubère was a deeply influential account of the coastal Theravāda Buddhism encountered by the late seventeenth century. It was also the primary account of the Pāli language--only superseded by Burnouf and Lassen's *Essai sur le Pāli*, published in 1826. Cf. the Oxford University Press facsimile reprint of the English edition: S. de La Loubère, *The Kingdom of Siam* (Kuala Lumpur, 1969).

linguistic, not iconographic. We are led to believe that “the sacred language of the Bouddhists is. . .Pali. . .The sacred language of the Brahmins is Sanskrit.”¹¹

Thus, we can see that already by 1813, with roots perhaps as early as the late seventeenth century, there is unmistakable evidence of the construction of an essentialized concept of Buddhism. This construct was based largely on the Theravāda Buddhists which inhabited the coastal areas familiar to European colonialists. Furthermore, this essentialized Buddhism was constructed precisely for the practical, typological activity of distinguishing “Buddhist” from “non-Buddhist” phenomena. That it soon found employment in relegating Tantric Buddhist traditions to the latter category should come as no surprise.

With the benefit of hindsight, one can immediately foresee the problems this template would raise when, soon after, Hodgson was confronted with the evidences of not only *Sanskritic* Buddhism, but *Tantric* Buddhism with its multi-limbed and semi-bestial “monsters.” As we shall see, this model did in fact directly influence Hodgson and, more importantly, it required him to make important interpretative decisions in order to accommodate the anomalous data with which he was confronted on reaching the Kathmandu Valley. I might point out that I am quite deliberately using the terminology of Thomas Kuhn here, as I feel that one can rightly understand Hodgson’s position as one of a researcher who, under the influence of the “paradigm” of a “normal science” (created by Erskine’s typology of Indian religions), is confronted by “anomalies”--evidence which does not fit neatly within the current paradigm. Indeed, Hodgson could not have avoided the conclusion that Erskine’s paradigm was inadequate as it stood. He was, however, as we shall see presently, able to tweak the paradigm with the conceptual tools available to him such that a “scientific revolution” was avoided.

Most illuminating for our purposes is a comment Hodgson made in the context of his “Further Remarks on M. Remusat’s Review of Buddhism,” in which he explained his

¹¹ Erskine, “Observations.” 531.

initial hesitation to publish plates depicting the Buddhist art he had encountered in Nepal.

He informs us that:

For years. . .I had been in possession of hundreds of drawings, made from the Buddhist pictures and sculptures with which this land is saturated. . .[but had not published them]. . .owing to the delay incident to procuring authentic explanations of them from original sources.¹²

Why did Hodgson feel it necessary to search out an explanation of these “Buddhist” images before publishing them? He continues

These images are to be met with everywhere, and of all sizes and shapes, very many of them endowed with a multiplicity of members sufficient to satisfy the teeming fancy of any Brahman of Madhya Desa! Start not, gentle reader, for it is literally thus, and not otherwise. Buddhas with three heads instead of one--six or ten arms in place of two! The necessity of reconciling these things with the so-called first principles of Buddhism, may reasonably account for delay in the production of my pictorial stores.¹³

Indeed, Hodgson here explicitly refers the source of his notions of the “principles of Buddhism” to “Erskine’s Essays in the Bombay Transactions.” And the cause of his caution was clear--for who would have believed his assertion that such multi-limbed figures could credibly be called “Buddhist,” when any well-informed reader of the Bombay Transactions knew quite well that good, anthropocentric Buddhists did not trade in such phantastic idols?

Hodgson was aided in this dilemma by Erskine himself, who had already used the trope of “grafting” to accommodate phenomena which did not fit neatly into his own system. For example, confronted with the presence of “Brahminical” deities even in Theravāda Buddhism, Erskine avers “the Bouddhists of India sometimes engrafted Brahminical notions upon their mythology, and, for certain purposes, acknowledged the

¹² Hodgson, *Essays on the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepal and Tibet*, Part I, (Amsterdam, 1972). 102-3.

¹³ *ibid.* 103.

existence and agency of the Brahminical deities.”¹⁴ Erskine could thus avoid having to seriously consider the implication that such deities might have been (as, indeed, they seem to have been *in fact*) integral to the system itself.

Encountering Sanskrit Buddhist texts in praise of multi-limbed deities and their associated images, Hodgson was very naturally led to apply this convenient conceptual tool and advance an hypothesis of religious “admixture.” And, indeed, in his landmark essays “Notice of the Languages, Literature, and Religion of Nepaul and Tibet,” “Sketch of Buddhism, derived from the Bauddha Scriptures of Nepal,” and so forth, he created a vision of Buddhism--widely cited and copied throughout the nineteenth century--which viewed Tantric Buddhism in such a light. Finding in Nepalese Buddhism an “immense, and for the most part useless, host”¹⁵ of deities, allied to what he termed “naked doctrines”¹⁶ and “a secret and filthy system of Buddhas and Buddha-Saktis,”¹⁷ Hodgson informed the European public of his conclusion that Tantrism was “a strange and unintelligible adjunct of Buddhism, though,” he was forced to admit, “vouched by numerous scriptural authorities.”¹⁸ Noticeable here is the fact that Hodgson is already using the language of Śāktism to describe this form of Buddhism--indicating where he believed the source of the admixture to be. Thus was born the tenacious notion that “Buddhism” (still Erskine’s Buddhism) became gradually “Sanskritized” and “Hinduized”--Tantric Buddhism being the terminal end of this process.

Hodgson’s work in Nepal was augmented and consolidated by the researches of

¹⁴ Erskine, “Observations.” 557.

¹⁵ Hodgson, *op. cit.* 15.

¹⁶ *ibid.* 40

¹⁷ *ibid.* 59.

¹⁸ *ibid.* 29.

Horace Hayman Wilson in Calcutta. It was certainly the cachet of collaboration with the great Sanskritist of the Court that gave a great boost to Hodgson's work. One of the most important and influential of the papers penned by Wilson was his "Notice of Three Tracts Received from Nepal," published in 1828 in *Asiatic Researches* XVI, immediately following and supplementing Hodgson's "Notices." This article represented the first English translation of Sanskrit Buddhist texts; and it was clearly startling to its first readers, as the three tracts were decidedly Tantric in nature.

In his analysis of the "Three Tracts," we see many of the key interpretative notions which would characterize the study of Tantric Buddhism for the next centuries: "Saivism," "admixture," corruption," and so forth. Here Wilson lends the authority of a translation ("original authorities"), and the concurrence of a noted Sanskritist (himself), to the "field-work" of Hodgson. In these texts, Wilson states, "the worship of SIVA, and *Tantra* rites, are. . .widely blended with the practices and notions of the *Bauddhists*."¹⁹ The works, he continues, "shew how far the *Buddha* creed has been modified by *Tāntrika* admixture."²⁰

It is clear that the *Bauddha* religion, as cultivated in Nepal, is far from being so simple and philosophical a matter as has been sometimes imagined. The objects of worship are far from being limited to a few persons of mortal origin, elevated by superior sanctity to divine honours, but embrace a variety of modifications and degrees more numerous and complicated, than even the ample Pantheon of the Brahmins.²¹

Here it is clear that Wilson, too, is alluding to the theories of Erskine. He goes on to elaborate his view of the source of these differences, claiming that

the *Sākta* form of *Hinduism* is. . .the chief source of the notions and divinities foreign to *Buddhism* with those *Bauddhas*, amongst whom the *Panchavinsati* is an authority [i.e. the Nepalese Buddhists]. It could only have been

¹⁹ H. H. Wilson, "Notice of Three Tracts Received from Nepal," *Asiatic Researches* XVI (1828). 451.

²⁰ *ibid.* 452.

²¹ *ibid.* 468.

brought to their knowledge by contiguity, for the *Tantras*, and *Tāntrika Purānas*, form a literature almost peculiar to the eastern provinces of Hindustan, the origin of which appears to be traceable to KĀMARUP or western Asam.²²

He adds an historical claim that the Tantrika ritual seems to have originated in the twelfth century, though he does not give any evidentiary source for this belief.

It should be no cause for surprise that Western scholars were thus led to consider the Vajrayāna as a form of “Buddhist Śāktism.” Indeed, this notion was also likely to have been seconded by most of the (uninformed) South Asian informants which were available to them. This would have been true of nearly all informants--Buddhist and non-Buddhist alike. In fact, this idea continues to hold currency to this day among South Asian Buddhists. Agehananda Bharati gives the following account of his experience in the mid-to-late twentieth century:

Among South Asian Buddhists. . . Vajrayāna is simply not known to the rank and file. I asked a *sarpanch* in the Mahar region of Maharashtra whether he knew anything about Vajrayāna. . . I drew a complete blank. When I elaborated on some points made by Shashi Bhushan Dasgupta [author of *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism*] to a Barua instructor in political science. . . he said all this sounded like Śāktism with which he, as an East Bengali, had some neighborly acquaintance.²³

Thus, the basic course of early European thought on Buddhist Tantrism is clear.

“Buddhism” was invented by Erskine. Śākta Tantrism was observed in the Bengali center of British administration. The anomalous divergences of Buddhist Tantrism from Erskine’s “Buddhism” were noted--their Sanskrit sources, poly-limbed deities, and “naked doctrines”--as were their similarity to Śākta elements. The theory of “admixture”--which had already been used to allow the theistic elements of Theravāda to meet the strict standards of the European construct of “Buddhism”--was invoked to reconcile these data. Some basic elements of a Tantric “history” now began to settle into place: “*original* (Pāli)

²² *ibid.* 470-71.

²³ A. Bharati, *Tantric Traditions*, 2nd edition (Delhi, 1993). 321.

Buddhism” was non-Tantric, Sanskritic “Tantra/Śāktism” is Hindu, thus “Buddhist Tantra” is a *later* mixture of Buddhist elements with Tantric elements developed elsewhere and incorporated perhaps as late as the twelfth century. These are the conceptual tools which were bequeathed to subsequent researchers on Buddhism and its history. It was not long before these tools reached the hands of the eminent French Orientalist Eugène Burnouf.

Eugène Burnouf

Apparently, the earliest notice of works belonging particularly to the literature of the Guhyasamāja schools is found in the landmark work *Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* of Eugène Burnouf, published in 1844 and subsequently issued in an almost identical second edition of 1876. This is the work which set the agenda and method which were to dominate the entire subsequent development of the field of Buddhist Studies. A large element of Burnouf's own mythic self-portrayal is that the greatness of his method came from his direct access to the documents of Indian Buddhism. No longer would researches be dependent on ignorant, biased missionaries' and merchants' reports. Now the ancient Buddhists could speak for themselves through their texts. However, it must be noted, that the conclusions Burnouf came to were nonetheless largely dictated by the hypotheses he inherited from his men in the field--Hodgson and Wilson (with some additional information provided by the ancillary Tibetan researches of Alexander Csoma de Körös). Constantly one finds him referring the reader to the articles published by these men in the *Asiatick Researches* and the *Journal of Asiatic Society of Bengal*. Thus, one should not overestimate the work of Burnouf as being somehow created in hermetic isolation in Paris, with merely the “authentic” testimony of the Sanskrit Buddhist texts at his disposal. He came to his project with many ideas inherited from his reading of these Orientalist reports and he found in these writers a map by which he could navigate the “uncharted” waters of Buddhist history.

Thus, it is not surprising that one finds Burnouf adopting the language of admixture and decline whole cloth from the writings of Hodgson and Wilson. In referring to the

Tibetan classification of scriptures into Sūtra and Tantra, Burnouf finds this distinction “interesting” as “it distinguishes clearly the Tantras, or the rituals in which Buddhism is mixed with the Saivite practices, from all the other Buddhist writings.”²⁴ Burnouf’s major innovation--no small one in regard to the development of ideas of Buddhist history, but of little importance here--was to distinguish “primitive” from “evolved” sūtras. That is, based upon the same principle of anthropocentric simplicity as the hallmark of Buddhist antiquity invoked by Erskine, the “primitive” scriptures were distinguished from the more elaborate ones. Burnouf believed he had demonstrated the existence of three great categories of Buddhist scriptures: “1st, those Sūtras in which the events are contemporaneous with Sakyamuni, 2nd those Sūtras which are spoken by persons later than him, finally 3rd those Sūtras of the great development in which it is hardly any more a question of human events.”²⁵

It is not relevant to the present study to dispute this particular point with Burnouf. At issue is whether early Mahāyāna luminaries were involved in Tantric practices, not whether Mahāyāna or Vajrayāna practice derived from the “original Buddha.” What is noteworthy is that nowhere does Burnouf advance a complete argument to place the Tantras later than these Mahāyāna Sūtras. Rather, he advances what was to become a very influential narrative discourse in Buddhist historiography--that of the progressive “popularization” of Buddhism.

Burnouf’s impression of the Tantric texts available to him was that they represented a simplification and reduction of Buddhism to the lowest level. “For vulgar and ignorant spirits,” he says, “such books certainly have more value than the moral legends of the earliest period of Buddhism. They promise advantages temporal and immediate; they satisfy in a word the need for superstitions, the love of devotional practices by which the

²⁴ E. Burnouf, *Introduction à l’Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien* (Paris, 1844). 68. [my translation]

²⁵ *ibid.* 219.

religious feeling (*sentiment*) expresses itself in Asia.” Here the trope is clear (and its subsequent history in writings on Buddhism is notable). We have seen this in the last chapter.

In describing the “Three Tracts” published by Wilson, Burnouf notes that,

One sees there the most complicated mythology and the ideas of the most erudite schools of Buddhism mixed with the names of divinities of which most belong properly to the special cult of Śiva.²⁶

It is crucial to note here that nowhere has the origin of these divinities been established. It has merely been noticed by residents of Bengal that these same divinities appear in Śaiva texts and devotions. In fact, nearly a century later Benoytosh Bhattacharyya would advance (what I, at least, consider) strong evidence for the Buddhistic origin of most of these deities; however, at this time it was the accepted view (vouchsafed, after all, by the Asiatic Society of Bengal) that the reverse was the case. Burnouf, as one can see above, merely repeats (nearly verbatim) the opinion of Wilson.

We also see an attempt to settle the date of the Tantras. Drawing on the published writings of Csoma de Körös, Burnouf was led to the conclusion that Tantrism “could not have been introduced before the Xth century of our era.”²⁷ On what evidence was this date--which quickly became the common touchstone in Tantric historiography--fixed? It was, as suggested above, precisely and solely based on the testimony of Csoma de Körös. This testimony consisted of three nearly verbatim references to the Kālacakra Tantra, a Tantra which is of admittedly late provenance and concerning which, incidentally, there are no texts ascribed to Nāgārjuna or Āryadeva. In his influential “Analysis” of the Tibetan Buddhist canon, Csoma notes that the Kālacakra “was introduced into India in the tenth

²⁶ *ibid.* 524.

²⁷ *ibid.* 526.

century, by CHILUPA, and into Tibet in the eleventh;”²⁸ and later repeats that the Kālacakra system was “introduced into India in the tenth century after CHRIST.”²⁹ He appears in these places to be parroting an earlier article of his on the “Origin of the Kālacakra and Adi-Buddha Systems,” in which he also says that:

The *Kāla-Cakra* was introduced into Central India in the last half of the tenth century after Christ..³⁰

Beyond this testimony, Burnouf presents no evidence which bears on the absolute dating of the Buddhist Tantras. He makes two arguments (on the basis of differences of content and style) to establish that they are not the “primitive teaching of Śākya,” but this is, again, not at issue. What is important to note is that his entire conclusion regarding the chronology of Buddhist Tantrism is based on the sole (and rather irrelevant) testimony of Csoma de Körös regarding the (admittedly late and idiosyncratic) *Kālacakra Tantra*.

This initial fixing of the date of Tantrism is important in the subsequent evolution of Tantric historiography, as this entire evolution can be seen as a gradual (if extremely reluctant) moving back of this date against a strong and perpetual resistance by scholars loathe to admit its provenance in a period any earlier than absolutely necessary. More than once have scholars written of their reluctance to admit the antiquity of certain texts, even in light of strong evidence.³¹

Of greatest importance for the present study is Burnouf’s Section Six, in which he treats of “Works bearing the names of authors.” Here Burnouf becomes the first modern

²⁸ A. Csoma de Koros, “Analysis of the Sher-chin, p’hal-ch’hen, dkon-seks, do-de, nyang-das, and gyut,” in *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. XX, part II (1839). 488.

²⁹ *ibid.* 564.

³⁰ A. Csoma de Koros, “Note on the Origin of the Kāla-Cakra and Adi-Buddha Systems,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, II (1833). 57.

³¹ Consider the following statement in regard to the *Lotus Sutra (Saddharma-puṇḍarīka)*: “If we did not know that it had already been translated into Chinese between 255 and 316 A.D., we should not consider it as so ancient.” G. K. Nariman, *Literary History of Sanskrit Buddhism*. (Delhi, 1992). 71.

scholar to give any notice of the Ārya Tradition, providing an important and influential account of the *Pañcakrama* ["Five Stages"] of Nāgārjuna. He makes the following observations which, due to their historical importance for our subject, I cite at length:

Among authors of works pertaining to the practice of the tantra, there is none more famous than Nāgārjuna--a religious of whom I have had more than one occasion to refer. I find in the collection of Mr. Hodgson a text of this celebrated author which is titled *Pañcakrama*, and to which is connected a commentary having for its title *Pañcakrama tippani*: it is a treatise written according to the principles of Yoga tantra and which is exclusively concerned with the exposition of the practical principles of the Tantric school. One learns there to draw magical figures called *Maṇḍalas*, where there appear the images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, and other fabulous characters (*personnages*) like Amitābha, Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Kṣitigarbha, Khagarbha, Vajrapāṇi, Lokeśa, Mañjuṣha, Samantabhadra, Sarvanivarāṇa-*viškambhin*, characters who, as I have said, are completely unknown in the Sūtras and in the ancient legends, and who appear only in the evolved Sūtras and in the Tantras. The author takes up the importance of maxims such as this: "My own nature is that of the diamond of the vision (*science*) of the void," or, "of the precious vision of the void"; and it is this maxim itself which one must pronounce when one has traced the diagram called "of the truth." Each of these diagrams, that of the sun for example, and of other divinities, has their corresponding philosophical formula; this formula is always marked by theories of the most absolute nihilism.

One sees there, all the ideas are mixed in this work, which independent of the name of the author which they bear, belong by their contents themselves to the epoch when all the elements of Buddhism were completely developed. That which dominates however, is the doctrine of the Tantras, with its absurd formulas and its unintelligible monosyllables. It is difficult to describe the kind of discouragement that one suffers in the reading of such a composition. There is something saddening in seeing serious men advance the most bizarre words and syllables as the vehicle of salvation (*salut*) and moral perfection. And what morality (*morale*) than that of an indifference and a quietism so exaggerated that the distinction of just and unjust, of good and evil, no longer exists for one who has so arrived. This book, in effect, conducts the ascetic by degrees to outrages (*énormités*) which, I am intimately convinced, are completely foreign to primitive Buddhism. I will cite just one example, drawn from the final chapter, which treats of indifference, to the practice of which all the efforts of the ascetic must tend. "For the ascetic, an enemy or oneself, his wife or his daughter, his mother or a prostitute. . .all these are the same thing." The pen refuses to transcribe doctrines as wretched in form, as they are odious and degraded in their

foundations. For the rest, everything in this work cannot be attributed without doubt to Nāgārjuna, as I find the name Sākyamitra at the end of a chapter. Perhaps also this latter name is only a title of Nāgārjuna. The light that such a treatise can throw on the other monuments of the Buddhist literature is, one understands, very weak. The only information that I find there is a citation of the Lalitavistara, with its title *Mahāyāna sūtra*.³²

For the rest of the nineteenth century (and, indeed, in varied forms up to the present) this passage was the final word on this fundamental text of the Ārya Tradition. As noted, Burnouf does not here go beyond the fundamental framework set up by Hodgson and Wilson, merely adding incidental details that he gleaned from his own reading of this text. While more information may be presented as to content, the context within which the text is interpreted remains the same.

Louis de La Vallée Poussin

Following the work of Burnouf, there was no scholarship produced on the literature and history of the Ārya Tradition (or even Indian Buddhist Tantricism itself) until Louis de La Vallée Poussin. A Belgian scholar of French heritage, La Vallée Poussin--a student of Sylvain Lévi and Heinrich Kern, among other luminaries--was to become one of the most important and influential modern scholars of Buddhism, particularly in the areas of Mahāyāna and Tantra. In 1894, La Vallée Poussin published an initial study of the *Pañcakrama*³³ which was to become, in 1896, the first critical edition³⁴ of this important work. He subsequently continued his work on the Tantras, concluding with the publication (in 1898) of an ambitious and remarkable work on the history of Buddhism and the

³² Burnouf, *Introduction*. 557-58.

³³ L. de La Vallée Poussin, "Note sur le Pañcakrama," in *Proceedings of the 10th International Congress of Orientalists*, Part I. (Geneva, 1894). 137-146. [My translation] This article was subsequently reprinted (with the revision of the brief introductory section) as the Introduction to the *Pañcakrama* edition of 1896.

³⁴ L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Études et Textes Tantriques: Pañcakrama* (Gand et Louvain, 1896).

Tantras. This latter was the first of a series of works bearing the title *Bouddhisme: études et matériaux* and dealt specifically with two works--the *Ādikarmapradīpa* and the *Bodhicaryāvatāraṭīkā*.

Perhaps the chief interest of this book in the development of Buddhist Studies is his sharp criticism of the credulity of the rapidly-advancing tradition of those he termed *les palisans*--what in colloquial English we might call “Pāli-heads”--toward the orthodox Theravāda understanding of Buddhist history (aided and abetted by the historical speculations we have detailed above). This view--which considers post-Buddhaghōṣa (fourth century) Theravāda as the “original, pure Buddhism”--still remains a tenacious bugbear in researches on Buddhism.³⁵ The criticisms leveled at this historically problematical method by La Vallée Poussin have, in recent years, been more widely appreciated. However, we shall see below that, at the time, this position was to yield serious professional fallout for the young scholar--leading him, in effect, to retreat from his initial position, not due to factual concerns, but rather from professional ones.

As noted, his initial work in Buddhist literature was precisely concerned with the central text of the Ārya Tradition--taking the form of a brief analysis and edition of the *Pañcakrama* itself. In these early writings, La Vallée Poussin is admirably cautious in his claims about Buddhist history. He is careful to base his conclusions on established fact, not mere conjecture. In the “Note sur le Pañcakrama,” he praises the initial groundwork laid by Burnouf in summarizing (in the passage I have cited above) the main subjects of the work. He writes that the *Pañcakrama* has as its author “the celebrated Nāgārjuna, probable initiator of great schools of metaphysics and, definitely, the head of the Mādhyamika school.”³⁶

³⁵ I personally know at least one scholar who insists on treating the Buddhism of the *Dhammapada* and the *Milindapañha* as if they were “straight from the horse’s mouth.”

³⁶ La Vallée Poussin, “Note sur le Pañcakrama.” 139.

So it seems clear that, in 1894, the young La Vallée Poussin felt it perfectly coherent to maintain the possibility that the “Nāgārjuna” who authored the *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā* (“the head of the Mādhyamika school”) and the “Nāgārjuna” who authored the *Pañcakrama* were one and the same. He goes on to give a brief summary of the speculations of Burnouf, in particular he makes the important observation that

Burnouf does not examine the question of authenticity and does not debate the question of knowing if the *Pañcakrama* should be attributed to Nāgārjuna, as the tradition maintains. The problem. . . remains difficult to resolve.³⁷

How refreshing it is to see such candor concerning this issue! It is indeed, as we shall see especially in the next chapter, “difficult to resolve.” However, we shall also see (in this chapter) that the problem was *de facto* “resolved” by the overwhelming consensus of the Buddhological community which, it seems, was “resolved” not to allow such a far-reaching assault on the fundamental imagination of the course of Buddhist doctrinal history.

La Vallée Poussin devoted the First Part of his *Bouddhisme: Études et Materiaux*, propadeutic to his edition of the *Ādikarmapradīpa*, to an extended essay on “the History of Buddhism.” In this work, he vigorously criticized the typical, Pāli-dependent approach of Buddhist Studies, suggesting that

Preoccupied with establishing the history of Buddhism [and] fixing straight away its origins, Orientalists have abandoned the road so intelligently blazed by Burnouf; they have given up examining the sources of the North or taking them into account; they attach themselves passionately to the exegesis of the southern Scriptures.³⁸

In particular, he mentions H. Oldenberg, M. Müller, and T. W. Rhys Davids as the preëminent “*palisans*,” but it is clear that he believed (rightly, it seems) that the flawed method of this approach was endemic to contemporary Buddhist Studies. He speaks of the typical notions of Buddhist history (especially the central construction as described in

³⁷ *ibid.* 141

³⁸ La Vallée Poussin, *Bouddhisme: Études et Materiaux* (London, 1898). 2.

Chapter Two) as “illusions.” Few informed scholars would today doubt that he was correct to problematize a method which, as he put it, “describes the fortunes of the Community, the constitution of the Saṃgha, the formation of the Scriptures, and the life of the Master according to documents which date from the 1st or the 4th century of our era.”³⁹

In place of this problematical method, he advocates the following program:

The Indologist must study with equal interest the Hinayāna (the vehicle of the rationalist monks of which the Pāli canon, itself composite, allows us to know only part of the history and the sects) and the diverse churches of the Mahāyāna, which covered India and all the Orient with a luxuriant profusion of their theologies and rites. One commonly regards idolatrous and superstitious Tantrism as “no longer Buddhism;” one forgets that Buddhism is not separable from Buddhists, and that the Indian Buddhists (*les Hindous bouddhistes*) were willingly idolatrous, superstitious, and metaphysical.⁴⁰

La Vallée Poussin considered this work as the natural development of Burnouf’s. “It is necessary, in a word,” he wrote, “to continue the *Introduction [à l’Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien]*, to apply ourselves above all to deciphering (*débrouiller*) the Tantric literature, relatively neglected by Burnouf.”⁴¹

Further, he insisted on the likely ancient provenance of Tantrism. It is here that the early La Vallée Poussin is at his most courageous and most revolutionary.

It is permissible to suppose the ancient existence of Mahāyāna and Tantrayāna: in any case, it is hazardous to place the Hindu and Tantric schools “upstage” of our researches, in the dark, like parasitical groups without historical or doctrinal importance. The scope (*programme*) of research enlarges at the same time that the official framework of Buddhist history is broken.⁴²

This “official framework,” it should be apparent, is the orthodox doctrinal history of the

³⁹ *ibid.* 3.

⁴⁰ *Bouddhisme: Études et Matériaux.* 5-6.

⁴¹ *ibid.* 6.

⁴² *ibid.* 5.

Theravāda monastic cartel interpreted through the lens of Buddhaghosa's "Reformation."

Even more radically, he made the following claim:

The Tantras. . .existed already from [the time] of the redaction of the books of the Mahāyāna, if not written and in their actual form, at least in effect and in an embryonic form.⁴³

Interestingly, much of La Vallée Poussin's criticism has since been vindicated by the Buddhological community and no doubt some improvement is evident in the method of twentieth century studies on Buddhism. However, these improvements took some time to blossom and were not accepted in their fullest form in his lifetime. In fact, what one sees historically is that by 1909 La Vallée Poussin himself, while continuing to insist on the ancient provenance of "embryonic" Tantrism, was compelled to give up his skeptical attitude with regard to the thesis that fully-developed Tantric Buddhism of the sort evidenced in the Ārya Tradition literature could have existed before the seventh century. This attenuated version of the received view was, of course, to become the new orthodoxy.

How did this happen? How is it possible that the Louis de La Vallée Poussin who so courageously questioned the methodological and doctrinal orthodoxy of the Buddhological community of his time with his groundbreaking studies of the long-ignored Tantric literature could so quickly (in the space of merely a few years) capitulate to this same orthodoxy?

The strong reaction in the Indological community against the conclusions reached by La Vallée Poussin were given voice by none other than the eminent Cambridge Indologist Edward James Rapson. Rapson, not surprisingly perhaps, found the revolutionary theses put forth in *Bouddhisme: Études et Matériaux* "startling."

[La Vallée Poussin] protests against the view *very generally accepted* that the Pāli scriptures are the best extant representatives of Buddhism in an early form, and contends that the Northern scriptures preserve the traces of a far older state of things. He also lays stress on the importance for the

⁴³ *ibid.* 72.

comprehension of early Buddhism of a study of the tantras--works which have been *universally regarded* as not only *extremely late* in point of date, but also as embodying ideas of an *essentially non-Buddhistic* character, due entirely to foreign importation.⁴⁴

This was clearly a sharp rebuke coming from a respected English scholar; and it seems, in fact, to have intimidated La Vallée Poussin so much that--at least according to his French eulogizers--he dropped the study of Tantrism entirely. After this experience, they inform us, he was only to publish one page of original research on the topic--which page is itself very non-committal and appeared only in the "correspondence" section of the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*. Consider the testimony of this 1939 eulogy concerning the events surrounding the publication of this work on Buddhist Tantrism:

Notwithstanding the tact and finesse with which it was treated, the subject unleashed the righteous indignation of the great Rapson who, in a long book review protested with severity against this display of "foul tantrism." . . . The criticism must have been bitterly resented by the young scholar. . . .

One might think that after this. . . work on the manifestations of popular Buddhism would continue to hold a large place in the activity of the young master, but he did no such thing, as, save for a study published in 1901, *The four classes of Buddhist Tantras*, the documents of this genre, a new and vital field, did not again form the object of his publications. After this excursion in the Indian jungle, so poorly viewed by traditionalist science, Louis de La Vallée Poussin rediscovered monastic Buddhism never again to leave it.⁴⁵

There should be no doubt that this was indeed a rather convenient time to "rediscover" Monastic (i.e. non-Tantric) Buddhism. And, it is readily apparent that the works of his later years demonstrate a fairly strict adherence to the view "very generally accepted" of the late and foreign provenance of Buddhist Tantrism. He continued to maintain that there were Tantric "elements" present in early Buddhism, but held the party line that full-blown

⁴⁴ E. J. Rapson, review of *Bouddhisme: Études et Matériaux*, by L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1898). 909. [emphasis mine]

⁴⁵ Marcelle Lalou and Jean Przyluski, "Louis de La Vallée Poussin," in *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, VI (1938-39): 6-7. [My translation]

Tantrism of “*la main gauche*” was a late and alien infestation. This modified position was to become the predominant view in the twentieth century.

In point of fact, however, it is not actually true that La Vallée Poussin stopped publishing on Tantra, for he was to author several pieces in addition to the one mentioned in his memorial--including several articles in Hastings’ *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics* (such as his highly influential articles on “Tantrism,” “Ādibuddha,” and “Tantrism (Buddhist)”) and the lengthy *Bouddhisme: Opinions sur l’Histoire de la Dogmatique*. Among his later works one also finds the short article “À propos du Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa d’Āryadeva.” This article is important for two reasons. For one, it is an important notice of another of the chief works of the Ārya Tradition--a logical place for his attention to proceed, following his work on the *Pañcakrama*. On the other hand, it is noteworthy that this work was only published after a thirty-five year hiatus. What’s more, this article reflects La Vallée Poussin’s post-1898 reversion to the received view on Tantric history, insisting on a late Buddhist Tantrism--and even uses the rhetoric of a “tantric Āryadeva.”⁴⁶ Is it a coincidence, then, that this article was published in a special number of the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*--a number which was entitled *A Volume of Indian Studies presented by his friends and pupils to Edward James Rapson on his seventieth birthday 12th May 1931*? I maintain that this was not an historical coincidence, but rather the consummation of the events we have seen above. This article represents nothing less than a formal capitulation--indeed, an *apology* of sorts--by La Vallée Poussin to Rapson. He could have published anything in that volume and his range of research interests was certainly vast. Such a choice of topic could only have been deliberate. By publishing this article, La Vallée Poussin was formally and strikingly creating a Buddhological orthodoxy. From this moment on, it became “established” that the literature of the Ārya Tradition was not written by the ascribed Mādhyamika authors.

⁴⁶ “Le ‘tantrisant’ Āryadeva.” Cf. “À propos du Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa d’Āryadeva,” *Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies*, VI.2 (1931). 415.

In line with this professional capitulation, La Vallée Poussin abandoned caution in his later years in declaring that the Tantric works attributed to Nāgārjuna and company were false attributions.⁴⁷ In his influential *Bouddhisme: Opinions sur l'Histoire de la Dogmatique* (which ran through no less than five editions between 1909 and 1925), he states

There are, no doubt, some tantric writings whose promulgation is attributed to Nāgārjuna, Saraha, [and] Aryadeva--illustrious doctors of the Great Vehicle. But this literary fraud cannot fool anyone, and the authors of our books are very probably the sorcerers subsequent to the sixth century that are described by Tāranātha--by profession "evokers" of divinities of the second rank, with a smattering of Buddhist philosophy, but totally foreign to the spirit of the Good Law.⁴⁸

It is clear that there is an essentialized notion of a "real Buddhism" (*"l'esprit de la Bonne Loi"*) functioning here in La Vallée Poussin's assessment of Tantric Buddhism which is very little different from the iconographical template created by Erskine and employed by Hodgson. La Vallée Poussin begins to espouse the notion that Tantrism is a foreign importation from Hinduism, stating that "Buddhist tāntrism is practically Buddhist Hinduism, Hinduism or Śaivism in Buddhist garb."⁴⁹ This view is totally foreign to his earlier insistence that the teaching of the Buddha, as far as we know, might just as easily have been thoroughly involved with rites, deities, and so forth--that is, all the "religious" accretions which formed around the "Good Law"--from the very beginning. In this light it is instructive to observe just how he began to conceptualize this "*Bonne Loi*." He says:

The Good Law consists *essentially* in a discipline entirely

⁴⁷ One wonders if this might have been the result of the misattribution by careless bibliographers of *Le nitrate de Norvège* (presumably a chemical treatise, composed by one L[udovic] de La Vallée Poussin) to our indomitable scholar of Buddhism (Cf. *The National Union Catalog: Pre-1956 Imprints*, vol. 318, p. 691).

⁴⁸ Louis de La Vallée-Poussin, *Bouddhisme: Opinions sur l'Histoire de la Dogmatique*, (Paris, 1925). 382-3. [my translation]

⁴⁹ L. de La Vallée Poussin, "Tāntrism (Buddhist)" in *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings (New York, 1921). 193.

spiritual in which the adepts ignore the gods, the demons, all the necessities of the present life.⁵⁰

In case it is not immediately and absolutely clear that this hypostatization of the “essence” of Buddhism is still widely prevalent in Buddhist Studies, the most recent number (at the time of writing) of the journal *History of Religions* contained the following observation (describing an on-line debate among scholars of Buddhism about the importance of local spirit cults in Buddhist traditions):

Almost no participant in the discussion was comfortable with [the] use of the word “essential;” yet, almost every post attempted to pinpoint criteria for delimiting normative Buddhism. Typically, these criteria described a two-tier model, distinguishing the “true” Buddhism, founded in pure philosophy, the Buddha’s exact attitude, or the confronting of essentialisms, from a “lesser” Buddhism that involves supernatural powers, the worship of spirits or deities, ordinary folk, and indigenous beliefs.⁵¹

The similarity to the situation in historiography (described in Chapter Two)--in which no scholar would profess belief in a Universal History “out there” to be discovered, but which is “implicitly presupposed as widely it would be explicitly rejected”⁵²--is striking. This academic view of Buddhism reinforced the earlier position concerning the late and foreign provenance of Tantrism in the Buddhist Tradition. In point of fact, the work of the later La Vallée Poussin is not substantially different from the naïve yāna-based chronology that he himself criticized so forcefully and insightfully in his earlier work:

. . . Criticism can admit this tripartite division: a Buddhism undevotional and exclusively monastic, or the Little Vehicle, *which goes back without doubt [!!] to the founder*; a Buddhism much more composite, monastic and secular, devotional, polytheistic, at times monotheistic, highly commingled with pure philosophy and gnosticism (*gnose*): this is the Great Vehicle. . . ; finally, the *degraded* and

⁵⁰ L. de La Vallée Poussin, *Bouddhisme: Opinions sur l'Histoire de la Dogmatique* (Paris, 1925). 362. [italics mine]

⁵¹ Richard S. Cohen, “Nāga, Yakṣiṇī, Buddha: Local Deities and Local Buddhism at Ajanta,” *History of Religions* XXXVII.4 (May 1998). 361.

⁵² Louis O. Mink, *Historical Understanding* (Ithaca, 1987). 188.

denatured Buddhism of the Tantras, attested since the VIIth Christian century.⁵³

Benoytosh Bhattacharyya

Certainly one of the most eccentric scholars of Buddhist Tantrism, Benoytosh Bhattacharyya is the person most often quoted in relation to the date of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and its literature. His father was Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasād Śāstri, the man who first brought the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* of Āryadeva to the attention of modern scholars of religion.⁵⁴ Bhattacharyya did a prodigious amount of good textual work in the Buddhist Tantras. He was, in fact, the first scholar to bring out an edition of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* itself under the auspices of Gaekwad's Oriental Series.⁵⁵ He also edited other important Buddhist Tantric texts such as the *Sādhanamālā*,⁵⁶ which he brought out in the same series in two volumes, with substantial historical and textual introductions. Much of the material from these introductions was reworked (sometimes minimally) and became the influential *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism*.⁵⁷

One important contribution of Bhattacharyya was his attempt to discredit the widespread assumption that Buddhist Tantrism is merely “Buddhicised Hinduism” or, more generously, “Hinduized Buddhism.” He was thoroughly convinced that, on the contrary, Tantric religion initially developed within the Buddhist schools, and was only later adopted by non-Buddhists. He went so far as to write that

It is possible to declare, without fear of contradiction, that the Buddhists were the first to introduce the Tantras into their religion, and that the Hindus borrowed them from the

⁵³ La Vallée Poussin, *Bouddhisme: Opinions sur l'Histoire de la Dogmatique*. 19. [emphasis mine]

⁵⁴ H. P. Shastri, “The discovery of a work of Āryadeva in Sanskrit,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 67, part 1 (1898). 175-184.

⁵⁵ B. Bhattacharya, *Guhyasamāja Tantra or Tathāgataguhyaka*, (Baroda, 1931).

⁵⁶ B. Bhattacharya, *Sādhanamālā*, 2 vols. (Baroda, 1925 and 1928).

⁵⁷ B. Bhattacharyya, *An Introduction to Buddhist Esoterism* (Baroda, 1931).

Buddhists in later times, and that it is idle to say that later Buddhism is an outcome of Śaivism. A study of the Tantras has revealed these facts. . .⁵⁸

While here he merely presents an argument from authority for this claim, elsewhere he devotes considerable space to a cogent and convincing argument, based on the presence of unexplained Buddhistic elements in the Hindu iconography, establishing, for example, that the goddess Tārā was originally a Buddhist divinity, later incorporated into the Hindu pantheon.⁵⁹

Bhattacharyya was among the first to make an attempt to establish the historical study of Buddhist Tantrism within an absolute chronological framework. Bhattacharyya himself claimed that his was the first attempt to “construct a chronology of Tantric authors.”⁶⁰ While conceding that “it is. . .difficult and hazardous with the present materials to attempt to build a chronology of Vajrayāna,” he nevertheless insisted that “a beginning has to be made somewhere.”⁶¹ Certainly, his intellectual boldness is worthy of admiration. Unfortunately for those of us who follow, Bhattacharyya is as bold in making important historical claims in his writings as he is lax about adequately footnoting them with substantiating evidence or, when he does provide a reference, ascertaining that this reference is, in fact, reliable.

For example, Bhattacharyya is famous for making the claim (since rejected by almost everyone I can think of) that it was Asaṅga who introduced the Guhyasamāja Tantra into the world. He made this assertion based on Waddell’s book on *Lāmaism*, which is clearly a derivative and often deeply confused account of Buddhism and its history. Waddell does not footnote his source, and Bhattacharyya merely footnotes Waddell. This

⁵⁸ Bhattacharyya, *Introduction*. 147.

⁵⁹ *ibid.* 148-53.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 62.

⁶¹ *Sādhanamālā*. xl.

popular notion seems to be derived solely from a solitary statement in Tāranātha (1608) that “the greatest Tāntrika *ācārya*-s belonged to the period between that of *ārya* Asaṅga and this one [of Gobhicandra, etc.]”⁶² It is truly amazing that anyone could seriously make the claim that “Buddhists generally believe that the Tantras were introduced into Buddhism by Asaṅga.” This statement is contradicted by more evidence than we have for almost any other point about Tantrism. For instance, Bhattacharyya himself knows that many Buddhists believe the Tantras were introduced by Śākyamuni; the Ārya Tradition is believed to have been introduced by Saraha; other traditions are ascribed (by the same Tāranātha) to La-ba-pa, and so on. One would be hard pressed, in fact, to find *even one* Buddhist who believed that the Tantras were introduced by Asaṅga.⁶³

Such cavils aside, Bhattacharyya’s most important and most influential contribution to Buddhist Studies is his discussion of the chronology of the commentarial literature (and its authors) of the Buddhist Tantric tradition. Most important for our study is his claim that “Nāgārjuna” (“Tantric” Nāgārjuna, of course) can be dated to around 645 C.E. His argument is based upon two Tantric lineage lists--“one given in the Tangyur catalogue of P. Cordier and another in the *Pag Sam Jon Zan* quoted in the edition of the *Chakra Sambhāra* (sic) [*sic*] *Tantra* by the late Kazi Dawasam Dup [*sic*].”⁶⁴ These lists are as follows. The first list runs: Padmavajra, Anaṅgavajra, Indrabhūti, Bhagavati Lakṣmī, Līlāvajra, Dārikapā, Sahajayoginī Cintā, and Ḍombī Heruka. The second list reads: Saraha, Nagarjuna, Śabaripā, Luipā, Vajraghaṅṭā, Kacchapā, Jālandharipā, Kṛṣṇācārya, Guhya, Vijayapā, Tailopā, and Nāropā. Assuming that the “Indrabhūti” in the first list is the Indrabhūti who was the father of Padmasambhava (a figure whose date is fairly certain due to his

⁶² Cf. Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya, *Tāranātha’s History of Buddhism in India* (Delhi, 1990). 255.

⁶³ One may note, in addition, that “most Buddhists believe” that Asaṅga’s supposed *vajrācārya*, Maitreya, will not teach Tantra during his career as a Buddha.

⁶⁴ *Sādhanamālā*. xl-xli.

involvement with Tibetan royalty), Bhattacharyya assigns him the date 717 C.E. He then makes the assumption that there would be a twelve year gap between master and disciple. He then assigns corresponding dates to the other figures in this list.⁶⁵ The *coup de grace* comes when he can then link this list with the other. On the principle that Padmavajra (who is reputed to have introduced the *Hevajra Tantra*) must be one generation earlier than Jālandhārī (who is reputed to have been “the first to profess the *Hevajratantra* and to compose a work on the subject”), he assigns the date 705 to Jālandhārī. It is then a simple matter to count back to “Nāgārjuna” who, he concludes, lived around 645 C.E.⁶⁶

A very neat argument this makes on some levels; nevertheless it should be obvious that there are major problems with it. In brief, it makes so many assumptions and uses such problematical data that, in the end, it would take nothing less than a fantastic stroke of luck for it to actually be correct. There are three principal assumptions this argument relies on. For one, the identity of “Indrabhūti.” For another, the highly arbitrary twelve-year gap Bhattacharyya assumes between master and disciple (a gap of at least thirty years would seem more likely to me). And finally, and most important, is Bhattacharyya’s assumption that these lists themselves are free of gaps.

Strangely, even though Bhattacharyya is forced to acknowledge that, since we know Tilopā and Nāropā to be substantially later than his formula would imply, there must be a gap (or gaps) in the list, nonetheless he insists on the validity of his method--implicitly endorsing the direct guru-disciple relationship of the other members of his series. This is highly problematical. A manifest 237 year gap cannot, to my mind, be so easily dismissed. Of course, the tradition itself insists that such lists of *guruparamparā* should be complete,

⁶⁵ To wit, Padmavajra (693), Anaṅgavajra (705), Indrabhūti (717), Bhagavati Lakṣmi (729), Lilāvajra (741), Dārikapā (753), Sahajayoginī Cintā (765), and Ḍombī Heruka (777).

⁶⁶ The entire list reads as follows: Saraha (633), Nagarjuna (645), Śabaripā (657), Luipā (669), Vajraghaṅṭā (681), Kacchapā (693), Jālandharipā (705), Kṛṣṇācārya (717), Guhya (729), Vijayapā (741). . . . Tailopā (978), Nāropā (990). This entire argument can be found at *Sādhnamālā*, xl-xliii.

as each link in the chain of succession is a crucial element in its transmission. However, this is merely the theory--in practice, such lists are rarely complete. The most cursory perusal of contemporary Tibetan lineage lists (who maintain this theory of *paramparā*) shows that such meticulous care is not taken and many members of the lineage are omitted as a matter of course.⁶⁷

Based on such reasoning, Bhattacharyya concludes that “Nāgārjuna. . . is, of course, different from the author of the same name who is regarded as the founder of the Madhyamaka school of Buddhist philosophy.” He further bases himself on the influential, if not terribly illuminating, short study of Max Walleser on “The Life of Nāgārjuna from Tibetan and Chinese Sources”:

From [Walleser’s] learned and scholarly observations it can easily be seen [again, all too easily!] that the Tibetan sources have hopelessly mixed up together the accounts of Nāgārjuna--the disciple of Aśvaghōṣa, with Nāgārjuna--the disciple of Saraha. One flourished in the first and the second quarter of the second century; while the other flourished in the middle of the seventh century, the two names thus being separated by five hundred years.⁶⁸

It is important to note that Walleser did not, in fact, demonstrate this notion, but merely asserted it, based upon precisely the same assumption of the lateness of Tantrism we have seen time and again. In fact, a reading of his work will reveal that he did not believe that there was reliable data of any kind for *any* Nāgārjuna. He found the Chinese sources equally as problematical as the Tibetan sources--to the point where, far from asserting the separate existence of a Nāgārjuna I and a Nāgārjuna II, he felt unsure that any such person

⁶⁷ For instance, Bu-ston lists the “lineage” of teachers of the ordination in Tibet as: “Shariputra, Rahula, Nagarjuna, Bhavaviveka, Srigupta, Jnanagarbha, and Santiraksita.” (Obermiller, p 190) Obviously, there are some gaps here. . .

In fact, it seems clear that there must be one such gap between Nāgārjuna and Śabaripā--in no source that I know of is Śabaripā said to be a disciple of Nāgārjuna. The 84 Mahāsiddhas text has Avalokiteśvara as his guru--no mention of Nāgārjuna. Tāranātha mentions a lineage “from the Ārya Father and Son. . . up to Śabari,” in which there is an obvious lacuna between these figures.

⁶⁸ Bhattacharyya, *Introduction*. 67.

(or persons) ever existed! He certainly is not the source (Bhattacharyya seems to be) of the subsequently very popular opinion that the Tibetans “mixed up” the two Nāgārjunas.

Based entirely on these (nearly vacuous) arguments, Bhattacharyya began to enable and popularize a discourse which spoke in terms of two Nāgārjunas, which mode was quickly taken up by the later La Vallée Poussin (in his reference to the “‘tantrisant’ Āryadeva”) and Giuseppe Tucci. The concurrence of these two intellectual giants soon made this discourse standard in the field. One could now refer to a “Siddha Nāgārjuna” (of the 84 Mahāsiddhas text) in contradistinction to a “Mādhyamik Nāgārjuna.”

Of great interest and, I believe, significance, is the similarity between Bhattacharyya’s methodology and conclusions regarding the chronology of the Buddhist Tantric literature and those of F. Max Müller concerning the dating of the Vedic literature. Methodologically, both scholars employed (arbitrary) models of historical development, arguing backwards to a putative historical location for the literature in question. Most similar, however, is the manner in which these hypotheses have been cited and recited in the subsequent literature. Müller, one will recall, reasoned that Buddhism, whose founder is (relatively) reliably dated to the 6th century B.C.E., presupposes the literature of Vedic India. There is a sequence of literary presupposition from Buddha back through the Brāhmaṇas, the Vedic Saṃhitas (as compiled), and the earlier period of composition of the Mantras. Positing (rather arbitrarily) a two-hundred-year span to each of these periods, Müller “dated” the composition of the Vedas to around 1200 B.C.E. The similarity of this method to that of Bhattacharyya should be clear.⁶⁹ Now, consider the later comments of M. Winternitz concerning the destiny of Müller’s speculations in Indological circles:

It is remarkable, how strong the power of suggestion is even in science. The *purely hypothetical* and actually quite arbitrary chronological fixation of the Vedic epoques by Max Müller received, *without the addition of any new arguments or actual proofs*, in course of time more and

⁶⁹ The major difference being that Müller’s starting point was a lot more reliable than Bhattacharyya’s.

more the recognition and character of a scientifically proved fact. One formed the habit. . .of saying, Max Müller has proved 1200 to 1000 B.C. to be the date of the R̥gveda.⁷⁰

That this is, in fact, what happened with the hypotheses concerning the chronology of Tantrism is, of course, precisely what I am maintaining in this essay.⁷¹ It is worthwhile to observe that this is by no means an isolated incident in the otherwise perfectly rigorous chronological research of classical Indology. In addition, the conservative nature of such hypotheses is also remarkable, and Winternitz did not fail to remark on this aspect either. In effect, the speculations of Müller became a fiercely-guarded orthodoxy, and

Only with hesitation did some researchers like L. von Schroeder dare to go beyond, up to 1500 or even up to 2000 B.C. And when a few years ago, by reason of astronomical calculations H. Jacobi tried to push back the Vedic literature into the 3rd millennium before Christ, a hue and cry was raised by scholars against such a heretic step, and even today most researchers cannot comprehend that Jacobi could put forth such a crazy view on the age of the Veda. It was strangely forgotten, on how weak a footing 'the prevailing view' actually stood which they tried to defend so vigorously.⁷²

In all fairness, it should be noted that some scholars did comment on the frail basis of Bhattacharyya's conclusions. They came under heavy criticism soon after he published them. Even his close contemporary and fellow scholar of Tantricism, S. B. Dasgupta, said of his work that,

so vast and confused is the field and so scanty and doubtful are the materials that the structure [of his history] does not seem to be very well built.⁷³

⁷⁰ M. Winternitz, *A History of Indian Literature*, Vol. I, (Delhi, 1990). 273. [emphasis mine]

⁷¹ H. P. Shastri may have begun the tradition (perhaps out of fatherly affection), "The age of Advayavajra has been fixed by Dr. Benoytosh Bhattāchāryya in his Introduction to the *Sādhnamālā*. So I need not dilate upon it." Cf. Shastri, ed., *Advayavajrasaṃgraha* (Baroda, 1927). v.

⁷² Winternitz, *ibid.*

⁷³ S. B. Dasgupta, *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism*, (Calcutta, 1950). 60.

More recently, he has been sharply criticized by Ronald Davidson who has accused him of using “very unhistorical methods.”⁷⁴ Nonetheless, for all their (major) shortcomings, his conclusions were quickly taken up by the Indological and Buddhological communities--including, as we shall see, the great Giuseppe Tucci. It seems that most scholars of Indian religions were eager to quickly forget their qualms, so desperate were they for any landmark by which to navigate the (still largely uncharted) “dreary wastes of Indian history.” As we shall see below, the entire subsequent development of research on this tradition is based on the (largely) uncritical assumption of the conclusions of Bhattacharyya.

Prabhubhai Bhikhabhai Patel

As noted above, Mahāmahopādhyāya Haraprasad Shastri was, in 1898, the first to present the extant MS of Āryadeva’s *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* to the Anglophone Indological community.⁷⁵ Except for the brief “À propos” of La Vallée Poussin in 1931, and some rather select quotations from it in the works of Bhattacharyya and Dasgupta, this work was not taken up as the object of sustained attention until an attempt was made to edit the text by Prabhubhai Patel, a young nationalist and budding scholar studying at the Viswabharati University. Under the tutelage of Vidhushekhara Bhattacharya, Patel took up the study of Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese and turned his attention to what he called the “*bodhicitta*” literature--a canon apparently of his own devising. This interest in the *bodhicitta* led him to work closely on the *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* of Nāgārjuna, on which he

⁷⁴ Cf. R. Davidson, “The Litany of the Names of Mañjuśrī: Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṅgīti*,” in *Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, vol. XX (Bruxelles, 1981). 4-5. Davidson writes: “attempts to attach dates to Buddhist tantras without reference to historically localizable commentators or citations by datable authors is premature”--(and in a footnote) “We should certainly wish in any event to avoid the very unhistorical methods demonstrated by B. Bhattacharya in his various works and by Alex Wayman in *Yoga*, pp. 97-102.”

⁷⁵ H. P. Shāstrī, “The discovery of a work by Āryadeva in Sanskrit,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, vol. 67, pt. 1 (1898). 175-184.

published an article in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, and eventually led him to turn his attentions to the work of the “Tantric” Āryadeva. This latter research resulted in a published edition of the Sanskrit text, in which he sought to bring the text of H. P. Shastri into conformity with the Tibetan translations.

Whereas Shastri was content to allow that a Tantric treatise such as the *Cittaviśuddhi-prakarāṇa* may have been written by the “Mādhyamik” Āryadeva, Patel could not accommodate such a possibility. The weighty opinions of such figures as Louis de La Vallée Poussin and Benoytosh Bhattacharyya had already come down against this view and the young student from Gujarat fell right into line. “As regards the identification of this Āryadeva,” he wrote in 1949,

it can unhesitatingly be said that he is not the same as the one who is well-known as the author of the *Catuḥśataka*, *Sataśāstra*, *Akṣaraśataka*, etc. though Haraprasad Sastri, Poussin, Bendall, Kimura, Nariman, and others seem to have once believed him to be so, while Bhattacharyya, Vaidya, and later Poussin also doubted this identification.⁷⁶

These lists are of great interest. For one, he mentions more than five eminent authors who at one time supported the possibility of the authorship of Tantric works by “Mādhyamik” Āryadeva. Against these authors, Patel can muster only three particular authors who deny this possibility. This list becomes even more fascinating when we look more closely at the three figures on whose authority Patel makes the claim that “it can unhesitatingly be said” that there must be two Āryadevas.

In the preceding discussion, we have already seen the relationship of the earlier to the later “Poussin,” and the utter lack of real evidence upon which his conversion to the idea that Āryadeva’s Tantric writings are nothing but a sloppy “literary fraud” was based. We have also examined the views and arguments (such as they are) of Benoytosh Bhattacharyya (the “Bhattacharya” he refers to). From what we have seen, Patel would be ill-advised to base his beliefs upon such “authorities” (though, at the time, they no doubt

⁷⁶ P. B. Patel, *Cittaviśuddhiprakarāṇa of Āryadeva* (Santiniketan, 1949). xv.

lent great authority to his claims). This leaves his claim dependent upon the authority of one P. L. Vaidya. The published work of Vaidya to which Patel refers is his *Études sur Āryadeva et son Catuḥśataka*. Beside the fact that this work is almost completely devoted to (and largely based upon) an exploration of the exoteric literature attributed to Āryadeva (chiefly, in fact--as is clear from the title--just one work, the *Catuḥśataka*), this study cannot be considered to have advanced inquiry into the question of the attribution of Tantric works to this writer. Indeed, it is somewhat strange that Patel includes him as an independent voice on the matter. In raising the question of the *Cittaviśuddhi-prakaraṇa* and Āryadeva's relationship to Tantricism in this work, Vaidya contents himself with merely mentioning that Louis de La Vallée Poussin believes that Āryadeva couldn't have written Tantric treatises and states, "Je suis d'accord avec lui et pense que c'est un autre Āryadeva."⁷⁷

In all justice, it may be said that Patel (unlike many others) does seek to provide some new, independent argumentation for this view. He admits,

As regards the date of this Āryadeva, there is very little evidence. Some of the verses of the work occur in other works of settled dates; but that too, does not throw any light on the point, as these verses occur in the texts themselves without any indication that they are quoted from other works. We have already seen that Āryadeva was the predecessor of Śākyamitra. . . . Now this Śākyamitra was a disciple of Śākyaprabha, who was a contemporary of Gopāla of the Pāla dynasty of Bengal. This fact gives us some data to presume that this Āryadeva was somewhat earlier than the beginning of the eighth century A.C.⁷⁸

In short, Patel argues that the presumed "Tantric Āryadeva" lived before the eighth century C.E. This might very well be the case. In fact, however, the "Mādhyamik Āryadeva" also lived "somewhat earlier than the beginning of the eighth century A.C." All he has provided

⁷⁷ P. L. Vaidya, *Études sur Āryadeva et son Catuḥśataka*, (Paris, 1923). 64. In addition--true to what was fast becoming a venerable rhetorical tradition--he consistently (indeed, almost reflexively) qualifies the noun "tantrisme" with the adjective "dégénéré."

⁷⁸ Patel, *ibid.* xvi.

is a *terminus ante quem*, an important notice if shown to be soundly established, but not a terribly helpful one in attempting to determine the provenance of the literature which concerns us.

Giuseppe Tucci

Writing at the same time as Patel, the great Italian Buddhologist Giuseppe Tucci also had an interest in the Tantric writings of the Ārya Tradition. In his influential article “Animadversiones Indicae” (1930) and in a chapter of his voluminous *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* (1949), the great Italian scholar and explorer took up, among a wide array of important topics in Indian history, the question of the provenance of Tantric literature such as that of the Ārya Tradition. Tucci was certainly one of the most qualified to explore this topic, and his authority quickly led to his conclusions being among the most influential--if not the single most influential--discussions of this topic in the twentieth century. They have been repeatedly cited by subsequent authors discussing this topic, and considered among the highest authorities. Whether or not justly so, is the question we must explore below.

Tucci begins “Animadversiones Indicae” with an apologetic which has become almost the standard introduction to subsequent works on Buddhist Tantra. He defends the academic study of Buddhist Tantrism by making the claim that “the Tantras contain almost nothing which can justify the sweeping judgment of some scholars who maintain that they represent the most degenerated form of Indian speculation.”⁷⁹ In the second part of this article, Tucci follows La Vallée Poussin and Bhattacharyya (among others) in examining evidences of the early provenance of Tantric ideas, pointing out that “the Somasiddhānta represented a Tantric sect, . . . , and that the existence of this school can be proved as early as the time of Harivarman and Asaṅga.”⁸⁰ He criticizes his colleagues who maintain that the

⁷⁹ G. Tucci, “Animadversiones Indicae,” *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, N.S. XXVI (1930). 128.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* 131.

Tantras originated in the seventh century, acknowledging at the same time that this had become the universal view.

The most important contribution in this article occurs in the sixth section, in which Tucci takes up the question of the identification of the author of the *Pañcakrama*. He concurs with his predecessors, asserting that,

we find the series: Nāgārjuna, Rāhulabhadra, Āryadeva as the authors of many treatises absolutely tantric and describing rituals, mudrās, kramas, quite peculiar to the tantric sects, but which, though based generally upon the dogmatical teachings of the Mādhyamika school cannot be considered as old as the great Ācārya Nāgārjuna.⁸¹

Such a view was certainly nothing new. What Tucci claimed to have done in this animadversion, however, was to have finally grounded this view upon a firm foundation. He was, no doubt, aware of how weak the previous foundations of this view were, based as it was originally on the bare assertion of Louis de La Vallée Poussin. When he comes to providing such incontrovertible evidence, however, one finds Tucci resorting to the following:

That there were two Nāgārjunas has been clearly pointed out by Dr. Benoytosh Bhattachārya and this view is supported by the comparative study of the material at our disposal, the remarks made above and even by the brahminical tradition.⁸²

This, needless to say, is problematical in the extreme. In fact, it is not significantly more helpful than (and very similar in form to) the “contribution” of P. L. Vaidya. We have considered the contribution of Bhattacharyya above (Tucci specifically refers one to the passage in *Sādhanamālā* (pp. xlv ff.) which we have analyzed in detail). Further, his second bit of evidence--the “remarks made above”--present no more than dogmatical assertions of this position, given without evidence. Next, the testimony of the “brahminical tradition” boils down to a footnote which reads “Goraksasiddhañtasāṅgraha, which knows:

⁸¹ *ibid.* 140.

⁸² *ibid.* 141.

Malayārjuna, p. 19, Nāgārjuna, Sahasrārjuna, p. 44"--a cryptic tradition, no doubt, and the one may come to his/her own conclusion. Certainly there was more than one person in first millennium India with the name "Nāgārjuna;" this fact, however, has no immediate bearing on the question at hand.

We are left, then, with the support of the "comparative study of the material at our disposal." I have no doubt that Professor Tucci undertook such a study, and we see the valuable results of it elsewhere, but in the absence of his explicit sharing of the steps of his reasoning, it boils down to a matter of Professor Tucci's opinion. I certainly respect his opinion, but the fundamental methodological starting point of the present study is a suspicion of such opinions. It is precisely the lack of such suspicion which, it appears, has allowed a largely unsubstantiated historical hypothesis to be perpetuated for the better part of this century as the "scientific results" of research on Indian Buddhism.

Tucci adds the following argument. The Biographies of the 84 Mahāsiddhas gives the succession: Nāgārjuna, Vyāḍi, Kambala, Indrabhūti. There is an Indrabhūti who is connected with Padmasambhava, who lived in the eighth century. Vyāḍi was an alchemist. Therefore, "we can safely assume with Doctor Benoytosh Bhattācārya that the Alchemist or Siddha Nāgārjuna lived in the VII century A.D."⁸³ He gives the further argument that there is a succession that reads: Nāgārjuna, Śabara, Advayavajra. This Advayavajra was connected with Naropā and so "the Nāgārjuna here referred to must have flourished about the beginning of the X century A.D."⁸⁴ And this seems to agree with Alberuni. The reader, again, may draw his/her own conclusion, but in my opinion there are so many problems with this method of argument that it is almost ridiculous. It is certainly not an advance on that of Bhattacharyya. The same problems with such lineage lists and claims of succession which render the conclusions of Bhattacharyya so dubious apply equally to the

⁸³ *ibid.* 142.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* 143.

nearly identical claims of Tucci.

In *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, which contains another influential discussion of the development of Buddhist Tantrism, Tucci again attempts to make an argument based upon lineage lists. His main argument runs as follows. In the *Gaṇapati-samaya-guhyasādhana*, there is a *sampradāya* which reads: Nāgārjuna, Candrakīrti, Tathāgatarakṣita. This Tathāgatarakṣita was a collaborator of the Translator Rin-chen bZang-po, who lived in the tenth century. Therefore, this “Candrakīrti,” author of the *Pradīpoddyotana* commentary on the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, must have lived in the ninth century and, thus, not be the same as the “Mādhyamik” Candrakīrti who lived in the sixth century.⁸⁵ I have already had occasion to point out how weak is the assumption that these lineage lists are complete. In this regard, it is worth observing a further problematical circumstance in this reasoning. According to Tucci’s beliefs, Rin-chen bZang-po would have been translating the works of his collaborator’s guru and grand-guru. How probable is it that: a) Tathāgatarakṣita would dishonor his own guru and grand-guru by trying to pass off their works as those of the ancient paṇḍits, or b) if he did, that Rin-chen bZang-po would believe him, when he had plenty of other Indian collaborators (including Śraddhākaravarma (with whom he in fact translated the texts of the Ārya Tradition, including the self-same *Pradīpoddyotana*)) who would quickly contradict anyone trying to so promote his own particular lineage’s works at the expense of more generally-accepted authorities? Tucci obviously did not feel it necessary to think his suggestion through very carefully.

Ultimately, Tucci’s most original contribution was that he was not content merely to speak of a “Mādhyamik” and a “Tāntrik” Nāgārjuna, but believed that the works attributed to Nāgārjuna should be allocated to no less than *three* “Nāgārjunas.” “Nāgārjuna I,” whom he imagines on the basis of the Chinese accounts, is posited as the author of the works on Mādhyamika philosophy--the *Suhṛllekha* and *Ratnāvali*. “Nāgārjuna II,” imagined

⁸⁵ G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, vol. I (Roma, 1949). 214.

according to the description in the 84 Siddhas text, is defined as the author of the Guhyasamāja works. Finally, a “Nāgārjuna III” is postulated to account for the mention of a tenth century alchemist named Nāgārjuna in al Beruni and Kalhaṇa.

All of this (much cited) speculation aside, Tucci nonetheless admits that “we are not yet in a condition to state what are the works preserved in Tibetan which may be ascribed to one or the other of these writers.”⁸⁶ Regardless, he goes on to claim that “the fact seems certain that the tantric works as a whole have no connection whatsoever with the founder of the Mādhyamika doctrine.”⁸⁷ His chief piece of evidence for this “seemingly certain” fact, however, is the testimony of a Guhyasamāja commentary ascribed to Nāgārjuna--which commentary, significantly, is rejected as a spurious attribution by the tradition itself.⁸⁸

His final argument is based on the divergence of various traditions which supposedly refer to Nāgārjuna, particularly the divergent Chinese and Tibetan redactions of the *Mahāmeghasūtra*. The various traditions give various birthplaces, various names for the king associated with him and so forth. Thus, I agree, we are not sure what is going on. Nor are we at all certain how much authority to give each of these testimonies. Based on these flimsy arguments, however, Tucci has the temerity to conclude the following:

The facts collected here and the remarks made above are at any rate sufficient to prove that we must distinguish the philosopher Nāgārjuna from the tantric.⁸⁹

The question we are left with is “sufficient for whom?” I agree that such “facts” and “remarks” have sufficed and continue to suffice for some as certain establishment of the hypothesis of misattribution of the Ārya literature. I believe I have made clear, however, that, like those who came before him, such sufficiency is based chiefly on the authors’

⁸⁶ Tucci, “Animadversiones.” 143.

⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁸⁸ Cf. rJe Rinpoche bLo-bzang grags-pa, *Rim-lnga gSal-sgron*.

⁸⁹ Tucci, “Animadversiones,” 147.

wishful thinking and the overweening credence of their audience.

Alex Wayman

Among twentieth century scholars of Buddhist Tantrism and the Guhyasamāja traditions, by far the most prolific has been Alex Wayman. Author of numerous essays and several books, Wayman devoted a large part of his scholarly energies, at least in the early part of his career, to the study of Indian and Tibetan Tantrism. He is, notably, the first American scholar to merit consideration as a significant, independent voice in the debate about the historiography of the Ārya Tradition. Unfortunately, for all the independence of his voice, Wayman's contribution--while not insignificant in terms of the raw information he provides as to the contents of much of the Tantric literature--does not advance the state of our knowledge concerning the historical provenance of this literature. While an analysis of his work will not be terribly illuminating (or, rather, will be all-too-illuminating) of the state of research on Buddhist Tantra, as he is a widely published and (sometimes) cited author on Buddhist Tantra, I cannot avoid at least some mention here.

Wayman's approach to the study of Tantra is certainly unique, if not downright quixotic. He makes the rather puzzling claim that the goal of scholars of Buddhist Tantra should be that of "recreating the Tantra as a viable entity to be liked or disliked," claiming that "the trouble with so much of the present writing on the Tantra is that the reader is, or should be, left with a feeling of distancy or bewilderment; he is neither genuinely for or against it."⁹⁰ It is not clear why such advocacy (or antagonism) should be the role of academic scholars of religion, and Wayman does not himself provide any rationale of this position. Mercifully, in practice, Wayman does not frequently adopt such a judgmental role himself and, in fact, rather frequently speaks out against the snap judgments of others about

⁹⁰ A. Wayman, *Yoga of the Guhyasamājatantra* (Delhi, 1991). 52.

the value of Tantric religion (much in the style of Giuseppe Tucci).⁹¹

In terms of his conclusions, Wayman seems on the whole to follow the speculations of Bhattacharyya, though he goes out of his way to note that his reasons diverge. He too argues for a relatively early date (the fourth century) for the redaction of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, but for the most part (like Bhattacharyya) goes along with the party line of modern scholarship with regard to the dating of the Tantric commentarial literature. Wayman is one of the few writers (in fact, it seems, the only writer) to have taken notice of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* of Āryadeva. He makes it very clear, however, that in his interpretation, the author of this work is not to be identified with that of the *Catuḥśataka*. He writes:

In this tradition the greatest work on important phases of tantric praxis is Āryadeva's *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*. 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 Candrakīrti.⁹²

In this regard, he notes that “scholars are fairly well agreed about the dating of the named commentators on the *Guhyasamāja* cycle and the *Tantra Siddhas* generally.”⁹³ He does not, however, cite a reference which might give us more confidence about the source of this agreement. We are safe in assuming that the scholars he alludes to have been met in the preceding pages. Accordingly, he places “tantric Nāgārjuna” in the late eighth century,

⁹¹ I was gratified to discover, after writing the above, that my views are shared by the eminent Per Kvaerne, who wrote in a review of *Yoga* that, “I would strongly urge that the study of the tantras, or of any other religious tradition, must be guided by entirely different motives. The historian of religions must always exercise the most scrupulous epoche when studying and interpreting a text, a phenomenon, an entire religion; a genuine understanding is incompatible with value judgements.” *Indo-Iranian Journal*, Vol. XXII, No. 3 (July 1980). 247.

⁹² A. Wayman, *ibid.* 93.

⁹³ A. Wayman, “Early Literary History of the Buddhist Tantras, especially the *Guhyasamāja-tantra*,” in *The Buddhist Tantras: Light on Indo-Tibetan Esotericism*, (Delhi, 1977). 13.

and “tantric Āryadeva” in the late ninth.⁹⁴ Thus, while fairly confidently maintaining the radical view that the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* was redacted in the fourth century and its explanatory tantra, the *Vajramālā* in the fifth,⁹⁵ Wayman balks when it comes to considering that such an early period might also have seen the Tantric careers of a “Nāgārjuna” or an “Āryadeva.”

In an earlier article on the “Early Literary History of the Buddhist Tantras,” written when *Yoga of the Guhyasamāja Tantra* was still in manuscript form, Wayman promises the reader “extensive [historical] data”⁹⁶ in this forthcoming work. In the event, as is so often the case in discussions in this field, such data is not forthcoming. In fact, Wayman goes so far as to devote over three pages of his discussion in *Yoga*, to a lengthy, *verbatim* citation of the very argument put forth in “Early Literary History. . .” This, his chief argument for the early date of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, is predicated on the presumption of the dating of the *Pañcakrama* to the eighth century and proceeds based upon the further presumption that it must have taken more than a century for divergent commentarial traditions to emerge.⁹⁷ (One may note here the similarity of this method to that of Müller and Bhattacharyya).

The “chronological observations” Wayman finally makes (page 96f.) offer little that could credibly be called historical argument. In fact, this passage, from which Wayman claims finally to conclude that “the Tanjur Guhyasamāja cycle of commentarial literature is composed between the eighth and the twelfth centuries” is, one might say, rather

⁹⁴ *ibid.* 14.

⁹⁵ *ibid.* 13.

⁹⁶ *ibid.* 14.

⁹⁷ *ibid.* 17-18.

desultory.⁹⁸ As noted above, this passage has been cited (along with that of Bhattacharyya) as one of the worst examples of attempts at dating the Tantras. Besides lacking much of an argument, the discussion is predicated on the results of figures such as Tucci who we have examined above. In short, the “arguments” of Wayman do nothing more to advance the historical question.

Wayman is at his best when he acknowledges the limitations of his own and others’ speculations about the history of Buddhist Tantric literature. For instance, Wayman criticizes the precise dating of the “Tantric Nāgārjuna” to A.D. 645 made by Bhattacharyya, claiming “it simply is not possible yet to pinpoint with accuracy the date of Nāgārjuna as 645 A.D., the date given by B. Bhattacharyya in the introduction (p. xxx) to his edition of the *Guhyasamāja*.”⁹⁹ Elsewhere he claims that his own dating of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* to the fourth century was done “on a purely tentative basis,” and that “a decision on this matter requires solution of other problems of Indian literary history.”¹⁰⁰ In this, I am in full agreement with Wayman; as would be, I believe, Davidson. It is precisely this detailed examination of the literature itself--augmented by consideration of its context within and contribution to “other problems of Indian literary history”--to which anyone who hopes to make any headway in this issue must turn.

Mimaki Katsumi

As an indication of the official position on the provenance of the Ārya literature at the end of the twentieth century, it is worthwhile to review an entry on “Āryadeva” in the recent *Encyclopedia of Religion*, edited under the supervision of the late, “great” Mircea Eliade. This monumental work drew on the best talent among international scholars of

⁹⁸ Wayman, *Yoga*. 96. A comparison of this passage to the former (“Early Literary. . .,” cited above) shows that, while he is obviously recycling his previous work, at least he makes some editorial improvements.

⁹⁹ Wayman, *Yoga*. 89.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* 99.

religion, and one would expect it to contain the state of the art on the subjects it covers. Such being the case, one must again lament the lack of rigor which characterizes the “state of the art” with regard to the study of Āryadeva and the Ārya Tradition

As a prime example, we may consider the article on “Āryadeva” written by the well-regarded Japanese scholar of Tantrism, Mimaki Katsumi. The argument put forth in this article, it will be seen, is highly problematical methodologically and is based upon the same “patchwork of assumptions” we have seen in other attempts to speak on this issue. Mimaki begins with the now classical claim that “we” need to distinguish an “Āryadeva I” from an “Āryadeva II”--figures he defines exclusively in terms of the *genre* of their ostensible literary output. In this context, he makes the following claim:

“Āryadeva II,” was a Tantric master whose date [is] . . . probably at the beginning of the eighth century. . . because he cites the *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* of Bhāvaviveka (500-570) and the *Tarkajvālā*, its autocommentary, in his *Madhyamakabhramaghāta*, and because verse 31 of his *Jñānasārasamuccaya* is cited in the *Tattvasaṃgrahapañjika* of Kamalaśīla (740-795).¹⁰¹

In this claim, we see a definite advance on prior studies. Mimaki quite intelligently approaches the issue by considering the relative chronology of the literature based upon a close study of the texts themselves, rather than jumping immediately to absolute chronological claims based merely upon the general tenor (Tantric or non-Tantric) of the texts. This is all to the good; and, in this limited sense, Mimaki’s work is to be commended.

On the other hand, Mimaki here merely raises another question of textual attribution. It is indeed odd that, in speaking of this man he has *defined* as a “Tantric master,” Mimaki subsequently cites, not *Tantric* texts attributed to “Āryadeva,” but two *Mādhyamika* texts. More problematically still, subsequent Buddhist tradition is equally incredulous of this attribution of these works to the “Mādhyamik Āryadeva.” For example,

¹⁰¹ Mimaki Katsumi, “Āryadeva,” in Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion* (New York, 1987), 431.

the attribution of the *Madhyamakabhrahmaghāta* to “Āryadeva” is considered spurious by Bu-ston, who does not mention it in his list of Āryadeva’s Mādhyamika works. No doubt he too was struck by this anachronism. All this establishes, however, is that this one Mādhyamaka text in the bsTan-‘gyur is spuriously attributed to Āryadeva. Mimaki has yet to establish that the author of this text is the same as that of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* and the other Guhyasamāja treatises. With regard to the *Jñānasārasamuccaya* antedating Kamalaśīla, this is surely to be expected according to the traditional historical account. This *terminus ante quem* (which is perhaps as dubious as the other attempt at a *terminus post quem*) does nothing to establish a necessarily late date for “Tantric Āryadeva.”

To pile absurdity upon absurdity, Mimaki goes on to make the sweeping claim that “all the works ascribed to Āryadeva in the Tantric section of the Tibetan canon are unquestionably attributed to Āryadeva II. The most important and well-known texts among them are the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa*. . .the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*. . .and the *Pradīpoddyotana-nāma-ṭīkā*.”¹⁰² One cannot avoid agreeing somewhat with Mimaki here, for it is *only* “unquestionably” that one would attribute the latter of the three texts to Āryadeva, as this text is manifestly a commentary on Candrakīrti’s *Pradīpoddyotana* and thus must be of later provenance than even the putative Āryadeva II! Not even the representatives of the tradition itself are so credulous as Mimaki. Indeed, this attribution is rejected by both Bu-ston and Tsong-kha-pa. What we see here is critical doubt about the attribution of works unevenly applied. What Mimaki might have more appropriately claimed is that “all of the works ascribed to Āryadeva in the Tantric section of the Tibetan canon are unquestionably not attributable to Āryadeva I.” Instead, he is selectively critical-- in the process falling into the same error of credulity which, the story goes, the Tibetans fell into in lending too much credence to the colophons of the received texts. It would seem that, in his zeal to appear a critical scholar of Buddhism, Mimaki has left behind a crucial

¹⁰² *ibid.*

prerequisite--a truly critical method.

Concluding Thoughts

We have seen in the foregoing that, among the several arguments which have been advanced over the last two centuries purporting to establish the history of Buddhist Tantrism and the Ārya Tradition, not one stands up to critical scrutiny. In all fairness, it has been observed that many of these authors expressly disavow the “certainty” of their arguments and frankly acknowledge them as speculative. Nonetheless, it should also be noted that, in practice, these fallacious arguments are routinely taken by the authors themselves and by other Indological and Buddhological scholars as *de facto* conclusive.

We have seen how, based upon a premature, essentializing construct of Buddhism put forth by William Erskine, subsequent scholars have employed a rhetoric of “admixture” and “grafting” to describe the elements of Buddhism which seemed to them most foreign to the Theravāda-style Buddhism which was the model for the original construct. Tantrism especially was subject to this discourse which, when the rudiments of the contents of these works were revealed, was soon augmented by the *a priori* discourse of a Buddhist “decline and fall.” At first, this theme of decline and fall was based upon the classical Etruscan model of decline through sexual degeneracy. From the early part of the twentieth century, it was transformed into a tale of “popularization,” in which Buddhism became watered down with rites and so forth to appeal to the “masses.”

Accordingly, this view has been passed down from authority to putative authority, believed to be the results of rigorous research. Even otherwise excellent scholars fall into the trap of quoting from the authority of “Authors” (in Hobbes’ felicitous phrasing)--many of whom have never done research on the Tantras. To provide merely one example, in discussing the age of the *Lakṣmi Tantra* in her 1972 translation of this text, Sanjukta Gupta cites Edward Conze’s authority that “the Buddhistic Tārā worship was not openly practised

before 500 or 600 A.D.”¹⁰³ She refers the reader to Conze’s *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development*, which book--besides bearing a title which clearly betrays its author’s commitment to an essentialized Buddhism--bears no trace of any serious original research on Tantric Buddhism. Nor is such to be found in Conze’s other works.

Thus, the first investigators of Buddhism and its history, on coming into contact with two divergent traditions, quickly developed a complete theory to account for this divergence. However, as Freud has cautioned,

complete theories do not fall ready-made from the sky and. . . if anyone presented you with a flawless and complete theory at the very beginning of his observations. . . such a theory could only be a child of his speculation and could not be the fruit of an unprejudiced examination of the facts.¹⁰⁴

It should be clear that, however one feels about the presence or absence of prejudice among the authors we have considered here, the historical claims they have advanced concerning the history of Buddhist Tantrism and the Ārya Tradition are indeed the children of mere speculation. This has not, I believe, been widely recognized by scholars to date. It is this recognition which, to my mind, constitutes the crucial prerequisite to advancement of research on Buddhist Tantrism. To the extent that one believes that the foregoing authors have established important historical truths about the history of Buddhist Tantrism, to that extent is authentic, constructive and creative investigation of the matter impeded. It is only by beginning with such an understanding that we will be enabled to determine which “facts” in this historical morass are worthy of our confidence--and which are not. In the next chapter, we will look at the range of these evidences and further consider the problems incident to their interpretation.

¹⁰³ S. Gupta, *Lakṣmī Tantra: A Pāñcarātra Text* (Leiden, 1972). xx.

¹⁰⁴ S. Freud, *Five Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (New York, n.d.). 20.

We have a huge amount of iconographical evidence (but only partially utilizable because most original contexts are lost), and no literary historical sources, a small number of inscriptions ([only] partly utilizable for political and religious history), and no literary religious text *directly* referable to a particular monastic establishment, very little evidence on the so-called 'material culture,' and no information at all on daily social needs.¹

Chapter IV: Assessment of the Evidentiary Record

In the previous chapters, while the discussion has, I believe, been balanced, it has of necessity been chiefly polemical. Given the overwhelming weight of almost two centuries of habitual misknowledge (or, at least, half-knowledge) with regard to the question of the history of Buddhist Tantrism and its literature, it was necessary to show in no uncertain terms just how fragile is the congeries of presumptions and hypotheses which many believe to be certain, "indisputable" knowledge in this area. Having done so, we are now in a position to shift our focus and begin to examine the question independently, with a constructive--though still critical--intent. In what follows, we will survey the various types of data which are available to the historian of Buddhism and evaluate their respective contributions to the problem of the history of the Ārya Tradition. We will begin by examining the testimony given by traditional historical sources. We will then review, in turn, other varieties of evidence. These include data internal to the literature itself as well as what little external textual evidence² exists. We will subsequently consider the range of external evidence such as archæological, art historical, and numismatic evidence, in addition to the oft-cited dates of Chinese translation and reports by foreign travelers in India. We conclude by considering the overall state of the evidentiary record and the variety of conclusions which such a record might justify.

As we proceed in our examination of the evidence bearing on the history of the Guhyasamāja literature, we must demand uncompromising rigor in our standards of

¹ Verardi, *Homa and Other Fire Rituals in Gandhāra*. (Napoli, 1994). 48.

² By "external textual evidence" here I refer to evidence provided by the presence of MSS as physical artefacts.

historical evidence. We should emulate strict legal procedure and not be satisfied with circumstantial or hinted evidence--after all, the indigenous history of this tradition has been indicted, and we owe all parties a fair trial. We must survey our available data, examine and cross-examine it. Sadly, I believe that we shall see that almost all the evidence which bears on this matter is capable of manifold interpretations and/or risks being "thrown out of court" on procedural grounds (we shall see this especially in the case of the archæological and literary evidence). If such does, indeed, turn out to be the case, we must acknowledge then that (as with all historical problems, if we be honest) we have almost no hope of finding certainty about this issue. Nonetheless, there is clear benefit in reviewing what it is that we really do and do not know and what we are entitled to appropriately deduce therefrom. If, in the process, we discover that we are not entitled to confidence in what we once thought we knew, then we shall nevertheless have learned something valuable indeed. We may then begin the work of reconceptualizing our approach(es) to the history of ancient Indian religions.

Indigenous Sources

Now we shall take a close look at the traditional histories of Buddhist Tantrism (and in particular that of the Guhyasamāja traditions) as it is presented in the literature of India and Tibet. As I have made clear previously, while there have been fragmentary references to some of this data in works by modern scholars (who are, in general, much more dependent on, for example, Bu-ston and Tāranātha than they would like to admit), there has never been a sustained and serious treatment of these traditions. While I cannot claim to have exhausted the literary resources for this project here, and hope that in the near future the project of systematically exploring the many sources of traditional history scattered throughout the vast Tibetan literature may be undertaken, I nonetheless believe that I have drawn on a representative range of these works.

One reason that the indigenous literature has not been seriously examined is that most modern historians are univocal in their condemnation of the historical writings of the

Indians and Tibetans. If feeling generous, they are dignified as “ideological” histories; if not, they are deemed mere deluded, phantastical “hagiographies.” This is a problematical stance to take. It is certainly true that history is a discourse of power and Indians and Buddhists have been aware of and (quite self-consciously) interested in its potential in this regard. However, this is no less true of the modern European historiography which is nonetheless accorded serious (if not utterly credulous) consideration. Surely they were written for different audiences with different concerns, yet a clear difference in kind is not immediately apparent--and in many cases is manifestly *not* present.³

Another obstacle to the proper consideration of such traditions is the common notion that “there is no history in South/Central Asia,”⁴ such being (among Asians) the exclusive province of the Chinese. This (mendacious) prejudice should be quickly and decisively rejected by scholars seeking to work in this area. It is absolutely untrue that India and Tibet were not historically-aware cultures. For Tibet, at least, one might consider the testimony of L. van der Kuip (currently at Harvard) who, at a recent meeting of the American Oriental Society, maintained that:

One of the outstanding features of the Tibetan Buddhist religious tradition is its keen awareness of chronology and the developmental aspects of its intellectual heritage.⁵

Even as early as Eugène Burnouf, scholars were aware of the historical interest of Tibetans, and Burnouf himself also makes particular mention of the Tibetan penchant for careful chronological and historical record-keeping.⁶ Unfortunately for our project, this is chiefly true of events which transpired in Tibet proper. The information they obtained about events

³ One may consider the many “hagiographical” accounts of public figures in the United States, many of which are produced by otherwise reputable scholars.

⁴ Cf. the comments of Dahlquist who writes, “it is common knowledge that the culture of India lacks any historical aspect.” *Megasthenes and Indian Religion* (Uppsala, 1962). 9.

⁵ “Abstracts of Communications presented at the 207th Meeting of the American Oriental Society.” <http://www-personal.umich.edu/~jrodgers/abs974.htm>

⁶ Burnouf, *Introduction à l'Histoire du Bouddhisme Indien*, (Paris, 1844). 26.

in India are not nearly so exact.⁷ For this, the Tibetans were dependent in large part on Indian sources which, for reasons still obscure, were not plentifully available to them.

The current absence of extant historical records of Indian Buddhism is a vexing issue. As noted, many have claimed that India has been a thoroughly ahistorical culture throughout its long existence. These scholars are all-too-quick to point out the lack of historical records which have come down to us as evidence of a lack of historical interest and proficiency. This view, however, is highly problematical. There are numerous reports of an indigenous Indian practice of careful historical record-keeping, which seems to have been in no way inferior to the much-vaunted historical tradition of the Chinese. We may briefly consider the testimony of the famous Hsuan-Tsang, himself a Chinese. In his report of his journey to India in search of Buddhist education, there are the numerous mentions of his encounters with historical records of Indian states. For example, he reports that there was a tradition in all states of keeping an historian on staff. He writes:

With respect to the record of events, each province has its own official for preserving them in writing. The record of these events in their full character is called *Ni-lo-pi-ch'a* (Nilapita, *blue deposit*).⁸

Hsuan-Tsang also mentions an office of “chief historian,” which would seem to imply a staff of at least two, if not several, professional historians.⁹ Elsewhere, he himself cites a passage drawn from “the records of India (*In-tu-ki*)”¹⁰ and the “records of the Buddhist religion.”¹¹ It should be borne in mind that this is the testimony of a highly literate Chinese, whose standards one would expect to be rather exacting. Thus, the argument

⁷ Given what we shall note below concerning the historiographical traditions of India, it is not clear why this should be the case. Further research on this topic seems to be in order.

⁸ Beal, *Si-yu-ki: Buddhist Records of the Western World*. (Delhi, 1981). 78. It is interesting to note the similarity of this title with that of the monumental historical work of 'Gos Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals (deb ther sngon po)*.

⁹ *ibid.* 107

¹⁰ *ibid.* vol. I. 173

from negative evidence (which, interestingly, is also one of the chief modes of argument for the late provenance of Buddhist Tantrism) with regard to the Indian historical tradition--that is, the claim that there was no Indian tradition of historiography due to the fact that such records have not come down to us--is manifestly fallacious.

Given the above considerations, there is, then, no *prima facie* reason not to consider the testimony of those elements of the indigenous Indo-Tibetan historical tradition that *have* come down to us. In fact, at least for interpretative, if not for historical, purposes, there are many good reasons to take the testimony of the received historical tradition very seriously. Simultaneously, as with any voice or evidence, one must approach these texts with an appropriate critical suspicion. Regrettably, we do not have any surviving Indian historical works. All of the historical sources that have come down to us are the work of Tibetans who lived long after the putative time of "Nāgārjuna I" and even a good deal later than has been supposed for "Nāgārjuna II." They are, thus, very far removed from the events which they purport to describe. The source(s) of their information and its reliability is thus open to question, but they are certainly worth a look.

Traditions

As, in approaching the question of the history of the Ārya Tradition, I feel it is appropriate to bracket the question of whether the Tantric Traditions existed before the start of the Christian era, we will not here consider the narratives which describe the enlightenment and teaching of the Buddha according to the Unexcelled Yoga schools. Nor will we concern ourselves with traditions concerning the teaching of the tradition up to the time of Nāgārjuna. We will only be concerned here with historiographical traditions of the Ārya Tradition *per se*, which school really begins with Nāgārjuna, the earliest author of the tradition of whom works are extant. We will consider the contributions of the various Tibetan historical traditions in roughly chronological order. In the final analysis, we do not

¹¹ *ibid.* vol. 2. 240.

learn very much from the traditional histories. Their information is slight to begin with and the nature of the evidence is not such as to inspire great confidence in a historian.

The earliest, exclusively-historical Tibetan work is the well-known *History of Buddhism* (*chos 'byung*) of Bu-ston Rinpoche, composed in 1322.¹² In this highly-influential work, Bu-ston does not at all address the issue of the initial preaching of the revealed Tantras, except to allude briefly to the recital of the Mahāyāna scriptures by Vajrapāṇi. Nor does he describe the lineages of the Tantric teachings in any great detail. His concern is more with the exoteric schools. He does, however, clearly subscribe to the tradition--already well-established in Tibet by his time--which considered that the foundational works of the Guhyasamāja Ārya Tradition were written by the same, famous Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and so on who wrote the authoritative works of the Mādhyamika school.¹³ He is quite straightforward about his belief that this same Nāgārjuna studied the Tantras with one Saraha and lists the works which this Nāgārjuna composed on Tantric subjects, including the *Pinḍikṛta-sādhana* and *Pañcakrama*.¹⁴ Likewise, he accepts that Āryadeva was Nāgārjuna's disciple in both exoteric and esoteric traditions, and that he composed the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*, *Cittaviśuddhi-prakarāṇa*, and other Tantric works.¹⁵ Thus, we see quite clearly that the historiographical tradition available to Bu-ston in the early fourteenth century considered the early and authentic authorship of these Tantric works to be an accepted fact. Bu-ston does not mention any controversy about this, which

¹² Full title: *bDe war gshegs pa'i bstan pa'i gsal byed chos kyi 'byung gnas gsung rab rin po che'i mdzod ces bya ba.*

¹³ As evidenced by the *gSang-'dus stong-mthun* of 'Gos Khug-pa Lhas-btsas (an eleventh century translator).

¹⁴ "He studied with the Brāhmaṇa Sāraha the texts of the Ṣṛīguhyasamāja etc. with all the necessary instructions." Obermiller, trans., *The History of Buddhism in India and Tibet*, (Delhi, 1986). 123. Cf. Bu-ston, *Chos-'byung* (Lhasa, 1988). 146. On his works, see Obermiller, *ibid.* 125-127, Bu-ston, *ibid.* 147-148.

¹⁵ Interestingly, Bu-ston does not mention the *Svādhiṣṭhānakramaprabheda* or the *Abhibodhi-kramopadeśa*, though he does raise doubts about the anachronism of the *Pradipoddyotana* commentary attributed to him.

one would expect if such existed at the time.¹⁶ He does, for instance, mention that certain works attributed to these saints are of dubious authenticity. He also mentions two important traditions about Nāgārjuna: that he lived a long time (600 years), and that he was proficient in medicine and alchemy (having made or acquired both an elixir of gold and an elixir of life.¹⁷ These are important elements of what has been called the “Nāgārjuna legend.” These traditions are important to keep in mind, as some have pointed to them (particularly the 600-year lifespan—including an intriguing tradition of his death and resurrection) as evidence of a conflation in Tibetan tradition of two (or more) Nāgārjunas. We shall consider this problem further below (when we look at the Chinese traditions on this matter). Regardless of these interesting details and the few anecdotes about the life and works (and prophecies concerning) Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, the work of Bu-ston is not terribly helpful in attempting to resolve the troubling issue of authenticity.

In contrast to the silence of Bu-ston on Tantric history, the *Blue Annals* (*deb ther sngon po*) of ‘Gos Lotsawa (the younger) remains one of the principal sources of available historical traditions about the Indian Tantric schools. Though composed 150 years later (between 1476 and 1478), this work communicates ideas both about the initial preaching of the Tantric scriptures as well as many narratives about the later history of the transmission of these texts and practices (including an entire chapter (*skabs*) about the Ārya Tradition).¹⁸ Its contribution to our problem, however, is ambivalent. There are passages in this work which might seem to support the hypothesis of authenticity and others that might be cited as evidence of inauthenticity. We will briefly consider some of these.

Among the few positive evidences which are cited in support of the thesis that the

¹⁶ He does not shy away from such things, but tends to present both sides of any disputed issue and comment that further analysis is in order.

¹⁷ On longevity and resurrection, see Obermiller *op. cit.* (p. 127-28), on medicine (*ibid.* 126), on gold elixir (*ibid.* 123) and life elixir (*ibid.* 127).

¹⁸ Cf. Roerich, trans., *The Blue Annals* (Delhi, 1988). 356-367. ‘Gos Lotsawa, *Deb-ther sNgon-po* (New Delhi, 1974). Vol. ja, f. 3a⁷-7b⁶.

traditions of the Unexcelled Tantras were not written until the period between the Early Propagation and the Later Propagation of Tibetan Buddhism (eighth to eleventh centuries), is a statement by ‘Gos that there was “a great increase” in teaching of the Yoga and Unexcelled Yoga Tantras during the Later Propagation (i.e. late tenth/early eleventh century).¹⁹ In the context of the usual presumption about Tantric history, this notice has typically been subject to near-automatic interpretation by scholars, who understand it to constitute an admission from within the tradition that there were *no* (or very few) Yoga and Anuttarayoga Tantras before this time--that they were therefore developed between the time of King Khri-srong lDe’u-btsan and that of Atiśa.

This is certainly one interpretation, but by no means the only one. There are numerous objections which can be raised--including other testimony internal to this work--which would belie such a reading. For instance, in another passage discussing the Early Propagation of Tantras in Tibet, the *Blue Annals* mentions that among the eight great classes of Tantras transmitted to Tibet in this period, the three primary traditions were the Guhyasamāja, the Candraguhyatilaka, and the Buddhasamāyoga. This is an important notice for, if true, it establishes not only the *existence* of these texts and their traditions as early as the eighth century, but also their having been ensconced as foundational authorities. This is further intriguing, as Āryadeva’s *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* bases much of its teaching about the Guhyasamāja yogas on these two other texts which, notably, are important representatives of the class of “Mother” Tantras. One of the major potential objections to the early provenance of the Ārya Literature (not, however, mentioned by any other writers, to my knowledge) is that it draws so heavily on traditions of the so-called “Mother Tantras”--which some believe to be among the latest *strata* of esoteric Buddhist scriptures. Of course, the grounding of this latter presumption is rather dubious--based in

¹⁹ “During the Period of the Later Spread of the Doctrine there has been a great increase in the preaching of both the ‘Outer’ Yoga-Tantra and ‘Inner’ Yoga-Tantra.” Roerich, *op. cit* 351.

large part on their alleged similarity to that *stratum* of Hindu Tantric literature which is also believed to be the latest. This report, then, (rather than confirming) might instead suggest a reassessment of the models used to imagine the chronology of this Tantric literature.

Regarding the antiquity of the Guhyasamāja Tantra, 'Gos states that it was

translated during the Period of the Early Propagation of the Doctrine by the translator (lo-tsa-ba) lCe bKra-śis. The teachers belonging to the rNying-ma-pa school declared the (Guhya)samāja to be the most important text among the eighteen classes of their Tantras.²⁰

This report seems to be confirmed both by the existence of a Tibetan version of this work, found among the early texts at Dun-huang, and its presence in the Tantric canon of the Old School (*rNying-ma'i rGyud-'bum*). Thus, we can be fairly certain of the existence of a version of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* in the eighth century. Given the importance attributed to this Tantra, it is also not improbable that there was a developed commentarial tradition--perhaps even one such as the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, which links this text in a totalizing fabric with the other important Tantras, for example, the *Candraguhyatilaka*, *Buddhasamāyoga*, and so forth. It seems clear that, at the level of sophistication achieved in the Buddhist tradition by the time it reached Tibet, no text such as the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* could have held such pride of place without a highly systematized interpretative tradition (such as that of the Āryas) behind it.

With regard to actual transmission of the Ārya Tradition, 'Gos gives the lineage of the Guhyasamāja teachings as follows: Buddha Śākyamuni taught it to King Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna.

After that a yogini, who had descended from the realm of Nāgas, heard it from (king) Indrabhūti and taught it to king Viśukalpa of the Southern country.

The mahā-brāhmaṇa Saraha heard it from him and taught it to ācārya Nāgārjuna. The latter had many disciples, but the chief ones were the four: Śākyamitra, Āryadeva, Nāgabodhi, and Candrakīrti. Candrakīrti taught it to

²⁰ *Blue Annals*. 359. This passage is, I believe, the original source of the now-common quip that the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* is the "earliest and most important of the Buddhist Tantras."

Śiṣyavajra (sLob-pa'i rdo rje). The latter to Kṛṣṇācārya. The latter to Gomiśra (Sa-'dres-pa) and the latter to Abhijñā (mÑon-śes-can). 'Gos studied it under him and other teachers.²¹

After a rather lengthy discussion of various alternative traditions available in his sources, 'Gos (not the 'Gos mentioned above, but the younger 'Gos, author of the *Blue Annals*) concludes that “the (Guhya)samāja must have originated in several Lineages.”²² It is clear that, even at the time of 'Gos, there were several incommensurate traditions regarding the lineage of transmission of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. He himself notes that the variety of traditions concerning the history of the Tantric schools are seemingly contradictory and seems to suggest that there is some doubt about the reported lineage. For instance, 'Gos maintains that La-ba-pa and king Indrabhūti are the same person--thus accounting for the tradition that the Tantras were introduced into India by the former and the various traditions about the early preaching of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* by the latter. The major difficulty is that the *Sahajasiddhi* and its commentaries give a substantially different lineage of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. In this lineage, Indrabhūti/Indrabuddhi occurs at the end of a long line of teachers. He tries his best to make sense of the contradictions, concluding that:

If you compare [this tradition] with the tradition that La-ba-pa transmitted the Tantras from Oḍiyāna to Āryavarta, I believe that the lineage of mentors of the Guhyasamāja seems reliable (*khungs can*); this also fits with [the fact that] Āryadeva cites and explains [the words of] La-ba-pa in his *Lamp of Integrated Practice*.²³

Here we find an interesting issue. The *Sahajasiddhi* tradition is considered by Bu-ston

²¹ *ibid.* 359-360.

²² *ibid.* 363.

²³ 'Gos-lo, *Deb-ther sNgon-po* (New Delhi, 1974). Ja, 5b⁷-6a². [my translation] The translation by George Roerich communicates the passage well, except that he mistakes a “citation” of La-ba-pa for a “prophecy.” He translates, “I am of the opinion that, if one were to compare the story about the introduction of the Tantras in Āryavarta by La-ba-pa from Oḍiyāna, with the above quoted passage, one would find that the account of the Lineage of the teachers of the (Guhya)samāja was authentic. This also seems to agree with the prophecy about La-ba-pa quoted by Āryadeva in his *Caryāmelayanapradipa* who also gives an explanation of the prophecy.” Roerich, *The Blue Annals*. 362-3.

(prior to 'Gos) and Tāranātha (subsequent to 'Gos) as not relevant to the lineage of the Guhyasamāja Tantra. Why does 'Gos bring it in then? It seems that he found in this tradition a means of reconciling the fact that the *Lamp of Integrated Practice* cites a profusion of authorities--including not only Sūtras and Tantras, but also prior teachers, such as Kambala and Padmavajra--with the received lineage which does not mention these figures prior to him. Indeed, as we shall discuss briefly below when we explore the internal textual evidence, this does seem to be a sticky point relative to the chronology of the tradition. By invoking the *Sahajasiddhi* lineage and identifying La-ba-pa with Indrabhūti, 'Gos believes he can eliminate these difficulties.

A most interesting source for the indigenous Tibetan history of the Guhyasamāja Tantra is the *History of the Guhyasamāja* written by A-myes-zhabs Ngag-dbang Kun-dga' bSod-nams, a layman of the Sa-skya tradition who lived in the early part of the seventeenth century (1597-1662).²⁴ The colophon to this work mentions that he wrote it in the wood-male-dog year, which would put the composition of this work in 1634, when A-myes was 37 years old. As with all Tibetan historical sources, written long after the fact, we must be reserved in our credulity, but this work is a fairly useful source. A-myes does not radically depart from earlier works (sometimes outright plagiarizing them) and he brings together the testimony of many disparate sources. His work is clearly the product of wide reading and study of both the historical and the primary and secondary religious literature of which he treats. He discusses not only "historical" aspects of the tradition, but numerous issues of literary criticism also--including a fine treatment of the many disputes about authorship and authenticity relating to the Indian commentarial literature which have occupied the Tibetan heirs to the tradition.

In giving the life-story of the great saints of the Ārya Tradition, while his work is helpful in bringing together a broad range of materials, A-myes tends to replicate

²⁴ A-myes-zhabs, *gSang-'dus Chos-'byung* (Dehradun, 1985).

(sometimes verbatim) the parallel passages in Bu-ston and 'Gos. He does, however, give a different version of the Ārya Tradition lineage than that reported by 'Gos. It runs as follows:

Vajradhara himself directly bestowed the precepts of the Esoteric Communion on the tenth-stage bodhisattva Ratnamati (bLo-gros Rin-chen). He was preceptor to both Saraha and Nāgārjuna. Nāgārjuna to Mataṅgipa; he to Tailopa; he to Nāropa. The Esoteric Communion teaching (*chos skor*) descending from them, which school of spread in this land of snow mountains and is known as the Marpa's Tradition, the Inner Lineage of the Siddhas, still remains to this day.²⁵

This lineage seems to have been followed by several traditions, as we find essentially the same one in the "Lineage Prayer" of Tashi-lhunpo Monastery (a major dGe-lugs center established by the Dalai Lama I) written by rJe Thams-cad mKhyen-pa. This work describes the Indian lineage thus: Anābhoga Parārthakāra (Lhun-grub gZhan-don-mdzad), Vajradhara (Khyab-bdag rDo-rje-'chang), Ratnamatipāda (bLo-gros Rin-chen-zhabs), Nātha Nāgārjuna (mGon-po kLu-sgrub), Mātāṅgipāda (Matāṅgipa'i Zhabs), Tilopā (Te-lo Sher-bzang-zhabs), and Nāropā (Nā-ro-ta-pa'i Zhabs).²⁶

As we have discussed previously, such lineage lists need not be comprehensively inclusive and one can point to many which are clearly not. Thus, the fact that there are only three teachers in the lineage after Nāgārjuna should not bother us overmuch (especially as we can see that Āryadeva, by all accounts a very important link in this chain, is absent). However, it is worth our while to consider a very intriguing case in which it appears that such a brief lineage did in fact disturb the composure of another major Tibetan historian. Jo-nang Tāranātha, in his famous *History of Buddhism in India*, composed in 1608 (just prior to the work of A-myes) makes some remarkable historical claims. In considering this tradition that holds Mātāṅgipā to have been a disciple of Nāgārjuna, Tāranātha asserts that

²⁵ A-myes Zhabs, *ibid.* f. 50b²⁻⁵.

²⁶ Cf. rJe Thams-cad mKhyen-pa, *gSang-ba 'Dus-pa'i bLa-brgyud gSol-gdebs*.

Mātaṅgi must have had a miraculous vision to make him Nāgārjuna's disciple, since he couldn't have lived at the same time.²⁷ Regrettably, Tāranātha does not spell out his reasons for this conclusion.

Later in his work, he develops this idea and suggests a reason why the lineage seems so short. He feels that this reasoning also accounts for the fact that the exoteric works of Nāgārjuna are so much more famous than his esoteric ones. What he suggests, in fact, is that they were sequestered revelations somewhat along the lines of the Treasure Teachings (*gter ma*) famous in the rNying-ma School of Tibetan Buddhism.²⁸ Speaking of the Ārya Tradition works, such as the *Pañcakrama* and *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*, Tāranātha says,

Those treatises did not become widely renowned like texts such as the [Six] Logical Treatises of the Middle Way.²⁹ Since they were entrusted solely to Nāgabodhi, who attained the state of *vidyādhara*-hood, they were spread later in the time of King Devapāla 'father and son.' That is the reason that the lineage of the Ārya literature and the Buddhakapāla literature is short. For example, it is like the Tibetan Authentic Vision Teachings (*bod gyi yang dag snang gi chos*) and those Treasure Teachings which are not counterfeit (*gter chos rdzun gso ba med pa*).³⁰

²⁷ Chimpa, trans., *Tāranatha's History*, (Delhi, 1990). 129. He says that "though it is said that Mātaṅgi was a disciple of *ācārya* Nāgārjuna and his disciple [Āryadeva], he could not have lived at that time. He could have had their vision later (*phyis zhal mthong ba'o*)." Cf. Tāranātha, *ibid.* f. 43a⁶-43b¹.

²⁸ Though by no means exclusive to that school. There were several Treasure Revealers who belonged to other schools, such as the dGe-lugs.

These traditions are believed to have been hidden away in various ways (some quite ordinarily in caves, others implanted in the minds of saints, or communicated through angels) until the time was ripe for them to have the maximum salvific effect, according to the needs of the times.

²⁹ That is, the *Prajñā-nāma-mūla-mādhyamika-kārikā*, *Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*, and so forth.

³⁰ Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India* (Tezu, 1974). f. 51b¹. Again, the previous translations do not communicate the meaning of this passage. The Chimpa/Chattopadhyaya translation runs:

Besides, even these treatises are not as well-known as the collection of the Mādhyamika *Śāstra*-s. These were entrusted only to Nāgabodhi, who attained the *vidyādhara*-sthāna and these were made extensively available later on during the period of king Devapāla and his son. Hence the

Note continued on next page. . .

It is hard to overestimate how remarkable this passage is. Later, in the chapter on the era of King Devapāla, Tāranātha finishes the story, describing the manner in which these “Treasures” were revealed.

At this time, the son of a Mātāṅga [outcaste] met Āryadeva and, through his blessing, came to a thorough knowledge of the Dharma. Meditating, he achieved accomplishment (*siddhi*). He obtained the esoteric works of Ārya Nāgārjuna, father and son. He appropriately explained them. [He was] Mātāṅgipa.

In addition, in Koṅkana, Ācārya Rakṣitapāda actually studied under Candrakīrti; the text of the *Brilliant Lamp* appeared also. Likewise, Pandita Rahula is said to have met Nāgabodhi. The Ārya Tradition teaching began to spread a bit. Later, at the time of the four latter-day Pālas, it spread extensively. It is said, “The Sky, [is illuminated by] the sun and moon; the Earth, [by] the two *Brilliant*s.”³¹

absence of any remote succession accounts for the purity of the Ārya and *Buddhakapāla* [*Tantras*], as in Tibet there is no corruption of the works in circulation [because these are copies from] sealed texts. (*ibid.* 152-53)

³¹ Tāranātha, *Chos 'byung*, (Tezu, 1974). 101b⁴-101b⁶. It is worth noting that the importance of this passage has been overlooked due to poor translation. The recent translation of Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya (pp. 272-273) reads as follows:

During this time, a son of a Caṇḍāla had the vision of (lit., met) Āryadeva and under his blessings received the knowledge of the Doctrine without much effort. He meditated and attained *siddhi*. He received all the Tantra-śāstras of Nāgārjuna ‘the father and son.’ He also expounded some of these. This one was Mātāṅgi-pā.

Ācārya Rakṣita-pāda of Koṅkana composed the *Pradīpodyotana* under the direct instruction of Candrakīrti.

Similarly, paṇḍita Rāhula also met Nāgabodhi. This was only the beginning of the Dharma-viśiṣṭa-maṇḍala.

Afterwards during the four later Pālas, this was widely spread. Hence, it is said, ‘The two--namely the sun and the moon in the sky--while on earth shone the two [? the two works entitled the *Pradīpodyotana*].’

This so-called “Dharma-viśiṣṭa-maṇḍala” is, as corrected in my translation above, none other than the Ārya Tradition (*chos 'phags skor*).

Incidentally, the short verse about the “two Brilliants” (*gsal gnyis*) refers, not (as Chimpa and Chattopadhyaya suggest in their awkward translation) to two works entitled the *Pradīpodyotana* (in which they follow comments in the earlier translation of Vasiliev and Schiefner--the latter of whom claims it refers to a *Pradīpodyotana* by Candrakīrti and one by Āryadeva), but instead to two famous works of Candrakīrti: the esoteric *Brilliant Lamp* (*Pradīpodyotana*, *sgron gsal*) and the exoteric *Brilliant Words* (*Prasannapadā*, *tshig gsal*). It may be noted that this is clearly an indigenous Tibetan saying. I am not sure of the source.

Here, our historian seems to give another version of his theory. Rather than the expected revelation of the Ārya literature by Nāgabodhi, we find Āryadeva himself appearing to transmit these works to Mātaṅgipa. Tāranātha seems to suggest that Candrakīrti was still alive to teach Rakṣitapāda; and Nāgabodhi gave teachings to a Paṇḍit Rāhula (Rāhulabhadra?). It seems that, in the previous passage, Tāranātha did not mean that Nāgabodhi held on to the teachings and later spread them himself, but merely sought a reason why the tradition would have disappeared for a time. However, this reading is belied by the use of the term “entrusted” (*gtad*), which generally implies a responsibility to spread and transmit them. Regardless of these inconsistencies, it is remarkable that this narrative, seeming as it does to lend support *from within the tradition itself* to the conventional modern view of the late provenance of the Ārya literature, has not been commented on by any of the modern scholars who have explored this problem. One is tempted to conclude that they have all relied on the available, generally-but-not-perfectly-reliable translations which do not entirely capture the significance of these passages.

One must be suspicious, however, of whether Tāranātha came up with this theory himself to account for his sense that Mātaṅgi must have lived later on. It is, after all, the only³² appearance in the literature of this notion regarding the origin of the Ārya Tradition literature and it is not taken up by A-myes. We have no other evidence of a Treasure Tradition in India and one must wonder if Tāranātha is anachronistically (and anatopistically) imputing second millennium Tibetan practices to first millennium India. By the seventeenth century, the idea of a “short lineage”--teachings directly revealed by ancient saints to later masters so as to reinvigorate long, tired lineages--was well established in Tibet³³ and he may very well have extrapolated from this idea. In the Old School, these tend to be distinguished by the names *bka' ma* (for the long, overland Indian tradition) and

³² This story also appears in the *History of the Nyingma* of Dudjom Rinpoche, but his version seems to be a verbatim regurgitation of Tāranātha's.

ger ma (for the refreshed lineage revealed in Tibet). As Tāranātha drew from Indian sources whose dates of composition and authors are not known to us, as well as drawing on oral information from his Indian teachers, one may also entertain the hypothesis that this story emerged sometime between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries. On the other hand, the possibility that this is indeed a genuine (and truthful) account received from India of old (and possibly unknown to--or suppressed by--earlier Tibetan historians) cannot be discounted, and would indeed lend support to the hypothesis that the Ārya literature was not disseminated by the physical, “historical” Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva, regardless of who may have composed it.

To conclude, it appears that the Tibetan literature is not, in fact, terribly helpful in establishing a critical history of the Ārya Tradition. It does not provide a consistent picture of this history, but presents a variety of ways it has been understood in Tibet since at least the fourteenth, if not the eleventh century. As we shall see below in our examination of external evidence, the conviction of the Tibetan tradition that the Ārya works were composed by Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva may, in fact, be true. It certainly cannot be merely written off as “native imagining.” However, there are limits to what it can tell us.

There are a few points which *are* clear from the Tibetan histories. For one, they (and their Indian predecessors) were clearly aware that many religious figures in India shared the same name. There are several occasions in which persons with the identical names are distinguished. There are also clear instances in which they recognize when multiple names refer to one person. For instance, there are at least four “Āryadevas” to be found in Bu-ston’s *History*--the Mādhyamika/Tāntrika Āryadeva, a translator named Āryadeva, a “rGya-ston Āryadeva,” and a “rNgog Āryadeva.” Tāranātha distinguishes several Padmavajras, two Vimuktisenas, two Dharmamitras, two Mātṛcetas, and so on. In

³³ For instance the lineage of the Vajrabhairava Tantra which was directly given by Mañjuśrī to Tsong-kha-pa, reinvigorating the longer tradition which came to Tibet from India.

all, it is apparent that an awareness of the problem of discrete persons with identical names--as well as a concern to properly distinguish them--is evident in the Tibetan Buddhist historical literature. This is clearly not the problem we face, and this old saw should be laid to rest.

In short, while we are confronted with a fascinating array of traditions and data by the indigenous sources, we are unable to resolve our historical problem on their basis. They are, on the whole, as has been suggested by numerous modern authorities, too far removed from their subject and far too derivative (of sources whose authority we are unable to ascertain) for scholars to place much confidence in them. Furthermore, it is apparent that there is some inconsistency in their reports which makes it yet more difficult for us to rely on them as a source of knowledge. They allow us to exclude some of the weaker theories (such as this absurd notion that the Tibetans just "mixed up" two important figures) and provide some suggestive reports (and interpretations). In all, however, the most a critical historian can really derive for certain from the Tibetan sources is the fact that there is a sincere, and critical, belief among the heirs to the Ārya Tradition that these traditions were taught by the great saints of the Mādhyamika School. It is an evaluation of the cogency of this belief (in light of the range of evidence available) that will occupy us in the succeeding sections.

External Evidence: its history, benefits, and problems

Leaving the late and ambiguous world of the traditional histories, we may now turn our attention to the wide range of available evidence from both internal and external sources and the range of possible interpretations which might be derived from such evidence. This is a richer and more promising field than the indigenous histories--at least for the type of information of interest to a modern historian--as it would seem to be (at least slightly) more free of the problematical questions of ideological distortion and fabrication. However, it must be stressed that whatever external information there is only becomes "evidence" *per se* through the interpretative activity of historians. I emphasize this fact, as it is important to

remember that no bare information can stand on its own as independent confirmation of any view. It must first be given meaning through an interpretative act and these acts themselves must be subjected to criticism.

As demonstrated in the previous chapter, scholars who have written on Tantrism and the Guhyasamāja Traditions seem not to have felt themselves bound by the usual standards of proof and historical argumentation. This may be partly accounted for by the fact that more than a few Indological and Buddhological scholars seem to be inadequately trained in critical historiological and historiographical method. However, this was not the case with most of the luminaries whose arguments we examined above, particularly the scholars of the later nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Rather, the heart of our current problem lies elsewhere--in the scanty testimony and problematical nature of the evidentiary record. As we shall see in detail below, the "archive" available to historians of first millennium India is so meagre and presents so many difficulties, that it is no wonder that historians--in the absence of compelling evidence--have resorted to the use of unconvincing evidence and even invalid arguments. While this may serve to reinforce the dominant historical paradigm (informed as it is by the internal logic of its subtending narrative archetype), such a lowering of standards does not reflect well on the field as a whole.

One of the dominant characteristics of these invalid arguments is the uncritical use of what can be termed "negative evidence." That is, the attempt to interpret "lack of evidence as evidence of lack."³⁴ The principle which invalidates such an argument is so clear that it is inescapable; yet perhaps this clarity itself--and the frustration of having the better part of one's evidence consist precisely in such lack of data--leads to this principle being frequently flaunted by otherwise highly talented scholars. The truth and the importance of this principle have been demonstrated by countless cases in archæology and historiography. For example, if one considers the case we discussed above (what one

³⁴ I am indebted to Ron Davidson for this economical way of expressing this idea, though I doubt he would wholeheartedly support my use of it here.

might call “The Case of the Missing History”), the testimony of Hsuan Tsang, the Tibetans, and others as to the existence of a tradition of historiography and court record-keeping in India clearly shows the errors into which one may fall through making hasty conclusions based on the absence of any surviving, direct, literary evidence of such an historical tradition.

In the following sections, we shall review several major categories of historical evidence relating to India in the first millennium and consider the extent to which they may or may not legitimately contribute to conclusions concerning the history of Tantrism and the Ārya Tradition. We will evaluate the quantity and quality of the surviving evidence and the range of conclusions which may be drawn from it.

Internal Textual Evidence

Under the rubric of “internal textual evidence” we shall consider two varieties of data. We have the evidence provided (or suggested) by the contents of the literature itself and that provided by other Tantric Buddhist literature. This is important information because it seems to be the most direct. Certainly, the literature itself would seem to be the best place to start when looking for information about it. On the whole, this is the case; and one might legitimately lament the fact (as Alex Wayman has on numerous occasions) that many writers on the Tantras have not begun with this crucial propaedeutic research. There is indeed much suggestive data in these works. However, it must be kept in mind that even this type of direct evidence has its problems and its special questions. For instance, one must deal with the questions of: a) what is the extent of the literature in question?, and b) do the received texts accurately reflect the work as it was composed by the original author (assuming that there even was merely one author)? As we shall see, both of these questions involve methodological difficulties which make the use of this type of information (at least at present) an uncertain business.

It is in considering the first question--that of the extent of the Ārya literature itself--that our problems really begin; for intrinsic to the entire enterprise is a type of “Catch-22.”

We have seen the manner in which Mimaki Katsumi sought to avoid this Pandora's box by merely attributing every Tantric text in the Tibetan canon with the name "Āryadeva" in the colophon to the same author. While such may ultimately turn out to be the case, such a position can only legitimately be adopted as a preliminary hypothesis--a mere launching point for further inquiries which would seek to determine the degree of plausibility of such a view. Ultimately, any critical exploration of a literature must necessarily begin with a suspension of judgment about its extent and attribution. To do otherwise would be to beg the very questions one seeks to answer. This situation can raise extremely vexing and persistent problems for scholars,³⁵ as a truly critical study must be open to the possibility (perhaps even a probability in the case of intelligent and creative thinkers) that any given author's views, interests, style and so forth *changed* over the course of his or her career, leaving what can only be described as a poly-vocal *œuvre*.

So, returning to the literature of the Ārya Tradition, we must then ask ourselves: "what works are we talking about?" Certainly we must attempt to determine which writings belong in fact to the Tantric work of "Nāgārjuna" or "Āryadeva" before we even think to raise the question of the possible identity of these figures with their Mādhyamika namesakes. There are, it is salutary to note, many texts which were transmitted to Tibet under the names of the Mādhyamika masters which prominent members of various Tibetan Buddhist traditions have regarded (rightly or wrongly) as counterfeit. Thus, one must eschew the naïve approach that many scholars unthinkingly (or ignorantly) attribute to the native traditions--who they believe were uncritical in their acceptance of texts as authoritative. To my knowledge, the only precedent for such an approach lies in the contemporary Indological academy itself.

Unfortunately, it would seem to be premature at this time to essay to resolve the many and difficult issues involved in attempting to ultimately determine the scope of the

³⁵ Which may account for why most seem to ignore the entire issue--perhaps they hope that it will just "go away."

authentic Tantric *corpus* of the Ārya Tradition. There is too much work that needs to be done with regard to gathering and editing the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts of the possible contenders, and surveying these works and the critical and commentarial literature of India and Tibet for the evidence necessary in order to intelligently proceed with this research. In Chapters Six and Seven, I have briefly begun to lay out some of the evidence and arguments relevant to this issue. For our immediate purposes, however, it seems sensible to restrict our inquiry to a more manageable range. In what follows, then, we will concern ourselves only with the two central, undisputed texts of the tradition, the *Pañcakrama* (*Five Stages*) of Nāgārjuna and the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* (*Lamp of Integrated Practice*) of Āryadeva.³⁶

As in the case of the “exoteric Nāgārjuna,” the “esoteric Nāgārjuna” seems to be “defined” by at least one major text. The exoteric work which has been taken as definitive of his personality is the *Prajñānāma-mūlamādhyamika-kārikā* (*Root Verses on the Middle Way, called “Wisdom”*). In the esoteric sphere, the work which is paradigmatic of “Nāgārjuna” is the *Pañcakrama* (*Five Stages*). This is the chief work of the Ārya Tradition, the one which defines its approach to the all-important Perfection Stage (*niṣpanna-krama*) of Unexcelled Yoga Tantra. While exception is sometimes taken to the attribution of other esoteric works (such as the *Maṇḍala-vidhi-viṃśika*, or *Maṇḍala Rite Twenty*) to “Nāgārjuna,” the *Pañcakrama* (with the possible exception of its Second Chapter) is universally accepted as his work by subsequent tradition. Closely related to the *Pañcakrama* is the work of “Āryadeva” entitled the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*. This latter is a detailed unpacking of the import of the *Pañcakrama*--giving (further) scriptural citations supporting its claims and authenticating the practices it enjoins, as well as giving important further instructions concerning the yogas involved. As we shall show in more detail in Part

³⁶ It may be argued that the authenticity of this latter work has been questioned; however, as I point out below, this cavil is of modern provenance and is extremely dubious (if not entirely vacuous).

Two, there are several other esoteric texts attributed to “Āryadeva,” but none are definitive of his esoteric work and uncontested in any way comparable to the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*.

Returning to the larger question at hand: given the delimitation of our focus to these two texts, what historical information can we derive from their study? It is clear, for one, that these texts assume a highly-developed Buddhist Tantric tradition. This is important, for it is clear that this is not a tradition which is “raw” in any way. It assumes a literary and religio-philosophical sophistication on the part of its readers/adherents. This in itself suggests to some scholars that these texts could not be valid attributions, as it is believed that such a highly-developed discourse--particularly of a Tantric nature, but even of an exoteric one--could not have existed at the time ascribed. This argument is certainly an important one to consider, and we shall explore this issue further below.

In line with the implication of shared knowledge among the audience of these texts, a certain amount of information concerning their relative chronology can be deduced from the manner in which they treat of other Tantric works. For example, both texts assume the existence and (it seems) the final redaction of the text of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*. It is clear that, whenever these texts were written, there was an active tradition of yogic practice which took the *Guhyasamāja* (and its explanatory Tantras) as its chief inspiration and the repository of its principle postulates. As noted, these texts also draw on other “Explanatory Tantras” ([vy]ākhyātantra), whose dates are also the subject of some debate. Both works cite the *Vajramālā* (*Vajra Garland*) and the *Caturdevipariṣcchā* (*Enquiry of the Four Goddesses*)--verse compositions which are chiefly concerned with the yogic manipulation of the vital winds (*prāṇa*, etc.)--as well as the *Samdhivyākaraṇa* (*Analysis of Intention*), another long verse work which is concerned with the proper interpretation of the encoded revelations of the primary, or “root,” Tantras. The *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* also cites the *Jñānavajrasamucchayā* (*Compendium of Intuitive Vajra Wisdom*), a shorter verse Tantra on similar issues of hermeneutics. These texts also cite the eighteenth chapter of the

Guhyasamāja Tantra, under its separate name the *Uttaratantra* (*Tantric Appendix*).

The citation of these works raises serious questions for the chronology of this tradition. As, however, the date of these other works is (or should be) itself still in question, this data does not contribute substantially to the question of absolute chronology, for all its important contribution with regard to relative chronology. As David Snellgrove has noted, “to give a date to a particular tantra is a difficult, indeed an impossible task.”³⁷ Matsunaga Yukei has attempted to derive a relative chronology of these explanatory Tantras from a close study of the Ārya literature, suggesting that at least one of these Explanatory Tantras was composed after the *Pañcakrama* in order to validate its position.³⁸ More work needs to be done on these texts before such hypotheses can be given serious consideration, however. Given the current state of our knowledge of the chronology of Tantric literature, we do not derive much illumination from these particular references. As up to now the entire enterprise of dating the Buddhist Tantric literature has been on similarly shaky footing, we cannot get very far with such data relating to other Tantric literature (at least until we have a clearly-defined relative chronology of a broad range of Tantric literature as well as some means of relating it to exoteric doctrinal developments). Far more promising at this point in the development of our knowledge would be an attempt to relate these texts directly to some landmarks in the development of exoteric Buddhist doctrine. For instance, one might ask whether these texts (or the texts they cite) clearly assume a knowledge of the writings of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti on *pramāṇa*, logic, and so forth? Or perhaps some clear reference to the doctrines (or works) of Maitreya(/Asaṅga), which the tradition itself maintains emerged after the time of the early Mādhyamikas?³⁹

³⁷ Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, (Boston, 1987). 147.

³⁸ Matsunaga, Yukei, “A Doubt to the Authority of the Guhyasamāja-ākhyāna-Tantras,” *Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies*, MCB, XII.2 (1964). 16-25.

³⁹ It is very important that this be a *specific* reference. Many believe that they can establish
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I, for one, however, have not found any unambiguous reference to doctrines which would make the attribution of these texts to the general time of Nāgārjuna (second century, plus or minus a century or two) seem clearly anachronistic. As these works deal almost exclusively with yogic procedures, they do not go into details of exoteric interest which would give us some *entrée* to dating them in relation to the exoteric literature. The best anyone has yet come up with is the occasional reference in the Tantric writings to the teaching of “mind-only” (*cittamātra*), which some take to mean that they refer to the work of so-called “Maitreya/Asaṅga.” However, it is clear that the doctrines of “mind-only” are drawn, not only from Maitreya, but from the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, which text could easily have been known to Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva. The mere use of language which implies a mentalistic focus is certainly not grounds for dating a Buddhist text after Asaṅga-- otherwise, we would be forced to place works such as the *Dhammapāda* in a similarly late stratum.⁴⁰

The *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* gives us more room for thought (and, indeed, some pause) in that it cites, not merely an array of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna scriptures, but draws on works by (seemingly) human authors. Most notable are Āryadeva’s citations of the

the late date of the Ārya Literature (and Tantrism in general) from the “Yogācāra” vocabulary which is used in some of these texts. This reasoning is spurious and based on an incomplete understanding of the development of these traditions, which did not spring into existence whole cloth with the writing of Asaṅga. The prior sūtras, such as the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra*, used such terminology also. More to the point, it should not be forgotten that the longer title (found in the colophon of the work itself and in the title of the commentary by Candrakīrti) of the preëminent exoteric work of Āryadeva is called the *Bodhisattvayogācāracatuḥśataka*. In other words, “yogācāra” terminology was not alien to the early Mādhyamika authors.

⁴⁰ Mark Tatz has also recently criticized this line of argument. He writes (in a recent review of a work by Jeffery Schoening) that “Following conventional wisdom in the field, Schoening doubts the attribution [of the summary and commentary on the Śālistambha Sūtra to Nāgārjuna] on the grounds of doctrinal divergence from Nagarjuna’s *Madhyamakakārikās* (MMK)--for example, inclusion in these texts of ‘Yogācāra’ terminology such as the three natures (*trīsvabhāva*). This reasoning is faulty, and it is arguably indicative of the immature state of modern Buddhist studies.” Review of Jeffery D. Schoening, *The Śālistambha Sūtra and its Indian Commentaries*, in *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, CXVIII.4 (1998). 547.

work of a Padmavajra (the *Guhyasiddhi*, or *Secret Accomplishment*) and the words (if not, in fact, discrete works) of Ācārya Kambala-pāda.⁴¹ These are names which are known from works surviving in Sanskrit MSS and Tibetan translation and which also appear in the various historical sources such as the *Biographies of the 84 Mahāsiddhas*. We have seen how these citations caused doubts for ‘Gos-lo and Tāranātha regarding the lineage of the Ārya literature. They must give us some pause as well, as they are names which belong (also) to saints believed by some to have lived in the late second millennium. However, as with most every Indian saint prior to the eleventh century, their dates (and the perennial question of the correlation of any given name with discrete persons and/or works) have not yet been satisfactorily determined. Many scholars, adopting at the outset the position that the Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva of the eighty-four Vajrayāna siddhas are not the early Mādhyamika saints--and thus assuming that all these saints are attributable to the “late” “Vajrayāna period”--also assume a late date for Padmavajra and Kambalapāda--which, by the inevitability of such circular reasoning, would place the composition of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* in a similarly late period. We do not know in any satisfactory sense, however, who these authors are. As, for instance, Tāranātha also tells us, “there were many bearing the name Padmavajra.”⁴²

Snellgrove (citing Tāranātha) mentions in his *Hevajra Tantra*, that a “Kampala” was the originator of the Hevajra Tantra along with Saroruha. He is also known in Tibetan tradition as “Lva-ba-pa.”⁴³ Keith Dowman notes that there might have been a few different people named Kambala, if we lend credence to the various affiliations attributed to persons of this name.⁴⁴ He is said to have traveled to Oḍḍiyana with Lalitavajra, the originator of

⁴¹ Or, as the name appears in an identical citation (lifted, apparently, from the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*) in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*, Kambalāmbara-pāda.

⁴² Chimpa, *op. cit.* 242.

⁴³ Translating the Sanskrit *kambala* (“a (woolen) blanket”) into Tibetan (“lva-ba”).

⁴⁴ Keith Dowman, *Masters of Mahāmudra*.

the *Vajrabhairava Tantra*. If we assume there was only one, his strength seems to have been in the traditions of the Mother Tantras, as these are the subject on which most works attributed to a “Kambala/La-ba-pa” are written and a biography cites his practice of Cakrasaṃvara as central. Āryadeva also cites “Kambala-pāda” in the context of Mother Tantra practices.⁴⁵ The Ārya Tradition’s approach to the practice of the Guhyasamāja Tantra (as found in the *Pañcakrama* and *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*) draws resources from the Heruka/Cakrasaṃvara traditions and their literature. If this latter (or at least the traditions on which it is based) is as late as some suggest, then we must, in fact, put the author of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* (or at least the final compilation of this work) at a similarly late date. However, the arguments which situate the Mother Tantra literature at a late period are also rather problematical--boiling down to something as sketchy as “the ‘sexier’ the Tantra, the later its date.”

In addition to affiliations with the Mother Tantra tradition of Cakrasaṃvara, a Kambala-pāda is also said to have been initiated into the Guhyasamāja tradition by a “Yamāntakarāja.” Dowman suggests that this might be our same Lalitavajra. Another tradition has him as a direct disciple of Buddhajñānapāda, who initiated the rival “Jñānapāda Tradition” of the Guhyasamāja Tantra. If this were true of the Kambala-pāda whose words are cited in the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*, it would raise further questions about the traditional chronology, as the Jñānapāda Tradition seems to be understood as having developed later than the Ārya Tradition. There may be some validity to this concern, as the *Blue Annals* describes a Kambala as coming “after” Nāgārjuna and his disciples. The passage in question reads, “the ācārya Nāgārjuna and his disciples obtained the Yoga-Tantras, including the Guhyasamāja and others, and preached them. . . .After that, from the West Śrī Kambala and others discovered the Yogini-Tantras.”⁴⁶ This is an

⁴⁵ Cf. his *Lamp of Integrated Practice* (Chapter VIII, *infra*).

⁴⁶ *Blue Annals*. 753.

interesting discrepancy which must be resolved by further research into the literature of the Jñānapāda Tradition and the writings and personal identity of Kambala-pāda.

An extreme position concerning the provenance of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* has recently been advanced and bears addressing at this point. It has been suggested by some⁴⁷ that the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* was perhaps written by a Tibetan (rather than an Indian). This would, of course, have the dual implication that it a) was not the work of the Indian saint Āryadeva, and b) that it was most likely composed rather late. This is a very tenuous position to adopt, however, and the source of such a view is obscure.⁴⁸ Two points may be made to establish that the text was, at the least, composed in Sanskrit (whether by an Indian, Tibetan, Sri Lankan or otherwise remaining uncertain for the present). First, there is reference to and citation of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* in known Indian sources. Most notably, the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* is quoted in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*--a Sanskrit compendium of Tantric knowledge found in Nepal and edited by Cecil Bendall in the early part of this century. In addition, an incomplete Sanskrit MS of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* itself has recently been identified in the collection of the Rashtriya Abhilekhālaya in Nepal.⁴⁹

Even if we did not have this textual evidence of the Sanskritic origins of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*, we may be reasonably sure of this on the basis of the evidence of

⁴⁷ cf. the catalogue of the so-called "Nyingma Edition" of the Tibetan Canon published by Dharma Publishing in California (*The Nyingma Edition of the Tangyur*, vol. XLVIII).

⁴⁸ Nowhere have I come across a place in Tibetan literature where this position is advanced (though my experience is admittedly limited). It has been suggested to me that this might be an attempt by latter-day Tibetan subitists to erode the authority of such a rabidly gradualist work as the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*. However, the late "supreme head" of the rNying-ma School of Tibetan Buddhism, Dudjom Rinpoche, cites approvingly the authority of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* in his work on the *History of the rNying-ma School*.

⁴⁹ Cf. Janārdan Pāṇḍey, "Durlabh Granth Paricay," *Dhīḥ: A review of rare Buddhist texts*, vol. X (1990). 6-8.

the Tibetan translation itself. For instance, one finds a commentarial passage in Chapter Four to the effect that “‘illuminating space’ is not a firefly” (*mkha’ snang zhes bya ba ni srin bu me khyer ni ma yin no*). This is an absolutely nonsensical remark in the Tibetan (and English) translation. It only reveals its true significance when one considers its commentarial form and its Sanskritic reference. The term in question is clearly the Sanskrit word *khadyota* or *khadyotika*. This term, without gloss, is ambiguous. Literally, the word means “that which illuminates space” (*kha* (space--Tib. *nam mkha’*) + *dyota* ($\sqrt{\text{div}}$ “to shine”--Tib. *snang*)). This--in addition to being a poetical name for the sun--is also a very suitable term for a “firefly.” Thus, the author of the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* felt it necessary to distinguish for the reader the sense of this ambiguous Sanskrit term. Either the supposed Tibetan author was quite savvy and skilled in Sanskrit (and the simulation of its translation), or we can take this as further evidence of its Indian origins. In all honesty, however, we cannot at this time eliminate the hypothesis that, if the work can be shown to be later than the seventh century, it may very well have been written by a Tibetan as well as anyone else, albeit a Tibetan skilled in composing Sanskrit prose.

Another useful bit of information on the history of the transmission of Buddhist literature to Tibet which would seem to be of use in determining the date of the Ārya Literature is the early listing of canonical translations known as the *IDan-dkar-ma* Catalogue.⁵⁰ This document is the earliest surviving official catalogue of Tibetan translations. It seems (or, at least, it purports) to have been drawn up in the time of the Tibetan King Khri-srong lDe’u-btsan (756-97) as a listing of the translations which were completed under his royal patronage. It is notable that the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* does not appear in this list of early translations. Some might interpret this lack of mention to

⁵⁰ The *bKa’-’gyur dKar-chag lDan-dkar-ma*, which was compiled by sKa-ba dPal-brtsegs and Nam-mkha’i sNying-po in the ninth century. Cf. Marcelle Lalou, “Contribution à la Bibliographie du Kanjur et Tanjur: Les Textes Bouddhiques au Temps du Roi Khri srong-lde’u-btsan,” *Journal Asiatique*, 1953. 313-53.

mean that the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* did not exist at the time of this early catalogue (or else surely the Tibetans would have translated it).

While this is certainly one possibility, there are several objections which can be made to this interpretation. For one, it is by no means certain (in fact, it is quite unlikely) that this catalogue constituted a comprehensive list of the works extant at that time. It was an official list and many texts might have been excluded (either consciously or unconsciously) for various reasons. Even beyond such hypothetical objections, however, it is an important fact that the Tantric section of this catalogue was never completed, and thus the failure of any Tantric text to appear in it cannot be the basis for any very substantial conclusions about its existence at that time. For instance, we may note that the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* itself does not appear in this catalogue, though it seems clear from other evidence that there was a flourishing tradition of the Guhyasamāja at this time and that the text had in fact been translated. A parallel instance has been indicated in the excellent researches of Martin Boord on the Vajrakīla traditions, who states that although “the existence of a Kīla cult among the Buddhists in eighth century India. . . must surely be accepted as established” and there are strong grounds for believing that they were a significant element in the early Tibetan assimilation of Buddhism, “they have never been included in the published lists of canonical works, even the earliest catalogue of translations carried out at bSam-yas monastery [i.e. the lDan-dkar-ma Catalogue].” He notes also that “the rNying-ma explanation for their absence is that the initiated holders of these highly esoteric doctrines deliberately maintained their secrecy in accordance with tantric ordinance, never permitting them to become widely known.”⁵¹ Thus, we have at least some direct evidence of conscious exclusion of esoteric doctrines from the lDan-dkar-ma Catalogue (and, indeed, further evidence for an historical policy of preserving the secrecy of Tantric

⁵¹ Martin Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla* (Tring, 1993). 107. A quick glance at the title of Boord’s work will assuage the doubts of any who suspect Boord of being an over-credulous apologist for the rNying-ma Tradition.

traditions, which idea has not been given serious consideration by most modern scholars).⁵²

So, what have we learned from these internal literary sources? Again, regrettably, nothing terribly certain at the present time. There is a great deal of potentially illuminating information here and it is to be hoped that the progress of open inquiry on the issue of Tantric Buddhist history and literature will make it possible to weave the suggestive threads of this evidence into an informative and (at least reasonably) reliable narrative. Before we move on, however, there is one last aspect of the internal literary evidence which needs special consideration.

Stylistics

The issue of stylistics, a sub-category of internal evidence, is a particularly vexing one and, regrettably, is among the least satisfying of the historical arguments Indologists have to offer. The arguments advanced are inconclusive and based upon highly problematical presumptions. Most typically, arguments based on stylistics claim that one can deduce the alleged late appearance of the Tantras on the Indian scene from characteristics of the language in which they are composed. Often, and not terribly surprisingly, given what we have seen in Chapter Two, this is couched in terms of the “degeneracy” of Tantric Buddhist Sanskrit. Implied here is another version of the classical tale of decline to the effect that, after the reputed “golden age” of Sanskrit literature during the Gupta Period, the quality of prosody and poetry went into decline. The “bad Sanskrit” of the Tantras, then, can be attributed to declining standards during the supposed post-Gupta “dark ages.”⁵³ Another version of this trope accounts for the so-called “degenerate” language with reference to the fringe, vernacular communities in which Buddhist Tantrism

⁵² Here I am particularly thinking of the tradition reported by Tāranātha that the Tantras were kept secret from the time of Nāgārjuna through the seventh century.

⁵³ conveniently forgetting the efflorescence under the Pāla dynasty.

supposedly took birth before it “infected” (and was “domesticated” by) the mainstream monastic Buddhists.

It is clear that some of the Buddhist Tantras are written in non-standard Sanskrit. Some, such as the *Ḍākāṛṇava*, are composed wholly in vernacular. With others, it is difficult to determine the true nature of the language in which they were originally redacted. Immediately, however, the models used to account for this fact in the typical stylistic arguments can be seen to rest on several presuppositions concerning the texts themselves and on the evolution of Sanskrit stylistics which are by no means certain. One might reasonably object, for instance, “might not these grammatical and terminological anomalies be the result merely of those scribal errors and local idiosyncrasies of the manuscript tradition which gave us the supposed ‘Buddhist Hybrid Sanskrit’ of the Mahāyāna Sūtras? Otherwise, if it is really a distinct style which is discernibly late, might its non-standard usage really be a sign of its earliness?”⁵⁴ The chief problem with this type of argument is that there is virtually no universal agreement on the nature of the history and development of Sanskrit stylistics. Many scholars believe that they personally know, and some of them band together into (more-or-less influential) lobbying groups,⁵⁵ but many of the best scholars continue to remain skeptical of arguments based on such evidence.

Michael Coulson’s comments in the Introduction to his *Teach Yourself Sanskrit* textbook aptly explodes the typical pretense behind judgments concerning Sanskrit stylistics. In this essay, Coulson draws attention to pronouncements on Sanskrit stylistics made by the great William Dwight Whitney (the “doyen of American Sanskrit studies”), who (recapitulating the classical trope) claimed that the history of Sanskrit stylistics showed:

⁵⁴ Indeed, there would seem to be a double-standard here in the use of this argument, with the non-standard Sanskrit of texts such as the epics being taken as evidence of their early provenance, yet construed as evidence of the lateness of the Tantras.

⁵⁵ What Ian Mabbett has called a “self-fulfilling majority vote.”

for the most part. . . a gradual deprivation, an increase in artificiality and in intensification of certain more undesirable features of the language--such as the use of passive constructions and of participles instead of verbs, and the substitution of compounds for sentences.⁵⁶

With remarkable critical acumen Coulson comments:

Why such a use of passive, participles, and compounds should be undesirable, let alone depraved, is left rather vague, and while there have been considerable advances in linguistic science in the past fifty years there seems to have been nothing which helps to clarify or justify these strictures.⁵⁷

One can clearly discern in Whitney's vision of the history of Sanskrit stylistics the same pre-fabricated, model historical narrative of decline that we discussed previously in Chapter Two. No matter what the field of investigation or what the evidence--everything, it seems, had to somehow confirm the inexorable decline of Indian civilization (contrasted, of course, with the equally inexorable rise and development of "Western" civilization).

D. S. Ruegg, in discussing the contribution of stylistic arguments to precisely our own question of the proper attribution of the various texts which appear in the Tibetan canon under the name "Nāgārjuna," raises the same problem we discussed above--namely, the circularity of any attempt to argue from internal evidence. He notes that:

It would clearly be begging the question were one to argue that, because of differences of style or terminology, such texts must necessarily be by different authors. Indeed, the question is precisely to define the full range of an author's religious and philosophical thought; and this can surely be done only by taking into account all his works, without any text ascribed to him being excluded *a priori* on purely stylistic or terminological grounds. We have, in other words to determine what styles an author has employed and what religious and philosophical ideas he has accepted on the basis of the entire corpus of his works; and *to proceed the other way round can all too easily involve prejudgements and circular reasoning*. In sum, we must be prepared to recognize the full range of historical, philological, and philosophical problems that arise in discussing the

⁵⁶ W. D. Whitney, *A Sanskrit Grammar* (New Haven, 1924). xv.

⁵⁷ Michael Coulson, *Teach Yourself Sanskrit*.

authenticity of the works ascribed to Nāgārjuna.⁵⁸

He further notes that,

Even when we do possess indubitable evidence of differences of style, terminology, and ideas, it is by no means certain that works that so differ have necessarily to be by different authors. It can in fact be just as legitimately supposed that they belong to different periods in the development of the thinking of a single author, or even that they represent one author's complementary (rather than opposed) approaches to certain difficult philosophical problems.⁵⁹

These observations would seem to preclude the use of stylistic evidence as anything other than merely confirming or disconfirming the results achieved through study by other materials.

Significantly (lest this critique of the validity of stylistic evidence seem one-sided), at least one eminent scholar of Sanskrit (the late Jagannath Upadhyaya) has claimed, from a close reading of the Nepalese Sanskrit MSS of both the *Catuḥśataka* of Āryadeva and an important Unexcelled Yoga Tantra text attributed to him, that it can be established on stylistic grounds that they were written by the same author.⁶⁰ Further, in case some may imagine that this scholar's views might be the result of some prejudicial bias, it may be observed that he himself had earlier imbibed the conventional views about the lateness of Tantrism and vehemently held to this conviction. His study of the Nepalese manuscripts

⁵⁸ D. S. Ruegg, "Towards a Chronology of the Madhyamaka School," in *Indological and Buddhist Studies*, ed. Hercus, *et. al.* (Canberra, 1982). 510. [italics mine]

⁵⁹ *ibid.* 510.

⁶⁰ Personal communication of His Holiness the Dalai Lama XIV, Dharamsala, H.P., India, 27 April 1996. Cf. also *The Yogic Deeds of Bodhisattvas*, trans. and ed. Ruth Sonam, (Ithaca, 1994), fn. 20, p. 335: "The late Professor J. Upadhyaya, founder of the Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, and director of the Rare Buddhist Manuscripts Project, discovered a version in Newari of *The Hundred on the Essence Facilitating Understanding* (*pratipattisāraśataka, go bar byed pa snying po brgya pa*, P4695, vol. 82), which is attributed to Āryadeva. On account of certain stylistic similarities with the *Four Hundred*, he was prepared to attribute it to Āryadeva. It is a Vajrayāna work dealing with the wisdom of bliss and emptiness in the context of the Hevajra Tantra. The expression of worship is made to Heruka."

alone caused him to revise his views.

P. C. Bagchi, also, in a brief notice concerning the *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* published in 1931, wrote that:

As regards the date of the text it is for the present impossible to say whether the author is the same as the great founder of the Mādhyamika philosophy or a later personage of that name. *The style and quality of the Sanskrit in which the text is written would not go against its attribution to the famous Nāgārjuna.*⁶¹

It may be noticed that this *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* is clearly a Tantric treatise, as it comments on the famous *bodhicitta* verses of the second chapter of the Guhyasamāja Root Tantra.

Robert Thurman has also claimed that “evidence internal to the texts supports the traditional claim that one person wrote both the philosophical and Tantric books [attributed to Nāgārjuna].”⁶²

Perhaps the seemingly most “degenerate” text of the tradition, stylistically speaking, is the *Pradīpoddyotana* of Candrakīrti. However, pronouncements on the stylistic qualities of this work may be considered premature, as it still awaits serious, competent editing. The edition that we have is based on the sole testimony of a single surviving Sanskrit MS, and was made by a scholar lacking adequate knowledge of the Guhyasamāja Traditions and literature, and without reference to the Tibetan translation.⁶³ Quite sensibly, S. K. Pathak, author of the “Introduction” to this edition, himself claims with regard to Mahāyāna and Tantric texts that: “Modern scholars attempt to study regarding their respective date of compilation and style etc.; but nothing definite can be said about these texts in the present

⁶¹ P. C. Bagchi, “Bodhicitta-vivarāṇa of Nāgārjuna,” in *Indian Historical Quarterly*, VII (1931). 740-741 (*sic* 820-821). [*italics mine*]

⁶² Robert A. F. Thurman, *Tsong Khapa's Speech of Gold in the Essence of True Eloquence: Reason and Enlightenment in the Central Philosophy of Tibet* (Princeton, 1984). 27 fn. 29.

⁶³ This latter--the Tibetan translation--may be considered (for better or worse) a *sine qua non* of editing a work of which only a single Sanskrit MS exists.

form as they are available to us.”⁶⁴ This last point is important, as it is by no means certain how similar the texts we have are to those in circulation a thousand years ago. As the *Pradipoddyotana* MS is a relatively early one, it does nonetheless show what *one copy* in circulation the early second millennium looked like.

Thus, even if we presume that stylistics can give us useful information about the historical provenance of Buddhist texts, we still cannot reliably make use of this information. For one, we are not certain that the texts as we have them accurately reflect the work as it left the pen of the author. For another, even if we do have a reliable text, we do not have a reliable consensus among Sanskrit scholars by which to evaluate and locate the work within the history of Sanskrit stylistics. There are numerous examples which demonstrate that the view that later texts are written in “worse” Sanskrit is an unacceptable (and, indeed, a rather simplistic) position. For instance, one wonders at the consistency of arguing the lateness of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* on the basis of its nonstandard Sanskrit in light of the testimony of the *Pañcakrama* which was manifestly written later, yet is written in “better” Sanskrit. Clearly this mode of argument calls for further examination. In the final analysis, arguments from stylistic evidence cannot, at present, substantially advance our inquiry. While some scholars have attempted to make reasonable use of stylistic evidence, other scholars of great merit have rejected the validity of this “evidence” in the most uncertain terms.⁶⁵

External Textual Evidence

Another, potentially promising source of historical evidence is that category which may be termed “external textual evidence.” By this is to be understood the historical data which can be garnered from the actual physical artefacts of Indian texts. The dating of

⁶⁴ S. K. Pathak, “Introduction,” in C. Chakravarti, ed., *Guhyasamājantra-pradipodyotana-ṭikā-ṣaṭkoṭivṛkhyā* (Patna, 1984). 7.

⁶⁵ For instance, Matthew Kapstein in a personal communication, 6 May 1996.

these physical objects--“texts” in the strict sense of the term--would seem to be a most reliable set of data. Unfortunately, this type of evidence has also not been very helpful in illuminating the chronology of the Ārya literature. In short, it is greatly limited, as most of our MSS were created after the period in question. There are some few texts, however, which are in fact datable to the period 100 to 900 C.E. and which might, thus, contribute to our enquiry.

One major strand of argument which utilizes external textual evidence is a variation on the argument from lack. The reasoning is predictable and does not differ in essence from that which we have criticized above on purely logical grounds. The basic premise is that we have no physical textual evidence of the Ārya Tradition literature datable earlier than the eleventh century. Thus, in the absence of such positive evidence, some conclude that this contemporary lack of texts reflects an historical lack. Again, it must be stressed that this argument is deeply flawed in its logical foundation. It is also not unambiguous in its implications. It may, in fact, be construed as lending credence to the notion that the lack of Tantric traces is due to the secretive nature of the traditions, an idea rarely given the consideration it deserves. At the very least, it provides us an opportunity to demonstrate the problematic nature of such arguments through consideration of a concrete example.

There have been many important finds of ancient Buddhist manuscripts in the 150 years since the birth of Indian archæology. However, the texts which have come to light constitute a mere drop in what must have been a veritable ocean of texts which existed at the time. Thus, for one, we must acknowledge that our data pool is highly idiosyncratic. We have a handful of texts from the cache at Dun-huang and some from Gilgit and so forth. Most of these are datable no earlier than the eighth century. They do, on the whole, also contain some form of Tantric texts. There is one important find, however, which seems to be much earlier, and which, in fact, does *not* seem to contain recognizable Tantric texts. Proponents of the argument from lack might point to this as confirmation of their hypothesis that the origins of Tantrism occurred between the early first millennium date of

this cache and the eighth century date of the Dun-huang library.

However plausible it might seem at first glance, this argument is nonetheless plagued by significant problems of consistency. For instance, in a recent notice concerning this find, the leader of the team researching it, Richard Salomon, pointed out the interesting fact that, not only is there no Tantric material to be found in this early set of texts, but there are no Vinaya texts either! He comments:

It may seem surprising that no Vinaya material *at all* has been found in this substantial body of manuscripts. But a similar lacuna has been noted among the oldest of the Central Asian Sanskrit manuscripts, and Sander (1991: 141-42) has plausibly hypothesized that the Vinaya texts were preserved by oral recitation and not normally set down in writing in early times. It is possible, of course, that the absence of Vinaya texts among the new manuscripts is merely coincidental, “the luck of the draw,” as it were, but I think it more likely that there were few if any Vinaya manuscripts in our hypothetical complete monastic library, for reasons similar to those adduced by Sander.⁶⁶

Here, the scholar of the Vinaya is faced with a nearly identical evidential situation to that which confronts the scholar of Tantrism. There is a clear and consistent lack of early Vinaya manuscripts, and yet, in light of this evidence, scholars are nonetheless happy to hypothesize that in fact these texts were known and followed, albeit preserved in an oral tradition and not committed to writing. This is a likely hypothesis, I agree, and, indeed, if we reflect on the Buddhist tradition of restricting the teaching of the Vinaya solely to the ordained, it seems stronger still. Traditionally, the Buddha is said to have often given “secret” teachings (presumed to be about the Vinaya rules) which were open only to the inner circle of ordained monks, to the exclusion of the laity.

One wonders, then, why the Tantric tradition, of which all the same circumstances apply, is not given the same consideration. Indeed, there is a tradition of secrecy and non-textuality in the Tantric schools nearly identical to that which Sander hypothesizes to have

⁶⁶ Richard Salomon, “A Preliminary Survey of Some Early Buddhist Manuscripts Recently Acquired by the British Library,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, CXVII: 2 (April-June 1997). 355. [italics mine]

been the case for the Vinaya. Yet, in practice, most scholars of Buddhism dismiss this tradition as mere native apologetics.⁶⁷ And if this asymmetry were not enough, scholars also, in speaking of Tantric history, routinely ignore the important caveat that Salomon raises with regard to his own hypothesis--namely, that the lack of texts may have been merely the "luck of the draw." The evidence of one cache of texts, with all its local and historical idiosyncrasies, cannot be taken as suitable evidence for an hypothesis of such sweeping and momentous import. We shall have occasion below to note a similar difficulty in the use of the evidence of Indian Buddhist painting. In view of the broad scope of Buddhist literature, almost *none* of what is usually regarded as ancient Buddhist literature is actually attested by physical manuscript evidence. It is thus clear that, in practice, the dating of Buddhist literature has been carried out on the basis of an entirely different set of data. This is, no doubt, the result of the fact that the few, scattered traces of such evidence that we have is not sufficient to support any such theses. It is, thus, illegitimate to claim that the Tantric literature must be dated late on the basis of this evidence. One is not only holding the Tantras to a different (and higher) standard of historicity, but also working from a data pool which limits one's conclusions to little more than guess-work.

Other Physical Evidence

Beyond the testimony of the ancient manuscripts, there is much information concerning ancient Indian history to be gleaned from the other physical artefacts which remain from this time. This evidence includes various varieties of coins (numismatic evidence), ruins, inscriptions, and everyday detritus (archæological evidence), and sculptures, paintings, ritual objects and the like (art historical evidence). All of these are indispensable to our developing understanding of the societies of ancient India. In fact,

⁶⁷ It will be argued that the Tantric literature is not attested in the same manner in the early Chinese translation catalogues as the Vinaya literature, but surely this is not sufficient grounds for this imbalance of treatment. These catalogues, as we shall discuss below, are as problematical as the Tibetan catalogue described above, and over reliance on them has been a hallmark (and liability) of Buddhist Studies since an early period.

they constitute one of the most important sources of evidence for contemporary scholars of Buddhism, who are seeking to move beyond sole reliance on the testimony of the canonical textual tradition to a more nuanced understanding of Buddhism “on the ground.”⁶⁸ Is it possible that we shall find here our “magic key” to the history of the Ārya Tradition? We shall explore each type of evidence in turn, looking at the various hypotheses each might support, and considering as well the important methodological concerns which constrain our reliance upon them.

During the initial period of organized Indological research, numismatics quickly made an important place for itself in the emergent historical field. The chronology of India was at first a murky, chaotic mystery to Europeans and looked to stay that way indefinitely until James Prinsep, assayer at the mint of Benares, published the results of his epochal research on the coinage of ancient India. From an early period, ancient coins began to turn up, many of whose Greek and Roman origins incited great interest among the classically-educated British colonialists. The history of the ancient world (read “Greece and Rome”) was the anchor of world history for the nineteenth century European mind, and the possibility of forging a chronological link between unknown ancient India and the well-known Classical world was an exciting possibility. Before too long, this dream became a reality as Prinsep had the important insight that the “Sandrocottus” found in Greek accounts might correspond to the “Candragupta” found in Indian sources and coins. Another important contribution of Prinsep’s work was the identification of Aśoka and the tracing of the rough outlines of the Mauryan dynasty. This latter intuition allowed an interface with the European knowledge concerning the campaigns of Alexander, whose general/heir Seleucus battled the grandfather of Aśoka. Before too long, research on Indian coins

⁶⁸ Cf. especially the important work of Gregory Schopen, of which one set has recently been reprinted as *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India* (Honolulu, 1997).

allowed Prinsep and his heirs to construct a rough, but workable chronology of Indian kings and dynasties.

This numismatic evidence, for all its immense help in creating lists of kings and rough chronological periods for dynasties--that is, for constructing the political history of India--is not terribly helpful in reconstructing her religious or cultural history. For one, there is not a lot of information to be had on a coin. The surface is small and the obverse tends to be dominated by the visage of the reigning king. The reverse, however, usually bears some interesting motif or other, and one might look here (as well as to the trappings of the king on the other side) for important suggestions of contemporary cultural forms. For instance, one might look at these coins in order to identify pictorial evidence of the existence (and, quite likely, the patronage) of certain religious forms in the reign of that king. Unfortunately, the interpretation of these motifs is no easy feat. One has only to reflect on the debates which have raged over the interpretation of the "proto-Śiva" found on a Harrappan seal to have a sense of the obstacles to making such a case. Indeed, in the case of Tantrism, the situation may be even more difficult, given the entrenched presupposition of its late date.

Almost any "Tantric" motif one might try to identify on an Indian coin can be explained away by a determined critic; and, indeed, few esoteric motifs would have been inscribed on coins for public use in the first place. We may consider one example of a suggestive piece of numismatic evidence. Cunningham, in his *Coins of Mediaeval India*, describes (among numerous others) coins minted by the "Western Satraps," including those of the Nahapāna dynasty, which preceded the Chashtana (Tiastenes of Ptolemy).⁶⁹ Given this anchor in Classical history, it can confidently be adduced that these coins predate 79 C.E. An interesting aspect of this collection is that all the coins of the Nahapāna known at the time of Cunningham's book (1893) were marked with the thunderbolt (*vajra*). Given

⁶⁹ A. Cunningham, *Coins of Medieval India* (Delhi, 1967). 3-6.

the general Buddhist tenor of these regimes, the good possibility that north-western India was one important wellspring of the Vajrayāna teachings, as well as the identifiable presence in contemporary Gandhāra of esoteric forms such as the *homa*,⁷⁰ it is not a great stretch to suppose that this use of the *vajra*--in an already readily-recognizable, stylized pictorial form with central hub and prongs--reflects the patronage by the Nahapāna kings of an (at least somewhat) developed esoteric Buddhist tradition.

Of course, the *vajra* was a symbol of power and might which predated the Buddhist use of it, reference being made to it at least as far back as the Vedas. Though these were, it is true, Buddhist dynasties, they might still have used any symbol which would lend them an aura of prestige and power. The appearance of popular Vajrayāna artistic motifs is not, as has been stressed on more than one occasion by those who defend the received view of Tantric history, solid evidence for the existence of the same at that time and place. However, one may reasonably rebut that it does suggest that such *might have been* the case. It is at least *possible* that such traditions were current in the Buddhistic culture of the time. These qualified and unresolved possibilities would seem to be the most that can be adduced from such evidence at this time.

In general, though, regardless of which conclusion one reaches based on the numismatic evidence we have, we cannot on the whole place too much confidence in this data for reasons similar to those which make manuscript evidence so problematical. A major limitation of numismatic evidence derives from legitimate doubts about how complete our record is. This can be misleading, for coins seem on the contrary to be generally plentiful and, indeed, thousands of coins of various provenance have been found in India. In this field, however, one needs to be especially cautious with the use of negative evidence, for the important concern raised by Salomon with regard to his manuscript evidence--that the "luck of the draw" might be the source of such virtual evidence--is

⁷⁰ Cf. Verardi, *op. cit.*

particularly relevant. In one of the earliest numismatic reports, for example, Masson noted that 30,000 coins were routinely found every year in Afghanistan and melted down for their metals.⁷¹ If we assume that this process had been going on continuously (or even sporadically) in the 1000 to 2000 years since the coins left circulation, we must conclude, as did H. H. Wilson, that “great numbers of coins, of high numismatic interest, must have perished in the indiscriminate destruction to which the whole have for so long a time been condemned.”⁷² To make the situation even worse, even those coins which managed somehow to end up in the hands of European researchers were often lost--by accident or exigency. Abu Imam reports that the extensive collection of coins belonging to Alexander Cunningham--the fruit of a life’s work of collecting by one of the leading lights of Indian numismatics--was all lost in a shipwreck.⁷³ Wilson further speaks of the “precarious” nature of the many private collection of coins in British India “the members of which have no permanent interest in a country in which they are only temporary and transient sojourners. Such numismatic collections as had from time to time been made,” he tells us, “therefore speedily again disappeared, and no trace of them was left behind.”⁷⁴ More than likely, they quickly found themselves reduced to their base metals.

The archæology of India may be said to have been born at the same time as numismatics. The leading light in this area was Lt. Gen. Alexander Cunningham, numismatic disciple of Prinsep and “founding father” of the Archæological Survey of India. The major pioneers in archæology were for the most part (like Cunningham) military men who, following the exciting discoveries of Ventura, Masson, and others, began to excavate the many “topes” (*stūpas*) which dotted the Indian countryside, particularly in the

⁷¹ Masson, in Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua* (Delhi, 1971).

⁷² Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua* (Delhi, 1971). 12.

⁷³ Abu Imam, *Sir Alexander Cunningham and the Beginnings of Indian Archaeology*, (Dacca, 1966). vii.

north-west. Driven, again, by the natural fascination of classically-educated Europeans for artefacts of the Classical world discovered in India, there was for a time a great rage for digging. Given the great number of objects of ancient Indian Buddhism which were unearthed during this period (as the greatest concentration of colonial archæological interest was in Buddhist sites), one would expect that we have much to learn from this data.

This is another area in which the proponents of the received view believe that they can establish the late date of Buddhist Tantrism. There are, they claim, no archæological traces of Buddhist Tantrism which can be dated before the seventh century. Here, two major objections can be raised. The first, and most sweeping, relates to the problems of method endemic to the results of Indian archæological excavations to date. As we shall consider in some detail below, there are great limitations on the extent to which we can legitimately consider the traces of India found at these sites and by these methods to accurately reflect the state of Indian society in the ancient period. The second objection to this claim is more straightforward: it is simply not true.

With regard to the first objection, it must be established from the outset that the archaeological data collected in India in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries are highly suspect. It is no mere “post-colonial ‘Orientalist’” gripe to say that the British “scientists” carrying out this work--whatever their intentions--were often little more than glorified grave-robbers, and that their results were commensurate with their methods. It is, rather, an important methodological consideration for scholars who want to make reasonable use of the data supplied by such digs. Archæology as a field basically began with Indian archæology. There had been a few digs in Europe, but the discipline as we know it only really began in India. The foundational theoretical framework of archæology--as well as the practical details of excavation method--have undergone significant development over the 150-200 years since its inception. Thus, the data created by the digs of the nineteenth century are often significantly skewed. This much might be

⁷⁴ Wilson, *op. cit.*, (Delhi, 1971). 7.

expected of any early archæology; yet in India, this problem was (as we shall see) exacerbated by a general lack of professional conduct. In addition, even on later digs, methods in India seem to have lagged behind the field as a whole. As late as 1940 (which time also witnessed the decline of the Archæological Survey of India and the end of most archæology relevant to our studies), the Archæological Survey of India called in an outside expert to evaluate their performance. This expert was forced to conclude that, "On almost every site I visited there was evidence of work having been done in an amateur fashion by men anxious to do well but not sufficiently trained and experienced to know what good work is."⁷⁵ Today, we cannot replicate and verify the excavations of Cunningham; we are thus left at the mercy of his data--deeply influenced as they are by his presuppositions, biases, and problematical excavational methods. Confirmation of results--so crucial to scientific method--is impossible. Indian archæology is at a virtual standstill, even for Indian archæologists (Westerners are, for the most part, totally prohibited).

In addition to methodological problems inherent to the excavation process itself, Indian archæological evidence is made more difficult to evaluate given that virtually no sites were undisturbed at the time of their unearthing. On the one hand, certain sites were continuously occupied and significantly affected. The axial Buddhist site at Bodh Gaya, for example, was subject to the depredations of well-intentioned, but ideologically biased, Burmese and Śaivite "restorers" for nearly six hundred years. On the other hand, other sites which had remained pretty much intact until the nineteenth century were systematically looted, either for artistic or industrial gain--often by the British and occasionally by the very officer put in charge of the archæological excavation! Perhaps this problem was best summed up by one of the early researchers himself writing in 1846 about one of the most important finds of ancient Indian art. James Fergusson tells us in his landmark article "On the rock-cut temples of India:"

⁷⁵ Wooley, cited in D. K. Chakrabarti, *A History of Indian Archaeology* (Delhi, 1988). 174.

A traveler who would now visit them [the Ajanta caves], [would] miss much that I saw a few years ago. It is sad to think that after standing so many years an exposure to so destructive a climate, after escaping the bigotry of Moslem, and the rough usage of the robber Bheel, they should be fast perishing from the meddling curiosity of Europeans who now visit them. . . . Few come away without picking off one or two of the heads he thinks most beautiful or interesting, and as most of them are reduced to powder before they reach their destination they are lost to the world for ever.⁷⁶

Not only were sites robbed of items due to their artistic interest, many were looted of their stones (including important statues) either for new buildings or to provide ballast for the burgeoning railroads. This is especially true of Sarnath, of whose copious supply of brickwork half now lies beneath the adjacent railway line. Many significant items of Sarnath's statuary too were thrown into the river to form a foundation for a railway bridge.

Some sites were completely (or nearly completely) devastated. Speaking of the important early Buddhist *stūpa* at Amaravati, Robert L. Brown recently noted that it

was already largely destroyed when Colonel Mackenzie, an Englishman, visited it in 1797. By then it had been a source for building materials by local builders, and the stone was also being burned to produce lime. The site was cleared completely in 1880; . . . with the site's destruction we will never have a clear view of what was there and how the sculpture was used.⁷⁷

The important site of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa--believed by many to have an important connection with the Mahāyāna saint--was only noticed very late, not long before it was to be inundated by the creation of an artificial lake. Some initiatives to salvage the archæological site were taken between 1954 and 1960, but "only the briefest excavation reports have thus far been published."⁷⁸ Many more examples could be given of the fact that whatever remains of the Buddhist sites of ancient India is due entirely to the "luck of the draw." We do not in any measure have a reliable record of the range of artefacts which existed at any given site, nor

⁷⁶ Fergusson, cited in Chakrabarti, *ibid.* 102.

⁷⁷ Brown, Robert L. Review of *Amaravati: Buddhist Sculpture from the Great Stupa*, by Robert Knox, and *The Buddhist Art of Nāgārjunakoṇḍa*, by Elizabeth Rosen Stone. *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 118 (1998): 304.

proper knowledge of the contexts of those we do have.

We must not ignore the selectivity of these depredations either; for there is no doubt that items of Tantric provenance were disproportionately affected. Indeed, the question which should stick in the mind of any scholar who systematically investigates the archaeological record of India is: “where are all the Buddhist Vajrayāna remains?” Relative to the amount of items found, there is a discernible lack of traces of the Vajrayāna.

There are two reasonable explanations for this paucity of Tantric remains. One is related to the very nature of esoteric artefacts. That is to say, it is axiomatic in archaeology that the greater the worth ascribed to an object by a culture, the less likely it will turn up in an excavation. The one exception to this are sites which were buried extremely suddenly so that the inhabitants did not have time to collect their valuables; otherwise, one expects that objects considered precious will have been removed. Even in the former case, if objects are of more than sentimental value, it is proportionately likely that they would be taken by those who happen on the site later. This leads us to a second likely explanation--that those Vajrayāna remains which were left at the site may have been taken by others who, for various reasons, felt an interest in them. Let us look at each of these cases in turn.

Objects with great personal or monetary value do not usually show up in the archaeological record. This maxim has been clearly enunciated by K. R. Dark in his important work on *Theoretical Archaeology*. He notes that:

Vickers (1990) has drawn attention to the way in which socially important classes of artefact may be poorly represented in the archaeological record due to social factors alone. Vickers observes that high-value metal vessels existed in Classical Antiquity, but are less strongly represented in the archaeological record than lower-value decorated pottery because precious metal was liable to be melted down and re-used. This has meant that archaeologists have placed undue importance on decorated ceramics and overlooked a socially important but archaeologically (almost) invisible type of artefact. This highlights a point made independently by other scholars. . . that material culture does not reflect the

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 304.

sophistication or complexity of the culture of its users: that is to say, there is no certain correlation between the two.⁷⁹

He mentions, for instance, that before the implications of this axiom were understood, it was long maintained that the Romans did not use vessels made of gold. This, if I may say, was asserted by Classical scholars as strongly as many Indologists claim that Buddhists in the time of “Nāgārjuna” did not have Tantric artefacts. However, by the “luck of the draw” it was shown to be false and scholars learned to be more careful in their reliance on such negative evidence. As Tantrism was (and is) a secret tradition whose texts and ritual objects are accorded the greatest religious awe by its practitioners, its artefacts should not be expected to show up in the archaeological record. Tantric texts or artefacts would have been taken to new quarters if the site were being abandoned, or, if it were under attack (as in the final phase of Indian Buddhism), they would most probably be removed to prevent these (especially sacred) texts or artefacts from being read or damaged by the infidels.⁸⁰ On the other hand, if left behind, they would most probably have been destroyed by iconoclastic Muslim raiders.

Secondly, even if some items were left *in situ*, there are some good reasons to believe that they may not have been left intact. To the uninformed viewer, the erotic aspects of Tantric art make them stand out from other artefacts. Moreover, there are special interests--both sacred and secular--who would take an active interest in Tantric Buddhist art works. One may consider the vicissitudes of erotic artefacts in archaeological digs

⁷⁹ K. R. Dark, *Theoretical Archaeology*, (Ithaca, 1995). 47.

⁸⁰ In similar fashion, Dark has shown that “the most important artefacts. . . may be the least preserved or obvious. In many medieval chapels the most valued item--a relic--does not survive in the archaeological record even though it was consciously preserved and sealed into a substantial stone, wood or metal container during the use of the building” (*ibid.* 95).

I, for one, theorize that the development of sand-painted maṇḍalas may have been driven by the same need to keep the Tantras secret. Under duress, such maṇḍalas could have been quickly and easily destroyed, preventing discovery by uninitiated or hostile elements. Later, after the dissemination of texts describing such maṇḍalas, this art persisted alongside that of painted or sculptured maṇḍalas as the most ancient and preferred method for initiatory purposes.

throughout the Nineteenth Century. For instance, at Pompeii--a site replete with explicit erotic imagery and a plethora of utensils bearing blatant phallic motifs (for instance, lamps and mobiles)--many such "licentious" artefacts were destroyed or suppressed by the archæologists. At numerous Greek and Roman digs, such erotic statuary (including Olympian gods engaging in what, in certain of the United States, might be termed "sodomy") disappeared from the record--into private collections, gentlemen's clubs, and drawing rooms. A similar pattern can be observed in many of the digs conducted by the Archæological Survey of India and its freelance operatives. Unspecified images "of interest" (in Fergusson's phrase cited above) are known to have disappeared from digs into the private collections of the officers in charge. Their whereabouts and any inscriptions or other data they might contain are unknown.

The prurient interests of amateur colonialist archæologists is not entirely to blame, however. One must also consider the various indigenous processes between the twelfth and nineteenth centuries (continuing into the twentieth) which have affected the archæological traces of Tantric Buddhism. For example, one might consider the case of the Mahābodhi Temple at Buddha Gayā. This site, an important center of nearly all Buddhist sects since at least the time of Aśoka, stands out among ancient Buddhist sites in that there seems to be no substantial evidence of any Tantric presence there. This might be partially accounted for by the first reason we adduced--that Buddhists evacuated such images, due to their especial sanctity. However, it is worthwhile to note the other processes which have been at work at this site.

Beyond the ravages of time, one needs to consider the nearly continuous--and hostile--Theravāda Buddhist presence at Buddha Gayā (which was never completely buried or abandoned like most other ancient Buddhist centers). We have an eyewitness account of depredations by zealous Śrī Laṅkans in the thirteenth century, who policed the presence of

Mahāyāna texts at the site⁸¹ and are also reported to have destroyed Tantric images and scriptures.⁸² Further, one must consider the series of revisionist “repairs” which have been made to the temple complex. Between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries, the (Theravāda) Buddhist kings of Burma sent a series of delegations to the site to carry out “renovations.” These only stopped when the British prohibited them from further such work, due to the somewhat questionable vision which guided it. Throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--continuing even after the government of British India took over repairs (and, eventually, control) of the temple--such influences as the Sri Lankan-inspired Theosophical society and the Bodh Gaya Temple Management Committee had significant impact on the dispensation of images preserved at the site. The anti-Hindu ideology of these groups--which sought, in the words of Sir Edwin Arnold, to “restore” Buddha Gayā to “what it should be, the living and learned centre of *purified* Buddhism”⁸³--led (as one can well imagine) to rather selective restoration. Tantrism represented to them (as to their European informants), in the words of Anagarika Dharmapala, the final,

⁸¹ “When the Guru Dharmasvamin visited the Vajrāsana Saṅgha-vihāra carrying an Indian manuscript of the *Aṣṭasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā*, the keeper, a Śrāvaka, enquired, ‘What book is it?’ The Dharmasvamin answered that it was the *Prajñāpāramitā*. The Śrāvaka said, ‘You seem to be a good monk, but this carrying on your back of a Mahāyāna book is not good. Throw it into the river!’ He had to hide it. The Śrāvaka said further, ‘The Buddha did not preach the Mahāyāna; it was enunciated by one called Nāgārjuna.’” G. Roerich, trans., *The Biography of Dharmasvamin* (Patna, 1959). 73-74.

⁸² “In a temple of Vajrāsana there was then a large silver-image of Heruka and many treatises on Tantra. Some of the Śrāvaka Sendhava-s of Siṅga island (Ceylon) and other places said that these were composed by Māra. So they burnt these and smashed the image into pieces and used the pieces as ordinary money.” Chimpa, trans., *Tāranātha’s History*. 279. “At the time of King Dharmapāla, . . . the Singhala Śrāvakas known as the Sendhapas burned many Tantric scriptures and, finding a large silver image of Heruka, they destroyed that as well. They also did a great deal of damage to the Maṇḍala of Buddha Śrījñāna.” Tāranātha, *The Origin of the Tārā Tantra*, (Dharamsala, 1981). 22-23. Also, “many of the Sendhapa and Singhala monks of Vajrāsana, finding a silver image of Heruka, reviled and destroyed it.” Tāranātha, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*, trans. Templeman (Dharamsala, 1983). 59.

⁸³ Edwin Arnold, *East and West, Being Papers Reprinted from the “Daily Telegraph” and Other Sources* (London, 1896), 314, cited in Jacob Kinnard, “When is the Buddha Not the Buddha: The Hindu/Buddhist Battle over Bodh Gayā and Its Buddha Image,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, LXVI.4 (Winter 1998). 828. [italics mine]

decadent phase in which “the Kshatriya Dharma was supplanted by Brahminical priestcraft and ritualism, when. . .the teachings of Lord Buddha were abandoned for idiotic superstitions and insane sensualism.”⁸⁴

This narrative model should have a familiar ring, and its adherents had a discernible impact on Buddha Gayā as an archæological site. At present, the only remotely Tantric images in the main temple compound are relegated to a special “Hindu” platform which was set up with its own Bodhi tree in order to remove the Hindu presence (abhorrent to the European-inspired ideological Buddhism of the reformers) from the central temple area. Most of the Tantric images at the site are presently in the possession of the Hindu Mahant. His *math* is graced by elegant images of Trailokavijaya, Yamāntaka, and Cuṇḍa--all major Buddhist Tantric deities. All the images are quite large and impressive. It is certainly not an oversight that the Temple Management Committee did not reappropriate these for the Mahābodhi complex. Thus, one must evaluate the archæological evidence of Buddha Gayā with a very critical eye. What we see (and what the first British on the scene also saw four hundred years into the making) can best be understood as a kind of Theravāda Buddhist theme park, self-consciously manipulated to reflect and reinforce their distinctive understanding of the history and doctrine of Buddhism.

Thus, it should be clear that severe limitations exist to how reliably we can base judgments about the history of Buddhism on sites such as Buddha Gayā. It must be admitted, however, that this site is one of the most problematical. There are many other sites which have not been subjected to the kind of deliberate remaking that we see in the case of the Mahābodhi Temple. These sites have yielded many objects of interest to scholars of Indian Buddhism which may also shed some light on Buddhist history. In particular, many have relied on art historical traces as a reflection of the state of

⁸⁴ From *Return to Righteousness: A Collection of Speeches, Essays, and Letters of the Anagarika Dharmapala*, ed. Ananda Guruge (Colombo, 1965), 728, cited in Kinnard, *op. cit.*, 822-823.

contemporary Buddhism. What are the principal issues which constrain our use of such seemingly relevant and unobjectionable data?

Consider the testimony of the Ajanta caves. At this site we have a large collection of Buddhist temple and monastic grottos which have been relatively undisturbed since their abandonment over a millennium ago. The walls of these caves are covered with murals which seem to offer a very good picture of the society and the Buddhism of the time. It has been noted by historians that there is no apparent trace of Tantric elements in these paintings, from which many conclude that there was no Tantrism at the time in India. As David Snellgrove has noted, these paintings were created no later than the eighth century. Their lack of Tantric imagery, then, would seem to confirm the general view that Tantrism began in India around the seventh century.

This argument is vulnerable on many counts. Its most obvious flaw, as Snellgrove himself points out, is that “all we have is the negative evidence that tantric imagery had not yet been developed at this one site.”⁸⁵ Here, Snellgrove himself, though adopting a somewhat critical stance, appears to be under the subtle thrall of negative evidence. For, indeed, one might further refine this critique to the effect that “all we have is the negative evidence that Tantric imagery had not been *put on public display* at this one site *as it remains*.” It is unclear whether there may have been Tantric imagery previously which had been effaced, or if there were Tantric imagery at the time which was not installed in a permanent, public form on temple walls; or, further, that perhaps there was Tantric theory and practice yet no imagery.

None of these are far-fetched possibilities. Rather, given the state of the evidence, each theory is as plausible as any other which attempts to explain the testimony of the Ajanta murals. For starters, we cannot as yet make presumptions about the nature of Indian Buddhist painting in general--what was depicted, why, by whom, and so forth. To do so,

⁸⁵ Snellgrove, *op. cit.* 186.

we would need evidence from a substantial cross-section of the tradition. This is not available; for, in fact, the *only* surviving Indian Buddhist paintings (according to David Snellgrove) are the murals found at Ajanta. The fact that this data represents the sole testimony of a tradition puts (or ought to put) severe restrictions on the claims we make regarding its interpretation. This, again, is no small fact with regard to Indian Tantric archæology. According to the traditions attested in the literature, Tantric ritual images--maṇḍalas and so on--were either painted on cloth, traced in colored powder, or were merely visualized in the minds of those involved in the rites.⁸⁶ Of these possible forms, the latter two could not plausibly have been preserved intact for modern archæology to discover; and any which may have been rendered in paint on cloth have not been so preserved. We are, thus, in a situation where we do not have *any* direct evidence available to make claims (grand or otherwise) about the history of Indian Buddhist Tantric painting.

A similar problem confronts the scholar who seeks to use evidence from Indian sculpture. It would seem at first glance that its testimony would be free of many of the above problems. We have, for example, many fine stone statues of Buddhist origin which have come down intact (or nearly intact) to the present. These also seem to show that Tantric imagery only began to appear about the seventh century.⁸⁷ However, this argument is equally vulnerable to critique. There is the initial problem that this line of reasoning puts

⁸⁶ Cf. Verardi, *Homa and Other Fire Rituals in Gandhāra* (Napoli, 1994). 52. "Even in much later contexts--say, Pāla Buddhism--it would not be at all easy to hypothesize the existence of *maṇḍalas* on the basis of *sculpture* production. *Maṇḍalas* are still usually drawn with perishable materials (ground rice, powders, etc.) on very special occasions; when painted, they were kept hidden from the uninitiated. Moreover, even in late contexts which are clearly 'Tantric,' the *pañcajinās* are not necessarily represented within a circle, but in a row."

⁸⁷ This also has been contested; notably by J. C. Huntington who claims that a "trinity of a Buddha (presumably Śākyamuni/Vairocana) with Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi Bodhisattvas as attendants, it is archaeological evidence that at least the 'core concept' of Mahāvairocana cycle practices in Buddhism had even earlier origins than the second century date of the stone image." He further contends that "the artistic record will demonstrate a pervasive presence of Tantric, or perhaps 'proto Tantric' methodologies having 'emerged' in the second century B.C.E." Huntington, "Note on a Chinese Text Demonstrating the Earliness of Tantra," *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, X:2 (1987). 96.

disproportionate weight on the testimony of stone statues. This medium is known to have been a rather late development in the Indian tradition of sculpture. Early images were chiefly made of wood.⁸⁸ They have, of course, all deteriorated. Stone was very rare as an artistic medium; and metal both rare and late of development. Thus we also have no evidence about Buddhist images as they would have chiefly been represented up to the early-mid first millennium.⁸⁹

Further, there is the difficulty of judging such issues from the limited evidence which has come down to us. There are notable instances in which the dating of certain iconographies has had to be revised by several centuries due to the fortuitous discovery of a single surviving early example. We must, in all honesty, ask ourselves “in how many such cases have we not been so fortunate?” The observations of G. Verardi are relevant in this regard. He writes,

The case of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara at Kānheri is worth considering, notably for the methodological questions that its very existence implies. As a matter of fact, as S. L. Huntington (1985: 265) says, it is a form, dating ‘from approximately the late fifth or early sixth century,’ which ‘while found frequently in later Buddhist art outside of South Asia as in Nepal, Tibet, China and Japan, is not known in the Indic realm except at a rather late date in Kaśmir and the eastern regions. This image is thus the only artistic documentation for the view that this iconographic type originated in India.’ *If this single image had not reached us, no modernist scholar would ever have admitted, even hypothetically, that around A.D. 500 there could have*

⁸⁸ This fact is testified to by Greek reports. “The Indians already possessed figures of their gods as early as the time of Alexander. It may be argued that these figures were probably made of wood.” A. Cunningham, *Coins of Ancient India* (Varanasi, 1971). viii.

⁸⁹ The art historian John Huntington has commented, in speaking of an early first millennium piece (which he believes to represent Śākyamuni/Vairocana flanked by Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi--a clearly Tantric “trinity” with links to the *Mahāvairocana Tantra*) that, “while it is not widely known by art historians, there is an early literary tradition in Buddhism that refers to the making of images in a variety of materials, except, however, monolithic stone. Accordingly, although the date of the image of ca. 152 C.E. is tentative pending the final resolution of the date of the Kuṣāṇa era, its existence in stone suggests a relatively long tradition of making such images in other materials before it was appropriate to translate it into monolithic stone.” J. C. Huntington, *ibid.*

*been, in India, such fully developed iconographical forms.*⁹⁰

Clearly, then, it is no mere hypothetical and negligible concern which casts doubt on conclusions based on negative evidence in the art historical field. This is especially so considering a further aspect of art historical evidence. Verardi continues, highlighting another, related problem with such arguments from lack, and providing an illustrative example from a Western context. He points out that, even if we choose not to be too skeptical with regard to the possibility of data not having reached us, nonetheless such iconographic forms,

may not have emerged from the 'conceptual basis' of [the] system. This is obvious. . .and it is amazing that art historians make such methodological blunders. To take an example. . ., it is well known how through the whole first millennium of Christian art there are no iconographies representing God the Father and the Holy Ghost, but only Christ, who alone represented the Holy Trinity: now, there is no doubt that many students would deduce that the concept of the Trinity had not developed yet, or would perhaps, more subtly but not less wrongly, maintain that, in considering early Christian and medieval images of Christ, the Trinitarian 'interpretation' is not 'relevant.' Thank goodness for St. Augustine's *De Trinitate* (A.D. 399, while the Trinitarian iconographies all date after 1000)!⁹¹

The parallelism between this example and that of the Tantric tradition should be extremely clear. We cannot, in light of this possibility, rely overmuch on this type of art historical claim.

In similar fashion--as we noted in the case of paintings--even if the iconography existed, the public stone temple images would not likely represent Tantric deities. Some have claimed that this reliance on the secret nature of the tradition is an unreasonable dodge--which could be used to argue the plausible early existence of anything--and that it was, in fact, invented historically by the Tantric Buddhist tradition itself to cover its (lack of) tracks.

⁹⁰ G. Verardi, *ibid.* 17, fn. 27. [italics mine]

⁹¹ *ibid.*

While this is a legitimate concern, I nonetheless believe that there are circumstances which make this an important consideration for the historian of Tantric Buddhism.⁹² For one, as briefly observed above, Indian Tantric images of *any* sort--late or not--are almost non-existent. In the Pāla dynasty, when Tantric Buddhism was fairly exposed to the light of the Indian day, Tantric images are far outnumbered by (at least seemingly) exoteric images to the point one might even call them *rare*. Even in Tibet, which hosted a flourishing Tantric tradition from at least the ninth century--and in which the scruples of Tantric secrecy seem never to have been as strong as in India--we have almost no Tantric images from the early period.⁹³ One only begins to see significant numbers of Tantric images after, roughly, the time of Tsong Khapa, when there seems to have been some kind of liberalization in Tibetan practice.

Alongside the many and various difficulties incumbent on the scanty and problematical nature of the archæological record of India stand equally-difficult issues surrounding the adequate interpretation of that record. We are hindered from the start, as the poor excavations--what Verardi has gone so far as to call "disastrous archaeology"--prevent us from reconstructing contexts of use in which objects bear meanings. Further, though archæological reasoning was quickly becoming highly developed in Europe, archæology of India lagged behind. Even terribly simple errors passed (and, it seems, continue to pass) undetected. For instance, Horace Wilson speaks of the discovery of a *stūpa* by a Mr. Court, "about a cannon-shot N.N.E. from the village of Manikyala," in which were found seven "Roman coins struck between the years of Rome 680 and 720." From this he infers that "these coins are therefore of great chronological value, and determine the

⁹² Verardi concurs (in reference to *homa* rituals): "clearly, *the more esoteric a ritual becomes the less documented it is.*" *ibid.* 45.

⁹³ There are, to my knowledge, no surviving Tibetan images of Guhyasamāja created before the fourteenth century.

construction of the monument, in which they were found, to have taken place at a period not very long subsequent to the æra of Christianity.”⁹⁴

Now, any student of archæology today (and many at the time) would quickly note that Wilson here commits the error of mistaking evidence of a *terminus post quem* for that of an absolute dating. That is, the evidence of early Roman coins informs us that the structure in question could not have been sealed *before* the time of the coins in question--nothing more. While it clearly delimits the antiquity of the monument, it does not put any kind of a cap on its youth. On this evidence alone, we could still entertain the hypothesis that the coins were sealed in the structure the day before its excavation. Such interpretative errors are ubiquitous in assessments of India’s archæological record.⁹⁵

There are other problems of interpretation which are simply endemic to meager and inconclusive evidence. As in many other cases, scholars do not let such considerations hamper them from reaching whatever conclusions they desire. Consider the following piece of epigraphical evidence: an inscription which was found in South India at a site called Jaggayyapeta. The archæologist who wrote the report described it as follows:

. . .Jaggayyapeta has yielded one Saṁskṛit inscription among others, all Prākṛit records of the Ikshvāku King Siri Vira Purisadata. The inscription is incised in 5 lines below the feet of a standing Buddha image in high relief and records the setting up of the image for universal beatitude by one Chandraprabha, a pupil of Jayaprabhāchārya, who in turn was a pupil of the Venerable Nāgārjunāchārya.

A recent translation of this inscription reads as follows:

Salute! The disciple of the Teacher Nāgārjuna was the teacher Jayaprabha. May all beings, even though themselves denied the perfection of Buddhahood, rejoice in sympathy at the Buddha image caused to be made by (Jayaprabha’s) disciple Candraprabha, inaugurated for the purpose of the

⁹⁴ H. H. Wilson, *Ariana Antiqua*, (Delhi, 1971). 36.

⁹⁵ In fairness to Mr. Wilson, he does demonstrate an understanding of this principle later on in his essay, though again it may be stressed that--even though many of the interpreters knew better than to make certain errors--many nonetheless overlooked such excesses in their zeal to derive historical knowledge from the evidence.

attainment of Buddhahood following upon prosperity in the world of gods and men in the course of a round of births distinguished by the great favors of the real Buddha.⁹⁶

A piece of evidence, no doubt--but evidence for what? In brief, it constitutes evidence for the donation of a statue by one Candraprabha, who is said to be the disciple of one Jayaprabha and the grand-disciple of one "Bhadanta Nāgārjunācārya." The archæologist provides the following ambitious interpretation:

Nāgārjuna referred to in this inscription is probably the later Tāntric Guru, Siddha Nāgārjuna, who was one of the 84 Siddhas, and has therefore to be distinguished from the earlier Āchārya Nāgārjuna, the founder of the Mādhyamika school of Buddhist philosophy, who flourished in the second century A.D. The "Bhadanta Nāgārjuna" referred to here would appear to be the disciple of Saraha, who became famous for his mastery of Māyūrividyā. His period is probably the fifth century A.D.⁹⁷

A very curious interpretation--and one which only makes sense given the congeries of historical prejudices we have traced in preceding chapters. Ramachandran, first, assumes that the "Nāgārjuna" referred to is a Nāgārjuna we already know (or think we know), and, subsequently, regurgitates the party line about the two Nāgārjunas in what has become by his time (and continues to the present) an almost verbatim litany. What, however, do we *really* know? This inscription has been dated by Burgess to ca. 600. Tucci suggested that it might be as early as 450-500.⁹⁸ There is, built into such guesstimates, a reasonable margin of error--which gives us (in my opinion) a range of 300-750. The center range here seems late for "Nāgārjuna I" and early for "Nāgārjuna II." The earlier end of this range would seem consistent with my own theory of a fourth century, integrated Sūtra-Tantra

⁹⁶ Ian Mabbett, "The Problem of the Historical Nāgārjuna Revisited," *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, CXVIII.3 (1998). 336.

⁹⁷ Ramachandran, *Memoirs of the Archaeological Survey of India*, No. 71, Nāgārjuna-konḍa, (1938). 28-29

⁹⁸ *Minor Buddhist Texts*, II (Rome, 1958), 284, cited in Ruegg, "Towards a Chronology." 523 n10.

Nāgārjuna. It is not, however, immediately clear why it need be evidence relating to any postulated Nāgārjuna of which we have prior and independent knowledge. It is absolutely plausible that the Nāgārjuna referred to in this inscription might be a little known teacher from the south with a rather grandiose name. To believe or claim otherwise would be to make serious and problematical errors of assumption. In fact, in doing so, the much-vaunted modern historical tradition--the "last best hope" of Indian Buddhist historiography--commits the same mistake which some (erroneously) attribute to the Tibetans: that is, of uncritically conflating discrete references to the lexeme "Nāgārjuna." It is precisely on the shoals of such insurmountable interpretative obstacles that speculation regarding the history of Nāgārjuna and the Ārya Tradition must founder. This further highlights the problematical interpretation of the inscriptional evidence which has been so glorified in the interesting work of Gregory Schopen. As Verardi also points out, "in ancient India inscriptions are a scarce and often random evidence."⁹⁹ This is true especially of the era in question--the early Gupta and pre-Gupta period, in which some try to establish the absence of Tantric schools.¹⁰⁰

In short, given the number that has been done on archæological evidence of Indian religion--both by time and by archæologists--and the numerous methodological problems in relying on negative evidence, the lack of early material evidence of Tantrism establishes

⁹⁹Verardi, *op. cit.* 47. He comments further that, "The introjected model is--alas--Graeco-Roman epigraphy. But whereas for classical antiquity the inscribed evidence is added to all the other (generally rich) evidence, and everybody knows what use to make of it, for ancient India, for reasons that we all know, the value of inscriptional evidence is at the same time essential and over-emphasized" (*ibid.*, fn. 67).

¹⁰⁰ Verardi is right on the money in his criticism of Schopen's use of this evidence when he says (*ibid.* 47):

I fail to understand the alleged historical value of the statement [by G. Schopen] that 'the earliest known occurrences of the term *mahāyāna* in Indian inscriptions all date to the 5th-6th century,' both because the Mahāyānists were apparently known as *Vaipulyas*, and, more important, because it is only from the fifth-sixth century onwards that we have in India as a whole a (comparatively) systematic epigraphical production.

little or nothing even remotely certain about its history or time of emergence. The evidence is scanty to begin with. It was not well preserved. It was not well excavated. In short, while archaeological traces are among the most important data we have for reconstructing early Buddhist history, we scholars must be careful to use this evidence solely as positive evidence. That is, we may rightly conclude on the basis of archaeological evidence the existence of that to which it bears witness at the time to which it is properly and strictly locatable. We must be very certain, however, given the scanty and problematical nature of the archaeological record, of the fallacy of taking any *lacunae* in this record as evidence of non-existence at any given time.

Before we conclude our consideration of archæological evidence, lest it should seem that--even though exclusively negative (and thus methodologically invalid, if suggestive to some)--what archæological evidence we do have supports *only* the received view, we should examine some illustrative examples which suggest otherwise. For it is *not*, in fact, the case that there is *no* archæological evidence which might support an early date for Tantric Buddhism. What evidence there is is simply not well known. It is not widely noticed, publicized, or credited, as it is problematical for the “normal science” of Buddhist Studies. Thus, it has either been “swept under the rug” or forced (through selective interpretation) to conform to the received view. Examples of the former are not nearly as unusual as one might wish, for the fact is that the results of archæological work in India were not always properly reported. This is the case even of major figures such as Alexander Cunningham. One of his famous *Reports* described the important Heliodorus *pillar*, but mysteriously failed to mention the equally-important Heliodorus *inscription*. This is a blatant example of selective myopia--even though the Greek element is precisely what would attract attention of European Orientalists, the evidence of that inscription--that a Greek would convert to Hinduism--had to be suppressed due to ideological concerns.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Cf. Chakrabarti, *ibid.* 77

As this is not a Tantric piece, one may wish to consider the case, described by Verardi, of “a most extraordinary Shaivite piece published by Tucci in 1968,” which “in these last 20-25 years [now 30] no student of Gandhāran art has ever to my knowledge mentioned in print.”

The piece in question is a three-sided stand depicting, in the first scene, a young man raising his hands, in the act of masturbating, and in the last scene in a state of rest. According to Tucci, . . . , the figures are to be interpreted as the *akulavira* or *ekavira* aspects, and the stand as an *arghapātra* which was first filled with alcoholic substances, and next with *kuṇḍagolaka*, i.e. the male and female elements (*argha*), which were eaten by the initiates, *as is also documented by a similar and related tradition by the rÑiñ ma pa in Tibet*. Tucci, who began his article saying that ‘there has always been a tendency in India to keep secret the teachings of religious schools. . . [and] All the more so, in the esoteric schools which needed a special initiation,’ concluded it saying that ‘practices which are documented in Tantric literature. . . were current already in some schools, to which we cannot so far give a name beyond contention, that existed in some parts of the North-Western regions of the Indo-Pakistani Subcontinent, in the 1st. cent. or the beginning of the 2nd cent. A.D.’¹⁰²

The significance of this discovery for the historiography of Tantrism cannot be underestimated. The silencing of this piece over the last thirty years clearly suggests that the Indian schools are not the only ones with a tradition of secrecy. Further, though it is not a Buddhist, but a Shaivite piece, if Tucci’s interpretation is correct, it is (as he says) confirmation that “practices. . . documented in Tantric literature. . . were current already. . . in the 1st. century or the beginning of the 2nd cent. A.D.” This would seem to deal a fatal

¹⁰² Verardi, *ibid.* 54. Verardi continues, “Positivistic scholars, the *bêtes noires* of this article, will obviously say that, since this piece is ‘isolated,’ no conclusions can be drawn until more evidence emerges: only when we have a certain number of facts of the same kind will we be authorized to take them into consideration. This positivistic attitude. . . is so widespread that it is probably vain to recall that these positions have long been criticized by epistemologists such as Popper, and that this criticism is at the basis of modern research. In fact we know that whereas even a great number of confirming examples cannot validate a proposition, a single contrary example is sufficient to show that it is not true. From a methodological point of view, a piece such as the one published by Tucci is enough to change one’s own mind about the emergence of “Tantrism.” *If scholars do not change theirs, it is not because of facts but because of ideology.*” [italics mine]

blow to the argument from lack.

One may also note another representative instance of evidence of ancient Tantrism--Buddhist this time--which dates to around the same time as the Gandhāran piece just described. There are ancient *kilas*, or ritual daggers, which were discovered by Aurel Stein near the caves of Tun-huang. Martin Boord describes this find as follows:

A set of four such *kilas* (two of which are currently housed in the British Museum) have been dated as belonging to the first century B.C. Approximately nine inches long, they have been crudely fashioned from an unspecified species of wood into a shape that remains instantly recognizable after two thousand years as characteristic of the magical *kila*. The upper part of each has been fashioned into the wide-eyed grimacing countenance of a wrathful deity, below which extends a tapering three-sided shaft culminating in a sharp point. If the experts at the British Museum are correct in their dating of these pegs then it would seem reasonable to assume that Buddhist *dhāraṇīs* calculated to invoke and utilize the apotropaic power of the *kila* may also have existed in the pre-Christian era. None of the currently available texts, however, can be dated prior to the third or fourth centuries AD although it is well-known that *dhāraṇīs*, in general, had by then been long integrated into the vast corpus of Buddhist literature.¹⁰³

This example is highly illustrative. In themselves, the daggers do not conclusively establish anything. We merely know that such daggers were used for some purpose by Buddhists in the period to which we can date them. Further contextualization and interpretation are necessary to utilize this data and it is here that widely divergent opinions can be formed. Nonetheless, these daggers are highly suggestive--especially when considered in light of the contemporaneous Śaiva piece and the pattern of early art historical traces of Tantrism which J.C. Huntington feels he has identified. As these objects have such strong associations with the tradition of Vajrakīla, an important deity of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantra class--and they are so distinctly stylized--it would seem at least plausible that we have here strong evidence that such a tradition existed in central Asia before the start of the Christian era.

¹⁰³ Martin Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla*, (Tring, 1993). 55-56.

However, one may observe that Boord, in reporting this find, couches it in the context of his own rationalization of how this startling evidence can be explained so as not to conflict with the received view. He is willing to allow that these artefacts might have some connection with “*dhāraṇīs*”--that is, with a phase of “proto-Tantra” scholars occasionally posit precisely to explain away such early Tantric traces--even though the *dhāraṇī* texts themselves are dated by most scholars many centuries later. This interpretation raises more questions than it answers. At the very least, it might suggest that the techniques used to construct the chronology of such Buddhist literature are sorely wanting. In instance after instance, one sees scholars forced, quite reluctantly, to push back their initial dating of Buddhist scriptures. Why? Because, in the congenial atmosphere of the conventional narrative of Buddhist history, the dating of Buddhist texts has been (and remains) almost *exclusively* reliant on the reported date of their Chinese translations. It is to this evidence--and its attendant problems--which we will now turn our attention.

Chinese Translation Catalogues

In attempting to construct a rough chronology of Buddhist literature, scholars have--in the face of the well-known paucity of indigenous Indian records--relied overwhelmingly on the evidence of the Chinese texts in which lists of Buddhist translations completed and offered to the reigning emperor were recorded. Historians were quick to take advantage of the dates provided in these texts to create a relative chronology of Indian Buddhist literary development--assuming, for one, that the order of their translation into Chinese parallels the order of their composition in Sanskrit (or other Indian language). This strategy has long been in favor and is stubbornly perpetuated. This is due in part, I believe--in addition to the fact that no other avenues are available--to an almost cultic awe of the Chinese historical and textual traditions by traditional Orientalist scholars.

We have just observed how Martin Boord recently claimed that the *dhāraṇī* texts of what he calls the “cult” of Vajrakīla are datable no earlier than the third or fourth centuries of the Christian era. The reason he makes this claim is that this is when they first appear in

the Chinese translation lists. According to these records, the early Chinese translator, Śrimitra, was energetically translating *dhāraṇīs* (“more than anything else” according to Winternitz¹⁰⁴) during the early part of the fourth century (307-342 C.E.).¹⁰⁵ We do here have evidence that certain texts called *dhāraṇī* were current in early fourth century and we have the names of many of them. To set determinate limits on the date of a phenomenon based on its absence from the historical record (as in the case of the archæological record) is, however, to outrun the truth a bit. Boord might in fact be justified in claiming that “the earliest date for which we have (more or less) indubitable evidence for the existence of these texts is the third or fourth century.” Yet one finds him claiming that, “none of the currently available texts. . . can be dated prior to the third or fourth centuries AD.”¹⁰⁶ As noted above, the same could be said of the entire corpus of Vinaya texts, yet scholars are not nearly so squeamish about ascribing great antiquity to these latter (exoteric) texts.

It is based upon such evidence (and such misuse of it) that the most widely-accepted view for the “emergence” of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna in India is founded. The former tradition, it is averred, did not develop until the first or second century of the Christian era, as translations of its literature did not begin in China until that time. We read, for instance, that

The most ancient Chinese translation of a Buddhist text is the ‘Sutra of the forty-two articles,’ which is reported to have been prepared in 67 A.D. by Kassapa Matanga from Indian, that is Sanskrit, originals (B. Nanjio Catalogue, No. 678). But we do not know whether these were Mahayana texts. The earliest Chinese translations of the Mahayana texts are those of the Sukhavativyuha, between 148 and 170 A.D., of the Dasahasrika Prajnaparamita, between 75 and 220 A.D. (B. Nanjio Catalogue No. 235 and No. 5).¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, vol. 2. 372.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. P.C. Bagchi, *Le Canon Bouddhique en Chine*, vol. I (Paris, 1927). 319-321.

¹⁰⁶ No matter that some may retort that they merely mean the same; in practice, scholars regularly treat these dates not as mere *terminus ante quem*, but as a real date of composition.

¹⁰⁷ Nariman, *op. cit.* 93-94

From this information, scholars conclude that Mahāyāna Buddhism developed around this time (or, at most, a century or two prior). This is a classic example of the variety of historical reasoning upon which scholars have based their views concerning the chronology of Indian Buddhist literature. There are numerous problems with this type of reasoning which, coupled with the fact that these arguments form the linchpin of the currently-popular views, should cause them to be reconsidered. Even setting aside the major obstacles attendant on arguing dates for the emergence of traditions in India based on evidence for the importation of such traditions elsewhere (a not insignificant problem, which we shall leave for last), there are still further questions which such arguments raise.

One may note in advance a tendency on the part of scholars (which, I would argue, is related to the pattern of historical pre-judgment analyzed in Chapter Two) to date the emergence of the texts of the Mahāyāna in general (much less its Vajrayāna elements) very late. In light of this, it is remarkable that, not only are scholars reluctant to date texts any earlier than their translation into Chinese, but they are equally reluctant to date them even so relatively late! As can be observed in numerous passages in histories of Indian and Buddhist literature, many texts whose dates are attested in the Chinese lists would have been relegated to much later times otherwise--and it is only with the most grudging approval that the dates thus established are accepted. For instance, we read of the *Lotus Sūtra (Saddharmapūṇḍarika)* that,

The few point [*sic*] of contact between the text of the Saddharmapundarika and that of the Shatapathabrahmana which Kern indicates by no means suffice to bring the work in line [chronologically] with Vedic literature, *If we did not know that it had already been translated into Chinese between 255 and 316 A.D., we should not consider it as so ancient.*¹⁰⁸

Not only does this author reject the arguments Kern advanced to date the text to a period not long after the Buddha, but he is manifestly amazed at the notion that the text could even

¹⁰⁸ Nariman, *ibid.* 71, [*italics mine*]

have been written as early as the beginning of the fourth century. Why? It is clearly due to the *a priori* belief-systems described previously: belief in a pattern of change from “pure, rational” Theravāda Buddhism to the devotional “mummery” of the Mahāyāna. Surely such “mummery” must have been written later, closer to the “decline” of Buddhism. So, in fact, the situation is one in which the evidence of the Chinese translations is used in a rather selective fashion: invoked, to demonstrate the supposed late development of the Mahā- and Vajrayānas, and ignored, to allow for an early provenance for the Vinaya and other literatures whose early existence, though not otherwise attested, is allowed for by the usual paradigm.

Even if such evidence were to be uniformly interpreted, there are further problems which must be taken into account. For instance, it is well known that the Chinese translations often reflect significant editorial adjustments, so as to render the texts more suitable to the Chinese consumer. In light of this fact, the more sophisticated line of argument which claims that a late development of Tantric (or mantric) elements in Buddhism is discernible, not merely from their late translation, but from the testimony of various *strata* of Chinese translations, falls into question. For instance, it is often asserted that the sections of the various Mahāyāna sūtras in which enlightened beings teach *mantra* or *dhāraṇī* are later interpolations, as they do not appear in the earliest Chinese translations.¹⁰⁹ From this, it is further concluded that such mantric elements were so added by a Tantric (or “proto-Tantric”) trend in Buddhism which must have developed after the initial translation. This argument has been put forth by a variety of writers on Buddhist history. However, as it is undeniable that the Chinese translators felt themselves justified in freely excising “objectionable” sections of the texts they translated, this line of reasoning

¹⁰⁹ Cf. Winternitz, *History*, vol. 2, (Delhi, 1993). 372. “We have found them [dhāraṇīs] in Chapters XXI and XXVI, *i.e.* those chapters which were added at a later time, of the Saddharma-Puṇḍarīka, and also in the last two chapters of the Laṅkāvatāra, chapters which are missing in the earliest Chinese translation of 433 A.D. Thus we see that they are a later element in the Mahāyāna-Sūtras.”

would seem to be problematical. Such conclusions can only be confidently made if based on sets of reliable translations (and even then, there may in fact be an alternative explanation which could account for such a circumstance). As such, the Chinese translations cannot serve as a suitable foundation upon which to erect a chronology of Buddhism. It has, for instance, been noted that “some parts of the original text [of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*] which are not fit for publication as Dr. Rajendralāla Mitra indicates. . .are omitted in the Chinese.”¹¹⁰ Thus, the possibility must be entertained that any such textual variants are due--not to any purported evolution of the text in India, but rather to an evolution of perceived Chinese taste and the consequent evolution of editorial practice among Chinese translators and their sponsors.

A final aspect of this evidence which merits consideration in evaluating its possible contribution is the fact that the record as it stands is incomplete; and, even if it were complete, might yet be misleading nonetheless. Though set aside at the beginning of this section, one should not underestimate the problems inherent in drawing conclusions about literary chronology in one region from the chronology of its translation in another. John Huntington rightly takes to task the extremely influential conclusions of Togano, based as they are on the notion that “shortly after any given text was created, it was written down and translated into Chinese.”¹¹¹ This position is little more than wishful thinking. Examples may be multiplied. Kant’s *Opus Postumum* was only just published in English translation, though it was composed in the latter part of the eighteenth century.¹¹² Furthermore, and analogously, no major Buddhist Tantras were translated into English before the 1950s, though Englishmen had been translating Buddhist Texts since the early

¹¹⁰ K. Watanabe (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 1907, 664) in Winternitz, *ibid.* 380.

¹¹¹ Huntington, *ibid.*

¹¹² Further problems for textual history come from the fact that it was only published in Germany in 1930 (reminiscent of the Buddhist Tantras?!). Cf. Immanuel Kant, *Opus Postumum*, (Cambridge, 1993).

nineteenth century. Assuming that the secondary, secular literature (the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, etc.) and the original Sanskrit and Tibetan texts are lost in the next thousand years (which is, in fact, not so unlikely), might not scholars using precisely the same presumptions come to the mistaken conclusion that the Buddhist Tantric tradition emerged between 1800 and 1950? Were we to follow this course of reasoning, we should have a very late Tantrism indeed.

David Snellgrove has himself conceded that scholars may derive from the dates of Chinese translation, not the date of composition, but the date “when such works were sufficiently in vogue in Buddhist centers in India to attract the attention of foreign translators.” This is a much more sensible and measured assessment of the data than one usually finds. Snellgrove also has the good sense to note that in such circumstances, “the whole question of dating remains open to speculation and consequent disagreement.”¹¹³

Thus, in conclusion, the records of Chinese translation do seem to provide a fairly reliable *terminus ante quem* for the date of various Buddhist works (or, at least, for the names of such works). That is to say, we can be fairly certain from these reports (though, of course, there might be false reports) that there existed at the time reported a text bearing a certain name. These texts do not tell us, however, how much before the time of the translation the original text was written. It may have been days, it may have been one or several centuries. Unless specifically noted, we have no means of determination. They do tell us when someone felt it sufficiently important to translate such a text (or an expurgated version of the same) for a Sinophone audience and to report it in order to curry imperial favor. In short, for our purposes, the information which can legitimately be derived from such texts (even if we assume they are reliable) is, in the end, rather meager.

Foreign Reports

Before summarizing the results of our examination of the historical data at our

¹¹³ Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, 184.

disposal, there is one more important set of information which must be addressed. Given the general low regard in which Indian historiography was (and is) held by most modern scholars, there has been an inversely high esteem for the reports of foreign travelers in India--particularly the remarkable reports of the Chinese pilgrims. These sources have been heavily relied-upon by writers of Indian history. In fact, the first fifty years of Indian archæology--which itself set the direction and tone of other historical research--was in essence a prolonged reënactment by Alexander Cunningham (and his subordinates in the ASI) of Hsuan-Tsang's pilgrimage in northern India. It was (and is) commonly assumed that these travelers represent objective voices which could be relied upon for unbiased and reliable information on ancient India. The few notices of Nāgārjuna and his school in these works have played an important role in forming conclusions about the history of Tantric schools. As the reader has probably come to expect by now, there are major difficulties with all of this evidence as well.

Much, for instance, has been made of the casual mention of a "Nāgārjuna" in the eleventh century *Indica* of Al Beruni. This writer, an historian in the employ of the infamous Mahmud of Ghazni, mentions a "Nāgārjuna" once in the context of a discussion of Indian alchemy (*rasāyana*). The passage reads as follows:

A famous representative of this art was Nāgārjuna, a native of the fort of Daihak, near Somanath. He excelled in it, and composed a book which contains the substance of the whole literature on this subject, and is very rare. He lived nearly a hundred years before our time.¹¹⁴

If we can accept this report at face value, it would seem to establish that there was a man called "Nāgārjuna," skilled in *rasāyana*, who lived around 930 C.E.. Some scholars have concluded from this reference that this provides indigenous confirmation that there was a later Nāgārjuna and that the person referred to here must be either "Nāgārjuna II" (the postulated Guhyasamāja Nāgārjuna), or perhaps even "Nāgārjuna III" (whose existence

¹¹⁴ E. Sachau, *Alberuni's India*, Vol. I, (Delhi, 1992). 189.

Tucci proposed in order to accommodate the alchemical texts attributed to “Nāgārjuna” as well as this very passage).

This conclusion, however, has also been questioned by several respected scholars, including many who accept a late, Tantric Nāgārjuna on other grounds.¹¹⁵ One cannot, in truth, put too much stock in this interpretation of the evidence. A major limitation of this notice has been recently indicated by Ian Mabbett who comments that

Reference to the context, which contains various stories of miracles that are repeated uncritically, does not inspire confidence in its historical value.¹¹⁶

Naudou also expressed doubts about the significance of this report, and specifically about the exactitude of Al-beruni’s chronology.¹¹⁷

There are other reasons to be cautious about jumping to the conclusion that the alchemical activities of “Nāgārjuna” must be attributed to a late period based on a random reference by the court reporter of a foreign invader. One check on such enthusiasm is the testimony of the earliest extant biography of Nāgārjuna, which was translated into Chinese by Kumārajīva, most likely around 402-417.¹¹⁸ This early fifth century account tells of Nāgārjuna learning and using techniques of invisibility (one of the eight mundane accomplishments of Buddhist Tantrism). It also speaks of his involvement with “immortality cakes” and claims that he lived over two hundred years, with his death also having occurred “over a hundred years previously.”

The testimony of this biography is important to digest properly. For one, it very clearly demonstrates the error of the claim that the “magic and mystery” was all added to

¹¹⁵ Tucci himself, for instance.

¹¹⁶ Ian Mabbett, “The Problem of the Historical Nāgārjuna Revisited,” *Journal of the American Oriental Society* CXVIII.3 (Jul-Sep 1998). 338.

¹¹⁷ It is notable that, although Naudou is extremely critical of Tibetan sources, he nonetheless seems to swallow the testimony of Kalhaṇa’s *Rājatarāṅgini* lock, stock, and barrel.

¹¹⁸ Roger Corless, “A Chinese Biography of Nāgārjuna,” in Lopez, ed., *Buddhism in Practice* (Princeton, 1995). 526.

Nāgārjuna by Tibetan biographers who conflated a later, magical, Tantric/alchemical Nāgārjuna with the Mādhyamika saint. That there is much in Kumārajīva's biography which is magical is beyond doubt; any who claim otherwise, and try to pretend that there was a "mundane" biography in the Chinese, are either simply imagining things or are very creative readers.

Thus, when we evaluate the biography of Nāgārjuna, we must understand two very important points. First, the so-called "later" Tantric tradition is *not* the source of the tales of Nagarjuna's participation in alchemy, medicine, and magic.¹¹⁹ This much is a well-established tradition by the beginning of the fourth century. It is not merely attested by Kumārajīva. Nāgārjuna is referred to as a physician in both Hsuan-tsang and I-Tsing as well as finding a mention in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*. Hsuan-tsang also mentions his alchemy.¹²⁰ There are many alchemical/medicinal texts attributed to Nāgārjuna in the Chinese tradition, including some which scholars believe to be quite early (even early enough for "Nāgārjuna I").¹²¹ In addition, there were "medical treatises in China attributed to Bodhisattva Nāgārjuna (*Lung-shu p'u-sa*) referred to in the seventh century by the *Sui shu*."¹²² This would seem to attest a medical/alchemical Nāgārjuna rather early. The medical connection is a notice of no small significance, as proficiency in medicine was

¹¹⁹ These three traditions should be understood to be intertwined in the period we are discussing. The medical tradition itself, *āyurveda* (the "science of life"), is especially interested in increasing life-span. The alchemical tradition is chiefly focused on the attainment of immortality. These and other "magical" feats are sometimes accomplished by what we might consider pharmaceutical measures.

¹²⁰ Ruegg, *ibid.* 522

¹²¹ For instance, Eliade notes that the "*Rasaratnācara*, which had been held to belong to the seventh or eighth century (cf. Lamotte, *Traité*, I, n. 1), 'might really go back to the period of the Buddhist Nāgārjuna of the second century' (Filliozat, *Doctrine classique*, p. 10)." Cf. Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom*. 2nd edition (Princeton, 1990). 416.

¹²² Mabbett, *ibid.*

considered (also perhaps quite early¹²³) a prerequisite of a qualified Tantric master. It seems clear that, as in the case of the traditions of the *Atharvaveda*, the various skills of magic, mysticism, and medicine were companion subjects in Buddhist education as well.

Second, this evidence requires one to repudiate the oft-told tale of modern critics who hold that it was the Tibetans who dreamed up his extreme longevity in order (as the claim goes) to validate their alleged conflation of “Mādhyamika” Nāgārjuna and “Siddha” Nāgārjuna. One may note that Kumārajīva speaks of his having lived two hundred years. Hsuan Tsang, in mentioning that Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva was a great medical/alchemical master, recounts the well-known story of his long life.¹²⁴ Amoghavajra claimed in the eighth century that his Tantric lineage passed from Vajrasattva to Nāgārjuna to Nāgabodhi to Vajrabodhi to himself, each master having lived for centuries,¹²⁵ which report tallies with the probable time of Nāgārjuna I while also attesting to Tantric activities. Clearly, in this case as well, whatever ideas the Tibetans have had about Nāgārjuna and his career, they received them from India already fully-developed and consolidated.

However, before we put too much confidence in the “Kumārajīva” biography--either to attempt to establish a later Nāgārjuna or to problematize such a theory--it should be remembered that it is by no means certain that this work is really that of the famous Kumārajīva for, as Mabbett has noted, “it is not clear [from the received text] whether these should be seen as the words of Kumārajīva, or of an earlier work which he passed on, or of

¹²³ Cf. the *Gurupañcāṣika* attributed to Aśvaghōṣa. Depending, of course, on whether one credits the notion that this text was written by the Aśvaghōṣa who was a contemporary of Nāgārjuna.

¹²⁴ “Nāgārjuna Bodhisattva was well practiced in the art of compounding medicines” He goes on to describe the alchemy of Śadvaha and Nagarjuna. He relates the story of the Prince and the head cutting-off. (Beal, *ibid.* v. 2. 212) Hence, this tradition is at least this old.

¹²⁵ Jan Yün-hua “Nāgārjuna, one or more? A new interpretation of Buddhist Hagiography.” *History of Religions*. Vol. X (1970); repeated by Ian Mabbett, *ibid.*

his disciples who edited the material he bequeathed them.”¹²⁶ In short, this evidence could run a wide range. It could be far earlier evidence than previously thought (if “an earlier work which he passed on”) and thus further impetus to the kind of doubts I have explored here; or perhaps it may be a far later text which is not of much greater use (if any) than the second millennium Tibetan accounts. This question cannot be resolved at present, but surely the doubts raised by the text cannot be ignored by any who seek to base their conclusions on this type of evidence.

Another common argument utilizing foreign travelers’ reports is based on the collected accounts of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who visited India between the early fifth and the late seventh centuries. As J. C. Huntington has astutely noted, the prototype of this argument was advanced by Toganoo Shōun in the 1930s. As Huntington tells us:

The continuing attribution of the development of Tantra to the seventh or even the eighth century seems to have originated in Toganoo Shōun’s argument based on ‘negative evidence’: that if Fa-hsien (fifth century), Hiu-shen (sixth century), and Hsüan-tsang (seventh century) did not mention the *M[ahā]V[airocana]S[ūtra]*, but I-tsing (second half of the seventh century) did, the text had to have been written in the mid-seventh century.¹²⁷

It should be immediately obvious that the same reservations which apply to the use of Chinese translation dates apply to this evidence equally. However, there are further problems unique to it.

Immediately, one is struck by the strange fact that scholars, while highly (not to say “hyper”) critical of indigenous Indian and Tibetan sources, seem to believe that the Chinese are somehow positioned so as to provide unbiased, “objective” accounts of India. How such an idea gained currency in scholarly circles strains the imagination. For it should be clear that the Chinese accounts were rendered for Chinese consumption in a context [China] where Buddhism had had an uneasy and by no means secure existence for several

¹²⁶ Ian Mabbett, *ibid.* 339.

¹²⁷ John C. Huntington, *ibid.* 89-90.

centuries, facing attacks on several domestic fronts for its “foreignness.” “India” (or the “Western World”) was an important cipher in this cultural debate. How it was represented to a Chinese audience was a highly charged issue. As a result, one must expect that the returning Chinese pilgrims would represent “India” in such a way as to reinforce the prestige of Buddhism in China (more than likely by presenting it as less foreign than otherwise believed)¹²⁸ and also the particular style of Buddhism which the writer preferred. Each writer can be expected to present an “India” congenial to themselves and to their audience, and limited by their own experience (which was itself profoundly shaped by what they went looking for).¹²⁹

As Huntington himself points out with regard to this argument,

Toganoo ignores the fact that an Indian *paṇḍita* by the name of Puṇyodaya (Puṇyopāya) arrived in China in 655 and tried to introduce Tantric texts but was prevented from doing so by none other than Hsüan-tsang, who was primarily interested in the ‘Ideation Only,’ Vijñānavādin School (Fa-hsiang or Dharmalakṣana School), and who, therefore, had not even been looking for tantric texts in India.

. . . There would be little reason for the Chinese pilgrims, who were not specifically searching for initiation into the Tantras, to find them, and it was only after he had become well known to the Tantric masters at Nālandā that I-tsing was introduced to them.¹³⁰

Huntington makes several important observations in this passage. For one, the encounter with Puṇyodaya, demonstrating as it does an anti-Tantric attitude in Hsuan Tsang, is all the more reason to credit the possibility that he willfully omitted reference to any Tantrism he

¹²⁸ This rhetorical strategy has often been remarked on with relation to “neo-Buddhism,” which has been marketed as “scientific” and “rational” for Western (and general modern) consumption.

¹²⁹ My own experience as a scholar-pilgrim to Buddhist countries would seem to confirm this. Traveling to Nepal in the year 1989-90, with a head full of interest in Buddhist “philosophy” (read “Mādhyamika”), I spent a whole year studying “Buddhism” (primarily with Tibetans, who are certainly renowned for their Tantric interests!). I returned to the States with an excellent education in Tibetan language and Buddhism, yet my image of “Buddhism,” while deepened, did not include any substantial Tantric elements.

¹³⁰ John C. Huntington, *ibid.* 89-90.

might have witnessed in India. If he approve of its propagation in China, he certainly would not give it the *imprimatur* of Indic origin in the account of his travels. In addition, Huntington makes the important point that Hsuan Tsang did not stay in any one place long enough to win the trust necessary to receive esoteric instruction. I-Tsing only received instruction after ten years, and even then only in the “lower” Tantras. However one comes down on this issue, it should at least be clear that Toganoo’s reading of this evidence is by no means the only coherent one. This evidence, too, is open to multiple interpretations.

Further limiting our enthusiasm in this regard are important questions about the very reliability of these Chinese reports, even beyond any questions of personal bias. These are especially important to consider, in that their veracity is rarely questioned by scholars. As noted above, one frequently sees scholars assuming that the Chinese accounts provide an account of the situation of contemporary Buddhism in India which is both objective and accurate. Rarely are these reports subjected to very serious critical scrutiny. Perhaps this lapse in critical attitude is understandable, as these works provide an image of Buddhism which is seductively suitable to the received view, which is not available from any similar source, and which is conveniently pre-fabricated into a coherent narrative.

Before we follow these scholars in being overly credulous in regard to the Chinese accounts, it is salutary to note that their alleged superiority to the Tibetan sources (such as Tāranātha) is in fact merely the chimerical issue of wishful thinking. Their only advantage is their greater antiquity and their first-person voice (itself also, simultaneously, a liability).

As D. S. Ruegg has noted:

Tāranātha’s alleged unreliability has . . . been contrasted with the reliability of the Chinese pilgrims to India, especially Hsüan-tsang and I-ching. It has, however, to be recalled that the Chinese sources too are sometimes in serious error.¹³¹

Ian Mabbett has also commented--regarding Chinese chronologies of Buddhism--that “we have no grounds for believing that the Chinese possessed Indian records capable of

¹³¹ Ruegg, *ibid.* 516.

supporting such a precise chronology.”¹³² Furthermore, these precise chronologies are also often in conflict with one another. For instance, Nariman comments that:

Ashvaghosha appeared a hundred years after the Nirvana of the Buddha according to one Chinese authority; three hundred years after it, according to another; and five or six hundred years after it according to two other Chinese sources. One source makes it as late as eight hundred even.¹³³

In this light, the much-vaunted superiority of Chinese historiography over that of the Tibetans seems dubious at best. In spite of their antiquity, they do not seem to provide us with more reliable testimony than that of the Tibetans.

Summary

At the end of this survey and analysis of the available historical evidence, what are we entitled to say for certain? As I believe I have made abundantly clear, the nature of the historical record--literary, textual, archæological, and so forth--is such that it provides little in the way of certainty to a scholar who takes the trouble to question the status of the evidence. Nonetheless, there are certain points which seem clear at present. I believe that the foregoing discussion has established the following:

I. It is not the case that the Tibetans “mixed up” two different Nāgārjunas and their traditions. It is clear that they inherited an established Indian tradition which maintained that the Tantric stages literature was written by the same authors who wrote the central literature of the Mādhyamika school. Similarly, the tradition of Nagarjuna’s alchemically-enhanced life-span has nothing to do with any supposed multiple Nāgārjunas--it is an old tradition, attested by early Chinese accounts, and presumably based on his connection to alchemical works and longevity practices. There are no grounds for claiming that it was invented by Tibetans to allow for the identity of two Nāgārjunas.

¹³² Mabbett, *ibid.* 339

¹³³ Nariman, *ibid.* 184

II. Second, the historical arguments for non-existence which are based on lack of traces in the historical archive are invalid on purely methodological grounds and cannot serve as adequate confirmation of the received model of Tantric history. They are immediately and decisively invalidated by their theoretical insufficiency; and this cannot be dismissed as a “mere” theoretical or logical quibble. The unambiguous instances we have noted--such as the example of Trinitarian iconography pointed out by Verardi, and the under-representation of precious metal implements in Classical society noted by Dark, et. al.--give ample testimony to the very real, *practical* invalidity of this mode of argument.

III. Literary arguments are, at present, inconclusive; and stylistic arguments only serve to beg the question. We are not yet in a position to date various important works of Indian Buddhism with any degree of confidence or accuracy. Once we begin the process of questioning the attribution of texts in the Sanskrit and Tibetan Buddhist canon--which I think is an essential part of the critical process (and in which we have the example of the Tibetan tradition before us)--we open a can of worms which cannot be closed. It is disingenuous to selectively question the attribution of certain texts (in order that problems of consistency with our paradigm may be resolved), while happily and uncritically accepting those attributions which serve to confirm the same set of literary and historical presuppositions we started with. Scholars must be consistent in questioning attributions. They must also be prepared to accept the unfortunate, but unavoidable, consequence of this procedure: that is, that any confidence we may have had in the relative datings derived from uncritical reliance on such attributions melts away “like a dream at the break of day.”

IV. The physical data which is available to us--archæological, numismatic, and art historical--is also both problematical and inconclusive. There are important reasons, intrinsic to the nature of this kind of evidence, why we should expect that the record would not reflect a significant Vajrayāna presence. Such factors, which must be taken into account in interpreting the lack of early Vajrayāna remains, include such variables as sheer elapsed time since interral, conditions of such interral, the vagaries of preservation at certain

sites, the material and cultural value attributed to such remains, and yes, even the secrecy which was such an integral part of the tradition. Here again I have also endeavoured to show that it is not merely a case of being able to “explain away” a supposed lack of early Vajrayāna traces. There are, in point of fact, highly significant traces of early Vajrayāna which have *not* been given satisfactory explanation within the commonly-held paradigm. Proponents of the received view have long made use of a convenient catch-all to deal with such challenges to its adequacy. This serves as a kind of “pressure-valve” for this paradigm, which handily diverts the potentially-destructive force of all such anomalies by classifying them as “proto-Tantra.” This move is both historically unsophisticated and intellectually unsatisfying; and I believe it is long past time for the scholarly community to reassess its reliance on such “fudging.”

V. Finally, we cannot rely on the reported dates of Chinese translations or on the scattered and brief reports of foreign travelers to India in the first millennium. I believe it can be agreed that the procedure of assigning dates to the composition of Indian Buddhist texts by reference to the date of their Chinese translation is also methodologically unsound. These dates provide us with a *terminus ante quem* and nothing else; and such a *terminus* is, of its very nature, open ended. All we know with assurance is that they were composed before a certain time--we have no means of ascertaining how long before other than mere guesswork. With regard to foreign accounts, it should be clear that there are important considerations of bias and accuracy to contend with before they can be confidently relied on and, even if one feels these are surmountable, one is still left holding a bag “full” of a lack of evidence.

What, then, are we to conclude from this mass (mess?) of seemingly contradictory, often doubtful, and inconclusive data so beleaguered by problems of interpretation? At the very least, it should be abundantly clear by now that the received view of Tantric history, (our *bête noire*) does not rest on the type of reliable evidence and conclusive reasoning which its proponents claim and/or believe that it does. No single piece of evidence which

can be brought to bear on the issue is free of question--and by no means vain and irrelevant questions. These are the protocols of evidence which any reputable scholar should be subjecting their data. That these standards have not been adequately or consistently maintained with regard to the study of Tantric history is evidence of a major failing in the field. The question of its future prospects will occupy our attention in the following chapter.

Chapter V: The Future of Tantric Historiography

In his monumental work on the *History of Indian Literature*, Maurice Winternitz made the forthright declaration that:

Considerable as has been the advancement in the study of Indian literature, its history proper remains yet in many ways obscure and unexplored. In the first place, the chronology of Indian literature is shrouded in almost painful obscurity.¹

He continues, commenting that:

We have no exact chronological data whatever as regards the most ancient period of Indian literary history and only a few definite ones for the later ages. It was years ago that the famous American Orientalist W. D. Whitney declared what has since been repeatedly stated: 'All the data given in the literary history of India are like ninepins to be set up again.' And for the most part this dictum is true to this day. Even now the views of the most eminent scholars on the age of the most important Indian literary works diverge from one another, not by years or decades but, by centuries, if not by one or two thousand years. What can be established with some certainty is at most a species of tentative chronology.²

Contrary to the misplaced confidence of some, nearly a century later we are still not yet in a position to speak with great confidence about the literary chronology of India. There have been some definite gains and, with continuing studies, we are constantly learning more about previously obscure figures and their literary output. All of these secondary studies have much to teach us, but we cannot yet reliably situate these local studies within a larger, comprehensive framework.

This is especially true of Tantric studies, which can be said to have really begun only in the 1950s. Not until then was the intellectual climate such that the “transgressive sacrality” of the Tantras could be given serious consideration by scholars on its own terms. There were some exceptions to this general rule (such as Louis de La Vallée Poussin and Benoytosh Bhattacharyya) whose work enabled later researches to advance, but theirs were

¹ Maurice Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature*, cited in Nariman, *History of Buddhist Sanskrit Literature*, p. 156.

² *op. cit.* 156-57.

only the first, tentative forays into an otherwise uncharted realm. On the whole, any knowledgeable observer will agree that Tantric Studies is in its infancy. It should, then, come as no surprise that the overall chronology of Tantrism within the history of Indian religion and literature is largely obscure.

We have seen in the preceding pages how any critical and impartial jury would remain hung on the question of the history both of Tantrism overall and of the Ārya Tradition in particular. In general, there are two strategies by which one may attempt to discredit an intellectual position. One may trace the genealogy of that view in order to shed light on its problematical and historically-contingent nature; or one may attempt to grapple with it “head on.” In the previous discussion, I have employed both of these techniques in order to demonstrate how shallow is the pretense which permits scholars to claim that they have real knowledge of the history of Tantrism. In Chapters Two and Three, I employed the former technique: elucidating the genealogy of Tantric historiography in order to reveal the deep influence of narrative archetypes on the imagining of Buddhist history, as well as the manner in which the prevailing view of the history of the Ārya Tradition actually came to be imagined in the first place and, ultimately, how it was perpetuated over the years until it became official dogma without any real, substantial, historical argument to support it. Subsequently, in Chapter Four, I took the second approach, and tried to show further that any “head-on” analysis of the issue is at present bound to end up in a stalemate, with neither side being able to adduce evidence and argument in a definitive manner. Such being the case, the prospects for Tantric historiography in the future would seem rather dim. Where, one may well ask, is the field to go from here?

Certainly, I think, one cannot but admit that the evidence available for the most common assertions about the dating of intellectual and religious developments of first millennium India are sketchy, indeed. This puts us in a difficult position. Having come this far, we cannot retrace our steps: one can’t go home again. Are we to be left, however, with a terrible feeling of uncertainty about a crucial period of Indian religious history? For

scholars to admit defeat in the task of determining the lines and sequence of the development of religious thought of first millennium India seems a terrible blow. This period was one of the most fertile and fascinating in human history. Its scholars and mystics authored texts and artifacts which have continued to provide much food for thought and action throughout the intervening millennium. The quest for some historical knowledge which might help us in better interpreting the nature of these ferments seems an important task.

I suggest that we not abandon the effort, but nonetheless urge that we not commit ourselves prematurely to any position. Rather, let us remain open to a multiplicity of interpretations which might be given to the data in this area. This gesture of adopting a critical stance toward the received view on Tantric history does not constitute a step backward in the historiography of Indian Buddhism, though it may seem so from within the paradigm being overturned. Rather, one must take cognizance of the fact that the hegemony of the received view has itself served to suppress inquiry and truncate the debate regarding this most crucial and fascinating chapter in world intellectual history. Any approach which breaks out of this one-track mode of interpretation will be a clear advance for research in this area, whether immediately palpable or not.

To deviate from this paradigm does, however, open up a vast range of historical questions in need of resolution, and this can be quite daunting. I myself, as I persevered in executing the thought experiment whose results are documented in the preceding chapters, frequently longed to retreat into the safe, comfortable embrace of the conventional paradigm. There, one seems to find answers (right or wrong) to major structural questions, and the questions that remain are clearly delimited--just the kind of warm, happy home a scholar longs for. This is, in fact, what paradigms are meant to provide. On the other hand, however, it should be clear that such paradigms occlude as much as they illuminate. Verardi has stated the same in relation to studies of Gandhāran Buddhism. His work outlines the effects of the common "historical-evolutionistic paradigm" which is applied to

this region (and Buddhism more generally). Given the historical presuppositions of this view, he says, although “the presence of Mahāyāna currents. . .is cautiously acknowledged,” nevertheless

the presence of forms of esoteric Buddhism is usually denied through the well-known appeal to actual ‘facts.’ But facts, of course, emerge within paradigms. No ‘fact’--to take a famous example--ever came out to show that it was the earth that revolved around the sun within the Ptolemaic system: it was the recovery of Aristarchus’ theories, made possible by Humanism, that led to the construction of the Copernican system, within which ‘facts’ were promptly observed that had always been there. A paradigm, as such, shuts out from the start alternative ways of understanding reality.³

This, I argue, has been the case across the board in studies of Indian Buddhist history. The historical paradigms which are the common currency of Indian historians--many of which derive from the earliest period of Indological research (and, further back, from ancient narrative models)--are in urgent need of criticism and, perhaps, revision. The more immediate issue which concerns us here, the problematization of Indian Tantric History--what may be called the “problem of the Ārya Tradition”--demands a renewed methodological rigor on the part of Indic and Buddhist Studies, the effects of which can only be salutary.

I recommend that scholarship on Tantrism take its cue from the work of some post-processualist archæology, for whom historical data stands merely as an open text--available for multiple “readings.” There is no compelling reason at this point for scholarship to fix on one possible reading of the evidence as “the truth,” to the exclusion of other possible readings. Indologists should not shy away from such ambiguity. We are not doing our students or our readers a disservice if we present issues of Indian history as open questions rather than established conclusions--quite the reverse. In pretending that such historical problems have already been solved, potentially-fruitful avenues of inquiry and education are closed off. Perhaps as well, a willingness by scholars of India and Buddhism to

³ G. Verardi, *Homa and Other Fire Rituals in Gandhāra*, (Napoli, 1994). 3.

experiment in thinking through alternative paradigms of the history of Buddhism will, as Verardi suggests, allow us to see more clearly the facts which are already there.

In this light, let me return to the question of the Ārya literature. Within this new, pluralistic, “post-processualist” approach to Tantric history, what modes of interpretation are open to scholars who engage in the study of these works? For one, though it may come as some surprise, I believe that scholars may legitimately profit from thinking through the model provided by the received view. Though it should be clear by now that I personally believe it to be both ideologically and methodologically suspect, I must also concede that there is no unambiguous evidence which thoroughly and decisively invalidates this view. As a result, it may and should remain as one of several paradigms in play as historians attempt to understand the evidence concerning Indian Tantric history. There is, of course, a consistency and a (virtual) strength to this view. Regardless of how much a critical eye may suggest that the argument from lack is inconclusive, it has a great visceral impact. One cannot help but find the general absence of early Tantric traces remarkable. There has been an increase in scholarship on Tantrism in recent years, and it has produced some excellent results while nonetheless operating completely (or closely) within the conventional paradigm.⁴

I would, of course, add that what appears to be the strengths of this view are partly a testimony to the ability of such paradigms--subtended as they are by age-old narrative archetypes--to take a hold of our imaginations and to accommodate any variety of evidence which might present itself. I would further qualify this endorsement by saying that it is no longer acceptable to present this position as the result of unbiased scientific study, or to contend (as has been common practice to date) that it is “undeniable,” “certain,”

⁴ Based on this experience, some might argue that the “normal science” of Tantric Buddhist studies is proceeding apace and, if a paradigm shift is ultimately necessary, the need has not become apparent as yet. There are, of course, objections which can be made to this defense, but I don’t think it is important to belabour the case here.

“unquestionable,” or the like. It is none of these. We have seen the historical genesis of this view and it should be clear that it is fundamentally the product of the historical imagination of the early Indologists, and the earliest theories of Tantrism, which conditioned and potentiated later research, were the product chiefly of guesswork. It has been demonstrated that problems exist with every single piece of evidence commonly marshaled in support of the received view. If, nonetheless, some scholars choose to continue to credit this paradigm in their work, they may of course--though they should make it clear to their audience that it is merely one among several structural theories of Buddhist history, not an established fact. If this is openly and honestly acknowledged, we have no argument. I am willing to concede that, in the end, it is not impossible that the received view may turn out to be true; though I would add that, if it does, it will have been one of the greatest coincidences in the course of modern historical thought.

As an alternative to this view, one might entertain some form of theory which asserts the late revelation of this literature, while still maintaining that it was perhaps inspired by (if not directly and finally authored by) the ascribed authors. This approach has the advantage that it avoids the simplistic view that the literature was nothing more than a common “fraud.” There are many versions of this moderate view which might be considered. For example, Tucci⁵ mentions a tradition which holds that Advayavajra was an emanation of Nāgārjuna, upon which Tucci theorizes that this latter figure may have been the author of the Ārya literature. Others⁶ have suggested a similar theory: that the texts might have been written by adherents of a later school who self-consciously took the names of these early authors, perhaps also claiming to be their reincarnations. Or, one might credit the story reported by Tāranātha--that Mātāṅgipā revealed these works as a kind of Treasure Teaching (*gter ma*)--and (hopefully bracketing any personal feelings about the “authenticity” of such teachings) account in this way for the seeming lack of traces of these

⁵ “Animadversiones,” p. 139

texts in an earlier period. One might also explore the possibility that the traditions might have been initiated by the ascribed authors and evolved over the years as oral texts, gradually incorporating various developments along the way before being textually codified in a later period. Any of these are plausible hypotheses.

Finally, I contend that one may also coherently and legitimately entertain the possibility that the Ārya Tradition literature (at least those parts of it which withstand further critical scrutiny) was, in fact, written by the ascribed Mādhyamika authors, as well as the necessary consequence of this position, i.e. that the famous Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, and so forth, were practitioners of Unexcelled Yoga Tantra. Those who maintain this thesis have their work cut out for them--primarily because they have not to date had the benefit of collaboration by any other scholars, most of whom have been in the thrall of the conventional paradigm. For 150 years, most of the best minds in Buddhist Studies have devoted themselves to elaborating the consequences of, and fitting the evidence into, this received view. The work of exploring in detail the consequences of such an early Tantric school is no small task. There are suggestions in the data which might bear this hypothesis out, but it requires a comprehensive (and courageous) rethinking of the religious history of India. There are, fortunately, a handful of scholars with just such fortitude (Huntington and Verardi come immediately to mind). It is to be hoped that other scholars will soon join them (or, should I say, "us") in seriously thinking through the many difficulties which face historians of Indian religions, without shrinking from the many methodological difficulties, and in a spirit of collegial cooperation.

In sum, it seems clear that--given the state of our evidence--multiple, equally-plausible readings of the historical record are not only possible, but are to be encouraged. It should be clear that we--as writers, lecturers, and teachers--no longer have the right (if we ever did) to just uncritically repeat the classical story of the history of Buddhism without reservation. It is not appropriate to continue to say with such alacrity that "scholars know"

⁶ Most notably, David S. Ruegg.

that there must have been two Nāgārjunas and so forth. At the very least, the fact (attested to by this very dissertation) that this student of the history of South Asian religions can--after a thorough study of the relevant arguments and primary source materials over the course of over four years--still have reasonable doubts in his mind about a view which is so “undeniable” should raise some question about the adequacy of the arguments as they now stand.

Like the overwhelming majority of studies in the “hard sciences,” then, this study must content itself with providing tentative conclusions and end with a suggestion that “further research is needed.” It is no exaggeration to say that the study of the Buddhist Tantras remains in a woefully backward state relative to the rest of Buddhist Studies. Given the critical place which Tantrism holds in Buddhist history--whichever model of this history one subscribes to--this reflects an equally-woeful overall situation in Buddhist research. The words of Rhys Davids which I cited (with some disapproval) at the end of Chapter Two, though written nearly a century ago, nonetheless continue to hold true (with some important emendations): only when the texts are properly collected, edited, and translated (for, as Conze has rightly said, translation shows us in no uncertain terms just what we do and do not know about the texts we study) and the material evidence more fully exploited will we be in a position to really take up the historical question in earnest. One will recall that Rhys Davids envisioned a time in which the texts of Indian Buddhism had been edited and the archæological sites had been explored, after which we would be in a position to write a proper history of Buddhism. He thought that the story would be one of a decline and fall. I am not so sure. But I do, nonetheless, join him in looking forward to a day when these materials will be generally available to scholars of Indian religions.

What is needed in the meantime is further primary studies of the texts, traditions, and artifacts of Indian Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism. When these have begun to reach a critical mass, we may then begin to try to resolve the competing claims of these

research paradigms. To act otherwise is premature. Alex Wayman has been fond of commenting over the years that most writers who discuss the Tantras have not in fact even read the Tantras or, if they have read a few, have not read the vast commentarial literature which explains their meaning and the accompanying practices. Whether or not this is in fact the case, Wayman's implicit suggestion that research on the Tantras be based first and foremost on an intimate philological and philosophical analysis of this literature is well taken. Until the Tantric canon as a whole has been edited, studied, and systematically explored for clues to the relative chronology of various texts, arguments about the history of the Tantric traditions will be stumbling in the dark.

In the remainder of this essay, I offer my own small effort to advancing research in this area. The major and most lasting contribution can be found in Part Three, which contains my complete translations into English of all the major Guhyasamāja works of Āryadeva which seem to be reasonably authentic. These include his major work on the "gradual path" of Tantric enlightenment, the *Lamp of Integrated Practice (Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa)*, and the ancillary works on the three median stages: the *Examination of Mental Purification (Cittaviśuddhi-prakaraṇa)*, *Discernment of the Self-consecration [Stage] (Svādhiṣṭhāna-[krama]-prabheda)*, and the *Personal Instruction on the Enlightenment Stage (Abhibodhikramopadeśa)*.

Further, by way of introduction to these texts, in Part Two I submit two essays on the Ārya Tradition and its literature. The first essay, Chapter Six, is a general study in which I consider the nature of Tantric Buddhist studies and attempt to demonstrate the broader context of the Ārya literature within the Buddhist tradition. I begin by discussing some initial methodological problems which impede the proper study of the Tantras. I then attempt to locate the Guhyasamāja traditions in their broader Indic and Buddhist contexts. The second essay, in Chapter Seven, is a closer study of the literature itself as it has come down to us. I describe the scriptures and commentaries of the tradition, and analyze the works of Āryadeva in some detail. I further consider the extant textual record, *desiderata*

for future research, and present some tentative conclusions concerning the nature of these works. It is to be hoped that this contribution will be of some aid in eventually resolving the difficult historical conundrum which surrounds this tradition.

Part Two: Interpretative and Literary Essay

Chapter VI: Approaching the Study of the Guhyasamāja Traditions

Having treated exclusively of the historical problems concerning the Ārya Tradition in the foregoing, we will now turn to the issues incident to religious studies more generally. In a very real sense, it is presumptuous of scholars to attempt to address the question of the historical provenance of a literature before an adequate understanding of the literature itself has been established. This latter has, of course, not been accomplished. Relative to other areas of Indological and Buddhological research, Tantric studies has made almost no progress. I think it is safe to say that most scholars' knowledge of the Tantras is based, not on independent study, but on secondary works by the handful of scholars who have attempted such research on their own. We have met many of these in Part One: Louis de la Vallée Poussin, Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, Alex Wayman, and so forth. Their works contain much that is excellent in terms of exposition of Tantric literature and practice. We have also seen some of the ways in which their works contain elements that are problematical. On account of the esoteric nature of the tradition and the arcane characteristics of the language of the scriptures, the obstacles facing scholars of Tantrism go far beyond the difficulties incident to understanding, say, Nāgārjuna's exoteric *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā*--which Mt. Everest of the mind has itself been the subject of a never-ending stream of interpretative disputes.

In what follows, I will attempt to lay the groundwork for a primary study of the Ārya literature. In order to understand these texts, it will be useful to review the nature of the Buddhist Tantras and the scholarship which has taken them as its object. In the "Methodological Considerations," I look briefly at some preconceptions concerning Tantrism which have occluded a proper appreciation at least of the indigenous importance of these traditions, if not the nature of Tantrism as a whole. Having identified some elements which seem to be common to the Buddhist Tantric traditions as a whole, I then consider the presence or absence of these elements in both the Indic religious context more generally and the Buddhist context in particular. We will then turn our attention to a

description of the Indian Guhyasamāja traditions--what the indigenous historical understanding has been and how the tradition has ramified into sub-traditions. I hope to provide in this something of a “phenomenological” perspective. That is, I will attempt to present the information and interpretations available to practitioners of the tradition itself, and through which they have understood the lineage and come to an understanding of their place within it from an “insider’s” point-of-view. It is my belief that this type of sympathetic “emic” understanding of a tradition is an essential prerequisite to any subsequent, critical analysis of an “etic” nature.¹

Methodological Considerations

We have noted at length in the foregoing how certain historical prejudices must be set aside for research on this literature to proceed apace. Besides the assertions about chronological placement, there are perennial (and problematical) assumptions quite commonly made about the very nature of the literature itself which, in my view, prevent scholars from adequately interpreting the works.

So prevalent are some of these popular prejudices that, to begin any clear discussion of Tantrism in the late twentieth century, one needs initially to make certain important negative distinctions. That is, one must clearly define what Tantrism is *not*. For instance, one has to overcome the widespread misperception (in the West as in the contemporary East) that “Tantra” is a code-word for something like “(sacred) sex.” This view does have its learned proponents, but it seems to me that, regardless of the presence of sexual imagery and even sexual practices in some Tantric schools, as a whole sexuality is clearly peripheral

¹ A similar sentiment has been expressed by, for example, Michael M. Broido, who writes: “one of the reasons for the weakness of current western work on the Tantras is the almost complete neglect of the methods of interpretation which were used by the commentators and teachers who interpreted them. We may not have access to the methods used in oral instruction, but there is no good reason for this neglect of the methods used in the traditional commentaries.” Cf. “Killing, Lying, Stealing, and Adultery: A Problem of Interpretation in the Tantras,” in D. S. Lopez, ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu, 1988). 72-73.

to Tantrism. It might be said that those that do exist are better understood as “sexual yoga” rather than “yogic sex.” The contextual emphasis is consistently and clearly on the yoga, not the sex. Further, regardless of their seeming prominence in Tantric literature (and, indeed, one needs to ask, “prominent to whom?”), practices involving the sexual organs are quite rare in the Vajrayāna. Though sexual imagery is indeed an element in many of the Tantras, it is, for the most part, just that: imagery. There are sexual yogas, but these are generally referred to in non-sexual vocabulary. Rarely are they explicitly described as such. Frequently, if sexual words are used, a non-sexual yogic process is referred to and, conversely, if religio-yogic words are used, it may very well have a sexual referent.

In regard to this common modern view of Tantrism, Verardi has contrasted the typical indigenous use of the term. He writes:

In certain Indian contexts (e.g. Kashmir), we find the word *tāntrika* as clearly opposed to *kaulika*. It is the *kulaparakriyā* which puts the stress on sudden realization through the overflowing of inner energies, ritual coitus, etc., whereas the *tantraparakriyā* emphasizes the intellectual aspect, and lacks what the term ‘Tantrism’ usually suggests.²

This discussion is important, not merely to raise the level of discourse about the Tantras up out of the gutter, as it were, but also to allow the relevant terms of native Tantric discourse and practice to be properly understood. In many discussions of Tantrism, the “emic” understanding is all but completely occluded. Any indigenous self-understanding which might (as I have done here) question the putative “primitive literalism” of the texts (and, thus, the Orientalists’ privileged access) is derided as native (or nativistic) apologetics. That this is not a sound methodology has recently begun to be understood in Orientalist circles and, consequently, one has begun to see an elevation of discourse on Tantrism in recent years.

In this context, it is instructive to imagine what kind of notion of Christianity an outsider might form from observing the central Christian rite of the Eucharist. What variety

² Verardi, *op.cit.* 52.

of sinister, repugnant, and psychopathic cult might it be (to use some of the favorite monikers applied to Tantrism) which enjoins its followers to eat human flesh and blood--and not just any, but that of its founder! An indignant cry would surely be raised, "Cannibalism! Blood thirsty primitives!" In this light, it should be evident how important it is to give the native interpreters of Tantric Buddhism the same benefit that we give those of Christianity in crediting the indigenous understanding of their rituals.³

This latter, then, is another hurdle which must be overcome in approaching the Tantric *corpus*: it seems clear that we cannot assume (as some have) that there was an initial period in which Tantric texts were understood literally, only to have these risqué meanings "interpreted away" by later schools. In all fairness, not all scholars have been wedded to the idea that the Tantras were originally meant to be taken in their literal sense. Patel, for example, recognizes that the Tantras are symbolic texts, meant to be understood by those initiates to whom the code had been given--a symbolic system which in his words "was based on the most psychological and logical process of thinking and willing."⁴ Nonetheless, there have been many others who do maintain this view. Further, an unhelpful allegation has recently gained some currency, suggesting that the view that the Tantras were meant to be understood symbolically from the outset is a distinctively ideological view characteristic of modern practitioners of the Tibetan Tantric traditions.⁵ Such an assertion, it should be clear, does nothing to advance our understanding of the issue at hand--it is, in fact, nothing more or less than the age-old refuge of the feeble-minded: the *argumentum ad hominem*. While it is true that it is the univocal view of the Tibetans traditions that the Tantras were meant to require interpretation, it may also be said

³ This, of course, does not preclude such "emic" understandings, but (again) they should be such as to constitute a move *beyond* the indigenous understanding--not their *a priori* exclusion.

⁴ Patel. xxvii.

⁵ Some of Snellgrove's comments in *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism* are characteristic of this.

that this is, by far, the most cogent view concerning this literature.

Surely, one cannot credit the old Victorian theory that the Tantras were concocted merely to allow the repressed monks of “early Buddhism” to let their (shaven) hair down in order to drink some wine and love some women. Though this theory was popularized by no less authoritative a figure than the great English Sanskritist Monier Williams, I hope I will be excused for saying that it is patently ludicrous. There is more than enough evidence to establish that ancient Buddhist monks found plenty of opportunities for such dalliances if they so desired without going to the extremely contrived expedient of fabricating spurious scriptures in order to justify it. We may, thus, safely set aside this position.

As an alternative view, others (Warder comes immediately to mind) have suggested that the radical practices which the Buddhist Tantric texts enjoin might not have been as unacceptable to the Indian society in which they were written as they are to us--or, further, they may have been a kind of “therapy.” While not as fanciful as the former view, this approach is also fraught with difficulties. The substances and practices enjoined go so completely overboard in violating the most sacred taboos in Indian society, that I believe it could only have constituted a deliberate reversal. Whatever Professor Warder may think, it would seem that these expressions were meant to be shocking.

What we have, rather, is an intentional system of “transgressive sacrality” which used antinomian images and practices as an aid to religious transcendence. Consider, for instance, the ritual use of the “five meats”--bull, dog, elephant, human, and horse--in the Unexcelled Yoga Tantra traditions. Are we to understand that these are just pleasurable things to eat, such that the authors of the Tantric traditions felt that they must connive in giving a Buddhist rationalization to them, so as to enjoy them and yet maintain their status in the Buddhist hierarchy? I cannot credit this interpretation; and other evidence concerning their social context in India suggests otherwise. Consider the following report of Hsuan-Tsang, who reports that Indians

are forbidden to eat the flesh of the *ox*, the ass, the *elephant*, the *horse*, the pig, the *dog*, the fox, the wolf, the lion, the

monkey, and all the hairy kind. Those who eat them are despised and scorned, and are universally reprobated.⁶

Surely it is no coincidence that--other than the obvious, presupposed injunction against eating human flesh--all four others are found in this list of taboo meats. They do not appear, as Monier Williams and Alexander Cunningham would have us believe, merely because they are tasty and the monks want to have a barbeque. They appear because they *represent* the very essence of transgression. This representative nature, I contend, is characteristic of all such Buddhist Tantric discourse. Even in the limited cases in which such ciphers of transgression are used, their character as ciphers is still paramount. There is an obvious impulse in the Buddhist Tantras to counteract a tendency on the part of Buddhists to replicate the parameters of purity and defilement characteristic of the general Indic religious context.⁷ As this type of concern for conventional purity runs counter to the transcendent vision of those with a yogic bent (such as many Buddhist and other Śramanic traditions), it was a favorite target of Buddhist Tantric schools and their literature.

Other examples may be cited. Even in the case of the characteristics of the ideal Tantric consort--already somewhat transgressive in itself--there are prescriptions which quite intentionally suggest an inversion of conventional purity/defilement codes. In the *Lamp of Integrated Practice* Āryadeva writes:

One should make love to a sixteen year old girl. . .such as a butcher, washerwoman, dancer, garland-maker, arrow-maker, a labouress, . . .a woman friend, or another's woman.⁸

This list clearly subverts the purity strictures found in the Indian traditions of eroticism.

Each characteristic is chosen to be intentionally transgressive. One is specifically

⁶ Beal, *Buddhist Records of the . . .* 89. [italics mine]

⁷ One might consider in the polemics in Āryadeva's *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* (Chapter IX, *infra*) against what he derisively calls "village religion" (*grāma-dharma*)--to wit, the ritual bathing, fasting, and so forth characteristic of orthodox Indian religion.

⁸ Āryadeva, *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, Chapter Ten, sDe-dge bsTan-'gyur, 101a-101b. See below Chapter Eight.

prohibited in the *Kāma Sūtra* from sleeping with a “woman friend.” Likewise, the various impure castes listed here make them conventionally-unacceptable consorts, as also “another’s woman” inverts the basic *pañcaśīla* commitment of the Buddhists themselves. Also, with regard to the site appropriate to the performance of Tantric rites--preëminently the *śmaśāna*, or carnal ground--Hsuan Tsang describes this as an unlucky, lonely place where no one goes.⁹

Finally, as a corollary to the fact that this is a symbolic discourse--though it is also true in part of non-symbolic discourses like the exoteric religious literature of India--it must be recognized and treated *as discourse*. It cannot be directly construed as evidence of actual social practice. Statements, such as those of A. L. Basham, that “drunkenness, meat-eating, and sexual promiscuity were often indulged in, as well as such practices as eating ordure, and sometimes even ritual murder,” are based entirely on such a failure to consider the role of the Tantric literature as discourse, taking it rather as an unmediated reflection of contemporary Indian society, albeit a limited yogic society. Such claims about what ancient Indians “commonly did,” it should be evident, are based on no conceivable historical evidence. While they are a perfectly valid imagination of what *might* have been the case, based on literary evidence available to us, they are clearly not historical facts.

Tantra should also not be taken simply as a kind of “Buddhist magic.” This assessment--besides being based fundamentally on a hierarchical value judgement made (by Europeans) between “magic” and “religion”--fixates on a feature which has little or no classificatory utility in the Buddhist context. If one were to adopt this schema, nearly all forms of Buddhism would have to be construed as “Tantric”--for the exercising of psychic powers, casting of spells, control of the weather, and so on, are universally attested in Buddhist literatures of *all* times and places. Scholars such as David Snellgrove use terms

⁹ Beal, trans., *Buddhist Records of the Western World*, v. 2. 166.

such as “magic power” in speaking of Tantrism and its *siddhis*--explicitly aware that he may offend some modern sensibilities. I have no qualms with this usage. . . up to a point. To say that Tantrism involves the manipulation of powers which one might call “magical” is unobjectionable. However, the minute one begins to speak as if mundane magical powers constituted the sole interest of Tantric schools, or even that it is the foundational desire, one outruns the evidence available to us and is merely speculating. Some traditions seem to emphasize the *uttamasiddhi*, or Buddhahood, others the *laukikasiddhis*; we have no clear grounds, however, on which to claim that one or the other was prior, either historically or conceptually.

Having thus briefly cleared the ground by refuting some common misperceptions, we may proceed now to try to define what Tantra is in a more positive sense. If Tantra is not sex, it is not just a Buddhist rationalization for a fancy (if somewhat revolting) barbeque, and it is not simply the resort of those Buddhists who have abandoned their transcendent religious aspirations for the lure of magical super-powers, what *are* the key elements which make something a “Tantra?”

An important distinguishing feature, of course, is that the Tantric traditions are esoteric. That is to say, they are teachings and practices which are not available to all seekers. They are said to have been promulgated by enlightened beings to select disciples who were first prepared as vessels for these extraordinary revelations by a rite known as *abhiṣeka*: ritual consecration, or initiation. The lineage of these teachings is restricted to those who are considered qualified and have received this essential preparation.

The initiation itself, and the rites associated with the tradition, are performed in a specially-prepared sacred space, known as a *maṇḍala*. This space can range from a very simple bounded platform, to extremely complex, three-dimensional cosmic palace structures. Essential to an understanding of the esoteric Tantras is the observation that none of the ritual actions taken by the practitioners are performed in an ordinary environment.

The Tantric rites derive part of their extreme efficacy from the fact that they are performed in a thoroughly-purified, perfected “pure land” of sorts--a *buddha-kṣetra*, or buddha-verse, specially created by enlightened beings in order to be optimally conducive to enlightened praxis.

Similarly, Tantric rites are carried out by the practitioners in the *persona* of enlightened being themselves. The Tantric path is, for this reason, called the “vehicle of the result” (*‘bras bu’i theg pa, phala-naya*); that is, the religious practice which takes the desired result as the means itself. Rather than operating within a more conventional paradigm in which the ultimate goal resides far away at the end of the path, the Tantras insist that all activities at present be carried out both in a perfected environment, and by practitioners who are themselves already buddhas. One expression of this is the employment of consecrated gestures characteristic of enlightened beings, known as *mudrā*--another characteristic element of the Tantric traditions. And, as the body of the Tantric practitioner expresses the enlightened spirit through use of *mudrā*, likewise their speech expresses this spirit through the use of *mantra*. This latter element is of great import, as it holds such a conspicuous place in the esoteric schools that the Tantric tradition itself is frequently referred to as the Vehicle of Secret Mantra (*guhya-mantra-naya, gsang sngags kyi theg pa*).

In addition to these major structural and ritual elements, there are also several minor elements which are characteristic of the Tantric Buddhist traditions. Notable among these is the rite of *homa*, the Tantric Buddhist equivalent of the Vedic *yajña* or *havana* (also sometimes called *homa*). Given the importance of the fire offering in Indo-European religion in general--and its absolute centrality in Vedic and Zoroastrian practice--it is only natural that this ritual would be adopted by the Buddhists. There are also several minor rituals, such as consecration rites of statues and *stūpas*, ritual offerings of small cakes (*bali, gtor ma*), and the like. Although space does not permit discussion of all of these, they should be kept in mind as integral elements of Buddhist Tantrism.

With regard to the Unexcelled Yoga Traditions which are of primary concern to us here, however, there seems to be one outstanding feature which sets them apart from other traditions. I refer to the techniques of yogic intervention in the processes of life, death, and rebirth. This is the key meditative focus in these traditions. All the other techniques--whether of maṇḍala, visualization, mantra, or the like--are ancillary to this fundamental concern with tinkering with the mechanics of the life process. This is without qualification the most distinctive element of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras. They outline a technique for the practitioner to tap into the fundamental forces of the universe, by controlling the vitality (*prāṇa*) of the subtle body--including the manipulation of vital winds, their channels and, in some traditions, drops.

These are the principal features of the practice of Unexcelled Yoga Tantra which is elaborated and explained in the works of the Ārya Tradition. It is this type of practice which, many claim, *could not possibly* have been available at the time of the Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva famous for writing the great works of the Mādhyamika sometime in the early centuries of the first millennium. It has been noted by some, however, that all of these principal elements were, in fact, current at that time. As such, there seems no *a priori* reason to believe that such a tradition might not have been forged by these great saints. In the next sections, we shall look at some of these elements.

Tantra in its Indic Religious Context

There have been several attempts over the years to establish the existence of Tantrism in earlier forms of Indian religion. By their very nature, such discussions must remain inconclusive. Those open to the possibility may find the examples compelling, while others will never be convinced. In the absence of any unambiguous, ancient literary notices, any example one might point to can be rejected by as merely an example of “proto-Tantra.” As there is little I can do at present to move this discussion further, I will simply consider some few examples of this kind, not with the intention of establishing them conclusively as evidence of early Tantrism, but merely as an attempt to show that the

religious currents in India were such that Buddhist Tantrism could easily have existed from a very early date--very possibly within the lifetime of the Buddha and, if not so early, certainly not very long after. I am not the first to make this claim, of course, and I would refer the interested reader to the powerful early study by Louis de La Vallée Poussin (*Bouddhisme: Études et Matériaux* (1898)) for an excellent argument for the likelihood of an early Tantric presence in Buddhism.

When discussing the roots of classical Indian religious forms, it is, of course, commonplace to refer to the Vedas--the most ancient religious literature of India. There have been numerous discussions to date of the presence of Tantricism in the Vedic (and pre-Vedic Harrapan) civilizations. I hesitate, however, to join them in claiming such a pedigree for the Tantras--if for no other reason than the fact that such a project is a somewhat Quixotic quest. As Richard Gombrich has elegantly stated, "The Veda could remain authoritative because it was so obscure (and in fact so limited in scope) that any doctrine could at least be said to be compatible with it."¹⁰ I could not agree more with this assessment. Further, as we are only concerned here with the possible presence of such traditions in the early first millennium--surely it is overkill to look so far back in Indian history. However, allow me to draw attention to three ideas of interest to the present discussion.

For one, the Vedas testify to (indeed, they constitute) the use of sacred sounds (called *mantra*) in the earliest strata of Indian civilization. These mantras do not have a form characteristic of those found in the Tantras, but nonetheless the affinity is real. Further, as S. B. Dasgupta has pointed out, the use of distinctive syllables to represent deities can be traced as far back as the literature of the *Āryanyakas*.¹¹ This technique of the mantric arraying of deities is an essential feature of both the *maṇḍala* rites and the related

¹⁰ Richard Gombrich, "On Being Sanskritic." 25.

¹¹ S. B. Dasgupta, *An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism* (Calcutta, 1950). 65.

yogas of the Tantras and it is worth noting their use so early on in Indian religion. Finally, I would indicate that the doctrine of the five vital winds (*prāṇa*, etc.)--so crucial to the Tantric yogas--is also, in fact, clearly attested in the Vedas.¹² We can see, then, that three of the most essential elements of the Unexcelled Yoga were present from the earliest phases of Indian religious development--several centuries (at the most conservative estimate) before the probable time of the Buddha.¹³

By the era of the Upaniṣads, the latest stratum of Vedic literature, most of which are contemporaneous with early Buddhism, the elements of Tantric yoga become progressively more conspicuous. The Upaniṣads themselves detail a type of yoga which is nearly identical to that which constitutes the main part of the Tantras--a wind yoga which is based around a manipulation of the death process. This is especially true in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka*°, *Chāndogya*°, *Śvetāśvatara*°, and *Kaṭha*° upaniṣads. Given the wide chronological range of the Upaniṣadic corpus, it may be observed that these texts are all regarded as among the earliest two strata of Upaniṣadic literature.¹⁴ Let us consider some examples.

There are numerous borderline, or merely suggestive, instances which have been pointed out concerning possible Tantric elements in the Upaniṣads. I need not dwell on

¹² Cf. Eliade, *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (Princeton, 1990). 384. Eliade cites the work of Arthur H. Ewing, "The Hindu Conception of the Functions of Breath," where "an exhaustive collection of references" to these winds in the Vedic literature is given.

¹³ It is also clearly attested in the Pāli scriptures. Cf. *Majjhima Nikāya*, 1.420ff.:

The personal element of air is the wind in the body which moves upwards or downwards, the winds in the abdomen and stomach, winds which move from member to member, and the inhalation and exhalation of the breath.¹³

We have here a clear reference to the five primary winds which form the fundamental focus of Buddhist Tantric yoga. This passage describes the winds *udāna* (moving upwards, responsible for upwards evacuation), *apāna* (moving downwards, responsible for evacuation downwards), *samāna* (in the abdomen and stomach, the "agni" wind which is responsible for digestion and metabolism), *vyāna* (which pervades the joints "member to member", responsible for movement), and, finally, *prāṇa* (inhalation/exhalation, which is responsible for the preservation of vitality). The subsequent discussion about the mindful breathing of one's last breath is also analogous to Buddhist esoteric practice.

¹⁴ Cf. Joel Brereton, "The Upanishads," in *Approaches to the Asian Classics*, Wm Theodore deBary and Irene Bloom, eds., (New York, 1990). 115-135.

them here. These include, for instance, the famous passage in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* which states:

As a man, when in the embrace of a beloved wife, knows nothing within or without, so this person, when in the embrace of the intelligent Soul, knows nothing within or without.¹⁵

This has been taken by some to suggest a reference to the use of sexual union to create a state of non-dual consciousness--that is, a consciousness which is beyond subject-object intentionality. Further on, this same state is described by analogy to deep sleep--perhaps another parallel to Buddhist Tantra, in which sleep, orgasm, death, and wind yoga are the states in which the non-dual Clear Light Transparency mind dawns. Unfortunately, we cannot safely rely too much on this passage. It is suggestive, but without further corroboration, it remains inconclusive.

There are, however, at least two passages in these works which unambiguously refer to yogic processes identical (or nearly identical) to those found in the Buddhist Tantras. The passages in question are found in the *Chāndogya* and *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣads*. The former work contains an intriguing discussion of a self which exists within the heart and describes its further evolution as a body made of wind. The passage in question reads:

He who consists of mind, whose body is life (*prāṇa*), whose form is light, whose conception is truth. . .this Soul of mine within the heart is smaller than a grain of rice, or a barley-corn, or a mustard seed, or a grain of millet; this Soul of mine within the heart is greater than the earth, greater than the atmosphere, greater than the sky, greater than all these worlds.¹⁶

The slightest familiarity with the Buddhist Unexcelled Yoga Tantras will enable one to appreciate the inescapable parallels here. The Tantras also describe a “soul within the heart,” for the heart *cakra* is precisely the spot in the subtle body where one finds the

¹⁵ Robert Ernest Hume, *The Thirteen Principal Upanishads* (Delhi, 1995). 136.

¹⁶ *ibid.* 209-210.

“indestructible drop.” This is the foundational locus of the individual and it is this element which is said to carry over from life to life.¹⁷ It is also said to approximate a mustard seed in extent. The Tantras also speak of a person who consists fundamentally of mind, whose conception is ultimate truth, and who further creates a form of light which is said to be a body made solely of mind and wind (*prāṇa*).

In a similar vein, one finds another interesting yogic discussion in the *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*. There one finds the following marvelous verse:

Fog, smoke, sun, fire, wind,
Fire-flies, lightning, a crystal, a moon--
These are the preliminary appearances,
Which produce the manifestation of Brahma in Yoga.¹⁸

Again, one familiar with Tantric yoga will immediately note here the remarkable correspondence of these signs to the nearly identical “preliminary appearances” found in the process of the dissolution of the coarser consciousnesses into the fundamental Clear Light Transparency (*prabhāsvara*)--to wit, mirage, smoke, fire-flies, flame, moonlight, sunlight, darkness.¹⁹ Further research is needed to establish the extent of the correspondence, but at this point the conclusion seems inescapable that the Upaniṣadic yogis were engaged in a very similar type of wind yoga, in which one dissolves coarse, deluded consciousnesses into a fundamental enlightened awareness (“Brahma” to the orthodox *āstikas*, “*prabhāsvara*” to the Buddhist *nāstikas*) and, subsequently emerges in a purified body constructed anew out of the vital winds. This is precisely what the Ārya Tradition literature

¹⁷ As Robert Thurman has written, “The extremely subtle body is called the indestructible drop; it is a tiny energy pattern existing normally only in the center of the heart wheel or complex. . . . This indestructible-drop transparent awareness is the Buddhist soul, the deepest seat of life and awareness, whose continuity is indestructible, though it constantly changes while moving from life to life.” *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: Liberation through Understanding in the Between*, (New York, 1994). 36.

¹⁸ *ibid.* 398.

¹⁹ It should be noted, however, that it has recently been suggested by S. J. Cohen (in a Communication to the 207th Meeting of the American Oriental Society) that certain strata of the *Śvetāśvatara* are later Śaiva accretions. I have not been able to evaluate this claim.

describes. The only difference is the ancillary elaboration of the pantheon and its related cosmologies--being worked out at precisely the same time as these Upaniṣads by the emergent Mahāyāna traditions. Thus the elements that make up Buddhist Tantrism are of a piece with common currents in Indian religious culture. The idea of an early first millennium Buddhist Tantrism (still a few centuries in the future at this juncture) should, by now, begin to seem less and less far-fetched.

Tantra in its Buddhist Context

But, some will object, even if the elements of Tantrism existed in the Indian religious climate, was the Buddhist establishment prepared to accept them? This is a valid question (which we will attempt to address here), though it rests on some questionable assumptions. For example, one of the initial biases which any new paradigm of Buddhist Tantric history will inevitably encounter is the popular presumption that the Pāli scriptures of the Theravāda school represent an accurate record of “early Buddhism.” Integral to this theory is the image of Theravāda Buddhism purveyed by scholars such as T. W. Rhys Davids, Walpola Rahula and others, who represent this school as a “pure, original” Buddhism--fundamentally “philosophical” or “ethical” in nature--which is free of the “later accretions” of Hindu “religion” such as images, mantras, and the like. This argument is typically reinforced by reference to passages in the Pāli scriptures where the Buddha seems to state that “magic and mystery” is not a valid element of Buddhism. In what seems to be an intentional dig at the Mahā- and/or Vajrayānas, there is a passage in the Pāli *Mahāparinirvāṇa Sūtra* in which the Buddha is depicted as stating that he kept nothing back in “the closed fist of the teacher”--the implication being, of course, that only those doctrines and practices enshrined in and by the Pāli canon (and its promulgators, the Theravāda school) are “authentic Buddhism.”

There are, however, numerous grounds on which this position can be problematized. For one, it has been established for some time that the Buddha did not in fact speak Pāli and, thus, any claims that the Pāli canon constitutes the “original teaching” of

the Buddha are spurious, at best. Rather, Pāli is a dialect from a western region which did not become popular until several centuries after the Buddha. Further, we have no evidence of the Pāli canon as we now have it existing before the time of its codification by Buddhaghōṣa around the fourth century of the common era. Thus, these documents give us (fairly) certain testimony--not of "original Buddhism"--but rather of Buddhism at the time of Buddhaghōṣa (or, more accurately, Buddhism as Buddhaghōṣa would then have liked it to be). As we cannot authenticate the existence of these traditions much, if any, earlier than those of the Mahāyāna traditions (which were first translated into Chinese some centuries before the time of Buddhaghōṣa), the passage about the "closed fist of the teacher" takes on a much different historical color than that which the Theravāda apologists seek to impute to it. As A. L. Basham has written regarding these Pāli traditions:

we cannot be sure of their authenticity; the fine phrases concerning the "closed fist of the teacher" are particularly suspect, for they are just the sort of interpolation which an earnest Theravāda monk would be likely to make, in order to discredit the doctrines of schismatics of a Mahāyānist type, who claimed to possess the esoteric teachings of the Master.²⁰

Indeed, it seems highly likely that the documents eventually included in the Pāli canon were subject to significant editing (not to say bowdlerization) in the early centuries of the Christian era. On a similar note, David Snellgrove has made the dual observation that, in fact, "mantras [do] occur in the Theravādin canon" and, further, that they "have probably been reduced to a minimum."²¹ If we guard against the common tendency to view Buddhist history through the historiographical lenses of the Theravāda, it would seem that the Pāli canon itself is testimony to the growth of an esoteric Buddhist movement widespread enough to be considered a threat significant enough to address in canonical scriptures. And this would have been in the early centuries of the first millennium. . .right

²⁰ A. L. Basham, "Early Buddhism," in Wm. Theodore de Bary, ed., *The Buddhist Tradition in India, China and Japan*, (New York, 1969). 28.

²¹ D. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, (Boston, 1987). 122.

around the time of Ārya Nāgārjuna. In fact, even if one *does* continue to privilege the Pāli traditions as representing a chronologically-prior expression of Buddhist piety, one can argue that the elements necessary for differently-minded contemporary co-religionists to engage in an alternative piety of a Tantric nature are attested in the Pāli canon itself.

There are several aspects of Buddhism as preserved both in the Pāli canon and the Mahāyāna scriptures which attest to the existence of elements continuous with Vajrayāna traditions. In fact, the very structure of the Saṅgha belies an early esoteric bent. The Pāli scriptures, Vinayas, and other similar documents suggest that the Buddha would frequently disappear with the fully-ordained Saṅgha alone, to give them private teachings which were not open to the lay Buddhists or non-Buddhists. Further, the ordination platform used in consecrating a *bhikṣu* to the religious life is called, of all things, a *maṇḍala*. Though reading this as testimony of early Tantric practice is something of a stretch, it is not, I think, irrelevant to note that, from the earliest period of Buddhism, there has been a tradition of consecrating advanced practitioners in a specially-prepared sacred space. Further, the ceremonies performed in/on this consecrated maṇḍala are not different in kind from those common in the esoteric schools. The ordination ceremony of both the Hinayāna and Mahāyāna schools makes extensive use of mantras. For example, when the new disciple takes the robe, bowl, waterpot, and so on, there are mantras which accompany each act.²² These early Buddhist ceremonies have from the beginning, it seems, included rituals based on the ancient Vedic model such as *simabandha*, use of *kila*, measuring strings, and so forth. None of these practices are at all different in kind from those found in the Buddhist Tantric schools.

In this regard, it is salutary to remember that much of the strength of Buddhism over the years has issued from its ability to accommodate itself to local conditions and practices and, conversely, to accommodate these to itself. As is evidenced in the *Digha*

²² Cf. Nalinaksha Dutt, "Bodhisattva-prātimokṣa sūtra," *Indian Historical Quarterly* VII, 1931, 263.

Nikaya, for example, and the recent work of Verardi,²³ there has been a continuous practice of ritual fire-offering (*homa*) among Buddhist schools from at least the centuries immediately preceding the turn of the era, if not from the time of Śākyamuni himself. We learn from the latter source that:

homa was normally performed in connection with *rites de passage* (marriages, funerals) of laymen belonging to the *saṃvṛtisaṅgha* since the very beginning of what we perceive to have been a ‘Gandhāran society,’ as shown by a number of reliefs that can be dated early.²⁴

He also argues²⁵ that in early Gandhāra there evolved an “initiation” tradition (*dikṣā*) complete with a mantra transmission, which allowed the monastic establishment to control the *homa* tradition. That these homas were common practice in contexts such as the disposing of the monastic dead and so forth, we learn from the several studies of Gregory Schopen.²⁶ Concerning these *homa* for the dead, Verardi remarks that “a late derivation from Hindu practices or late independent developments are indeed unlikely. . . rather, Indian Buddhism shared an ancient tradition with orthodox Indians as far as the basic rituals for the dead were concerned.”²⁷ Indeed, in this excellent, short study of Gandhāran fire rituals, Verardi believes (and I would agree) that he has shown the existence of “a developed system of rituals, visualization, the Buddha as originator of mantras, *homa*, [and] . . . a theorization on gurus and *maṇḍalas*”--in short, “all we need. . . to give a picture of northern Buddhism as it developed in late ancient times very different from the accepted one.”²⁸

Whatever conclusion one may come to concerning the existence of Tantric Buddhist

²³ Giovanni Verardi, *Homa and Other Fire Rituals in Gandhāra* (Napoli, 1994).

²⁴ Verardi, 29.

²⁵ p. 36-37

²⁶ Cf. G. Schopen, *Bones, Stones, and Buddhist Monks: Collected Papers on the Archaeology, Epigraphy, and Texts of Monastic Buddhism in India*, (Hawaii, 1997).

²⁷ Verardi, 27.

²⁸ Verardi, *op. cit.* 50.

forms before the “rise of the Mahāyāna,” it is much less dubitable that the early Mahāyāna practitioner engaged in Tantristic, if not outright Tantric, practices. It is worthwhile reconsidering the comments made by Robert Thurman in the Introduction to his translation of the *Vimalakīrti-nirdeśa-sūtra* (VKN) concerning the affinity of Mahāyāna teachings such as the VKN and those found in Tantric theory and practice. In that place, Thurman remarks that “in the . . .reconciliation of extreme dichotomies Vimalakīrti is actually teaching pure Tantric doctrine, as can be found in such works as the *Guhyasamājatantra*.”²⁹ There are excellent reasons to follow Thurman in his assessment, as any analysis of the VKN will demonstrate. Indeed, the entire Mahāyāna, with its emphasis on the primacy of *upāya*--the unlimited range of application for the bodhisattva’s liberative technique--provided a congenial climate for the encouragement of radical, antinomian ideas and extraordinary yogic techniques. In numerous Mahāyāna sūtras, such as the VKN and the *Upāyakauśalya*,³⁰ one reads of the utilization of “transgressive sacrality” in service of enlightened beings.

These affinities, it seems, were not lost on the historians of these traditions. With Professor Thurman’s speculations concerning the deep affinities of the VKN and the *Guhyasamāja* in mind, a passage in the *History of the Guhyasamāja* written by A-myes Zhabs takes on an added significance. In the course of giving the lineage of the Ārya Tradition teachings, A-myes makes a remarkable claim about the identity of the tenth-stage bodhisattva Ratnamati (bLo-gros Rin-chen). This bodhisattva, it will be remembered, is the second lineage-holder of the *Guhyasamāja*. He received the traditions from Mahāvajradhara and passed them on to Saraha, Nāgārjuna’s teacher. A-myes tells us of this otherwise rather obscure figure that:

This bodhisattva Ratnamati, according to the exoteric (*sūtra*)

²⁹ Robert A. F. Thurman, *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti: A Mahāyāna Scripture*, (University Park, 1976). 7.

³⁰ Cf. Mark Tatz, trans, *The Skill in Means (Upāyakauśalya) Sūtra*, (Delhi, 1994).

tradition, is the great layman, the Licchavi Vimalakīrti.³¹

In short, what A-myes is claiming here is that Vimalakīrti himself was the second lineage-holder of the Guhyasamāja Ārya Tradition and the grand-guru of Nāgārjuna. Of similar interest is the tradition found in the Vajrakīla lineage that, among the *vidyādharas* to whom Vajrapāṇi first taught the practices of Vajrakīla--including representatives of gods, *nāgas*, men, *yakṣas*, and *rākṣasas*--the human representative was called “Dri-med grags-pa,” a.k.a. Vimalakīrti.³² Thus, the connections between the Mahāyāna teachings such as that of Vimalakīrti, and Vajrayāna traditions such as the Guhyasamāja and Vajrakīla, may go deeper than mere similarity of teachings. Further research concerning the historical and ideological connections between the traditions of the Vimalakīrti Sūtra and various Tantric traditions seems to be called for.

It is worth noticing that the travelogue of Hsuan Tsang--though commonly taken as evidence that there was no Tantricism until after the seventh century time of its writing--gives, on the contrary, clear evidence of Buddhist Tantricism. Beyond the fact that we know from other sources that Hsuan Tsang encountered Buddhist Tantrics even in China,³³ there are numerous references in his text itself which make it apparent that the climate of seventh century India was not alien to the practices of Tantrism. Hsuan Tsang describes an occasion in which King Silāditya came to Orissa. Upon his arrival, the disgruntled Hinayāna hierarchs of the country accosted the king:

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 the Nālandā convent a Vihāra of brass, a work magnificent and admirable. But why did not your majesty construct a Kāpālīka 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

³¹ A-myes Zhabs, *ibid.* f. 50b²⁻⁵.

³² Cf. Martin Boord, *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla* (Tring, 1993). 97, n.339.

³³ Cf. Kenneth Chen, *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey* (Princeton, 1964). 332.

its “sky-flower” doctrine is not different from the Kāpālika sect: this is our meaning.’³⁴

In short, he reports that the Mahāyānists were compared with the Hindu Tantric sect of Kāpālikas. This is a rather suggestive incident, for the Kāpālikas were rather flamboyantly Tantric--one could not mistake them for anything else.³⁵

It is not possible in this place to exhaustively make the case that the religious climate of early first millennium India was plausibly fertile ground for the development of a Tantric system as delineated in the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras. Not only have others attempted to make a similar case, but, as we have seen in Part One, the nature and quantity of evidence available to us concerning this early period of Indian history does not allow us to make conclusive claims. I nonetheless believe, however, that the foregoing examples--coupled with the critical studies found in Chapter Four--make a good case for (at least) the possibility of such an hypothesis. It seems likely that the currents of *prāṇa* yoga clearly attested among Upaniṣadic ascetics in the last centuries before the Christian era were shared by Buddhist renunciate schools, who integrated these techniques with the emergent Mahāyāna systems of *kāyas*, *bhūmis*, *buddhakṣetras*, traditional patterns of monastic ordination, and the like. It seems plausible to hypothesize that it was from this fertile ground that the Buddhist Unexcelled Yoga Tantras sprung forth.

At this point, we may at last begin to shift our attention from the broader Indic context, and directly at our principal subject: the Vajrayāna tradition of the Guhyasamāja

³⁴ Beal, “Life”, p. 159

³⁵ There is another interesting reference in which Hsuan Tsang speaks of certain honorable bhikshu who decided to go on meditational retreat. He says: “Not long ago there was a Bhikshu of pure and upright life. . .he desired to practice Samādhi concealed in this house. . .he reared an altar and began to recite his magic protective sentences. . .”³⁵ Hsuan Tsang, it seems, takes the recitation of Tantric (or Tantristic) “protection circle” mantras quite for granted. In this context there is no trace of reproach as in case with the Orissi Hinayānists--here the Bhikshu is prominently stated to be “pure and upright.”

Tantra and its interpretative schools. In the next chapter I will describe the place of the school and its importance within the Buddhist traditions. The discursive mode will be chiefly descriptive, as it is important that the indigenous understanding of the tradition be understood thoroughly before critical studies can truly begin. I look at the indigenous history of the Tantra and then describe the schools of the Guhyasamāja and their literature.

Chapter VII: Analysis of the Ārya Literature

Traditional Views Concerning the Guhyasamāja Tantra

The Guhyasamāja Tantra has been regarded by almost all the Indian and Tibetan Tantric schools as a revelation of extreme importance. It is often portrayed as the King of Tantras (*tantrarāja*) which stands preëminent among the traditions of the Unexcelled Yoga (which itself stands preëminent among Buddhist teachings). Of course, it may be argued that most of the major Tantras have been accorded supreme status by their practitioners--and nearly all are called “*tantrarāja*”--but nonetheless there seems to have been an especial, general respect for the Guhyasamāja. Consider the high praise lavished by Padmavajra, author of the influential *Guhyasiddhi*:

There is nothing more supreme than the Glorious Communion--
The jewel of the Three Worlds,
Supreme quintessence,
Greatest of the great Tantras.¹

The same sentiment is echoed in other works on the Vajrayāna. It is probable that these sentiments are in large part responsible for the many (otherwise unsubstantiated) claims made by scholars of Buddhism that the Guhyasamāja is the oldest and most important of the Buddhist Tantras.

One reason for the importance of the Guhyasamāja among the Unexcelled Tantras is the fact that it is exclusively in this tradition that one learns of the process by which the Buddha reached enlightenment according to these schools. mKhas-grub dGe-legs dPal-bzang makes this point in his *rGyud-sde spyi'i rNam-gzhag*:

The method by which the Lord Teacher became a buddha, according to Unexcelled [Yoga] Tradition, is not mentioned in other Tantras such as the *Kālacakra*, *Hevajra*, and *Cakrasaṃvara*. It is spoken of in the literature of the *Guhyasamāja*.²

¹ śrisamājāt paraṃ nāsti ratnabhūtaṃ tridhātuke/ sārāt sāratarāṃ proktaṃ
tantrāṇāmuttarottaram//. Cf. *Guhyādi-aṣṭasiddhisamgraha*, (Sarnath, 1987). 10. [my translation]

² Cf. Lessing and Wayman, p. 34. [My translation]

One of the principle ways in which Buddhist schools have distinguished themselves over the centuries is through their unique articulation of the enlightenment process. Each school describes the enlightenment of the Buddha as having resulted from the particular yogic techniques they favor. Thus, the Guhyasamāja literature provides the rationale and understanding which reinforces the ideological distinctiveness of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantric traditions.

Another important feature of the Guhyasamāja which may account for its prominence is that, as 'Gos-lo makes clear in his *Blue Annals*, "the Guhyasamājantra [was] preached by the Munindra himself,"³ that is, by none other than Śākyamuni. Although all the Tantras come from buddhas, the Guhyasamāja is among that select class of Tantras which are thought to have been taught during the lifetime of the "historical," or *nirmāṇakāya*, Buddha Śākyamuni. Other traditions, such as the Vajrabhairava (Yamāntaka), Cakrasaṃvara, Hevajra, and so forth, are not held to have been revealed in the Buddha's lifetime. Rather, they were revealed later, in order to deal with a progressively declining world situation. The Guhyasamāja, however, is said to have been taught on account of a special request by a king who wanted to follow the Buddha's path but could not "go forth from home into homelessness" as the Buddha and his *bhikṣu-saṅgha* had. A-myes' *History of the Guhyasamāja* gives the following summary of this first teaching:

Earlier, when the Lord was residing [in this world], in the western land of Udyāna, a king called Indrabhuti saw a saṅgha of śrāvakas who, using their religious robes as wings, flew in the morning from east to west, and in the evening flew in the sky from west to east. Inquiring of his domestic minister and so forth--who did not know--he asked the people of the city what it was. The citizens said, "to the east of here in the city called Śrāvastī, King Śuddhodana's son, Sarvārthasiddha, called the Buddha Śākyamuni, is residing turning the wheel of dharma for his disciples. They are his śrāvakas."

³ *Blue Annals*, 359.

Upon their reply, the religious instincts of the King were awakened. Immediately upon hearing the name “Buddha,” the hair on his body stood on end and an unexcelled faith in the Teacher was born. On account of that, he had a direct vision of the Teacher and retinue staying in Srāvasti. Having asked them, “please won’t you come and visit me tomorrow,” the next morning the Lord and his retinue miraculously appeared. Having pleased them through worship and service, he requested “Please establish us on the stage of omniscience.”

The Lord said, “Go forth from home into homelessness and practice the three educations.”

The King replied, “since we cannot abandon the objects of desire, please teach a method of enlightenment involving the enjoyment of the objects of desire.”

The Teacher. . . emanated the maṇḍala of the Esoteric Communion (Guhyasamāja) and gave initiation to those with the good fortune to hear such as the Great King Indrabhuti, and so forth. The King attained great accomplishment (*mahāsiddhi*) at the very time of initiation. . .

Then the Teacher proclaimed the Root and Explanatory Tantras of the Esoteric Communion to the King. He entrusted them to Vajrapāṇi. There, the King wrote the Tantras on gold paper with melted sapphire [ink], and he also made a building to house them. Then, everyone living in that land ruled by the King, even down to the crows who ate their scraps of food, attained accomplishment.

Gradually, as that land became empty, it became a great lake. Many nāgas lived in that lake, and gradually a town was built on its shores. Then, Vajrapāṇi, having again given initiation to the nāgas who lived in the lake, explained the Tantra, and taught the path, many nāgas became heroes and yoginis. Then, when the lake dried up [and] the house which the king had earlier built for the texts emerged without having been damaged by the water, it was given the name “chapel⁴ of the self-emergent Heruka.” It is said that even today that very [chapel] stands in the sky and one or two fortunate ones see it.⁵

Again, it is noteworthy that the Tantra is here taught, not by Vajradhara, but by Śākyāmuni. It further illuminates another important tradition concerning the Guhyasamāja, namely that the Explanatory Tantras too were taught by the Buddha at the time of this revelation. This circumstance is considered by Candrakīrti to be one of the distinctive excellences of the

⁴ *gandhola*; from the Skt. *gandhālaya*, a special temple for housing images, etc.. Cf. Das, p. 213.

⁵ A-myes-zhabs, *gSang-‘dus Chos-‘byung*. f. 6b-7b. [My translation]

Guhyasamāja tradition. As Robert Thurman has written, “this is the only Tantra in which the elucidations are given by the Buddha himself, not by later masters.”⁶

The above version of the history of the Guhyasamāja seems to be the most common. It is substantially the same as that given in the *Blue Annals* and a similar account is given by Giuseppe Tucci in his important *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*. There are other variations which have circulated. A-myes refers to some of these, including the following one in which, as is more common among the Tantras, the Guhyasamāja is taught in the divine abode of the Buddhas, Tuṣita:

The Master Alaṃkaśa [Alaṃkakalāśa], or “Play of Ornament” said, “The Teacher emanated a celestial mansion from the four elements of his body in Tuṣita. He emanated the hosts of deities of the maṇḍala from his aggregates, elements, and media. Then he taught the *Esoteric Communion*.”⁷

He goes on to cite an extensive story of the teaching of the Guhyasamāja drawn from “the *Commentary on the Vajramālā* by that same master.” In this version, the revelation takes place in Tuṣita, immediately after the Buddha’s enlightenment.

Then, the Lord Śākyasiṃha. . .defeated Māra at midnight. At daybreak, having become completely and perfectly enlightened, he went to Tuṣita. From the great elements of his body, etc., he emanated a celestial mansion made of the seven types of precious jewels. From his own aggregates, the five Transcendent Lords; from the elements--earth, and so forth--the four consorts such as Locanā, etc.; from the six [sense organs]--the eye, etc.--all the limbs with all the bones, such as there are, the five such as Rūpavajrī, and so on, together with the eight bodhisattvas; and from the limbs and digits of his body, he emanated the ten wrathful ones. After that, in that maṇḍala of the chief, the retinue having requested the Lord who pervades all of space, in order for the passionate to abandon passion, he showed the four clans according to the passion-free categories. He taught the great 25,000[-verse] *Esoteric Communion Tantra*. This is the manner of the extensive proclamation.

Then again, after that, regarding the province of sentient beings [labouring under] the impurities of the age

⁶ R. Thurman, “Vajra Hermeneutics,” in Lopez, ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu, 1988). 129.

⁷ A-myes, *op. cit.* 6a. [My translation]

and of sentient beings, [short] life[-span], [wrong] view, and the afflictions, being requested by the maṇḍala [deities], he taught the short king of Tantras, the *Esoteric Communion* of 8,000[-verses?] in eighteen chapters. This is the clear explanation of the manner of proclaiming the condensed root Tantra.⁸

This last detail is important, as it demonstrates the typical Buddhist notion that the revelations of the current age are largely abridged due to the shortcomings of contemporary practitioners. In general, the tradition asserts that the scriptures have been gradually truncated over the æons. It is in this context that the Tantric schools understand the revelation of the eighteen-chapter *Guhyasamāja Root Tantra* that has come down to us.

With these narratives in mind, let us now turn our attention to the commentarial traditions which developed on the basis of this revelation. While there are said to have been several lineages in India, there are only two which produced sufficient literary resources to warrant serious consideration as important schools. These are the Ārya Tradition, with which we are chiefly concerned here, and the Jñānapāda Tradition. Let us briefly discuss these other schools and their distinctive character before turning to a more extensive exploration of the Ārya school.

Lineages of the Guhyasamāja in India

The *History* of A-myes identifies seven principal traditions of the Guhyasamāja which existed in India. Partly in order to clarify that the Ārya Tradition was not so called because it is “superior” (*ārya*), he notes that these traditions are (in general) named after their founders. Besides the Ārya Tradition and the Jñānapāda Tradition (founded by Ārya Nāgārjuna and Buddha-jñānapāda, respectively), A-myes makes mention of a Śāntipā Tradition, a Lalitavajra Tradition, a Smṛti[jñānakīrti] Tradition, a hybrid Kālacakra-Guhyasamāja Tradition, and an Ānandagarbha Tradition. Each of these latter five schools have peculiarities which prevent them from being neatly categorized among the two

⁸ *ibid.* 6a-6b.

principal lineages, but overall they are not believed to differ so widely that they demand separate consideration as do the former two.

For instance, A-myes points out that the Śāntipā Tradition has affinities with the Jñānapāda Tradition, though it teaches a maṇḍala in which Akṣobhya is the chief deity (like the Ārya Tradition). However, this particular maṇḍala is only occupied by only twenty-five (not thirty-two) deities. Since Śāntipā teaches an Akṣobhya-maṇḍala, then, his school cannot be subsumed by the Jñānapāda Tradition. However, since it is based on a Cittamātra view (rather than a Mādhyamika one), it cannot be subsumed by that of Ārya Nāgārjuna either.⁹ Similarly, the other four traditions have minor, but important, variations in the array of deities (there are said to be six different maṇḍalas, incorporating nine, thirteen, nineteen, twenty-five, thirty-two, and thirty-four deities), the chief deity of the maṇḍala, and the style of textual interpretation. For our purposes, we need not be concerned with all of these details.

The source of the teachings held as authoritative by the Jñānapāda Tradition is a series of revelations given by Mañjuśrī to the Indian teacher Buddhajñānapāda. The *Blue Annals* describes his journey to Oḍḍiyāna and Jālandhara to seek teachings. While he was there, Mañjuśrīmitra is said to have transformed himself into the maṇḍala of Mañjughoṣa and bestowed the initiation.¹⁰ Tsong Khapa also claims that Jñānapāda was the disciple of Lalitavajra, who composed a commentary on the beginning of the *Guhyasamāja*. This tradition relies on the primary revelations of the seventeen chapters of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* as Root, and the *Uttara Tantra* and the *Vajramaṇḍalālaṅkāra* as Explanatory Tantras. On the basis of these authorities, and with the special guidance of Mañjuśrī, Buddhajñānapāda is said to have composed fourteen major works on the *Guhyasamāja* which serve as the foundation for the practice of his school. Bu-ston enumerates these

⁹ A-myes-zhabs, *gSang-'dus Chos-'byung*, (Dehradun, 1985). 21a.

¹⁰ *Blue Annals*. 369.

fourteen as follows: the *Mañjuśrī-mukhāgama* ('jam dpal zhal gyi lung), the *Samantabhadra-sādhana* (sgrub thabs kun tu bzang po), *Samantabhadrā* (kun tu bzang mo), *Ātmasāadhanāvātāra* (bdag grub par 'byung ba or bdag sgrub pa la 'jug pa), the *Viśvacakra* (sna tshogs 'khor lo), *Ratnajvālā* (rin chen 'bar ba), the *Mahāmūlajñāna* (rtsa ba'i ye shes chen po), the *Gāthākośa* (tshigs su bcad pa'i mdzod), the *Muktililaka* (grol ba'i thig le), the *Bodhicittatilaka* (byang chub sems kyi thig le), the *Maṅgalavyākhyā* (bkra shis nam bshad), the *Caturthāvātāra* (bzhi pa la 'jug pa) and a collection of works on *bali*, *homa*, *pūja*, *maṅḍala*, and the *sādhana* of Jalendra (*chu dbang gi sgrub thabs*).¹¹ A-myes mentions that there has been some dispute about the actual enumeration of these fourteen, but the above list is accepted by most later authorities. Its chief *maṅḍala-vidhi* (a crucial *genre* in any lineage, as it describes the rite of initiation) is the *Esoteric Communion Maṅḍala Rite Four-Hundred Fifty*,¹² composed by Buddhajñānapāda's disciple, Dipaṅkarabhadra. A-myes comments that this text is taken as authoritative by all later teachers of the Jñānapāda Tradition.¹³

As with all such traditions, there are numerous, varied enumerations of the subsequent lineage. Two lineages are given in the *Blue Annals*. That of Baliṅ-ācārya is as follows: Mañjuvajra, Buddhajñānapāda, Dipaṅkarabhadra, Mañjuśrikīrtimitra, Anaṅgavajra, and Akṣara-pāda. Another runs from Mañjuśrī through Jñānapāda, Dipaṅkarabhadra, Ānandagarbha, Tha-ga-na, Śāntipa, Śraddhākara, and Padmākara, until it was passed to the Tibetan translator Rin-chen bZang-po.¹⁴ Among eighteen principal disciples of Jñānapāda, four were said to be chief: Dipaṅkarabhadra, Praśāntamitra,

¹¹ Cf. Obermiller, p. 159-60, and Tibetan text (Lhasa, 1988). 165.

¹² gsang ba 'dus pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga bzhi brgya lnga bcu pa

¹³ A-myes, *op. cit.* 20a.

¹⁴ *Blue Annals*. 372-374

Rāhulabhadra, and Vajramahāsukha.¹⁵

Following the initial preaching of the Guhyasamāja by Buddha Śākyamuni to King Indrabhuti, we are told by A-myes:

The mahā-brāhmaṇa Saraha heard it from him and taught it to ācārya Nāgārjuna. The latter had many disciples, but the chief ones were the four: Śākyamitra, Āryadeva, Nāgabodhi, and Candrakīrti.¹⁶

Thus begins the Ārya Tradition. This lineage is distinctive in that its central deity is not the Mañjuśrīvajra form of Guhyasamāja, but the Akṣobhyavajra form. Also, the maṇḍala has thirty-two deities, rather than nineteen. It is believed by tradition to be chronologically prior to that of Jñānapāda. It also takes as its foundation the seventeen chapters of the *Guhyasamāja* as the Root Tantra, but it accepts as Explanatory Tantras (at least) the *Uttara Tantra*, *Caturdevipariṣcchā*, *Jñānavajrasamucchaya*, *Samdhivyākaraṇa*, and *Vajramālā*. Some authorities also accept the *Devendrapariṣcchā*, based on the citation of it in Candrakīrti's *Pradipoddyotana* commentary. On the basis of these authorities, guided by the personal instructions received by Saraha from a wisdom angel (*jñānadākinī*) and bestowed by him on Ārya Nāgārjuna, the saints of this school composed the commentaries and explanatory texts which inform the religious practice of their followers, who became known as the Ārya Tradition.

The Literature of Ārya Tradition

Now, it is time we looked more closely at the literature particular to the Ārya school. We shall examine below the formative texts of the tradition--those works by Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Nāgabodhi, and Candrakīrti which are definitive for the theory and practice of the Guhyasamāja in this system. There are, of course, many other indigenous

¹⁵ A-myes, *op.cit.*

¹⁶ *Blue Annals*. 359-360.

works which have been written elaborating on various aspects of this system over the years--in fact, even today, there are new works being written discussing both practical aspects such as *bali-vidhi*, *maṇḍala-vidhi*, *sādhana*, and the like, as well as the hermeneutical theories and yogic stages of the Ārya Tradition. Here, however, we will be concerned only with the Indian texts which defined the tradition in the minds of later followers and are accordingly taken as authoritative in later writings. We will briefly discuss all the major Guhyasamāja writings of these figures before looking in finer detail at the contents and contribution of the important, but little noticed, writings of Āryadeva. Before we turn to the Ārya literature, however, it will be helpful to momentarily consider the revealed texts that the Ārya Tradition authors themselves took as authoritative--the Root and Explanatory Tantras of the Guhyasamāja.

Root and Explanatory Tantras

In the Guhyasamāja, as in most Tantric traditions, the central, or “root,” scripture is supplemented and clarified by auxiliary scriptures, called *vyākhyā-*, or “Explanatory” Tantras. For all the traditions of Guhyasamāja, the Root Tantra is the seventeen-chapter *Guhyasamāja Tantra*--that is, the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* without its supplementary eighteenth chapter, the *Uttara Tantra (Tantric Appendix)*. This latter is understood by all schools, not as a Root, but as an Explanatory, Tantra. As noted above, the Ārya Tradition accepts the following as uncommon Explanatory Tantras of the Guhyasamāja: the *Tantric Appendix (Uttara Tantra)*, the *Enquiry of the Four Goddesses (Caturdevipariṣcchā)*, the *Compendium of Intuitive Vajra Wisdom (Jñānavajra-samucchaya)*, the *Vajra Garland (Vajramālā)*, and the *Analysis of the Intention (Saṁdhi-vyākaraṇa)*. Some (for instance, Tsong Khapa) also accept a work known as the *Devendrapariṣcchā* as an Explanatory Tantra, based on its citation in Candrakīrti’s *Pradipoddyotana*; and others the *Vajramaṇḍalālaṁkāra*, based on its citation by Āryadeva and others; but as these do not comment on a distinctive aspect of the Guhyasamāja, others do not consider them “uncommon” Explanatory Tantras. This latter point is important, for (as we shall see

especially in Āryadeva's *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* below) almost any Buddhist text can be used to illuminate or explain any other--so that the definition of what constitutes an "Explanatory Tantra" is a matter of some contention. The indigenous tradition, then, differentiated between those works that are "uncommon" Explanatory Tantras--which comment exclusively on the Guhyasamāja--and "common" ones--which supplement the understanding of a number of traditions.

This question of Explanatory Tantras is of especial significance in the Ārya Tradition, for one of the major emphases of this school is the manner in which the Root and Explanatory Tantras may be connected so as to yield the fullest understanding. In the *Pañcakrama*, Nāgārjuna states that, "The Glorious *Communion Tantra* is the site where these realities have been sealed; you will understand [them] from the mouth of the guru [who] follows the Explanatory Tantras."¹⁷ Similarly, Tsong Khapa, one of the most prolific Tibetan writers on the Ārya Tradition also mentions this feature in his *Extremely Brilliant Lamp of the Five Stages*:

the Holy Father [Nāgārjuna] and sons, seeing that the above explained Guru's knowledge of teaching by connecting Root and Explanatory Tantras would be hard to find in the future, and that writing it down. . . would cause it to remain. . . wrote many treatises on the instruction in the two stages such as the *Five Stages* and the *Lamp of Integrated Practice*.¹⁸

This comment, besides confirming the traditional position on the connection of Root and Explanatory Tantras, gives us a very important insight into the nature of these works as a whole. According to Tsong Khapa at least, the important works of the Ārya Tradition represent a fixing in written form of what had been an oral tradition of instruction in the lineage of gurus; and this oral tradition concerns precisely that special knowledge of how to

¹⁷ *Pañcakrama* I.9: etat tattvaṃ sthitaṃ tanre śrisamāje sumudritam/ vyākhyātantrānusāreṇa boddhavyaṃ guruvakrataḥ//. The Tibetan reads: dpal ldan 'dus pa'i rgyud du ni/ de nyid 'di dag rgyas btab gnas/ bshad pa'r rgyud kyi rjes 'brangs nas/ bla ma'i kha las rtogs par bya//. Cf. Mimaki and Tomabechei (Tokyo, 1994). 2.

¹⁸ JTK, *Extremely Brilliant Lamp of the Five Stages*, Thurman, trans., Ch. 3, p. 5.

interpret the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* through the lenses of the Explanatory Tantras.

What special teachings do these Explanatory Tantras provide, that is not found in the Root Tantra itself? Ultimately, of course, nothing--since all the required meanings have been "sealed" into the Root Tantra by the buddhas. However, through the knowledges of the Explanatory Tantras, one is enabled to break these seals and demystify the instructions in various ways. According to Ārya tradition, there are four indispensable (*med kha med*) Explanatory Tantras. These four can be classified as either hermeneutical or yogic in import.

The *Samdhivvyākaraṇa* and the *Jñānavajrasamuccaya* are classified by A-myes-zhabs as uncommon Explanatory Tantras of the *Guhyasamāja*.¹⁹ They are both chiefly hermeneutical in their focus--detailing the techniques of exegesis appropriate to this tradition. However, according to A-myes, *Samdhivvyākaraṇa* principally treats of the words of the Tantra, while the *Jñānavajrasamuccaya* illuminates its meaning. On the whole, this holds true, for the former work takes the form of a verbal commentary, while the latter describes the special interpretative techniques of the tradition: the six parameters and four procedures. These latter constitute the primary approach to unpacking the layers of meaning encoded in Tantric texts and are elaborated and demonstrated in Candrakīrti's *Pradipoddyotana*.²⁰ The division into hermeneutical and yogic texts should not be taken as exclusive, however, as, for example, the *Samdhivvyākaraṇa* also outlines the yogic process of the Vajra Recitation (*vajrajāpa*), as evidenced by its citation in this context by the *Pañcakrama* and the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*.

The latter two Explanatory Tantras of the *Communion*--the *Vajramālā* and the *Caturdevipariṣcchā*--are held in common with other unexcelled yoga Tantras, explaining as they do yogic techniques central to all such traditions (in particular the techniques of

¹⁹ *gSang-'dus Chos-'byung*, (Dehradun, 1985). 8b.

²⁰ For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Robert A. F. Thurman, "Tantric Hermeneutics," in Lopez, ed., *Buddhist Hermeneutics* (Honolulu, 1988). 119-148.

prāṇāyāma). The Vajramālā consists of a series of 82 questions posed by Vajrapāṇi and their answers. This work is the main textual source for the doctrine of the five stages of the Perfection Stage. A-myes justifies the claim that that the Vajramālā is not an “uncommon” Explanatory Tantra by noting that this work “explains the body maṇḍala of the Paramasukha [Cakrasamvara tradition] of Ghaṇṭapā and the channels and elements of the twenty-four regions.”²¹ The presence of this teaching characterizes it as participating (at least in part) with the “Mother Tantras” such as the Cakrasamvara. As such, it is not the sole province of “Father Tantra” teachings such as the Guhyasamāja. He states that neither is the *Caturdevipariṣcchā* “uncommon” to the Guhyasamāja, since it is also considered authoritative in the tradition of the *Samphuṭa* (another Mother Tantra). He does not give any support for this claim. However, it makes perfect sense that the techniques of wind yoga described in these texts would be important to the Mother Tantras, as they are the primary method for generating the Clear Light mind of great bliss--the definitive emphasis of the Mother Tantras.

It is on the basis of these works that the authors of Nāgārjuna’s school composed their commentarial and explanatory works. It is not possible to go into great detail here concerning the contents of these works. Here we are only concerned with the Ārya Tradition literature. We shall now turn our attention to the range of works comprehended by it.

Commentarial and Explanatory Literature

The Works of Nāgārjuna

The undisputed king of the Ārya school is, of course, Ārya Nāgārjuna himself. There have been numerous works written on life and (exoteric) works of this author, so there is no need for us to elaborate at length about these issues here. We will focus solely on the Tantric writings attributed to this master. As Tsong Khapa has noted, no works by

²¹ *gSang-'dus Chos-'byung*, (Dehradun, 1985). 8b.

earlier masters in the lineage have come down to us. Indrabhūti, Nāgaḍākini, Lord Visukalpa, and Saraha do not seem to have composed works on the Guhyasamāja.

There are four works on the Guhyasamāja attributed to Nāgārjuna that are generally accepted as authoritative--two on the Creation Stage and two on the Perfection Stage. The first two are the *Condensed Sādhana (Piṇḍikṛta-sādhana)* and the *Merged with the Sūtra [Sādhana] (Sūtramelāpaka)*. The former work is more famous in Indological circles, as it exists in Sanskrit and was published by La Vallée Poussin along with his edition of the *Pañcakrama*. The *Condensed Sādhana*, is just that--an abbreviated map of the yogic rites and visualizations involved in the Creation Stage yoga of the Guhyasamāja, including the creation of a thirty-two deity maṇḍala, arraying a body-maṇḍala, and the various mantras invoked in the process. It does not cite any scriptural authority, but simply teaches these points in a straightforward, didactic manner.

The latter text, the *Merged with the Sūtra*, is also a Guhyasamāja Creation Stage sādhana, but its approach is different. It is of great importance in that it itself constitutes a concrete example of textual exegesis in this tradition.²² The “sūtra” referred to here is the *Guhyasamāja Root Tantra*. It is “merged” in the sense that the text goes through each of the phases of the practice and, at each point, quotes an applicable verse from the Root Text. It is said that one way in which the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* was mystified--so as to make its meaning unavailable to the uninitiated--was to take the various teachings, such as that of the sādhana, chop them up, and scatter the pieces in different chapters of the text. Nāgārjuna’s work, then, reassembles this teaching, indicating where the parts had been hidden. In doing so, it demonstrates one manner in which the Ārya works have preserved a previously oral tradition in writing.

The two authoritative works of Nāgārjuna on the Perfection Stage yogas are the

²² That is, rather than being a theoretical discussion of the techniques for how to interpret Tantric texts, this work is an instance of it, giving not merely the final product (the *sādhana*), but, as it were, “showing his work.”

Pañcakrama and the *Bodhicitta-vivarāṇa*. Of all these works, the *Pañcakrama* stands at the forefront of Nāgārjuna's Tantric *œuvre*. It is here that the process of the Perfection Stage practices is broken down into sequential phases and elucidated. Its importance--not only within the Ārya Tradition, but for Buddhist Unexcelled Yoga Tantra as a whole--cannot be overestimated. The *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* is a commentary on the famous *bodhicitta* verses found in the Second Chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, where a series of bodhisattvas recite verses concerning the nature of the *bodhicitta*, or spirit of enlightenment.²³ There are two versions of this work preserved in Tibetan: one translated by Guṇākara and Rab-zhi bShes-gnyen (later revised by Kanakavarma and Pa-tshab Nyi-ma-grags), and the other by Kashmiri Pandit Jayānanda and Khu mDo-sde-'bar. While this latter is an interesting and illuminating text in its own right--especially as one finds there an early expression of the vow of the Tantric bodhisattva--we will here be concerned primarily with the *Pañcakrama*, as the works of Āryadeva are in large part devoted to elaborating this teaching.²⁴

The *Pañcakrama*, again, lays out the basic processes and stages of the Perfection Stage practice of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantras, particularly that of the *Guhyasamāja*. Nāgārjuna names the successive stages as follows: Vajra Recitation Stage (*vajrajāpa-krama*), Universally Pure Stage (*sarvaśuddhiviśuddhi-krama*), Self Consecration Stage (*svādhiṣṭhāna-krama*), Supremely-Secret-Bliss Enlightenment Stage (*paramarahasya-sukhābhisambodhi-krama*), and Integration Stage (*yuganaddha-krama*). These are arrayed

²³ Tsong Khapa makes a point of noting (in his *Extremely Brilliant Lamp*) that the *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* seems to be authentic, since it is quoted as an authority by both Smṛti[jñānakīrti] and Abhaya[karagupta].

²⁴ The reader interested in the *Bodhicittavivarāṇa* may consult the following notices: Nalinaksha Dutt, "Bodhisattva-Prātimokṣasūtra," *Indian Historical Quarterly* (VII, 259ff.), P. C. Bagchi, "Bodhicitta-vivarāṇa of Nāgārjuna," *IHQ* (VII, 740-741), and Prabhubhai Patel, "Bodhicittavivarāṇa," *IHQ* (VIII, 790-793). An edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts, along with a Hindi translation, has recently been published: cf. Ācārya Gyeltsen Namdol, *Bodhicitta-Vivarāṇa of Ācārya Nāgārjuna and Bodhicitta-Bhāvanā of Ācārya Kamalaśīla*, (Sarnath, 1991).

as a sequential series at the very outset of the work. Nāgārjuna writes:

The yogī abiding in Vajra Recitation
will win the Mind-objective [stage].
Abiding in the Magical Illusion-like samādhi,
[He] will be purified by the Reality Limit.
Arising from the Reality Limit,
[He] will win the Non-dual Intuitive Wisdom.
Abiding in the Integration Samādhi,
There is nothing further to learn.
This perfected yogī
Is Mahāvajradhara,
Endowed with the supreme of all forms,
And becomes omniscient.²⁵

In this passage, the names of the stages vary slightly from the way they appear in the chapter titles. The second stage, after the Vajra Recitation, is here called the “mind-objective” (*citta-nidhyapti*). This term is also used in the *Pradīpoddyotana* of Candrakīrti. Āryadeva, on the other hand, favors the terms “Mind Isolation” (*citta-viveka*) or “Mental Purification” (*cittaviśuddhi*) for this stage. Regardless of particular terminology, it is clear that there is a step-wise progression described here from the Vajra Recitation to this Mind-objective stage. The process continues to the Magical Illusion-like Samādhi (*māyopamasamādhi*), through the Reality Limit (*bhūtakoti*), up to Integration (*yuganaddha*). This five-stage development is, of course, the crux of Nāgārjuna’s work. It may be noted that these first two--*māyopamasamādhi* and *bhūtakoti*--are alternative ways of referring to the stages as they appear in the titles of Chapters Three and Four of the *Pañcakrama*, the Self-consecration (*svādhiṣṭhāna*) and Enlightenment (*abhibodhi*) Stages. These stages, their terminology, and their sequence will be discussed at greater length below in the context of our discussion of Āryadeva’s *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*, as this step-wise progress is the major focus of this latter work as well.

In discussing the nature of the *Pañcakrama*, one must note that--though the text as a whole is attributed to Nāgārjuna--it is by no means certain that he composed it in its entirety. The colophon of the second chapter--on the “Sarvaśuddhiviśuddhi-krama”--

²⁵ *Pañcakrama*, I.5-7. [My translation]

unmistakably indicates that the author was someone named “Śākyamitra.” Further, there is special mention of the fact that this chapter bears its own, unique title (*aparanāma*), the *Unexcelled Intention* (*Anuttarasam̐dhi*). Similarly, when this part of the *Pañcakrama* is quoted in the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*,²⁶ it is in fact cited as the *Unexcelled Intention*, not as the *Pañcakrama*--strong evidence for its status as a discrete text. Furthermore, this chapter has a very distinctive, alliterative verse of homage at the outset,²⁷ while the other chapters of the *Pañcakrama* begin with rather brief and understated homages which are integrated with the conventional expression of commitment to teach. These circumstances all seem to suggest that the Second Chapter was not, in fact, authored by Nāgārjuna, but was an independent text which was assimilated to Nāgārjuna’s work--perhaps replacing Nāgārjuna’s original chapter on this subject.

This issue sparked quite a bit of debate in later periods, with different figures weighing in with a variety of theories. Bu-ston, for example, tried to argue for Nāgārjuna’s authorship of this chapter by suggesting that “Śākyamitra” was perhaps Nāgārjuna’s ordination name.²⁸ Tsong Khapa, seemingly dissatisfied with this approach, suggests that the Second Chapter was written partially by Nāgārjuna and partially by his disciple Śākyamitra.²⁹ He further mentions a number of discussions regarding this by a range of

²⁶ CMP, Chapter Four, sDe-dge f. 79b¹.

²⁷ namaste ‘stu namaste ‘stu namaste ‘stu namo namaḥ/ evaṃ stute namaste ‘stu kaḥ stotā kaś ca samstutaḥ// PK II.1.

²⁸ Obermiller, p. 129-30

²⁹ In this, he may be following a tradition mentioned by A-myes-zhabs, who cites a passage from ‘Gos, author of the *Dose of Guhyasamāja Emptiness* (*gSang-’dus sTong-thun*), that “Up to ‘you will certainly be liberated from the prison of existence’ was composed by the Master Nāgārjuna, after ‘this nature of wisdom’ is Śākyamitra’s supplement and he put his name at the end of the second stage of the *Five Stages*.” (Cf. A-myes, *op. cit.* 17b) If we credit this tradition, this would make verses 1-44 of PK II the work of Nāgārjuna and verses 45-87 that of Śākyamitra. It is interesting in light of this that Āryadeva’s work does not cite any verses from PK II after verse 44.

commentators--all of whom, it seems, felt this issue demanded resolution.³⁰

In this context, it is worthwhile to reflect on the fact that the problem of apocryphal scriptures was, in fact, well-known in Indian and Tibetan intellectual circles. There is considerable discussion in later works of the validity of textual attributions--not infrequently resulting in the rejection of certain works as fraudulent. For instance, mKhas-grub dGe-legs dPal-bzang in his major work on the Creation Stage of the Guhyasamāja, the *Guhyasamāja Creation Stage Ocean of Accomplishment*, made the following statement concerning the *corpus* of Ārya works:

Since the *Commentary on the Root Tantra* (*rtsa rgyud kyi 'grel pa*) and the *Maṇḍala Rite* (*dkyil chog*) ascribed to the Ārya [Nāgārjuna], the *Garland of Jewels* (*nor bu'i 'phreng ba*), *Clear Import* (*don gsal*), and *Summarized Stages* (*rim pa khongs su bsdu ba*) ascribed to Nāgabodhi, the *Ornament of Realizations* root and autocommentary (*mngon rtogs rgyan rtsa ba rang 'grel dang bcas pa*) ascribed to Candra[kīrti], and so on, are nothing but mis-ascribed counterfeits, one should not rely on them.³¹

We see here that two works attributed in their colophons to Nāgārjuna--the commentary on the Guhyasamāja Root Tantra (sometimes considered two works: one commentary on the first seventeen chapters and another on the eighteenth) and the *Maṇḍala Rite Twenty*--are considered spurious attributions. Numerous commentators make this assertion--particularly with regard to the *Maṇḍala Rite Twenty*, as it seems to contradict with the widely-cited *Maṇḍala Rite Twenty* composed by Nāgabodhi, Nāgārjuna's close disciple. The *Guhyasamāja Commentary* as well is thought to be spurious both because it refers to the Jñānapāda Tradition (thought to be chronologically later than Nāgārjuna) and because it, too, is not consonant with the other authoritative teachings of the Ārya Tradition.

³⁰ According to Tsong Khapa, Rin-chen bZang-po felt that all five texts were composed by Nāgārjuna. Chag Lotsawa avoided the issue (of which five were the "five stages") by translating all five as separate texts. Abhaya and Samayavajra hold that the *Anuttarasamādhi* is by Śākyamitra, and that the *Piṇḍikṛta-sādhana* is the first of the five stages.

³¹ mKhas-grub dGe-legs dPal-bzang, *gSang-'dus bsKyed-rim dNgos-grub rGya-mtsho* (Varanasi, 1969). 18a⁴⁵.

These, and many similar claims, bear witness to a seemingly vigorous critical practice in the Tibetan Guhyasamāja Tradition. Given that most of the indigenous critics are far more knowledgeable about the tradition and its literature than even the best modern Western scholars--the systematic analysis of these discussions, their claims, counter-claims, evidence, and modes of argumentation would seem to be an important step in advancing discussion of this issue. Though, in the end, we might not agree with them (for instance, the chronological anomalies which troubled these critics might in the final analysis constitute evidence that the Ārya Tradition was, in fact, posterior to that of Jñānapāda), nonetheless the criteria used by the indigenous commentators need to be discerned and given serious consideration alongside other, more contemporary, criteria.

The Works of Āryadeva

Before embarking on a detailed study of the chief works of Āryadeva in the following section, let us briefly examine the range of works which are attributed to him overall. As Āryadeva is universally considered the closest disciple of the great master Nāgārjuna, his works are accordingly treated with the greatest respect. There are twelve works attributed to Āryadeva in the Tantric Commentary section (*rgyud 'grel*) of the Peking edition of the Tibetan canon--fourteen in the sDe-dge. Of these, seven deal with some aspect of the Guhyasamāja system. Of these seven, four seem to me to be reasonably authentic at first glance, though further research is necessary before any final determination can be made. These four works--the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa*, *Svādhiṣṭhāna-prabheda*, and *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*--are translated in their entirety in Part Three.

Among these traditionally-accepted works, Āryadeva's *magnum opus* on Tantric yoga is, of course, the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* (CMP). This work expands on the details of the various stages of the path of Unexcelled Yoga Tantra as set forth in the *Pañcakrama*, elaborating on many of the same issues and also clarifying the broader context within which the five stages are to be understood. The following chart demonstrates the

correlation of the eleven chapters of the CMP to the five chapters of the *Pañcakrama*.

<u>CMP chapter</u>	<u>Pañcakrama Chapter</u>
1. Removal of Doubts (<i>saṃśaya-pariccheda</i>)	1. Vajrajāpa-krama
2. Removal of doubts about Body Isolation	2. Sarvaśuddhiviśuddhi-krama
3. Removal of doubts about Speech Isolation	3. Svādhiṣṭhāna-krama
4. Removal of doubts about Mind Isolation	4. Paramarahasyasukhābhīśambodhi-krama
5. Removal. . .re: Limits of Karma	5. Yuganaddha-krama
6. Removal. . .re: Conventional Reality	
7. Removal. . .re: Ultimate Reality	
8. Removal. . .re: Integration	
9. Removal. . .re: Practice with Elaboration	
10 Rmvl. . .re: Practice without Elaboration	
11. . .Practice completely w/o Elaboration	

The relationship of these two works is extremely close. The CMP cites many of the same authoritative scriptures of the Esoteric Communion literature as the *Pañcakrama* in the same pedagogical contexts. This is especially evident in the correspondence between the First Chapter (*Vajrajāpakrama*) of the *Pañcakrama* and the Third Chapter (*vākviveka-saṃśayachedaḥ*) of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*. The CMP provides the larger context of the practices outlined in the *Pañcakrama*, and describes the same items in greater detail.

The CMP is supplemented by three smaller works which stand as companion pieces--each dealing with one of the three median stages--the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* (on the Mental Purification (*citta-viśuddhi*) or Mind Isolation (*citta-viveka*) stage), the *Svādhiṣṭhānaprabheda* (on the Self-consecration (*svādhiṣṭhana*) or Magic Body (*māyā-deha*) stage), and the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa* (on the Enlightenment (*abhibodhi*) or Clear Light (*prabhāsvara*) stage). No writings on the prior stage of Speech Isolation (*vāg-viveka*) or on the ultimate stage of Integration (*yuganaddha*) have been discovered.³² There are many questions which arise concerning the interrelationship of the comprehensive *Lamp of Integrated Practice* and its three ancillary works. Tsong Khapa notes that the authenticity of the first two--the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* and the *Svādhiṣṭhānaprabheda*--is

³² As noted above, there is a text attributed to him (the *Niṣpannakramāntaka*) which would seem to correspond to this latter stage, but it is generally considered to be a false attribution and, indeed, does not appear to be of a piece with the other works.

vouched for by the fact that they are cited as authorities in the works of Abhaya.³³ The last, however--the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*--is not vouched for in this way. Further questions exist regarding the authenticity of this work. Tsong Khapa claims:

In regard to the claim that this master [Āryadeva] composed the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*, the Tibetan sages allowed that it seemed to be somewhat controversial, but since it seems to disagree greatly with the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, it is a false attribution.³⁴

It is not entirely clear to me how the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa* contradicts the CMP, but it is undeniably a rather strange text. It does not have the clarity and cohesion of the CMP and the SKP. Tsong Khapa seems not to have noticed the curious circumstance that the CMP itself seems to cite the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*, though not by name. Three three verses are cited at the beginning of Chapter Seven (which itself concerns the *abhibodhi-krama*). Āryadeva does not specifically note the source of these verses, but introduces them as “spoken words” (*gsungs pa'i tshig*). The third verse is from an unknown source. The first two, however, appear in the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*. As Āryadeva is meticulous in properly attributing the various sources he cites throughout his work, his failure to specify whom he is citing in this instance leads me to believe that he did mean to cite his own work. Consequently, I have provisionally included the AKU among his works. However, I suspect it is more likely that the AKU is a composite work--as it includes verses which come from a variety of sources, including a long, unattributed citation from the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* itself.

While on the subject of the inter-referentiality of these texts, it is notable that the *Lamp* itself seems to be cited in the *Self-Consecration Stage*, though this circumstance is somewhat murky. The Sanskrit text of the *Svādhiṣṭhāna-prabheda* cites a work called the *Sūtaka* as a source for the Hundred [Buddha] Clans. In the Tibetan translation, this title is

³³ Tsong Khapa, *ibid.* p. 49. [Thurman translation]

³⁴ Tsong Khapa, *ibid.* 49. [Thurman translation]

rendered as *sPyod-bsdus*--the Tibetan abbreviation of the *Caryāmelāpaka*[*pradīpa*] (*spyod pa bsdus pa*['i sgron ma]). The Indian and Tibetan translation team obviously felt (or knew) that *Sūtaka* was another name for the CMP.³⁵ I have not seen this confirmed in any other text; however, it is not unlikely that the author of such interrelated treatises would have revised them together and added suitable cross-references so as to make them easier to use in concert. One may compare, in this regard, the mutual referentiality of the *Vajrāvali* and *Niṣpannayogāvali* of Abhayākaragupta.³⁶

Finally, what of the other three, dubious Tantric works of Āryadeva? These include a work on the rite of cremation of the dead (*Śmaśāna-vidhī*), a treatment of the consummation of the Perfection Stage (*Niṣpannakramāntaka*), and a commentary on Candrakīrti's *Pradīpoddyotana* (*Pradīpoddyotana-nāma-ṭikā*). None of these works, however, are commonly accepted as the work of Āryadeva by subsequent tradition. The doubts regarding the latter two works is clear: both of these works presuppose the existence of Candrakīrti's *Pradīpoddyotana*, which would not have been known to Āryadeva according to the traditional history. It is primarily for this reason that Tsong Khapa rejects these texts as spurious. Bu-ston refers to the *Niṣpannakramāntaka* as the *Explanation of the Four Procedures--ya, ra, la, va, etc.* (*Ya ra la va la sogs pa tshul bzhir bshad pa*),³⁷ after the verse which is cited and explained at the beginning of this work. It is strange that Bu-ston, who had written a commentary on Candrakīrti's *Pradīpoddyotana*, did not notice that this verse (and another further on in the work) is lifted verbatim from Candrakīrti. Strangely, he *does* mention that the attribution of the *Pradīpoddyotana-*

³⁵ If this is in fact a nickname of the CMP, it is very interesting. A *sūta* is a sort of charioteer/herald of a king. It is not too much of a stretch to envision that the CMP acts in just such a fashion for the "King" *Pañcakrama*--conveying its meaning (in clear prose) and announcing its greatness--but this is mere speculation.

³⁶ This fact was brought to my attention by the late Pema Losang Chogyen, whose extensive work of editing and translating these texts will hopefully be available to scholars before long.

³⁷ Bu-ston, *Chos-'byung* (Lhasa, 1988). 279.

abhisam̐dhi-prakāśika-vyākhyā-ṭikā to Āryadeva is dubious chronologically³⁸--for, I assume, the same reasons--but nonetheless fails to note the same about the *Niṣpannakramāntaka*. Tsong Khapa, however, did notice this discrepancy. Given our attempt to understand these works in a traditional light, I have followed the predominant traditional view in not accepting them as Āryadeva's works. Of course, ultimately, this question will need to be seriously considered and--if it seems that these latter works were written by the same author as the others--we shall have reasonable grounds to suspect the traditional history.

The Works of Nāgabodhi, Śākyamitra, and Candrakīrti

Supplementing the seminal works of Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva are the writings of three other putative disciples of Nāgārjuna: Nāgabodhi, Śākyamitra, and Candrakīrti. Of these, the first and last are of particular importance given the authority in which their works are held by subsequent commentators. The works of Nāgabodhi and Candrakīrti stand as reference points for the tradition. The works attributed to Śākyamitra on the other hand are, in general, considered spurious by indigenous critics.

Second in eminence to Āryadeva, Nāgabodhi is a writer of great importance in the Ārya Tradition. If Āryadeva's contribution to an understanding of the Guhyasamāja Tantra may be said to focus on the Perfection Stage, Nāgabodhi's is in regard to the Creation Stage. His most influential works on the Guhyasamāja are the (previously mentioned) *Maṇḍala Rite Twenty* (*Śrīguhyasamāja-maṇḍalopāyikā-viṃśati-vidhi-nāma*)--which describes the initiation ritual--and a work on the Creation Stage meditation entitled *Presented Stages of the Guhyasamāja Sādhana* (*Samājasādhana-vyavasthāna-krama*). In addition to these works, there are no less than three commentaries on the *Pañcakrama* attributed to this author, all of which, however, are considered apocryphal by most later commentators. These include the *Pañcakrama Commentary* called "Jewel Garland"

³⁸ Cf. Obermiller, *ibid.* 132.

(*Pañcakrama-ṭikā-maṇimālā-nāma*)³⁹ the *Clarification of the Meaning of the Pañcakrama* (*Pañcakramārtha-bhāskaraṇa-nāma*),⁴⁰ and the *Personal Instruction on Condensing the Stages* (*Kramāntarbhāvopadeśa-nāma-prakaraṇa*).⁴¹ Tsong Khapa notes that the *Jewel Garland* was accepted by many earlier Tibetans (he probably has Bu-ston in mind here), but that it had since been deemed a false attribution, due to citations in the text inconsistent with an attribution to Nāgabodhi. He also mentions the interesting fact that Chag Lotsawa theorized that the last text--*Condensing the Stages*--was written by another named "Nāgabodhi." Further consideration of these texts is in order after they have been adequately edited, translated, and analyzed.

It is not quite clear where to place Śākyamitra in regard to the Ārya Tradition. Tāranātha's *History* tells us that "He was also surely a disciple of ācārya Nāgārjuna. However, his account is not read or heard of."⁴² Other than the chapter of the *Pañcakrama* which seems to be attributed to him, there is only one work of his on the Guhyasamāja--a partial commentary on the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*. This work, the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa-ṭikā*, however, is, to my knowledge, not accepted as authentic by any ancient authority. Tsong Khapa suggests that "the commentary on the *Integrated Practice* attributed to Śākyamitra might possibly be by some author of a similar name, but if it is supposed to be the Śākyamitra [who was a] disciple of the Ārya [Nāgārjuna], it is definitely not his work."⁴³ A-myes-zhabs is equally terse in his assessment. He says:

³⁹ *nor bu'i 'phreng-ba*; a commentary on Nāgārjuna's *Five Stages*, called *Pañcakrama-ṭikā-maṇimālā-nāma* (Pek. 2697, Tōh. 1840). Bu-ston, however, seems to accept this work at least as authentic in his *History of Buddhism*. Cf. Obermiller, *op cit.* 132.

⁴⁰ *don gsal*; another work on the Five Stages: the *Pañcakramārtha-bhāskaraṇa-nāma* (Pek. 2702, Tōh. 1833)

⁴¹ *rim pa khongs su bsdu ba*; the *Kramāntarbhāvopadeśa-nāma-prakaraṇa* (Pek. 2677, Tōh. 1812).

⁴² Tāranātha, *op. cit.* 128.

⁴³ Tsong Khapa, *rim lnga gsal sgron*, Thurman, trans. p. 52.

Of the four Heart Sons [of Nāgārjuna], the one called “Śākya bZhes-gnyen,” or “Śākyamitra,” is the author of the second stage of the *Five Stages*, as demonstrated above. He is not the same as the one called “the Yoga School Śākyamitra,” since that Yoga Schooler cites the works of Bhavaviveka frequently. This [Śākyamitra, which we are discussing] is a supreme Heart Son of Nāgārjuna. Although Bhavaviveka was an actual disciple of Nāgārjuna, since he is not a senior student, [this Śākyamitra] would not have cited from his treatises.

Further, the “Śākyamitra” who composed a commentary on the *Lamp of Integrated Practice*, is also not the same. Nor is the “Śākyamitra” who was a holder of the Jñānapāda Tradition of the Esoteric Communion the same, as there is a discrepancy in their dates.⁴⁴

As a result, excepting again the possibility of his authorship (or partial authorship) of the Second Chapter of the *Pañcakrama*, no other texts of the relevant Śākyamitra have been discovered.

Candrakīrti is the last of the great Indian luminaries of the principal phase of the Ārya Tradition. His primary contribution to the literature of the Guhyasamāja is his masterwork on Tantric hermeneutics, the *Guhyasamājatantra-Pradīpodyotana-nāmatīkā-ṣaṭkoṭivṛyākhyā*. This is one of the few texts of the tradition--besides the *Pañcakrama*--available to us in Sanskrit. Unfortunately, as for most of this literature, the extant text is a unique witness, somewhat corrupted, and very poorly edited in its published form.⁴⁵ On the other hand, as is also the case for most of this literature, we do have a fine Tibetan translation of the root text and several commentaries. This text is held in high esteem by the

⁴⁴ A-myes Zhabs, *ibid.* f. 41b¹⁻⁴. yang thugs sras bzhi'i shā kya bshes gnyen nam shā kya mi tra ni gong du bstan pa ltar rim lnga'i rim pa gnyis pa mdzad mkhan de yin/ yo ga ba shā kya bshes gnyen bya ba de dang 'di mi gcig ste/ yo ga ba des legs ldan byed kyi lung mang po drangs shing/ 'di ni klu sgrub kyi thugs sras mchog tu gyur pa cig yin la/ legs ldan byed ni klu sgrub kyi dngos slob tsam yin kyang/ sras kyi thu bo min pas de'i bstan bcos nas lung 'dren mdzad pa mi 'byung bas so// yang spyod bsdus la 'grel pa mdzad mkhan gyi shā kya bshes gnyen bya ba gcig byung ba de yang 'di dang mi gcig cing/ gsang ba 'dus pa ye shes zhabs lugs pa'i brgyud 'dzin shā kya bshes gnyen zer ba cig yod pa de dang yang dus mi 'grigs pas mi gcig par bshad pa yin no//

⁴⁵ Chakravarti, ed., etc.

later tradition, as it is the highest authority which elaborates on the interpretative procedures of the Tantric traditions. What the stages works do for Tantric practices--that is, allow one to understand each practice in its proper developmental context--this work does for Tantric theories. After detailing the various categories of statements made in the Tantric texts, Candrakīrti goes through the text of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* and indicates which statements are to be taken in which sense(s).

There are two other works attributed to Candrakīrti which, however, are not accepted as authentic by later tradition: a *Vajrasattva Sādhana* and a *Guhyasamāja Ornament of Realizations*.⁴⁶ mKhas-grub⁴⁷ and Tsong Khapa both assert that the *Guhyasamāja Ornament of Realizations* is counterfeit. Strangely, this work is not mentioned at all by A-myes. All three, however, assert that he did not author the *Vajrasattva Sādhana*. They note that it is an Indian text, not a Tibetan forgery, as it is cited in works of Tathāgatarakṣita and Lilāvajra (and, we might now add, there is an extant Sanskrit MS). However, this work--a *Guhyasamāja sādhanā*--seems to contradict the two *sādhanas* composed by Nāgārjuna. As a result, the tradition claims it must have been composed by someone else--perhaps, interestingly, by a "Candrakīrti II."⁴⁸

Analysis of the translated works of Āryadeva

Having provided an overview of the primary works of the Ārya Tradition, we may now examine the finer details of the works of Āryadeva, translations of which may be consulted in Part Three of this work.

⁴⁶ *mNgon rtogs rgyan rtsa ba rang 'grel dang bcas pa*; I assume this refers to the work found in the bsTan-'gyur called *Samājābhisamayālaṅkāravṛtti* (Tōh. 1817, Pek. 2681).

⁴⁷ *dNgos-grub rgya-mtsho*, f. 18a⁴⁻⁵.

⁴⁸ Cf. A-myes-zhabs, *op. cit.* 18b. A-myes credits the Sa-skyā Pandita with this theory of a Candrakīrti II.

Caryāmelāpakapradīpa

As Alex Wayman has indicated, “In this tradition the greatest work on important phases of tantric praxis is Āryadeva’s *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*.”⁴⁹ That it is meant to serve as a companion piece to Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama* is clear. The discussion is clearly predicated on that of the *Pañcakrama*, though it does not describe itself as a commentary *per se*. (Later, Tsong-kha-pa would characterize the work as a “meaning commentary” (*don ‘grel*), i.e. one which unpacks the essential message without necessarily dwelling on the words of the source text.)⁵⁰ One major aim of the *Lamp* would seem to be to elucidate the stages of Guhyasamāja practice through an unpacking in prose of the details presented in brief, versified form in the *Pañcakrama*, while simultaneously drawing attention to passages from authoritative Sūtras and Tantras which (ostensibly) teach these various points. In so doing, the CMP draws support for its assertions from a broad range of the most authoritative Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna scriptures.

How is this work laid out? As seen in the chart above, the text is composed in eleven chapters, each of which is called a *saṃśaya-pariccheda*, or removal of doubts, concerning a stage or aspect of Tantric practice. The first chapter is devoted to a general removal of doubts about the teachings of the tradition. The next three chapters deal with problematical points relating to the stages of Body Isolation, Speech Isolation, and Mind Isolation (the *kāya-*, *vāg-*, and *citta-viveka*-s). There then follows a chapter concerning the “Limits of Karma,” in which the processes of death--the central focus of yogic intervention in the Buddhist Tantric traditions--are explained and clarified. The sequence of stages is then resumed with two chapters detailing the nature of the Two Realities, the Conventional and the Ultimate--referring, of course, in this context not to the famous philosophical distinction, but to the Magic Body (*māyādeha*) and the Clear Light Transparency

⁴⁹ A. Wayman, *Yoga of the Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Delhi, 1977). 93.

⁵⁰ *Collected Works of rJe Rinpoche*, vol. ja, f. 39a².

(*prabhāsvara*). These constitute the two major elements whose integration gives its name to the fifth and final stage of *yuganaddha*, or Integration--the subject matter of the Eighth Chapter. There then follow three concluding chapters which explain the fascinating post-Integration practices, which serve both to fix and to express the enlightened spirit as understood in this tradition.

With this overview in mind, let us look more closely at the contribution some of these chapters make. The central thrust of the First Chapter is especially noteworthy. The entire text is cast in the form of a series of questions posed by a Vajra Student (*vajrasīṣya*) to his Vajra Mentor (*vajraguru*), who removes his uncertainties. The student inquires whether the Vajrayāna path is “sudden” or “gradual.” In addressing this question, Āryadeva takes his stand firmly in the camp of gradualists. Interestingly, the Vajra Mentor quotes the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* (a sūtra held in great esteem by most “subitists”) and also the *Śūraṅgamasamādhisūtra* to illustrate the gradual education which this tradition advocates. Typically, the “sudden/gradual” problem is resolved by referring to an “instantaneous” purification at the end of the “gradual” process. This discussion is noteworthy, since, although a gradualist message is implicit in the *Pañcakrama*, the message tends to remain under the surface. Nāgārjuna never belabors the point. He describes the process as “like a staircase” and leaves it at that. This is not true of Āryadeva’s work. The issue is of such import in his eyes, that he devotes the greater part of the opening chapter to this view. We may, with some justification then, deduce that this was a vital issue for the audience he was seeking to address. Clearly, a major aim of these authors is to establish not only the details of, but also the very legitimation for, a graduated path to enlightenment in the Tantric tradition. Other than Nāgārjuna’s *Pañcakrama*, the *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa* seems to be the first major Indian work which details the progressive attainment of Tantric enlightenment in what, in later Tibetan tradition, would come to be known as a “stages of the path” (*lam rim*) genre. It is manifest, in this light, that Tantric stages works such as the *sNgags-rim Chen-mo* of Tsong-kha-pa are by no means a Tibetan innovation.

The Second Chapter elucidates the Body Isolation process. The intent here is to negate the reality of the ordinary body and to establish instead that all the inner and outer elements are in fact the magical transformation (*adhiṣṭhāna*) of the Five Tathāgatas. To this end, the Vajra Mentor reminds his student of the Buddha's teaching that the body has no real existence--that it is merely a "heap" or "accumulation" of various substances. He asserts that the reason they perdure in such a manner is through the "pride of ordinariness"--that type of ego-function which keeps a practitioner alienated from his or her fundamental, divine, enlightened nature (and the responsibilities associated therewith).

The task for the student, therefore, is to learn to recognize this divine reality. To this end, the Master teaches what becomes known as the doctrine of the Hundred Clans. In short, the five aggregates, the four elements (both as interior and exterior), the six sense media, the five sensory winds, and the intuitive wisdoms, are all sub-divided into five and correlated with the Five Tathāgatas--Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Amitābha, Ratnasambhava, and Amoghasiddhi.⁵¹ In this way, the student learns of the creation of a divine body "established from collections of sub-atomic particles of all Transcendent Lords (*tathāgatas*) by the process of the hundred clans." The Mentor then teaches him the manner in which these hundred are assimilated to five clans, three clans, and one clan, and clarifies the nature of the creation of a vajra body.

The Third and Fourth chapters detail the Speech and Mind Isolations in which these, too, are isolated from the ordinary appearance. The former is fundamentally a description of the Unexcelled Yoga practice of *prāṇāyāma*, the yoga of the vital winds. The latter chapter describes the fundamental nature of mind, free of its modifications, and, most importantly, constitutes an extremely influential discussion of the doctrine of the three luminances (*ābhāsa*) and the eighty instinctual natures (*prakṛti*), which are said to emerge during the process of the auto-cosmogony of the individual and, subsequently, re-emerge

⁵¹ A complete chart of these correspondences, based on Chapter Two of the CMP, can be found in Appendix I.

during the yogic practice of the Tantric path.⁵² In this context, Āryadeva describes in some detail the processes of death, the between, and rebirth.

The mentor notes that the Speech Isolation is “not the sphere of those who practice Creation Stage,” signaling that it is this point in the process which marks the boundary between the Creation and Perfection Stages. He notes that the processes he is about to describe--“wind reality,” the practice of *prāṇāyāma*--must be mastered in order to attain Speech Isolation, or “mantra reality.” He describes the subtle wind yoga and enumerates the names and functions of the ten vital and sensory winds. The student then inquires about the nature of “mantra reality,” and is told that this teaching is only found in the Explanatory Tantras. A long citation from the *Samdhivvyākaraṇa* is indicated as authoritative on this point. Within the tradition, this phase is considered one of the most difficult to understand--and it is no different from the outside. The practices involve extremely complicated breathing and visualization yogas which are all described in language which is anything but explicit. This seems to be one area in which the early authors of Ārya Tradition did not seem to feel it appropriate to commit the oral tradition to writing.⁵³ The chapter concludes with a discussion of the power of mantras and the qualities of the yogī who abides in this speech vajra samādhi.

Chapter Four addresses the nature of and progress through the next stage, that of Mind Isolation. Here, the mentor urges the student to seek the nature of his own mind. To this effect, he teaches him about the nature of the mind according to general Buddhist notions, drawing on scriptures such as the *Laṅkāvatāra Sūtra* and the *Bhadrapāla-paripṛcchā-sūtra*. This is basically the teaching found in Buddhist literature from the

⁵² One might profitably compare this process to that found in the *darśana-mārga* of the non-Tantric meditational schools in which the realization of the four truths is correlated to the abandonment of various proclivities (*anuśaya*)--28, 19, 19, and 22. (Cf. Griffiths, in *Buddhist Spirituality*, p. 55-56.)

⁵³ Indeed, the Dalai Lama told me that while he felt it was appropriate to make these Indian texts public, he felt that works such as Tsong Khapa's *Extremely Brilliant Lamp*, which does make these yogic techniques explicit, were not suitable for such public distribution.

beginning--this mind is clear light transparency (*prabhāsvara*), obscured by adventitious defilements.”⁵⁴ As the Mentor says, “the Mahāyāna Sūtras teach that consciousness has no color, no characteristics, and no shape, being mere self-aware intuitive wisdom.” That is the ultimate nature of mind. To know its conventional nature, however, one needs to consult Tantras such as the *Guhyasamāja*. The Mentor then presents the crucial conception of the evolution of beings from the fundamental clear light transparency mind through the stages of imminence, radiance, luminance, wind, fire, water, and earth--these stages being reversed in the death process. The mentor gives the important characteristics of these states of mind--in particular the “three luminances” (luminance, radiance, and imminence)--and completely enumerates the eighty instinctual natures (*prakṛti*) which are correlated with these states. As the Mentor assures his student, “the yogī who understands the categories of the appearance of the instinctual natures and their wind-mounts will know the fluctuation of the mental activities of all sentient beings of the past, present, and future.” The chapter ends with a discussion of how these winds and minds function to create the processes of death, the between, and rebirth, causing beings to “take rebirth again and again in the five realms [of existence]”. . . “in the manner of a Persian water wheel.”

This discussion leads quite naturally into the topic of Chapter Five, which is a short digression on the issue of the “Limits of Karma”--that is, on the question of how a purified mental body (as advocated in the Tantras) can be produced by the very same processes that result in an ordinary body bound by karma. The Mentor begins by explaining the ten paths of non-virtuous karma in a quite conventional manner. He then explains that the one who has realized Mind Isolation does not become involved in the creation of either virtuous or non-virtuous karma.

Chapters Six and Seven go on to discuss the Two Realities: the Conventional and the Ultimate. The first, again, refers to the creation of a Magic Body which is the distinctive specialty of the *Guhyasamāja* and other “Father” Tantras. This technique also

⁵⁴ Cf. *Āṅguttara Nikāya* I.10

known as the Self-Consecration (*svādhiṣṭhāna*)--itself a major theme of the Unexcelled Yoga literature. The Vajra Student observes that the processes described up to this point do not result in the creation of an actual divine body. He seeks to learn the special procedure through which one can create an actual deity body from mere intuitive wisdom--this is the point known as “deity reality”--which even tenth-stage bodhisattvas of the exoteric tradition do not know.

In response, the Mentor describes how a magical divine body “with five-colored light rays and endowed with various qualities” emerges. He cites the *Enquiry of Bhadrāpāla Scripture* under its alternative name, the *Transmigration of Consciousness Sutra*, in order to demonstrate the structural similarity of this process with that of ordinary transmigration. He also discusses the similarity of these with states of sleep and dream. He concludes by illustrating how the Transcendent Lords manipulate these processes in their divine activity, “abiding for as long as saṃsāra exists by the Magical Illusion-like Samādhi.”

The subsequent chapter, which clarifies doubts about the “Ultimate Reality,” describes the fundamental Clear Light Transparency awareness in which the practitioner is said to immerse and purify the divine body created by the process of Self-consecration. There is an excellent description of a ritual procedure in which the student offers a “well-educated consort” and other offerings to the Mentor, praises him, and is then given a series of initiations and instructions. This discussion follows very closely the parallel passage at the beginning of the Fourth Chapter of the *Pañcakrama*. After a brief comment on the “outer” and “inner” Enlightenments--a recapitulation of the treatment of the luminances from previous chapters--the Mentor gives a long list of names used to refer to ultimate reality used in Buddhism, which are applicable to this fundamental, enlightened mind. It is here, at the end of Chapter Seven, that Āryadeva gives his important description of the Enlightenment of Śākyamuni--which became the definitive story of the Unexcelled Schools (as noted, for instance, in the well-known work of mKhas-grub dGe-legs dPal-bzang).

This enlightenment--which is reached also by the Vajra Student at this point in the text--is known as Integration, which stage is described in the succeeding chapter.

Chapter Eight, then, deals with the characteristics of the perfected state of Integration, in which the Magic Body and the Clear Light Transparency awareness are brought to final consummation. This attainment is also called the Vajra-like Samādhi (*vajropama-samādhi*). The Mentor describes the final yogic emergence of the enlightened being:

a Vajra Body--indivisible and indestructible like a shadow, free of transmigration, free of impurity--it is free of all defiling instincts [and] has attained total mastery. That has the nature of form and it emerges like a fish [jumping] out of water or like one quickly awakening from sleep. [This] form has the nature of the Body of Supreme Joy and its name is "Mahāvajradhara."

He cites numerous scriptural verses which characterize this perfected state--ultimately, of course, ineffable. He again enumerates a list of names applicable to this state, concluding with a citation from the *Hero's Progress Samādhi Scripture*.

Finally, Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven discuss the Tantric practices known as *caryā*. These it classifies into three varieties, depending on the degree of *prapañca*, or "elaboration," involved: with, without, or completely without (*prapañca*, *niṣprapañca*, and *atyantaniṣprapañca-caryā*). It is worth noting that these *prapañca* are not the ordinary mental fabrications found in exoteric Buddhist works, but rather ritual *accoutrements* which enhance the post-Integration consummation and celebration of realization. Āryadeva devotes one chapter to each of these types of practice. Though it is not explicit here, given the overall gradualist message, the relegation of these practices to the post-enlightenment phase may be an important message Āryadeva seeks to communicate--an argument through implication.

Chapter Nine begins by noting that, for one who has attained this level of perfection, there is no distinction between meditation and non-meditation, or between an accomplisher, an accomplishment, and the accomplishing. However, at this stage, there still

remain the instincts (*vāsanā*) of defilement. The aim of engaging in “practices” seems to be the exhaustion these subtle instincts. The Mentor says:

abandoning the force of the instincts of beginningless defilement by equipoise in the signless *samādhi*, and having abandoned attitudes such as “if the one desiring to attain the effortless result practices, he practices” or “he does not practice,” one should overcome the eight worldly concerns and perform the yogi’s practices as explained.

These practices are the dharma of passion *par excellence*, for “from the distinctive cause, the distinctive effect arises” and “one-pointedness of mind will not be won by ascetic practices, for they annihilate the five senses.” The Mentor briefly addresses the Student’s concern that this seems to contradict the Buddha’s teaching regarding passion, hatred, and delusion as three poisons. In response, the Mentor offers a *resumé* of the Mahāyāna position on the relativity of poison and medicine: poisons becoming medicines and medicines becoming poisons, depending on circumstance. He concludes:

since this is a distinctive exhortation and was exhorted by the distinctive one, it becomes the cause which produces the delightful, distinctive result; there is no other way to accomplish the winning of the result of unexcelled great bliss. Therefore, that one, by the pleasures of food, residence, and so on, actualizes the perfection of omniscience endowed with the eight lordly qualities.

He describes various enjoyments of the Transcendent Lords as described in the *Tattvasamgraha*, the *Paramādyā*, and the *Buddhasamāyoga Tantras*. He also mentions that the Practices with Elaboration are not taught in the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* itself. Hence, Āryadeva is compelled to look elsewhere for the scriptural authorities which support this type of practice. The rest of the chapter describes how to arrange the yogi’s residence, the manner of arraying the female attendants as goddesses around the mandala, a fire-offering of foodstuffs, various erotic techniques to be employed with the companion-goddesses, the secret Tantric verbal and somatic signs, and so forth.

Chapter Ten continues with a treatment of the Practices without Elaboration. This also describes setting up a residence, but involves a merely visualized mandala and does without the ritual gestures, fire-pit, and so forth. There is an alternative array of goddesses

and further detail concerning erotic techniques.

Chapter Eleven details the Practices thoroughly without Elaboration. Another alternative yogic procedure is detailed, in which the yogi unites with a (visualized) “intuitive wisdom consort.” Yogic dissolution of the winds and the deities of the body maṇḍala is described again and the practitioner is told to “perform merely the practices of a Bhusuku.” It is here that one finds the “crazy wisdom” commonly associated with Tantrism. Such a *bhusuku* is devoted solely to eating, sleeping, and defecation. This is then followed by a citation from a work with the marvelous title *Scripture Explaining the Insane Discipline (unmattavrata-nirdeśa-sūtra)*. The results of this are described: the accomplishment of the Great Seal (*mahāmudrā*)--an enlightened body with the eight lordly qualities.

The final discussion in Chapter Eleven is most interesting. The Student asks whether one who does not have the time to engage in the Practices, may nonetheless accomplish perfection at the time of death. That is, may one make use of the Clear Light of the death process to engage in the consummation practices--rather than generate it through the wind yoga in the context of erotic practices. He specifically mentions farmers, workers, merchants, and public officials as those with duties which might keep them from devoting themselves full time to yogic practices. It seems that, at this time, the Tantric practices may have been taught to such “ordinary folk.” The Mentor reassures the Student that they, too, can be liberated by arising after death by the process of the Self-consecration. As he puts it:

If someone falls from the peak of the king of mountains,
 Even if they don't want to plummet, they will.
 If one gains the beneficial verbal transmission by the grace of the guru,
 Even if they don't want to be liberated, they will be.

One can see, then, that there is much in this text which is not found elsewhere in Buddhist Tantric literature. For a few topics, it is the very *locus classicus*; for others, it is nonetheless the most explicit and detailed discussion of them in the Indian literature. There are several illuminating elements in this work which bear brief mention.

For one, the *Lamp* can shed light on other monuments of Indian Tantric literature. Of immediate interest is its seemingly intimate connection to the well-known *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha* (SS), edited and published by Cecil Bendall at the beginning of this century. Bendall gave this work the subtitle, “An Anthology of Extracts from Buddhist Works Compiled by an Unknown Author to Illustrate the Doctrines of Scholastic and of Mystic Buddhism.” There is a clear structural similarity of this work to the CMP which suggests that the author of the SS drew heavily on the inspiration of the CMP in constructing his work. For example, a large number of the same passages of the same authoritative texts are cited in both works in nearly identical contexts. Further, as if this level of plagiarism were not enough, the SS directly quotes extensive passages from the CMP (though, in his defense, he does acknowledge his source).

On the other hand, the citation of the CMP found in the SS is somewhat misleading. As I mentioned above, Professor Wayman published an edition of the extract of the CMP found in the SS in an appendix to his work on the *Yoga of the Guhyasamāja Tantra*. It is a two-page extract which runs from page 57, line 17, of Bendall’s text, where it begins “*pustake Āryadeva-pādair. . .*” through page 59 line 10, where it cites a verse from the *Mūlasūtra*. However, a more thorough review shows that the quotation does not stop here--it merely skips to another section of the CMP. When the text continues “*Sarvadevasamāgamatantra ‘py āha,*” it is not citing a new authority--it is, rather, quoting Āryadeva’s quotation of the *Sarvadevasamāgama*, and continues to cite Āryadeva until page 64, line 6--that is, for another five full pages of Bendall’s text. Even after it leaves off the direct citation, the final few pages continue to rely quite clearly on the CMP. It seems apparent that whoever composed the SS considered the CMP of the highest authority. Further research on the relationship of these two works, as well as of the relationship of the CMP to the *subhāṣita* genre more generally, would be of the greatest interest.

With regard to its contribution to the study of Āryadeva in particular, most prominent are the questions it raises about the nature of this author’s *œuvre*. As previously

observed, the “scholarly method” applied to this question to date has been to neatly categorize the works ascribed to him by *genre* (i.e. Tantric or non-Tantric) and then to immediately shelve any such critical approach and subsequently act on the assumption that all of the ascribed Tantric works must have been written by a postulated “Tantrik Āryadeva.”

Further, this so-called “Tantric Āryadeva” has been represented to the scholarly world entirely through the well-known *Cittaviśuddhiprakarana*. This work is cited again and again in works on Buddhist Tantrism--A. L. Basham having gone so far as to have it stand as an exemplar not merely of Āryadeva, but of Buddhist Tantrism as a whole. The CVP is, however, a highly idiosyncratic text, more in the nature of a compendium than a deliberate work on Tantric practice. Its polyvocality was noted early on by Louis de La Vallée Poussin, who was surprised to find sloppy and unprofessional verses rubbing elbows with some that are quite elegant. This is not the case with the *Lamp*. It is clearly the most accomplished work attributed to Āryadeva and the most influential. It is coherent, well-written, and deliberate. Unlike some other works, its authenticity is not doubted by any native authority. Though the three ancillary works we have also translated are all attributed to “Āryadeva”--and were all catalogued together by Bu-ston--with the possible exception of the *Svādhiṣṭhānaprabheda*, legitimate doubts can be raised about the authorship of all of these texts. In my view, the *Lamp* should be used as the standard for Āryadeva’s Tantric corpus--much as the *Mūlamādhyamikakārikā* functions in studies of Nāgārjuna’s Mādhyamika corpus.

Why, one wonders, has this not been the case? Why have scholars of Indian Tantrism fixated on the CVP--an odd, short, fairly marginal text--rather than the masterful, comprehensive *Lamp* in their studies of Āryadeva? I believe this is directly attributable to the fact that many of them do not consult Tibetan translations--a situation lamented previously by Walter Eugene Clark in his 1951 Presidential Address to the American Oriental Society. One cannot avoid the conclusion that the CVP has been so over-rated

precisely because its Sanskrit text has been available since 1898. As we shall see, circumstances have changed, and a more objective assessment of the Tantric oeuvre of Āryadeva can now be attempted.

Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa

The *Examination of Mental Purification*, or *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* is commonly considered to be a work detailing the Guhyasamāja Perfection stage practice of Mind Isolation. Tsong Khapa states, however, that the CVP, while it is a “Tantric text teaching chiefly about the mind, “it “is not a special Esoteric Communion text.”⁵⁵ My reading of this text would seem to concur with that of Tsong Khapa. Nowhere in the CVP does Āryadeva lay out any teaching which is exclusive to or distinctive of the Guhyasamāja. In fact, I cannot but entertain serious doubts about whether this text was deliberately authored by one person, as it jumps around from one topic to another without any discernible internal logic.

The text begins with a lovely series of verses of homage to the Buddha as Padmanarteśvara, the Lotus Lord of the Dance (verses 1-4). Verses 6-20 articulate the notion that the result of an action depends on the intention with which it is done, not the action itself. An important claim is made regarding the view of “mind only” (*cittamātra*) which bears investigation in this context. It says (much as the first verse of the *Dhammapāda* does) that:

Of all things, mind is foremost.
Mind is chief, the swiftest.
Preceded by mind,
[One] speaks and acts.⁵⁶

And,

Hence, merit and sin
Are distinguished on the basis of intention.
Since it is thus stated by Tradition,
There are no faults belonging to one with a virtuous mind.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Tsong Khapa, EBL, [Thurman, trans.], 49

⁵⁶ CVP, verse 10.

⁵⁷ CVP, verse 16.

This teaching, of course, sets up the legitimation for the radical liberative art (*upāya*) of the Vajrayāna. These are briefly alluded to (in verses 21 and 22), which speak of commitment substances (*samaya*), before returning to the theme of antinomianism. Verses 23 to 34 again speak of the purity of mind and its contamination by concepts such as “saṃsāra” and “nirvāṇa”--purity and defilement. There is one verse here (verse 28) which seems to allude to the Mind Isolation practices. This is a reference to isolating the mind-jewel from ordinary conceptions, but it is murky and not systematically developed. Subsequently, verses 35 to 51 deal explicitly with the processes of converting poison (e.g. the poison of the passions) to medicine. This is called the “supreme alchemy (*rasāyana*).”

Six verses are then devoted to a poetical celebration of the heroism of the bodhisattva (verses 52-57). Again the tone changes (verses 58-65) and a harsh satire of typical Indian purification practices--what he calls “village religion” (*grāma-dharma*)--ensues. The inherent contradiction of this system is illustrated by noting how the inherent impurity of the body according to this system would preclude its purification by bathing rites, fasting, and the like. Further, there is a range of absurd consequences, such as dogs and fish becoming purified--a possibility not allowed by typical purity strictures. The text concludes by stating that the fundamental flaws are those of the mind and these cannot be removed by bathing.

At issue is the fundamental problem of the mis-perception of self. Verse 69 asserts that the “vajra intuitive wisdom” (*vajra-jñāna*) destroys the perception of self so that it will not recur. The work briefly mentions (verse 70) a “body created from the purity of selflessness” (*nairātmyaśucisamsrṣṭaḥ piṇḍaḥ*), before launching into a rather technical discussion of astrological phases and periods (verses 71-75) whose message seems to be “don’t worry about it.”

The opening of verse 76 initiates a discussion of a passage taken from the *Pañcakrama* regarding the viewing all things as having enlightened nature. Two verses describe the elements of the body as being six buddhas. An enumeration ensues of a set of

deities characteristic, not of the Guhyasamāja, but of the Mother Tantra systems: Vairocana, Vajrasūrya, Paramāśva, Padmanarteśvara, Śriheruka, and Vajrasattva. Verse 79-101 then detail the activities of one who engages in this practice and “does all as he desires” and the union of Critical Wisdom and Liberative Art involved in this.

A return is made to an argument concerning the vacuousness of caste (verses 102-106)--and in particular a suggestion is made that all women should be regarded as divine emanations. Verses 107 to 122 features the ways in which a yogi renders all activities--mundane or not-- into the practice of his own tutelary divinity. Verses 123 to 125 again take up the issue of commitment substances and how to consecrate them. After two verses (126-127) on the dangers of doubts, the reader is encouraged to treat the guru with supreme respect--considering him Vajradhara in person. Verses 128- 134 conclude the work by stating that its purpose is to clarify the issue of the purification of mind by reference to scripture and reasoning so as to keep the faithful from becoming confused.

One wonders if it really had this effect--its desultory approach seems on the contrary to rather heighten confusion. There are legitimate doubts about whether this work is a discrete text, or a loosely-arranged series of collected verses. In defense of its unity, it might be argued that the eclectic organization of this work reflects a desire for secrecy. Much in the way that Nāgārjuna’s *Merged with the Sūtra* sādhana was scattered throughout the Root Tantra, it might have been Āryadeva’s intention here (assuming he was, in fact, the author) to conceal the steps he is describing. If so, however, this is the only work in which he did so.

Svādhiṣṭhāna[krama]prabheda

The *Svādhiṣṭhāna[krama]prabheda* is a short (60 verse) work detailing the instructions on the yogic process of Self-Consecration. Unlike the CVP, it is clearly addressed specifically to the practitioner of the Guhyasamāja.

Āryadeva opens (verses 2-4) by associating the Magic Body which results from the Self-consecration with the view which conceptually posits neither existence, non-existence,

or a middle. Based on this ultimate understanding, he notes (verse 5), that one creates a conventional body called the “Self-consecration.” He speaks of the practices and qualities of this body (verses 6 to 11).

As in the CMP, this practice is specifically predicated on the general Buddhist teaching that “all things are like a dream [or] magic” (verse 12). After stressing the importance of the guru’s grace in bestowing these instructions. Āryadeva then begins a straightforward, technical explanation (verses 17-22) of the dissolutions of the elements and the luminances that occur in the processes of death, sleep, and yoga, described above. He speaks in glowing terms of the Magic Body (verses 23-25)--invoking it in terms reminiscent of the discussion of the buddha-nature (*tathāgata-garbha*) in the *Uttara-tantra-śāstra* of Maitreya. He then gives a quick summary (verses 26 to 27) of the famous twelve similes used to describe this body: illusion, mirage, city of Gandharvas, rainbow, mirror-image, image of moon in water, echo, dream, hallucination, clouds, lightning, and water bubbles.

In verse thirty, he makes reference to the teaching in the CMP (which he calls the *Sūtaka*) of the five buddha clans, and comments (31-32) that the extensive mandala should be emanated by the yogī. Verses 33 to 35 describe the mundane aspects which are absent in this miraculous, perfected body: suffering, fear, unpleasantness, defecation, old age, and so on.

He then initiates another discussion of how the unenlightened are bound by passion and the enlightened freed by it (verses 36 to 37). Specifically, he mentions the eighty instinctual natures (verses 38 and 39). Verses 40 to 50 encourage the yogī to enjoy the five objects of desire, including music, arts such as the erotic and so forth, and always sport in enlightened bliss no matter what the yogī is doing. The final verses liken the nature of all things to one’s own mind and speak of the appearance of Vajradhara--ending with a praise of this incomparable form which is to be attained by this very Self-consecration.

In all, it is a well-crafted, clear and deliberate text. It very much seems that it is a

versified condensation of the corresponding chapter of the CMP. Its Sanskrit text has recently been published and it seems to be well-preserved and to accord well with the Tibetan translation.

Abhibodhikramopadeśa

The *Abhibodhikramopadeśa* is said by Tsong-kha-pa to not be an authentic work of Āryadeva's yet, as stated above, there are two verses from it cited in the CMP (or, perhaps more likely, it cites two verses which are also cited in the CMP). It is meant to discuss the Enlightenment stage, but it does not closely follow the equivalent discussion in the comprehensive text.

It does detail the two aspects of Enlightenment mentioned in the CMP--the inner and outer--but it has a rather different take on them. The CMP speaks of these two in terms of how they are experienced in the outer world and the inner world of experience. That is, in outer terms, the Buddha did such and such at midnight, such and such at dawn, and so forth. In inner terms, he had such and such visions (of the three luminances), and so forth. The *Abhibodhikramopadeśa* defines inner and outer in terms of the degree of esotericism in the corresponding practices. For example, "the outer is that of the Sūtras and the Yoga Tantra." The "inner" he characterizes as "the inner method of secret mantra"--presumably Unexcelled Yoga. This he sub-divides into "inner-inner" and "outer-inner." The latter engaging a consort and the former using none. It is here that the verses which appear in the CMP are quoted. The text goes on to discuss the Self-consecration and the two techniques used in yogic dissolution. There is a digression about the consistency of this practice with philosophical views on permanence and so forth, which concludes by stating that the Enlightened Body is uncharacterizable. It has no gender, color, shape, etc.

There then follows a long quote from the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* itself. It includes the eight verses on bodhicitta from the Second Chapter without attribution. This is certainly unlike the other work of Āryadeva. Some good verses follow which discuss the names of the ultimate, and the nature of the emergence of the Integration Body "like a fish jumping

out of water,” and so forth.

The text then spends some time disparaging the degenerate times in which some will engage in Tantric practices without the proper motivation, view, and so forth. It describes the fate in Avici Hell that awaits the prideful Tānika--especially if he denigrates the Mentor. “That one will always be beset by demons.” He recommends in the end that:

Whoever respects the guru,
[And] fearlessly tolerates the Universal Void,
Faithfully aspiring to the ultimate import--
To that one bestow the guru’s grace.

It is hard to decide what to make of this text. It certainly does not seem to be a supplementary text to the CMP discussing the Enlightenment Stage. In fact, even though it is called the *Personal Instruction in the Enlightenment Stage*, it covers the entire range from Self-consecration to Integration. It also seems that Tsong Khapa is correct in his assessment that this work contradicts the CMP. I have included it for reference, but I am highly doubtful of its authentic attribution to the author of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*.

We shall now leave this discussion of the teachings of the Tantric works ascribed to Āryadeva. The foregoing discussion should be enough of a guide for most readers familiar with Buddhism to make their way through the translations in the next section. Before moving on to these texts, however, a brief word should be added about the prospects for future research on this literature.

Conclusions and Research *Desiderata*

This, then, is a brief *entrée* into the study of the Guhyasamāja Tantra and the history and literature of its Ārya Tradition. What, then, is the scope of future research regarding the study of the Ārya Tradition? It should be clear that there are numerous points which remain unresolved. We surveyed some important historical issues in Chapter Five. What of the specifically literary issues?

One of the most pressing needs in this area (as in any field of Buddhist literature) is, of course, reliable editions of the primary texts for scholars to work from. To date, there

have been four editions of the Guhyasamāja Root Tantra, two editions of the *Pañcakrama* (including the most recent one which contains a nice facsimile of the available MSS), one edition of a *Pañcakrama* commentary, and one edition of the *Pradipoddyotana*. In short, the most basic textual work necessary to advance research on this literature has scarcely been undertaken at all. There remains significant editorial work to be accomplished. Further, the translation of this material into English (which, for all that it is in some disrepute these days, is nonetheless urgently needed) has hardly begun. For this purpose, we must consult not only the Tibetan translations which are readily available, but also whatever Sanskrit texts are known to exist. At present we have Sanskrit MS available for the following works:

Of “revealed scriptures” of the Ārya Tradition, we have only the *Guhyasamāja Tantra* itself, though of this we have no less than forty-three Sanskrit MSS scattered throughout the world. This work has received the most attention of all the related literature and has been edited in a fairly reliable fashion. Published editions include those of B. Bhattacharyya (1931), S. Bagchi (1965, which edition cribbed off Bhattacharyya’s), and Y. Matsunaga (1978). Francesca Fremantle produced an edition and (what her advisor David Snellgrove describes as) a “provisional English translation” in her 1971 doctoral thesis. Robert Thurman has also drafted a translation of the first twelve chapters, and the publication of this (with the latter six chapters) is urgently anticipated.

Of Guhyasamāja works attributed to Nāgārjuna, we have Sanskrit MSS only of the *Pañcakrama*. There are three extant, identified MSS.⁵⁸ Manuscripts of several praises (*stotra*) have also been identified, as have a handful of exoteric works.⁵⁹ However, of the

⁵⁸ 1. Kat. NRA, ca 122, Nep script, 10 fols; 2. Ngor XVIII.1.94, new script, 13 fols complete; Paris 65-66, Dev script, 51fols w/commentary.

⁵⁹ The stotras include: *Dharmadhātustava* (two MSS), *Nirupamastava* (one MS), the *Lokātītastava* (six MSS), the *Paramārthastava* (two MSS), the *Prajñāpāramitāstotra* (four MSS), the *Acintyastava* (two MSS), the *Vandanāstotra* (one MS), the *Narakoddhāra-nāma* (seven MSS), the *Kalyāṅakāmadhenu* (two MSS), and the *Vajratārāsādhana* and *Muktakenatārodbhava-kurukullesādhana* (preserved in the Note continued on next page. . .

works on the Guhyasamāja, only the *Pinḍikṛtasādhana* and the *Pañcakrama* remain.

Among Āryadeva's works, there are Sanskrit texts of the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* (one MS), the *Svādhiṣṭāna[krama]prabheda* (two MSS), and the *Jñānasārasamucchaya* (one MS). The first two of these have been published, the former by Prabhubhai B. Patel in 1949, and the latter in 1990 by Janārdan Pāṇḍey of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath.⁶⁰ Of great importance is the recent identification of a MS--previously known only as the *Samśaya-paricchedaḥ* (based on the common element in its chapter titles)--of the crucially important *Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*.⁶¹ This MS is not complete, but it does preserve most of chapters five through eleven of the text. In addition, a portion of the CMP is available as a citation in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*.

Of Nāgabodhi's works, we have only one MS of his *Śrīguhyasamāja-maṇḍala-viṃśati-vidhi*. This is no small benefit, as this text has been the subject of much dispute in the Tibetan tradition. It is regrettable that we do not have a text of its rival, Nāgārjuna's *Maṇḍalavidhi-viṃśika*. Of Candrakīrti, we have both the *Pradīpoddyotana* (one MS) and the (dubious) *Vajrasattvasādhana* (one MS).

Thus, of the primary texts of the tradition alone, there are five which have not been edited at all in the Sanskrit. Of those Sanskrit editions which have been published, the *Cittaviśuddhi-prakaraṇa* stands out as in need of re-editing. In particular, these texts need to be edited with reference to the Tibetan translations; to this end, these too will need to be edited properly and published. Of these, we may also hope to utilize the early translations which have all but disappeared since the fixing of the canon in blockprint form. We hear of

Sāghanamālā). On the exoteric side we have *Prajñānāmamūlamadhyāmakakārikā* (preserved in the MS of Candrakīrti's *Prasannapadā*), the *Vigrahavyāvartanikārikā* (two MSS), the *Mahāyānaviṃśikā* (two MSS), the *Rājapraikathā-ratnamālā* (one MS) and the medicinal works *Yogaśataka* (no less than fifteen MSS) and *Jivasūtra* (one MS).

⁶⁰ J. Pāṇḍey, "Durlabh Granth Paricaya." *Dhīḥ: A Review of Rare Buddhist Texts*, X (1990). 20-24.

⁶¹ Benārsi Lāl, "Āryadeva evaṃ Unki Tāntrik Racnāyem," *Dhīḥ: A Review of Rare Buddhist Texts*, XIII (1992); and J. Pāṇḍey, "Durlabh Granth Paricaya," *Dhīḥ*, X (1990).

the variant readings of these old translations in the works of authors such as Tsong Khapa. With regard to the CMP, for example, Tsong Khapa mentions some earlier translations in his *Extremely Brilliant Lamp* (Speech Isolation Chapter). He explicitly mentions translations by Chag Lotsawa and Pa-tshab Lotsawa, which he cites. It would be best if we could find these texts in their entirety; if not, we must systematically collect the scattered references to verses from these versions found in the writings of Tibetan authors. In the course of my research in India and Nepal, the only translation which I could find is the canonical version by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po. An exhaustive search should be undertaken to seek MSS of these “lost” translations. I could not locate any MSS in either the Tibetan Archives in Dharamsala or the library of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath. It is possible that MSS might still exist in Tibet or, more likely at this point, in some warehouse in Peking. There is, further, some hope that such alternate translations may be found among the numerous, uncatalogued Tibetan holdings of the National Library of Nepal.

In a sense, a critical review of the Ārya Tradition and its literature shows us just how far we have yet to travel in research on the history and literature of Buddhist Tantrism as a whole. While over the years scholars have seen fit to make great claims concerning the historical provenance and character of these works, these claims are not based on adequate research. Even the most central works of the tradition have yet to be edited, translated, and interpreted by modern scholars. Only when the texts have thus been edited, published and translated--and the secondary indigenous literature has been explored for the light it can shed on the nature and meaning(s) of these works--will scholars be in an adequate position to begin to speak with some authority on the questions of the history and literature of this Tradition. I hope in the near future to undertake the task of editing the Tantric works in Sanskrit and Tibetan attributed to Āryadeva. In the meantime, I present in the following pages my provisional English translations of the central works of Āryadeva on the

Guhyasamāja as a small contribution to advancing the study of this most enigmatic, yet most fascinating, literature.

Part Three: Texts

A Note on the Texts

The texts in Part Three are translations made primarily on the basis of their Tibetan translations. In so doing, I consulted the redactions preserved in the sDe-dge, Peking, Co-ne, and sNar-thang editions of the Tibetan canon. For the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, *Svādhiṣṭhāna-[krama]prabheda*, and the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*, this is due to the fact that there was no Sanskrit text available to me at the time I initially began work on them. As there continues to be no Sanskrit available for the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa*, that text has been translated entirely on the basis of the Tibetan. As I have not been able to acquire a copy of the newly-identified MS of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa*, that text is also primarily translated from the Tibetan, with some reference to the passages available in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha* and the notice of the new MS. As Sanskrit texts are available for the *Cittaviśuddhi-prakarāṇa* and the *Svādhiṣṭhāna-[krama]prabheda*, I have relied on both the Tibetan and the Sanskrit in translating these. The translations of these texts (particularly the CVP) reflect the eclectic text which I believe should be established on the basis of these alternative testimonies. I recognize that not all scholars are comfortable with such eclectic texts, but in this I follow the editorial tradition of G. Thomas Tanselle in seeking to establish a text which (in my judgment) reflects the author's intention. I have noted the relevant passages, so that anyone interested in the "pure" reading of either the Tibetan or the Sanskrit may note these alternative readings.

Chapter VIII: Āryadeva's *Lamp of Integrated Practice*

In Sanskrit: Caryāmelāpakapradīpa
In Tibetan: spyod pa bsdus pa'i sgron ma

Homage to the bodhisattva, great spiritual hero Mañjuśrī, the intuitive wisdom hero!
Homage to the infinite, pure and thingless!
Homage to the wholly wordless and letterless!
Homage to the traverser of all pasts and futures!
Homage to the perpetual, ubiquitous Universal Void!

Lamp Chapter I: Resolution of Doubts

Entering the door of mantra in this Vajra Vehicle has two aspects: supreme dedication to mentor [and] secret mantra and supreme dedication to interior [transformation].¹

It would be inappropriate for me to [produce a work] like those done previously by the erudite. In order to care for all sentient beings [and] to clarify the words of scripture found in Sūtras, Tantras, and ritual texts,² they, having examined many beautiful and elaborate words [of teaching], collected from the authentic tantras [both] hidden and more explicit words in prose and verse. [In addition,] so that childish beings would understand,

¹ According to Geshe Jigme Dawa of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, “supreme dedication to mentor and secret mantra” refers to the gross Creation Stage and “supreme dedication to interior [transformation]” refers to the subtle Creation Stage. He is here following the testimony of dbYangs-can dGa'-ba'i bLo-gros's work on tantric stages called *Presentation of the Stages and Paths of Mantra According to the Ārya Tradition of the Glorious Esoteric Communion, “Eloquent Entryway of the Fortunate”* (dPal gsang ba 'dus pa 'phags lugs dang mthun pa'i sngags kyi sa lam rnam gzhas legs bshad skal bzang 'jug ngogs zhes bya ba), according to whom “yoga dedicated to mantra” (sngags la gzhol ba'i rnal 'byor) is a synonym for Gross Creation Stage yoga and “yoga dedicated to interior [transformation]” (nang la gzhol ba'i rnal 'byor) is a synonym for Subtle Creation Stage yoga. dbYangs-can dGa'-blo continues, “Tantric commentaries repeatedly apply the term ‘one supremely dedicated to mantra’ to the yogin who has completed the Gross Creation Stage, and the term ‘one supremely dedicated to interior [transformation]’ to the yogin who has completed the Subtle Creation Stage.” (3b²-3b⁵) It is noteworthy that he does not use the exact term “supreme dedication to *mentor* and secret mantra” that we find here, but this would seem terminologically insignificant.

Professor Robert Thurman of Columbia University suggests the latter term should include the path “from the subtle creation stage *on up*.” Given that the CMP as a whole discusses both stages (with, indeed, the greater part dedicated to the Perfection Stage), I am inclined to favor this opinion, though the weight of Tibetan usage is quite compelling.

² The sNar-thang and Peking editions read *rtog pa* here rather than the *rtogs pa* of Cone and sDe-dge. I have followed the former reading as the context seems to imply a textual referent, though some argument could also be made for the latter reading, “realization” or “understanding.”

they composed [works] like lamps [illuminating] the branches of the art of accomplishment (*sādhana*).

“Why?” At the time of the Twofold Era, Threefold Era, and the Perfect Era,³ the worldly had perfect lifespan and health, and were endowed with the perfect qualities of the actions of generosity, ethics and so forth. Being disciplined in the sciences, [they] came to know Reality through deep investigation. [Hence,] when one taught Reality through the hidden verses, elaborate words and so forth, they understood.

But now, in this Contentious Era, the worldly are lacking in accomplishments such as lifespan and health, are pretentious and deceitful, [113] haughty and jealous. On account of their lack of intelligence and false view, they take joy in bad karma. As they do not rejoice in ascertaining the meaning of the hidden verses and elaborate words, they do not investigate Reality. Since they therefore abandon investigation of the primary texts,⁴ they do not understand Reality, and pass the time dedicating themselves to virtuous and non-virtuous karma.

Furthermore, there will be no need [for such a work] for those who desire liberation, for the beautiful and elaborate words which abide on the textual level are like a ship.⁵ The Lord himself said, “one should follow the meaning, not the words.”

Hence, having grasped this pivotal point, I attained the samādhi of the Perfection Stage in accordance with the process given directly in the personal instructions of my preceptor, Nāgārjuna. In order to clarify the five aspects of the process--Mantra Reality,

³ These are the first three (of four) eras of the Indian cosmic cycle: *kṛta-yuga*, *treta-yuga*, and *dvāpara-yuga*. The final era is the “Contentious Era” (*kāli-yuga*) in which we now find ourselves.

⁴ Literally this would seem to mean “elementary shastras;” Geshe Jigme Dawa claims it refers to the texts which were spoken by the Buddha (or other great mentors).

⁵ I take this metaphor to mean the words are like a ship in that they conduct one to the meaning, not the typical use of this analogy in the sense of a ship which helps one cross the ocean of *saṃsāra*.

Mudra Reality, Subjective Reality, Objective Reality, and Divine Reality⁶--I will explain integrating sūtra, tantra, and ritual text in accordance with the [mode of] explanation common to both group and individual students.⁷

It is said in all the Lord's discourses set forth in the sūtras and elsewhere: "even if [one practice] for a million æons, without Reality one will not achieve." In the Great Yoga Tantra called *Enquiry of the Four Goddesses (to the Lord)*,⁸ it is said that "those who do not know Reality in the eighty-four thousand dharma teachings of the Great Sage, will have no result."

The Vajra Student inquired⁹, "Since the Lord said, 'One does not become buddha without knowing Reality,' please instruct me concerning the scriptures which delineate the nature of 'Reality.' How is it that the Mahāyānists and the Logicians, taking their stand on this very import, realize Reality by manifold methods? [114] In order to summarize these, Lord,¹⁰ please explain that which is known as Reality!"

⁶ Note the comments made on these terms in mKha-grub's *rgyud sde spyi'i mam gzhaq*, cf. Lessing and Wayman, p. 158-59.

⁷ 'Dus byas pa/ 'dus ma byas pa. This distinction is somewhat obscure. In the translation above, I have followed the suggestion of Professor Thurman, which I find compelling. Geshe Dawa suggested that it might refer those disciples who live together with the Mentor (Nāgārjuna) and those who live far away, though he was merely speculating.

⁸ thub pa chen po'i chos mams kyi/ phung po brgyad khri bzhi stong la/ gang gis de nyid mi shes pa/ de yi thams cad 'bras bu med//. *The Enquiry of the Four Goddesses Tantra (Caturdevipariprcchātāntra, Tōh. 446)*, an explanatory (or *vyākhyā-*) tantra to the *Guhyasamājatantra*. The Tog Palace edition (translated and edited by Smṛtījñānakīrti) has the following verse, which differs greatly from that nested in our text (translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po): gang gis brgyad khri rtsa bzhi'i chos/ stong phrag brgya ru shes na yang/ de yis de nyid mi shes te/ de dag kun kyang 'bras med do// [Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. Ca, f. 256a⁶⁻⁷].

⁹ The rest of Āryadeva's work is presented as a dialogue between a Vajra Mentor and his Vajra Student, who interrogates him about the nature and sequence of the various practices on the Vajrayāna path.

¹⁰ Note that the Vajra Student here addresses his Mentor as "Lord" (*Bhagavān, bcom ldan 'das*)--the epithet of a perfect buddha.

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Whatever is authentic, that is ‘Reality.’”

The Vajra Student inquired: “Lord, what is the ‘authentic’?”

“That which is undeceived is the authentic.”

“What is the ‘undeceived’?”

“The Samādhi with the Nature of the Completely Authentic Method is the undeceived.”

“What is that Samādhi with the Nature of the Completely Authentic Method?”

“That which has the character of the non-dual aspect of the two realities is the Samādhi with the Nature of the Completely Authentic Method.”

“What are the two realities, Lord?”

“The first is conventional reality, the second is ultimate reality.”

“What are the distinguishing characteristics of the two realities, Lord?”

The Vajra Mentor answered: “In the *Vajra Crown-protrusion Tantra*¹¹ it says:

Vajrapāṇi asked, “Lord, what is the Ultimate Reality, the condition¹² of all things?”

The Lord said, “Lord of Secrets, all things-- aggregates, elements, media, all beings, animate and inanimate--are the Ultimate Reality [and] thus, abiding in a non-abiding manner, the Ultimate Reality is Universally Void, not overwhelmed by selflessness. [It is] without increase, without decrease, purified, infinite, the stainless nature, letterless, wordless, free of body, speech and mind, not existent, not non-existent, not inanimate, not animate, not far, not near, not void, not non-void--this which is not even the middle is the Ultimate Reality. Therefore it is the supreme profundity, difficult to engage, birthless, ceaseless.

“That which arises on account of causes and conditions [115] is Conventional Reality. This Conventional Reality, perceiving things as like a dream, an optical illusion, and a reflection is the Illusion-like Samādhi; by its intrinsic nature it is the cause of the four Pure Abodes (*brahmavihāra*). This process of integrating these two is the Samādhi with the Nature of the Authentic Method. That

¹¹ *Vajroṣṇīṣatantra*, *rDo rje gtsug tor gyi rgyud*; This scripture does not seem to have been translated into Tibetan and is not found in the bKa’-‘gyur. It must have been deeply influential, however, as many Tibetan treatises cite it from its citations in text such as the present one.

¹² Following the suggestion of Geshe Jigme Dawa, I have here glossed *gnas* (lit. “abode”), as *gnas lugs* (“condition/status).”

which is the eradication of all objectification is called 'Reality'."

The Vajra Student inquired: "Alienated beings like ourselves, who since beginningless time have engaged in conceptual adherence to various external objects and conceptual adherence to [mental] constructions due to the essentializing habit [which conceives of] existence, non-existence, unity, plurality, duality, non-duality, non-existence, non-non-existence, permanence, destruction, etc.--when we learn the successive samādhis of the Perfection Stage, should we learn according to a [gradual] process or will we be illuminated in merely one moment by the personal instructions of the guru?"

The Vajra Mentor replied: "Since you should learn through gradual engagement, it is not [an] immediate [achievement]. The Lord Buddha himself stated in the *Journey to Lanka Scripture*:¹³

Then the bodhisattva, the great spiritual hero, Mahāmāti asked the Lord with the intention of purifying the continuum of his inner experience, "Lord, is the purification of the continuum of one's own inner experience 'immediate' or 'gradual'? How is it purified?"

The Lord replied, "Mahāmāti, the purification of the continuum of one's own inner experience is gradual, not immediate. It is like this, Mahāmāti. Since the fruit of the Amra tree ripens gradually, it is not immediate. Likewise, Mahāmāti, the continua of sentient beings' inner experience are purified gradually, not immediately.

"It is like this, Mahāmāti-- the vessels of a potter are made gradually, not immediately. [116] Likewise, Mahāmāti, the Transcendent Lord also cultivates the continua of sentient beings' inner experience gradually, not immediately.

"Mahāmāti, it is like this: just as in a large field grasses, trees, medicines, and groves gradually appear and are not immediately produced, just so the Transcendent Lord also cultivates the continua of all sentient beings' inner experience gradually, not immediately.

Mahāmāti, it is like this: just as one skilled in various performing arts such as comedy, music, songs, guitar, and cymbals becomes so gradually, not immediately, just so the Transcendent Lord also cultivates the continua of all sentient beings' inner experience gradually, not immediately."

¹³ *lañkar gshegs pa'i mdo, Lankāvatārasūtra*. sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, mDo, vol. ca, 56a¹-191b⁷ (Tōh. 107).

“This very process is also clearly described in the *Hero’s March Samādhi Scripture*¹⁴:

The bodhisattva, the great spiritual hero, Sthiramati stated thus: “Lord, how is the bodhisattva educated who learns the Hero’s March Samādhi without conceit for all his learning?”

The Lord then replied to the bodhisattva, the great spiritual hero, thus: “It is like this, Sthiramati. For example, is it the archery master or the archery student who hits a cow hide from the first? When one trains on a cowhide, one [can] hit a plank. When one trains on the plank, one [can] hit a target. When one trains on a target, one can hit a stick. When one trains on a stick, one can hit one hundred hairs. When one trains on one hundred hairs, one can hit ten hairs. When one trains on ten hairs, one can hit a single hair. When one trains on a single hair, one can hit even by the sound [alone]. When one hits by sound [alone], one can hit unerringly. [117] When one can hit unerringly, one has perfected the study of archery. That being the case, even in the dark of night, whatever human or non-human beings make a sound, the arrow will go there effortlessly and unerringly. Having learned to hit things by their sound [alone] there is nothing more to be learned.

“‘Why?’ Because it has been well-learned previously--all targets are evident to that one. Likewise, Sthiramati, the bodhisattva who abides in this Hero’s March Samādhi has nothing more to learn. ‘Why?’ Since that very samādhi has been previously well-learned, all the qualities of a bodhisattva will be evident to that one.”¹⁵

“Also, you who desire to learn the Hero’s March Samādhi of the Vajra Vehicle should learn according to these very stages. The stages are these: first, you learn the vision¹⁶ of the Buddha vehicle. Having learned the vision of the Buddha vehicle, you learn

¹⁴ *dpa’ bar ‘gro ba’i ting nge ‘dzin gyi mdo, Śūrangamasamādhisūtra. sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, mDo, vol. da, 253b⁵-316b⁶ (Tōh. 132).*

¹⁵ This citation integrates two passages found at: sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, vol. Da, fol. 271b²-271b⁷, 272b⁷-273a²

¹⁶ *bsam pa, āśaya*. Often merely “motivation,” in this context the term means something deeper. The basic motivation of the Universal/Perfection Vehicle is here presupposed; what is suggested, therefore, is that the student must then develop the depth of vision or ambition to undertake the accelerated process of Buddhahood through the Vajra Vehicle. This more cosmic perspective may be called a “vision” (in the sense in which we refer to someone as a “visionary”) which fits with the sense of *āśaya* as “thought; intention; way of thinking” (cf. MacDonnell, p. 43).

the Samādhi of Single-mindedness¹⁷ on the New Vehicle. Having learned Single-mindedness on the New Vehicle, you learn the imaginative yoga.¹⁸ Having learned the imaginative yoga, you will abide in the [Perfection Stage] Beginner's Samādhi.¹⁹ When you abide in the [Perfection Stage] Beginner's Samādhi, you enter the divisions of the hundred [buddha-]families.²⁰ When, skilled in the divisions of the hundred [buddha-]families, you know the [stage of] Body Isolation, you abide in the Body Vajra Samādhi.

“Abiding in Body Isolation, you enter Speech Isolation by means of [focusing on] the consonants and vowels. When you know Vitality and Control through the process of Vajra Recitation, one abides in the Speech Vajra Samādhi.

“Abiding in Speech Isolation, you enter Mind Isolation through the process of the luminance[s] of the natural instincts. When you learn accurately the authentic [reality] by discerning the luminance[s] of the natural instincts mounted on the winds, [118] you will become poised in the Mind [Vajra] Samādhi. Abiding in the thorough knowledge of the authentic [reality] of the mind, you will enter the conventional reality²¹ via the twelve similes [such as] magical illusion.

“When you becomes equipoised in the Illusion-like Samādhi, you win the Buddha Initiation. When you win initiation, then, abiding in the Illusion-like Samādhi, you enter ultimate reality²² via the process of the eighteen great voids. When you enter the reality

¹⁷ *dran pa gcig pa, ekasmṛti*. A synonym for the gross creation stage according to dbYang-s-can.

¹⁸ *rtog pa'i rnal 'byor*. A synonym for the subtle creation stage according to dbYang-s-can.

¹⁹ *las dang po pa'i ting nge 'dzin, ādikarmikasamādhi*. This is the first of four stages--cf. Yangchen Gawai Lodoe's *sngags sa lam*.

²⁰ These will also be treated in Chapter Two *infra*. They are arrived at by taking the Five Tathāgatas (qua five aggregates), the 4 Goddesses (qua four elements), the five Bodhisattvas (qua sense media), the five auxiliary winds, and the five intuitive wisdoms and sub-dividing them according to the five buddha families.

²¹ In this context, a synonym for the Magic Body (*māyādeha*). See Chapter Six, *infra*.

²² Here, as synonym for the Clear Light Transparency. See Chapter Seven, *infra*.

limit by the Holistic samādhi²³ and the Dissolving samādhi²⁴, all defilements will be purified. When, arising through the processes of intuitive wisdom [(as a purified magic body) and entering] the natural transparency, you attain perfect buddhahood yourself by integrating the[se] two realities, you have learned the Perfection Samādhi. When a yogin has become equipoised in the Perfection Samādhi, there is nothing further to be learned.

“‘Why so?’ For it has been well-learned previously--just as for the archery master who can shoot by sound [alone], there is nothing more to learn. ‘Why?’ Because it has been well-learned previously--it manifests through the force of prior momentum. Likewise, the one who abides in the Perfection Samādhi has nothing further to learn, for it was extremely well-learned previously--the transcendent and worldly accomplishments manifest effortlessly. Likewise, as one learning the Perfection Stage Samādhi learns by entering gradually, they do not enter it immediately.

“Hence, without Body Isolation, Speech Isolation cannot be known. One who lacks Speech Isolation cannot realize Mind Isolation. Without the samādhi of the luminance[s] of the natural instincts of the mind, one cannot actualize conventional reality. One who lacks the realization of conventional reality [119] cannot actualize ultimate reality. One who lacks realization of ultimate reality cannot actualize the stage of Integration.

“The Lord, having seen this crucial point, [said] that since one learns by entering gradually, it is not [an] immediate accomplishment. By learning the Perfection Stage gradually, one’s own continuum [of inner experience] will be purified immediately. The Lord himself states in the *Journey to Lanka Scripture*:

“Mahāmati, it is like this: since the appearances of forms in a mirror are all non-conceptual, they appear immediately. Likewise Mahāmati, the Transcendent Lord purifies immediately all spheres of activity which are free of

²³ *ril bur ‘dzin pa, piṅḍagrāha*°

²⁴ *rjes su gzhig pa, anunāśa*°. Yangchen Gawai Lodoe describes these as the “instantaneous” and the “gradual,” respectively--two different methods of dissolving the winds in the indestructible drop.

perception and free from conceptuality [such as] the continua of all sentient beings' own inner experience.

“Mahāmati, it is like this: by their rays of light, the orbs of the sun and moon immediately make forms manifest. Likewise, Mahāmati, the Transcendent Lord authentically shows the inconceivable object and sphere of activity--the wisdom of the Victors--to all those sentient beings whose own minds are free from the instincts of negative conditioning.”²⁵

“You should thoroughly understand this teaching--that one cannot realize the Perfection Samādhi without [going through] the process presented in the *Five Stages*²⁶ which says:

The perfect Buddha presented
This art in stages like a staircase
in order for beginner sentient beings
to enter ultimate reality.²⁷

²⁵ blo gros chen po 'di lta ste/ me long gi nang du gzugs kyi gzugs [K: brnyan; C: su] snang ba thams cad rnam par rtog pa med [K:par; C: pas] cig car snang ngo/ de bzhin du blo gros chen po de bzhin gshegs pa ['ang/yang] sems can thams cad kyi rang gi sems snang ba'i rgyud rnam par mi rtog cing snang ba med pa'i spyod yul nams cig car rnam par sbyong ngo/ blo gros chen po 'di lta ste/ zla ba dang nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor ni 'od zer gyis gzugs su snang ba thams cad cig car mngon par byed do/ de bzhin du blo gros chen po de bzhin gshegs pa ['ang/yang] sems can [C: thams cad kyi] rang gi sems snang ba'i gnas ngan len gyi bag chags dang bral ba nams [la/las] rgyal ba ye shes bsam gyis mi khyab pa'i yul dang spyod yul [K: cig car] yang dag par ston to// (*Laṅkāvatāra*, sDe, f. 120b.)

²⁶ The *Pañcakrama* or *Rim pa lnga pa* of Nāgārjuna. sDe-dge bsTan-'gyur, rGyud-'grel, vol. ngi, 45a⁵-57a¹ (Tōh. 1802).

²⁷ sems can dang po'i las can nams/ dam pa'i don la 'jug pa la/ thabs 'di rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyis/ skas kyi rim pa lta bur gzhag//.

The opening chapter of the *Five Stages*, the “Vajrajāpakrama,” as preserved in the sDe-dge bsTan-'gyur (also translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po (with revision by Kamalagupta and Rin-chen bZang-po)) has the following variation:

The perfect Buddha taught
This art like a staircase
To those who abide well on the Creation Stage
And desire the Perfection Stage.

bskyed pa'i rim la legs gnas shing/ rdzogs pa'i rim pa 'dod nams la/ thabs 'di rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyis/ skas kyi rim pa lta bur gsungs// (rGyud-'grel, ngi 45a⁶⁻⁷). This is much closer to the Sanskrit (cf. de la Vallée Poussin (1896) and Mimaki and Tomabechi (1994)), viz. utpattikramasamsthānām niṣpannakramakāṅkṣinām/ upāyaścaīṣa sambuddhaiḥ sopānam iva nirmitaḥ//.

mKhas-grub rJe cites both of these variations in his work the *Esoteric Communion Creation Stage Ocean of Accomplishment* (*gsang 'dus dngos grub rgya mtsho*) (Varanasi, 1969; f. 14a⁴⁻⁶) as if they were independent testimony, though it seems clear in Āryadeva's text that he intends to quote the *Pañcakrama*. Tsong Khapa, in his *Extremely Brilliant Lamp of the Five Stages*, also cites this verse in the form found in the CMP.

**Lamp Chapter II:
Resolution of Doubts concerning Body Isolation**

The Vajra Student asked, “O Lord, how at first do I learn isolation of my body?”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero,¹ excellent! You should understand Body Isolation in great detail.

“Regarding that, this body you have established, through bodily production out of the four elements, abides like a heap. The assemblage of flesh, veins, sinews, head, brain [120], [peripheral] nervous system, bone, marrow, small intestine, large intestine, kidneys, heart, nourishment, lungs, spleen, urine, excrement, gonads, stomach, colon, fat, lymph, pus, blood, bile, phlegm, snot, hair, facial hair, nails, body hair, skin, hands, feet, eyes, limbs, etc., is called a ‘heap.’

“Also in that regard, the five aggregates, four elements, six media, five objects, and five subjects are called a ‘heap’--just as many measures of rice, barley, sesame seed, wheat, and peas are called a ‘heap.’ Likewise, the collection of associated limbs and digits of the body are called a ‘heap.’

“Besides the collections of elements, the continua of defilements, lust, instincts, ignorance, mind, view,² and critical wisdom are called an ‘accumulation.’ The heap of collected consciousnesses will not [ultimately] be perceived, since they do not endure.

“Just as it says in the *Enquiry of Bhadrāpāla*:³

¹ Here for the first time, the Vajra Mentor addresses the Student as “Great Spiritual Hero” (*mahāsattva*)--seeming recognition of the fact that the student too, after Vajrayāna consecration, is as if enlightened.

² The sDe redaction has *lha ba* (Skt. *divya*), but the Co reading of *lta ba* is much more appropriate in this context.

³ *bzang skyong gis zhus pa'i mdo*. Tōh. 83: *Āryabhadrapālaśreṣṭhiparipṛcchā-nāma-mahāyānasūtra* (*'phags pa tshong dpon bzang skyong gis zhus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*), sDe-dge, dKon-brtsegs, vol. cha, 71a¹-94b⁷. This text is considered the thirty-ninth chapter of the 100,000-chapter *Ārya-mahā-ratnavyūha-sūtra*. It was [translated,] edited and certified by the Indian abbot Jinamitra and Surendrabodhi, with the editor-translator Bande Ye-shes-sde.

‘A consciousness abides nowhere in this body; and as there is no consciousness, the body is not produced.’⁴ Listen, then, O Bhadrāpāla! Since you do not see any true thing, you neither see nor know consciousness; nothing is seen as if it were a myrobalan fruit placed in the palm of your hand.’⁵

Also, these things--aggregates, elements, and media--which from beginningless time have endured through pride of ordinariness⁶ are now taught by all the Transcendent Lords as having the nature of creations from sub-atomic particles. The Great Yoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion* states:

In short, the five aggregates are
Said to be the five buddhas.
The vajra media themselves are
The supreme maṇḍala of the bodhisattvas.

Earth is Locanā.
The water element is Māmaki.
The fire element is [121] Pāṇḍaravāsini.
Tārā is said to be wind.

The mantrin always meditates
On forms, sounds, and so on, as deities.⁷

⁴ This sentence is found at f. 78b1-78b3. There is an elision here. The bKa’-‘gyur version reads: “. . .” (de bzhin du lus ‘di la nam par shes pa gang na yang mi gnas te/ mig la yang ma yin/ ma ba la yang ma yin/ sna’i dbang po la yang ma yin no// sa bon gyi myu gu skye ba gang yin pa de ni sems pa chung ba yin no// mngal du skye ba de ni tshor ba chung ba yin te/ dper na myu gu ‘byung zhing dus tshigs dang ldan pa na me tog mams ‘grub ste/ me tog grub na ‘bras bu ‘grub pa yod pa de bzhin de nam par shes pa’i khams ‘dis lus ‘grub par ‘gyur ro// lus grub pa na yan lag dang nyid lag gang la yang nam par shes pa mi gnas la/ nam par shes pa med na yang lus ksyé bar mi ‘gyur ro//

⁵ This last sentence is found at 83b⁵-83b⁶.

⁶ A key concept in Buddhist Tantra. The basic notion being that the conception beings have of their own and the world’s ordinariness is, fundamentally, due to misknowledge. Hence, clinging to that view as reality constitutes a kind of epistemic *hubris* on the part of such beings. Consider in this light the exchange between the Buddha and Śāriputra at the end of Chapter One of the *Vimalakīrti Sūtra*. Cf. Thurman, trans., *The Holy Teaching of Vimalakīrti*, (University Park, 1976). 18-19.

⁷ This passage is excerpted from two places in the *Esoteric Communion Tantra*. The first two verses are from the Seventeenth Chapter, which read “pañcaskandhāḥ samāsenā pañcabuddhāḥ prakīrtitāḥ/ vajrāyatanānyeva bodhisattvāgryamaṇḍalamiti//” (mdor na phung po lnga mams ni/ sangs rgyas lngar ni rab tu bsgrags/ rdo rje skye mched nyid dag kyang/ byang chub sems dpa’i dkyil ‘khor mchog//) and “pṛthivī locanā khyātā abdhātur māmaki smṛtā/ pāṇḍarākhyā bhavet tejo vāyustārā prakīrtitā//” (sa ni spyān zhes bya ba yin/ chu yi khams ni māmaki/ me yo khams ni gos dkar mo/ sgröl ma rlung du rab tu bsgrags//). The last (half-)verse is from the Seventh Chapter, which reads: “rūpaśabdādibhir mantri
Note continued on next page. . .

Again, the aggregates and so on are each sub-divided into five making one hundred; in the *Secret Moon Drop*⁸ it says:

Families are taught to be hundred-fold;
Briefly summarized, five.
Correlated with body, speech and mind,
They are also three-fold.⁹

“Regarding that, at the very first I must teach the division into one hundred families.¹⁰

“The collected form aggregate is Vairocana. Dividing that into five, it is the magical transformation of the five Transcendent Lords; for all forms with shapes such as are long or short, having inside and outside and both, are the magical transformation of Vairocana. The aspect of form as self or other or both is the magical transformation of Ratnasambhava. Inner and outer forms with the five colors are the magical transformation of Amitābha. Inner and outer appearances of sun and moon¹¹ are that of Amoghasiddhi. Indiscernible forms which are merely introspectively known¹² are the magical transformation of Akṣobhya. These are the five aspects of the form aggregate.

“Now to explain in terms of the samādhi of Ratnasambhava: the collected feeling aggregate is Ratnasambhava. It also is the magical transformation of the five Transcendent Lords. Feelings arising from bile and conjunction [of the three humours] are the magical transformation of Akṣobhya. Those arising from phlegm and wind are the magical trans-

devatāṃ bhāvayet sadā/.” [note here that the Tibetan translation of our text (*gzugs dang sgra sogs*) accords more closely with the *edited* Sanskrit (all MSS have *sparsāśabda*^o) than other redactions (Tog, Fremantle have *gzugs sgra dri sogs*).]

⁸ *zla gsang thig le, Candraguhyatilaka*. The *Śricandraguhyatilaka-nāma-mahātantrarāja* (*dPal zla gsang thig le zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po*), sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, rGyud, vol. ja, 247b¹-303a⁷ (Tōh. 477).

⁹ Reference not located.

¹⁰ A chart detailing these hundred families can be found in Appendix I.

¹¹ i.e. form as light

formation of Ratnasambhava. Feelings of pleasure, Amitābha. Feelings of pain, Amoghasiddhi. Feelings of ambivalence are the magical transformation of Vairocana.’ These are the five aspects of the feeling aggregate.

“Explaining in terms of the samādhi of Amitābha: the collected discernment aggregate is Amitābha. The marks which, having been grasped by consciousness, delimit those things which bear different names, classifying things as animate and inanimate objects, beings with two legs, no legs or the like--these are posited with the name “discernment aggregate.” [122] That discernment again is the magical transformation of the five Transcendent Lords. Discernments of bipeds are Akṣobhya. Discernments of quadrupeds are Ratnasambhava. Discernments of those with many legs are Amoghasiddhi. Discernments of those without legs are Amitābha. Discernments of inanimate beings are the magical transformation of Vairocana. These are the five aspects of the discernment aggregate.

“Explaining in terms of the samādhi of Amoghasiddhi: the collected volition aggregate is Amoghasiddhi. It also is the magical transformation of the Five Transcendent Lords. Physical volitions are those of Vairocana. Verbal volitions are those of Amitābha. Mental volitions are Akṣobhya. Volitions of the three worlds are Ratnasambhava. Liberative volitions are the magical transformation of Amoghasiddhi. These are the five aspects of the volition aggregate.

“Explaining in terms of the samādhi of Akṣobhya: whatever grasps an object, delimits an object, or thoroughly understands an object is consciousness. External objects are designated via their [corresponding subject] consciousness and consciousness is designated via its external object. In that way the knower and the known are established through their mutual relation. One should know the five-fold division of this consciousness also as the magical transformation of the Five Transcendent Lords. The collected aggregate of consciousness is Akṣobhya. Visual consciousness is the magical transformation of Vairocana. Auditory consciousness is the magical transformation of Ratnasambhava; olfactory

¹² e.g. bhikṣu vow

consciousness is that of Amitābha; gustatory, Amoghasiddhi; physical [tactile] consciousness is the magical transformation of Akṣobhya. [123] These are the five aspects of the consciousness aggregate.

“This explains the meaning of [the verse]:

In short, the five aggregates are
Said to be the five buddhas.

“Explaining in terms of the four elements: ‘What is the earth element?’ It is heaviness and solidity; its function is stability. ‘What is the water element?’ It is wetness and fluidity; its function is mixture. ‘What is the fire element?’ It is heat and burning. Its function is evaporation. ‘What is the air element?’ It is that which diffuses, compresses, is inhaled as breath, and exhaled. Its function is lightness and motility.

“Having thus presented the distinguishing characteristics of the four elements in the manner¹³ of the Universal Vehicle, I will now [present] them as having the nature of the Five Buddhas in the manner of the Vajra Vehicle in order to eliminate the pride of ordinariness.

“The earth element is Buddha Locanā. The five [sub-]divisions of this element are the magical transformations of the five Transcendent Lords. Hair and bone, excrement, liver, and heart are [the magical transformation] of Vairocana. Bodily hair, nails, pus, and heart are Ratnasambhava’s. Teeth, skin, flesh, and heart are Amitābha. Sinews, flesh, ribs, and heart are Amoghasiddhi. Filth, small intestine, bile, and heart are Akṣobhya. As it says in the *Vajra Garland*:¹⁴

¹³ The Tibetan term here is *rim pa*, “stage,” but I think the context suggests that we read it according to the wider semantic range of the Sanskrit *krama*, which includes the idea of a “way” or “manner.”

¹⁴ *rDo-rje phreng ba, Vajramālā*. One of the major explanatory tantras of the Esoteric Communion literature. Its full name is, in Sanskrit, *Śrīvajramālābhīdhānamahāyogatantrasarvatantraḥṛdayarahasyavibhaṅga-nāma* or, in Tibetan, *rNal ‘byor chen po’i rgyud dpal rdo rj phreng ba mngon par brjod pa rgyud thams cad kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phye ba zhes bya ba* (sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, rGyud, vol ca, 208a¹-277b³ (Tōh. 445)). A Sanskrit text of this work has not been found to date.

The heart abides certainly with five.
Created from the five tantras,
Endowed with five winds,
It performs the five dispersals (*'dong ba*).¹⁵

“Likewise, the external element of earth is divided in five: the four continents and Mount Sumeru. The King of Mountains, Sumeru, is the magical transformation of Vairocana. Videha is Akṣobhya’s. Jambudvīpa is Ratnasambhava’s magical transformation. Godāniya is Amitābha’s. Uttarakuru is the magical transformation of Amoghasiddhi. This explains the five aspects of the earth element. [124]

“Explaining the samādhi of Māmaki: the aggregated element of water is Māmaki. It again is the magical transformation of the five Transcendent Lords. Phlegm and tears are the magical transformation of Vairocana. Urine is Akṣobhya’s magical transformation. Sweat is the magical transformation of Ratnasambhava. Blood is the magical transformation of Amitābha. Saliva is the magical transformation of Amoghasiddhi.

Externally, again there are [five] types: The water of the oceans are Akṣobhya. The water of the rivers is Ratnasambhava’s. Spring water¹⁶ is Amitābha’s. The water of ponds¹⁷ is Amoghasiddhi’s. The rain waters¹⁸ are the magical transformation of Vairocana. This explains the five aspects of the water-element.

“Explaining the samādhi of Pāṇḍaravāsini: The aggregated element of fire is Pāṇḍaravāsini. It also is the magical transformations of the five Transcendent Lords. The heat of the head is Vairocana’s magical transformation. The heat of the heart is Akṣobhya’s. The heat of the navel is Ratnasambhava’s. The heat of all the limbs is Amitābha’s. The heat of the stomach is Amoghasiddhi’s magical transformation.

Externally, again, it shows five aspects: enduring fire is Akṣobhya’s. Fire arisen

¹⁵ Reference not located.

¹⁶ *bkod pa'i chu, prasravanodakam*, “gushing forth” Or perhaps a waterfall?

¹⁷ *lteng ka, villa*

¹⁸ *'babs chu'i chu* - streams?

from stones (flint-struck) is Vairocana's. Fire arisen from magnifying glasses is Ratnasambhava's. Fire arisen from wood is Amitābha's. Forest fires are the magical transformation of Amoghasiddhi. This explains the five aspects of the fire element.

“Explaining the samādhi of Tārā: the aggregated element of wind is Tārā. It also is the magical transformation of the five Transcendent Lords. That which is called the ‘vitality’[-wind], which abides in the heart, is the magical transformation of Akṣobhya. That called the ‘evacuative’[-wind], which abides in the pelvic region, is Ratnasambhava's. That which is called the ‘ascending’[-wind], which abides in the chest and throat, is Amitābha's. The ‘metabolic’[-wind], which abides at the navel, [125] is Amoghasiddhi's. That called the ‘pervasive’[-wind], which abides in all the joints, is the magical transformation of Vairocana. Explaining the function of each individually:

That which moves vitality and control
From the continuum of the sense doors
And proceeds eternally
Is explained as the ‘vital’[-wind].

Wind and urine and feces and,
Like them, semen: that which draws [these] down
The yogin always knows to be
The ‘evacuative’[-wind].

That which always accompanies
Tasting, eating, licking,
Drinking, and sucking
Is known as the ‘metabolic’[-wind].

That which moves upwards and mixes,
Speaking, tasting, and eating,
Knowing and combining,
Should be known as the function of the ‘ascending’[-wind].

Pervading and holding,
Moving and likewise reversing,
Since it pervades all of the joints
It is explained as the ‘pervasive’[-wind].

“Externally, again, it has five aspects: The eastern wind is Akṣobhya's. The southern wind is Ratnasambhava's. The western wind is Amitābha's. The northern wind is Amoghasiddhi's. The zenith wind is the magical transformation of Vairocana. This explains the five aspects of the wind element.

“With respect to these four great elements, wherever there is one, all four exist. Therefore, they are not self-established in terms of nature without mutual reference. Space, since it is beyond the senses and is uncompounded, is not a great element; [this is so because] since it makes room, space acts as non-obscurer of all things.

“This is the abbreviated explanation of the verse:

Earth is Locanā.
The water element is Māmaki.
Fire is Pāṇḍaravāsini.
Wind is said to be Tārā.¹⁹

“Explaining the samādhis of the bodhisattvas, the great spiritual heroes, Kṣitigarbha and the rest:

“The aggregated visual media are Kṣitigarbha. These also are explained in five divisions as being the magical transformations of the five Transcendent Lords. Among [the parts of] the eye-ball, the visual sensory organ which is the size of a grape [126] is Akṣobhya’s. The nature of the white of the eye is Ratnasambhava’s. Forms seen with the peripheral vision are Amitābha’s. The movement of the eye is Amoghasiddhi’s. The seer of the three forms is the magical transformation of Vairocana. This explains the five aspects of the visual media.

“Similarly, the aggregated aural media are Vajrapāṇi. The aural sense which has a form composed of sub-atomic particles like unto twisting and carved ravines is Akṣobhya’s. The nature of the ear is Vairocana’s. The ear orifice is Amitābha’s. The ear-root is Amoghasiddhi’s. That which hears the three sounds is Ratnasambhava’s magical transformation. This explains the five aspects of the aural media.

“The aggregated olfactory media are Khagarbha. The olfactory sense organ which has a form composed of sub-atomic particles like unto a fine instrument for [applying]

¹⁹ Note again that we here have another version of the verse than the one originally cited at the head of this chapter. *sa ni spyan zhes by ba yin/ chu yi khams ni māmaki/ me ni gos dkar mo yin nol/ rlung ni sgrol mar rab tu bsgrags//*

medicine²⁰ [for] nasal diseases is Akṣobhya. The nature of scent is Vairocana's. The inner center²¹ is Ratnasambhava's. The nose orifice is Amoghasiddhi's. That which smells the three scents is Amitābha's magical transformation. This explains the five aspects of the olfactory media.

“The aggregated gustatory media are Lokeśvara. The gustatory sense-organ which has a shape like a half-moon composed of sub-atomic particles is Akṣobhya's. The nature of taste is Vairocana's. The tongue-root is Ratnasambhava's. The tip of the tongue is Amitābha's. That which tastes the three tastes is Amoghasiddhi's magical transformation. This explains the five aspects of the gustatory media.

“The aggregated tactile media are Sarvanīvaraṇaviṣkambhin. The tactile sense-organ which is a form composed of all the sub-atomic particles of the body without exception is Vairocana's. The nature of bones is Ratnasambhava's. The nature of flesh is Amitābha's. The nature of skin is Amoghasiddhi's. [127] That which feels the three [types of] contact is the magical transformation of Akṣobhya. This explains the five aspects of the tactile media.

“Explaining the samādhi of Mañjuśrī: the three consciousnesses which are perceived in the body are the mental sense; since it is the master of all the other senses and their reflexive awareness, it has no external object. Taking the Realm of Reality as object and perfecting itself through the process of complete enlightenment by the magical web (*Māyājāla*), [it becomes] endowed with every one of the buddha's qualities and travels from buddhaverse to buddhaverse. This explains the samādhi of Mañjuśrī.

²⁰ This description is obscure to me. Literally, the text says “having a form like a subtle spoon/instrument of eye-medicine of nose-diseases.” It seems clear that what is being described is a surgical instrument for applying a medicine for the nose or the eyes (and thus looking like a nose in that it has two spouts). It is unclear, however, whether the instrument is for the eyes (reading *mig sman* as “eye-medicine,” in which case one must wonder “why put eye medicine in the nose?”), or (as I read it here) an instrument for the nose (in which case *mig sman* is to be read as a term for “ointment” or, perhaps, a particular type of medicated preparation).

²¹ *nang gi dbus*

“This explains the meaning of the verse from scripture:

The vajra media themselves are
The supreme maṇḍala of the bodhisattvas.

“Explaining the samādhi of the Object Goddesses, the Great Yoga Tantra, the *Vajra Door*, teaches ten winds. They are these: ‘vitality,’ ‘evacuating,’ ‘ascending,’ ‘metabolic,’ ‘pervading,’ ‘rising and moving’, ‘re-moving’, ‘authentically moving’, ‘well moving’, and ‘certainly moving’. As the five [main] winds, ‘vitality’ and so on, depend on the five aggregates, they perform the functions of the five aggregates. The five [auxiliary] winds, ‘rising and moving’ and so on, as they reside in the senses, perform external functions.

“As the wind ‘rising and moving’ depends on the visual media, it completes the function of the five [visual] forms. Again, seeing of [visual] form-objects by the cause of the assemblage of visual sense, mental function, and non-obscured appearance, this is the [magical transformation] of Vairocana. Forms of postures, play, and flirtation are Akṣobhya. Forms which are craved for are Ratnasambhava’s. Forms which are pleasant, unpleasant, and ambivalent are Amitābha’s. Forms which perform all functions are the magical transformation of Amoghasiddhi. This explains the five aspects of form.

“The wind called ‘re-moving’, [128] depending on the aural media, performs the function [of hearing] the five types of sounds. Sounds in the ear, or head and hair sounds are Vairocana’s. Song-sounds and continual sounds are Ratnasambhava’s. Palatal, labial, and vocal sounds are Amitābha’s. Various musical sounds such as mṛdaṅgam drum, clapping, finger snapping, streams and groves are Amoghasiddhi’s. The wrathful and peaceful sounds of the letter Hūṃ are Akṣobhya’s magical transformation. This is the explanation of the five types of sound-object.

“The wind called ‘authentically moving’, in dependence on the olfactory media, performs the function [of smelling] the five types of scent. All scents are Vairocana’s. The scent of all the limbs is Ratnasambhava. That which grasps the particulars of the three scents is Amitābha’s. The taste-scent is Amoghasiddhi’s. The inexhaustible scent is the magical transformation of Akṣobhya. This explains the five types of olfactory media.

“The wind called ‘well-moving’, in dependence on the gustatory media, upholds the five kinds of tastes. Sweet tastes are Vairocana’s. Astringent tastes are Ratnasambhava’s. Salty tastes are Amitābha’s. Bitter tastes are Akṣobhya. The particulars of the six tastes such as hot and sour tastes are the magical transformation of Amoghasiddhi. This explains the five types of the gustatory media.

“[The wind] called ‘certainly moving’, in dependence on the tactile media, is the enthusiasms and the strengths such as the [sixteen bodhisattva] powers²²; it upholds the five kinds of tactile object. Those objects of tactile sense which abide on a single seat²³ are Vairocana’s. Objects which are embraced are Ratnasambhava’s. Objects which are kissed are Amitābha’s. Objects which are inhaled are Amoghasiddhi’s. Passion-free contact of vagina and penis and the perception of the nature of the passion of the central channel is the magical transformation of Akṣobhya. This explains the five types of tactile object.

“This explains the meaning of the verse from scripture:

The mantrin always meditates
On forms, sounds, and so on, as deities.²⁴

“Explaining in terms of the five intuitive wisdoms: [129] The mirror-like wisdom, which is the immediate knowledge of all things as like the appearance of reflections in a mirror, that is Vairocana’s. The equality wisdom--which is the realization that all sentient beings, whether legless, bipedal, quadrupedal, or multi-pedal, have the same aspect of being

²² Here reading *stobs bskyed pa (balādhāna)* for *stobs ‘gyed pa*. This latter (which, admittedly, is the form attested in all redactions) means a kind of gladiator’s heroism. I have chosen a more “religious” reading here, though it is of course possible that Āryadeva had the latter in mind.

²³ The interpretation of this term is difficult. Literally, *stan cig* means a “single carpet” or “single seat.” The *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo* (p. 1100) defines *stan gcig* as “the ascetic practice of only eating once a day” (*nyin rer lto chas za theng re las mi za ba’i brtul zhugs*). In the context of discussions of “stages and paths,” this term is also used in reference to a level at which one attains sainthood in only *stan cig*, i.e. “only one session on a meditational seat.”

²⁴ Here we get yet another slightly different version of the verse, viz. *gzugs sgra la sogs. .* .. (See note above on the original verses).

“mind-only”--that is Ratnasambhava’s. The wisdom of individuating discernment which, distinguishing and designating inner and outer entities such as aggregates, elements and so on, knowing that all is the nature of the buddha[s], [and thinking] “the parts of all things are these [buddhas],” [and which] abides like a lotus petal with and without individuating conceptuality--is Amitābha’s. The function-accomplishing wisdom--which is the nature of completing the activity of self and other, their karma of body, speech and mind--that is Amoghasiddhi’s. The completely pure wisdom of the Realm of Reality which purifies the imprints of conceptualizing virtue and non-virtue, liberates from the karma and defilements, and purifies the obscurations of body, speech and mind--that is Akṣobhya’s.

“Therefore, it is said:

Aggregates, elements, and likewise, media
divided five by five
As they are the magical transformation of the five Transcendent Lords,
From where do the functions of saṃsāra emerge?

Likewise, the five senses together with their external objects
Are individually always the magical transformation
of the five Transcendent Lords.
They are the authentic abode of the five or three wisdoms.

This explains the meaning of the verse from scripture that ‘the families are explained to be one hundred.’”

The Vajra Student asked: “If I have no doubts about the body established from collections of sub-atomic particles of all Transcendent Lords by the process of the hundred families, how again do they become five when collected together?”

The Vajra Mentor said: “The body-aggregate is formed from the four elements. From the gathering of the elements [130] arises the ‘elemental.’ Hence, whichever form aggregates and so on are made of elements are of the family of the Transcendent Lords. They are classified²⁵ under the earth element. Likewise, those of the Jewel Family are the

²⁵ *nye bar ‘gro, upagacchati*

water element. Those of the Lotus Family are the fire element. Those of the Karma Family are the wind element. Those of the Vajra Family are collected under the consciousness element. In this manner, by dividing one's body maṇḍala into elements and the elemental, although the five aggregates become hundred-fold, the Reality of the five secrets becomes the Reality of the five great elements.

“With respect to this, it says in the *Esoteric Communion*:

Abiding in the middle of space
Create a maṇḍala from all vajras
If one desires peaceful Vajradhara
Make the connections!²⁶

And, in order to clarify this very import, the *Universal Secret Tantra*²⁷ explains:

In the five natures of the five elements
The human body should be designated.
By meditating certainly that thing,
You will become buddha by the power of your own mind.²⁸

And also the *Infinite Tantra*²⁹ says:

All these beings are the nature of the five buddhas
Appearing like performers and images.
Where there is only great bliss
Experienced as one, they are danced as many.³⁰

“In brief, I have explained the meaning of the sutra statement about ‘five aspects.’”

²⁶ Original reference not located.

²⁷ *Thams cad gsang ba'i rgyud; Sarvarahasya-nāma-tantrarāja (thams cad gsang ba zhes bya ba rgyud kyi rgyal po)*. sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. ta, 1b¹-10a¹ (Tōh. 481). Translated by Padmakaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po.

²⁸ 'byung ba nga yi bdag nyid lngar/ mi yi lus ni brtag bya ste/ dngos de nges par bsgoms pa yis/ rang sems mthu yis sangs rgyas 'gyur//. This is the first verse of the *Sarvarahasyatantra* preserved in the Urga Kanjur (vol 86), also the version of Padmakaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po. It reads in the Urga redaction: 'byung lnga nyid kyis lnga yi bdag nyid can/ mi rnams lus la nges par mthong ba dag/ rang sems rab tu bsgoms par gyur na ni/ dngos der rab bsgoms pas nges par sangs rgyas 'gyur// (Rgyud, vol. ta, f. 1b²³).

²⁹ *Nam mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud; Śrī-khasama-tantrarāja-nāma, dPal nam-mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po*. sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rgyud, vol. ga, 199a⁷-202a¹ (Tōh. 386).

³⁰ Reference not located.

The Vajra Student asked, “How do the five aspects become three?”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Ratnasambhava becomes innately non-dual with [the] body vajra. Amoghasiddhi becomes innately non-dual with the speech vajra. Akṣobhya becomes innately non-dual with the transcendent lord, the sixth. In that way, they are established from the one hundred families. The buddhas and bodhisattvas having the nature of the five families are collected into one’s own body, speech, and mind. Just as [131] the Lord said in the Great Yoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion*:

Then, all Transcendent Lords will enter one’s own body,
speech, and mind by the three inexhaustible vajras.

And,

If one objectifies body, speech and mind,
By nature unobjective,
In the yoga of the mantra body,
There is neither enlightenment nor meditation.

Having briefly analysed
The distinguishing characteristics of body, speech, and mind,
One should meditate by the rite of yoga
The samādhi created by mantra.³¹

“And, the *Union with all the Buddhas: Supreme Magic Bliss of the Ḍākinīs*³² also teaches this point clearly:

Though yoga will not emerge
From cast images,
If one strives in the enlightenment mind
From that, the yogin becomes a deity.

I myself am all the buddhas
And all the heroes are me!
Hence, through uniting myself with the deity
I will accomplish!³³

“These explain the scriptural passage [from the *Secret Moon Drop*], ‘Correlated

³¹ References not located.

³² *Sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha’ ‘gro ma sgyu ma bde ba’i mchog; Buddhasamāyoga*

³³ Reference not located.

with body, speech and mind, they are also three-fold.”

The Vajra Student asked: “If I have no doubts about the correlation of all the buddhas and bodhisattvas, who have the nature of all realizations, with my own body, speech, and mind, how do those three families become the vajra body which has the nature of the indivisible three vajras? Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, please explain this!”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Great Spiritual Hero, it is excellent that you have inquired about the ultimate of body isolation as it will benefit those who enter the import of the *Communion*. Listen, therefore, as I will teach the body, speech, and mind each mutually becoming the cause for the other, and [then] present the Body Vajra Samādhi.

The Lord said in the *Esoteric Communion*:

The body focused on the import and
Speech also are to be impelled by the mind.
The mind is the cause of joy [132]
One will achieve the supreme accomplishment.³⁴

“The intention of this statement is this. There, having become the Body Vajra, from joining the palate, lips, and tongue, one will enter the Speech Vajra. The mind vajra is the impeller of that; in that way from the assembly of the three, one perfects the power of making the mind joyous and satisfied. Such is the import. Having thus examined the distinguishing characteristics of the meditation of body, speech, mind and so on, I will now present the distinguishing characteristic of the indivisible three vajras.

“Since it says in the *Esoteric Communion*:

Make your mind like body,
Your body like mind, and
[Your] mind, like verbal expression.³⁵

³⁴ Reference not located.

³⁵ *Guhyasamājatantra*, Chapter II. The Lord Sarvatathāgatakāyavākcittavajra speaks this verse: khyod kyi sems lus lta bu dang/ lus sems lta bu dang/ sems tshig tu brjod pa lta bu skyed cig// Fremantle (p. 191) has *khyed kyis* and *lta bur skyed cig* which follow the Tog edition but seem mistaken. She translates (p. 34): “Create mind in the form of body, body in the form of mind, and mind as the utterance of speech.” Thurman (p.11) translates: “The form of your body creates your mind./ The form of your mind creates your body;/ But your Note continued on next page. . .

“The yoga of consecration is explained as imagining that the nature of the three vajras is Mahāvajradhara in order to generate the firm self-conception that ‘I am the intrinsic nature lord’ (*rang bzhin gyi bdag po*).”

mind is (itself) constructed/ By your conventional usage of speech!” The Sanskrit text given by Fremantle (p. 190) runs: utpādayantu bhavantaḥ cittaṃ kāyākāreṇa kāyaṃ cittākāreṇa cittaṃ vākpravyāhāreṇeti.

**Lamp Chapter III:
Resolution of Doubts concerning Speech Isolation**

The Vajra Student asked, “If I have no doubts concerning Body Isolation, O Lord, how shall I learn Speech Isolation? How shall I attain it? Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, explain this I pray!”

The Vajra Mentor said, “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! The aggregates, elements, and media just explained are the Body Isolation. The array of deities there is common to all, as it is a coarse yoga. Speech Isolation is the intuitive wisdom of the yogin. Extremely subtle, it is not the sphere of Mahāyāna practitioners; even among practitioners of the Vajrayāna, it is not the sphere of those who practice the Creation Stage, as it is extremely subtle.¹ Therefore, since you must understand the Speech Vajra Samādhi extensively and in detail according to the tantras I have explained to you, make great effort to listen!

“With regard to that, [133] that versified scriptural statement previously explained that ‘the families are hundred-fold,’ refers in common to Body, Speech, and Mind Isolations. With respect to that, the so-called ‘Speech Isolation’ is Mantra Reality. Again, those who have not reached the stage of Wind Reality will not come to know that. The so-called ‘Wind Reality’ is Vitality and Control.² Hence, the statement from the *Glorious Esoteric Communion* teaching Wind Reality:

A five-colored precious jewel
Merely the size of a mustard seed

¹ Note that here Āryadeva seems to be drawing the line of demarcation between Creation and Perfection Stages here--between the practices of Body Isolation and Speech Isolation. This issue is the subject of some debate among later schools of Tantric Buddhism.

With regard to this statement, it is important to note that with the stage of Speech Isolation begins the crucial practices of Vitality Control (*prāṇāyāma*), which serve to force the winds into the central channel (*avadhūti, rtsa dbu ma*). This technique is the *sine qua non* of the advanced yogic techniques of the Unexcelled Yoga Tantra. Hence, it marks a logical division in the stages of Tantric practice.

² *srog dang rtsol, prāṇāyāma*

The yogin always meditates that very thing
Steadily on the tip of the nose.³

“Analyzing these vajra words according to definitive and interpretable meaning, they apply to the two types of deity yoga. The teaching that one meditating on the Creation Stage should meditate on the symbol of one’s own deity merely the size of a mustard seed on the tip of one’s nose for the purpose of stabilizing one’s own mind is the explanation of the subtle yoga. The explanation of the subtle yoga of one on the Perfection Stage is that one creates the three syllables of the three genders--feminine, masculine, and neuter--vowels and consonants (*āli kāli*), etc.; by applying the three syllables to the entering, abiding, and arising, one performs the Vajra Recitation--Vitality and Control itself--according to the sequence of the four maṇḍalas.

“For the purpose of demonstrating that very thing, the *Esoteric Communion Tantric Appendix*⁴ states:

Breath the nature of the five wisdoms,
Born from a lump [having the]
Nature of the five elements,
A five-colored precious jewel
Visualized on the nose-tip
Is explained as “Vitality and Control.”⁵

³ GST, Chapter III: pañcavarṇaṃ mahāratnaṃ sarṣapasthūlamātrakam/ nāsikāgre prayatnena bhāvayedyogataḥ sadā// The Tibetan text seems to suggest a reading of “*sarṣapaphalamātrakam*,” but this reading does not fit the meter. Bhattacharyya (p. 15) reads *sthala*, which might be preferable. Cf. Bhattacharya (p.15), Fremantle (p. 198), Bagchi (p. 12), Mimaki and Tomabechi (p. 2), de la Vallée-Poussin (p. 18).

This verse is also cited in the “Vajrajāpa” Chapter of the *Pañcakrama* (I.11). In fact, Āryadeva even introduces it with the same description, viz. “statement teaching wind thatness” (vāyutattvoddeśapadaṃ/rlung gi de kho na nyid bstan pa’i tshig).

⁴ *dPal gsang ba ‘dus pa’i rgyud phyi ma, Guhyasamājottaratantra*. sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, rGyud, vol. ca, 148a⁶-157b⁷ (Tōh. 443).

⁵ The quote is found exactly so in the Tog Palace Kanjur version, Vol. Ca, f. 90b⁶⁻⁷ (also translated by Śraddhākaravarma and Rin-chen bZang-po): ye shes lnga yi rang bzhin dbugs/ ‘byung ba lnga yi ngo bo nyid/ gong bu’i gzugs kyis phyung nas ni/ sna yi rtse mor rab tu brtag/ rin chen kha dog sna lnga pa/ srog dang rtsol ba zhes byar bshad//. The Sanskrit reads: pañcajñānamayaṃ śvāsaṃ pañcabhūtasvabhāvakaṃ/ niścārya piṇḍarūpeṇa nāsikāgre tu kalpayet// pañcavarṇaṃ mahāratnaṃ prāṇāyāmaṃ iti smṛtam/ Cf. Bhattacharya (Baroda, 1967). 163.

This passage is also cited in the corresponding chapter of the *Pañcakrama* (i.e. the Note continued on next page. . .

“The explanatory tantra⁶ of the Esoteric Communion, the *Prophecy of the Intention*, elaborates on this brief teaching:

Then the Lord Vajradhara
Proclaimed the meaning of the vajra-essence.
“Prostrating to the one guide of the beings
I again request you.

If I proclaim the spirit of enlightenment
By mundane references,
How will those in the future
Understand the transcendent?

If you teach dharmas
In order to abandon all views [134]
How will you teach the view
Of the Reality of the spirit of enlightenment?

Those who are in the dark about intentional words,
Not understanding the meaning of what is said,
Say, ‘there is no other than these words,’
These hold to the literal [meaning].”

Then, the Lord Viśva
Said to Vajrapāṇi,
“For you to inquire about the ill-understood
Secret intention is good! Good!

The spirit of enlightenment becomes wind
and abides in space.
It is the vitality of all beings,
With five natures [and] ten names.⁷

Known as the ‘twelve links of dependent origination’
The natures become three
This spirit of enlightenment called ‘wind’
Is chief of all the senses.

“Vajrajāpakrama”: PK I.14-15).

⁶ Note also that here, though he has mentioned the *Vajra Garland* in the Second Chapter, is the first time that Āryadeva has used the term “explanatory tantra”--a concept which is crucial to the hermeneutical practice of the Ārya Tradition.

⁷ These last two lines, interestingly, are also found in the *Pañcakrama* I.3 where they form the first half of the first and the second half of the second pādas, respectively. The whole verse reads: *prānabhūtaśca sattvānām vāyvākhyāḥ sarvakarmakṛt/ vijñānavāhanaś caīṣa pañcātmā daśadhā punaḥ!* (repeated half-verses in italics).

Thus, though [it is] unmanifest and subtle,
I always clearly express it.
Working for beings and realms
Relies here upon that.

Pacification and Increase
Power and, likewise, Wrath⁸
Those are all produced by the spirit of enlightenment
Relying on the three sites.

Just as worldly notions
Likewise various notions and concepts
Invariably emerge from the wind
Called 'spirit of enlightenment.'

It is explained as being like the seed
of all things such as pleasure and pain.
This nature of spirit of enlightenment
Is non-dual with the aggregates, infinite.

By the unification of Wisdom and Art
The spirit of enlightenment will be mobilized.
Abandoning reading and meditation
Oneself, the Lord, recites.

By the separation of day and night
Is the union of sun and moon.
Since there are no things, only
The spirit of enlightenment pervades the world.

If one abandons the fruits of virtue and non-virtue,
One will become like space.”

The Vajra Student asked, “Lord, [you] have kindly presented [the line], ‘The nature of the five winds with ten names;’⁹ please explain the other divisions of the names individually.”

The Vajra Mentor said, “We may extract the teaching from the explanatory tantra just mentioned, [the *Prophecy of the Intention*]:

⁸ Variant of the usual list of four types of mystical actions: Pacification (*zhi ba, śānti*), Prosperity (*rgyas pa, pauṣṭika*), Controlling (*dbang du byed pa, vaśya*), and Attracting (??, *ākarṣa*). Here the fourth is *mngon spyod (abhicāra)*, which S. C. Das (p. 365) says is equivalent to *drag po'i las*, or “wrathful action.”

⁹ *rLung lnga'i bdag nyid bcu ming can*. Note that the line as quoted above says merely, “the nature of five, with ten names” (*lnga yi bdag nyid bcu ming can*).

Then all the Transcendent Lords [135]
 And likewise all the bodhisattvas
 Entered in order to please
 That lord of Transcendent Lords.

‘Vitality,’ ‘evacuative,’ ‘ascending,’
 ‘Pervasive’ and ‘aligned,’ he explained,
 ‘Nāga,’ ‘kurma,’ ‘kṛtalāsa,’
 ‘Devadatta,’ and ‘Dhanvanjaya.’
 Their own forms are transformed into women
 [And] emanated again.”

“These ten winds are described according to the manner of the *Union with all the Buddhas: Supreme Bliss of the Ḍākinis* with jargon terms: koṭakhya, koṭava, koṭa, koṭavaścaśa, koṭiragaḥ, kolakhya, kolavā, kola, kolavaśca, kolatathā. These ten names are also spoken of in literal terms in the Mahāyogatantra, the *Vajra Door*: Vitality, Evacuative, Metabolic, Ascending, Pervasive, Moving, Removing, Authentically moving, Well moving, and Certainly moving.”

The Vajra Student asked, “Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, pray explain what these ten winds--such as the ‘vitality wind,’ and so forth--do when they abide in this body.”

The Vajra Mentor said, “The five [main] winds, abiding in the parts of the body perform the functions of the body. The five [auxiliary] winds, abiding in the media such as the eye and so forth, perform the functions of the senses.

“In regard to that, the so-called ‘vitality wind,’ which abides in the heart, is the Transcendent Lord Akṣobhya. The ‘evacuative,’ which abides in the groin (*‘doms*), is the Transcendent Lord Ratnasambhava. The ‘ascending,’ which abides in the throat, is the Transcendent Lord Amitābha. The ‘metabolic,’ which abides at the navel, is the Transcendent Lord Amoghasiddhi. The ‘pervasive,’ which abides in all the joints, is the Transcendent Lord Vairocana.

“The ‘moving wind’ is [visual-]form. The ‘re-moving wind’ is sound. The ‘authentically-moving wind’ is smell. The ‘well-moving wind’ is taste. The ‘definitely-

moving wind' is tangible objects.

“These ten winds become inhalation and exhalation. They [136] also become of the nature of the four maṇḍalas such as the wind [maṇḍala] and so forth. They also become of the nature of four goddesses. They also become the five elements. They also become the five intuitive wisdoms such as the mirror-like [intuitive wisdom] and so on. They also become of the nature of the five [colored] light rays such as white and so forth. They also become of the nature of the five Transcendent Lords. Also, having become the basis of the three syllables, they perform the vajra recitation by the process of entering, abiding, and emerging. Also, having become the basis of the syllable ‘A,’ those winds enunciate all words. Also, having attained the indestructible, they become insubstantial.”

The Vajra Student asked, “Lord, how are these ten winds, which have the nature of being one and many, emitted and collected day and night in one’s own body? Lord and teacher, Vajra Mentor, I pray you explain!”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero,¹⁰ excellent! Since the Wind Reality is explained intentionally in the excellent¹¹ root tantras such as the *Glorious Compendium of Realities*,¹² it is not clearly stated. Since it is spoken of literally in the explanatory tantras, you must enter there. It says in the Great Yoga Tantra the *Vajra Garland*:

¹⁰ In our text here, the Vajra Mentor addresses the Vajra Student as *sems dpa' chen po*, “great spiritual hero,” rather than *sems can chen po*, “great one” or “great being.” As the Sanskrit word would be the same (to wit, *mahāsattva*), this may be insignificant as regards Indian Buddhism, yet it may have had some significance for the Tibetan tradition. One folio later, the reference returns to *sems can chen po*. One wonders if this is a significant variation, or whether it is a result of the lack of careful editing which is evident in various places in this translation. I am inclined to suspect the latter.

¹¹ *bla ma*. I am rendering this term based on its conventional equivalence with the Sanskrit *uttara*, “higher.”

¹² [*Sarvatathāgata-*] *Tattvasaṃgraha*

Abode of the five buddha families
Emergent from the orifice of the nose-tip
Moving on the five winds
Always acts in the body.

Acting on the conventional nose
Emerging from that door
left and right and both and
Leisurely moving are the four kinds.

¹³The element which emerges from the right
Is the fire-maṇḍala itself.
This reddish supreme
Is the movement of the Lotus Saviour (Amitābha).

The element which emerges from the left
The elements of the wind-maṇḍala
Appearing greenish yellow
Is the movement of the Karma Saviour (Amoghasiddhi).

The element which emerges from both
Appearing with a golden color
The maṇḍala of earth [137]
Is the movement of the Precious Saviour (Ratnasambhava).

The resting, non-moving element
Appearing like a pure crystal
Is the instantaneous water maṇḍala
The movement of the Vajra Saviour (Akṣobhya).

The emergence of all elements¹⁴

¹³ From this point until the line “the movement of the Vajra Saviour” is found in the sDe-dge redaction of the *Vajramālā* in the Twelfth Chapter, “Explanation of Wind Thatness,” from 222b⁷ to 223a².

This is also the section (plus one following verse, “the emergence of all elements,” etc.) which corresponds to the verses cited in the same context in the *Pañcakrama*. The Sanskrit for these verses runs: ūrdhvaghrāṇād viniḥkrānto vāma-dakṣina-dvandvataḥ/ stabdhaś ceti caturdhā syād velā tv ādhyātmikā smṛtā// kaṇṭha-hṛn-nābhi-guhyābje gatyāgatiṃ vinirdīset/ vihared ardhayāmikaṃ paripātyā yathākramam// dakṣiṇān nirgato raśmir hutabhuñ-maṇḍalaṃ ca tat/ raktavarṇam idaṃ vyaktaṃ Padmanātho ‘tra devatā// vāmād vinirgato raśmir vāyu-maṇḍala-saṃjñitaḥ/ harita-śyāma-saṃkāśaḥ Karmanātho ‘tra devatā// dvābhyāṃ vinirgato raśmiḥ pītavarṇo mahādyutiḥ/ mähendra-maṇḍalaṃ caitad Ratnanātho ‘tra devatā// stabdho manda-pracāras tu sita-kundendu-saṃnibhaḥ/ maṇḍalaṃ vāruṇaṃ caitad Vajranātho ‘tra devatā// sarva-dehānugo vāyuh sarvaceṣṭa-pravartakaḥ/ Vairocana-svabhāvo ‘sau mṛta-kāyād viniścaret// PK I.17-23 (Cf. Mimaki and Tomabechi, 4-5).

¹⁴ This line varies significantly in sDe-dge and Peking. I have followed sDe which seems to fit the context better: *khamṣ kun yang dag ‘byung ba ni*; rather than Peking’s *khamṣ gsum yang dag ‘byung ba yi*.

Holding support and supported
Is the body of Mahāvairocana [and]
Will emerge at the limit of death.

Always repeat these four maṇḍalas
Through meditative stabilization.
With the count of the mantra recitation,
Always repeat [it] night and day.

“Its meaning is this. The light rays emerge and ascend from the lotus and vajra noses. They emerge from the door of the conventional nose by the processes of the left, right, both, and leisurely movement.

“Those processes are as follows. The wind which certainly emerges from the left nose is the nature of the wind of the Transcendent Lord Amoghasiddhi; it is a yellow-green wind maṇḍala with the nature of black light rays. The wind which moves from the right nose is the Transcendent Lord Amitābha; the nature of fire, [it is] a fire-maṇḍala with the nature of red light rays. The wind which emerges from both noses is Ratnasambhava; the maṇḍala of earth with the nature of yellow light rays. The slow and leisurely wind is the nature of Akṣobhya; the nature of clarity, [it is] a water maṇḍala with the nature of white light rays. The pervasive wind which pervades all four elemental maṇḍalas and has non-emergent, pervasive light rays is the Transcendent Lord Vairocana. That has the nature of infinity.

“Although that is so, if the individual light rays emerge, all five light rays will definitely emerge, for even by one elemental maṇḍala all four elements are pervaded. One oneself always repeats the various processes such as engaging the three-syllable master mantra into each maṇḍala. This is the abbreviated explanation of Wind Reality.”

The Vajra Student asked, “The guru in his kindness has taught well Wind Reality from both scripture and realization. [138] Now, as I seek to know the distinctive characteristics of Mantra Reality, Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, please be kind and explain this.”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! The so-called ‘Mantra Reality’ is not taught by the mantra compendia¹⁵ which merely state the mantras from the root tantras and tantric appendices¹⁶ such as the *Compendium of Realities* and so forth. The Lord has only truly proclaimed mantra collections, mantra symbol, mantra meaning, and Mantra Reality in the explanatory tantras. Hence, those who adhere to external mantras will not come to know [this] except from the explanatory tantras. So listen with energy!

“One will only understand mantra Reality by following the explanatory tantras. The mantras such as serpent¹⁷ [mantra] and so on, are those which emerge from the vowels and consonants (*āli kāli*). The reality of those is the three syllables which emerge from the indestructible,¹⁸ for which reason you should enter the three syllables according to the personal instructions you have learned of the nature of all mantras being masculine, feminine or neuter. Therefore, the three syllables are the lord of all mantras. Also, those emerge each individually together with the indestructible from the three syllables.

“Now, I must teach the activity of the three syllables. First, from the joining of the three, the divine body will emerge. Those are caused to hold the body day and night by the processes of entering, abiding, and emerging. Those, accompanied by the vowels and consonants, at the time of uniting the two organs, facing downward, having emerged with the form of a seed from the orifice of the secret nose, creates the elements of sentient beings. Those, having gone upwards accompanied by life-control, having tried the sense-doors and emerged from the door of the conventional nose by the process of left and right

¹⁵ *sngags btu ba*

¹⁶ Here it seems we must render the term *rgyud bla ma (uttaratantra)* as “tantric appendix,” as it is being contrasted with the term “root tantra.”

¹⁷ *sbrul*; emanation? *sprul*?

¹⁸ Here an ambiguity: “Indestructible” and “syllable” are the same word.

and so forth, the effortlessly perform the vajra recitation--[139] [thus] purifying the obscurations of previous karma. Those, having held to the count of repetitions by the processes of day and night, emerge as maṇḍalas of water and so forth; abiding in the colors white, and so on, they perform the actions of pacifying and so forth. Those, having been uttered (*bzlas brjod*) with the characteristics of vocal utterance such as “imagined in the form of a syllable, utterly immovable [on] the tip of the tongue,” and so on, rely on the functions of external colors and so on, and perform the actions of pacifying and so on. Those three syllables, by the processes of purifying, realizing, and blazing, make food pure and faultless. At the time of abiding in the body in that way, [it] will do all; and finally, having entered the indestructible, relying on an ordinary body, it likewise does all.

“Now, the creation of the three syllables is described in the Great Yoga Tantra called *Prophecy of the Intention*:

First, one among nine
Not bound by ten
That is called “unbound”
Knowing that is the supreme site.

Those syllables, vowels and consonants,
follow a count of nine
Bound by “A,” mutually applied
Who knows that is an elevated being.

Who, knowing, desires to accomplish
The perfect fruit of liberation
Will accomplish it.
Since insubstantial, it is free of all substance.

Elemental limit, authentic endowment,
Site of the sixteen, *cha* and so on
The fifth endowed with five
The fourth, applied to three.

Lengthened by the syllable “ām”
Endowed with externals--qualities, application, etc.
Downward all becomes pure.¹⁹
Not one, not many.

¹⁹ Note that this line is cited differently below in the next question of the Vajra Student.

The one desiring accomplishments
Of suitable action by the meaning of "ya"
By the three, "ra" etc.,
Engages the goals of beings.

Whichever syllables were explained earlier
Whichever of those face [one]
Masculine, feminine and neuter
Are imagined as the elements, and so forth.

From below to above
Knowing, the mind will definitely apply
Six explained four and three and [140] one
Emerge from one unreal nature.

Having applied those to the[ir] meaning
Knowledge of the three times will also emerge.
The wise should/will end the causes of
Migration, like a magic illusion

These expressed mantras
Emerge from the unreal nature.
That transformed form
Visualized as a deity

Standing in those three by symbolic representation
In nature, they have the character of recitation.
Nameless, inexpressible--
This is the supreme spirit of enlightenment.

Those three are one;
Without coming, without going,
Ceaseless, utter peace itself
Discarding permanence and annihilation

Knowing the three times, with a character
Indivisible from the uncreated space of conceptuality,
This only is the ultimate
Of the character of individual self-awareness.

In every function,
In sleep and so forth--yogic awareness
Nameless, inexpressible,
The recitation of the three times will always be recited.

The recitation explained of Paṇḍara, and so forth,
Two hundred and twenty-five;
By collecting well the four
By collecting the four applications, nine-hundred.

That which shows the nine-hundred
By the sequence of twenty-four--
Individually occurring, that
is twenty one thousand six hundred.

That here, by the secret intention
Is the teaching of the subtle yoga.
Although lacking knowledge of texts and meditation,
Nonetheless, is explained the recitation.²⁰

That is the explanation of ‘Mantra Reality.’”²¹

The Vajra Student asked, “If I have no doubts about entering the three vocal syllables which have the nature of interiority, yet you cited the line, ‘downward, it becomes all words.’ Lord, how does that called ‘downward,’ become the cause of the syllable ‘a’ entering all words?”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Excellent, Great Hero, excellent! In regard to this, the explanations of scripture, following the words of the *Vyākaraṇa*,²² follow only the verbal meaning; also, [141] it does not know how, where, [and] for what purpose the syllables express. They do not know precisely the Reality of the meaning of syllables, for it is the sphere of activity of the buddhas. As I will make you understand according to the sequence of teaching, listen!

“With regard to that, words have the nature of the vowels and consonants (āli and kāli). The vowels are the sixteen vowel-syllables such as ‘a’ and so forth. The consonants are the thirty-three syllables such as “ka” and so forth. By explaining the forty-nine syllables including the sixteen vowels without exception by the name-symbols

²⁰ As has been the case with most of the texts cited in this chapter, this passage is also cited in the Vajrajāpa Chapter of the *Pañcakrama*. PK I.27-41 and 44-45 are devoted to a long passage from this Explanatory Tantra. Of these, verses 35-45 also appear here in the CMP, with extra verses found between 36/37, 38/39, 40 (six Tibetan lines between these two pādas), 41/44 (fourteen Tibetan lines standing in for the twelve in PK verses 42-43), and one more after 45.

²¹ Again this passage from the *Samdhivvyākaraṇa* is cited in the *Pañcakrama* as explaining “mantra thatness” (*mantratattva*).

²² The chief source of grammatical knowledge is the *Pāṇi-vyākaraṇa* (attributed to Pāṇini), though there are also said to be works such as the *Indra-*, *Candra-*, and *Kalāpa-vyākaraṇas* which also deal with grammar. Cf. Tāranātha, p. 84.

of the *Vyākaraṇa*, one will come to know the vowel syllables, the consonants, the [anusvāra] drop, together with the visarga (*tshig drag*), the verbal roots (*dhātu, skad kyi byings*), declensional endings (*vibhaktikāya, nam par 'byed pa'i tshig*), euphonic combination (*sandhi, mtshams sbyar*), compounds (*samāsa, tshig nam par sbyar ba*), the three genders (*rtags gsum*), the three methods of etymological analysis (*brtags thabs* (or, P. *ta mtha'*)), actions (*bya ba*) and their syntactic categories--the ultimates of explanation. Therefore, the transcendent śāstras such as the sutras, tantras, kalpas, three baskets (*tripiṭaka*), court poems (*kāvya*), and dance manuals (*gar gyi bstan bcos, nr̥tyaśāstra*) of eight-four thousand dharma teachings [all] emerge from the words, speech, composition (*sdeb sbyor*), commentary, verse, prose, and poetics,²³ etc., of that. By relying on the śāstras, all the powers will be perfected; as it says in the *Journey to Lanka Scripture*:

‘Mahāmati, it is like this. Some people, holding up a lamp, look at their wealth, thinking “in this place, I have this and this wealth.” Likewise, Mahāmati, by the lamp of the sound of verbal conceptualization, the bodhisattvas, great spiritual heroes, enter into the sphere of the meaning of introspective self-awareness free of verbal conceptualization.’²⁴

“However, that particular syllable of those which include the words and speech of those words which becomes consciousness is this ‘a.’ For which reason [142] there are no syllables such as ‘ka’ and so on, which do not contain ‘a.’ Since they are a limited thing, they cannot become words.

“Just as the Lord said in the *Song of the Names of Mañjuśrī*:²⁵

²³ *rgyun chags*

²⁴ blo gros chen po ‘di lta ste/ skyes bu la la zhis mar me thogs nas phyogs ‘di na nga’i nor ‘di lta bu ‘di [na] yod do zhes nor la lta ba de bzhin du blo gros chen po tshig tu nam par rtog pa’i sgra’i mar mes byang chub sems dpa’ sems dpa’ chen po nam tshig gi nam par rtog pa dang brai ba so so rang gis rig pa’i don gyi yul la rjes su ‘jug go// *Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra* (sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, f. 186b²⁴.)

²⁵ *mtshan yang dag par brjod pa; [Mañjuśrī]nāmasaṃgiti*. a ni yig ‘bru nam kyi mchog/ don chen yi ge dam pa yin// khong nas ‘byung ba skye ba med/ tshig tu brjod pa
Note continued on next page. . .

The sound 'a' is the supreme syllable,
 A holy phoneme of great import.
 Emerging from within, birthless,
 Eluding expression through words
 Supreme cause of all expressions
 It illuminates all words.²⁶

“Therefore, the Lord said, ‘since “a”--the seed-syllable which is the door of all meditation without exception--is birthless, it is the door of all dharmas.’ He also called it the ‘simultaneously-born syllable.’²⁷

“In the *Vajra Maṇḍala Ornament*,²⁸ it says:

In order to show clearly “a”:
 The indestructible in the heart-center
 Blazing like a pure lamp
 Unchanging, supremely subtle
 “A” is the chief supreme.²⁹

“In that way, all the Transcendent Lords are of the family of ‘a,’ are the cause of ‘a,’ definitely emerge from ‘a.’ As they know precisely the character of verbal conceptualization as having the nature of cessation with regard to expression, they teach the dharma to disciple-beings, discerning the intentions of sentient beings, without regard for

spangs pa ste/ brjod pa kun gyi rgyu yi mchog/ tshig kun rab tu gsal bar byed//
 Davidson’s Sanskrit edition reads: akāraḥ sarvavarṇāgryō mahārthaḥ paramākṣaraḥ//
 mahāprāṇo hy anutpādo vāgudāhāravajitah/ sarvābhilāpahetvagryaḥ
 sarvavākṣuprabhāsvaraḥ// (Davidson, p. 51-52).

²⁶ Āryadeva’s citation of this verse is referred to by mKhas-grub-rje dGe-legs dPal-bzang in his *rGyud sde spyi’i nam gzhag* (Cf. Lessing and Wayman, p. 126). The relevance for mKhas Grub is that it is an example of what is ostensibly a verse from a “Kriyā Tantra” being explained as referring to the Perfection Stage of Unexcelled Yoga Tantra.

This verse, as edited in the Sanskrit by Ronald M. Davidson (p. 51-2) reads: akāraḥ sarvavarṇāgryō mahārthaḥ paramākṣaraḥ // mahāprāṇo hy anutpādo vāgudāhāravajitah/ sarvābhilāpahetvagryaḥ sarvavākṣuprabhāsvaraḥ//.

²⁷ *lhan cig skyes pa’i yi ge, saḥajākṣara*

²⁸ *rDo rje dkyil ‘khor rgyan zhes bya ba’i rgyud; Vajramaṇḍalālamkaranāmatantra;*
 This text is found in the bsTan-’gyur under the title *rDo rje snying po rgyan* (Tōh. 490).

²⁹ Reference not located.

verbal and non-verbal [teachings].³⁰

“Therefore, the Lord said in the *Journey to Lanka Scripture*:

‘Mahāmati, the bodhisattva great spiritual heroes should rely on the meaning, they should not rely on the syllables. The son or daughter of the family who follows after syllables themselves fall away from the ultimate import (*don dam*) and do not cause others to understand.³¹

‘It is like this, Mahāmati. It is like someone pointing something out to another with the tip of their finger, and that person looking at the finger tip itself and following it. Likewise, Mahāmati, the children of the class of alienated beings, with childlike nature, become attached to the finger tip of the literal [meaning] and adhere to it. Adhering [to that], time passes and, [143] abandoning the import of the literal [meaning] which is like the finger tip, they do not seek the ultimate. Hence, those who desire the meaning should rely on that.’

Thus, the Lord taught in this Sutra Collection four ways in which to engage words, such as that ‘whosoever adheres to the fallacy of literalism,³² should abandon that and seek the meaning.’ [He continues:]

‘Mahāmati, there are four distinguishing characteristics of verbal conceptuality: defining words like this, dream words, words which conduce to taking a bad rebirth, and words of beginningless conceptuality. Mahāmati, with regard to that, defining words emerge from adhering to the signs in the form of one’s concepts. Mahāmati, dream words emerge from remembering previously experienced objects without a conceived object (*rtog yul*). Again, Mahāmati, words which adhere to the conception of taking a bad rebirth emerge from remembering the verbal karma done previously. Mahāmati, words of beginningless conceptuality emerge from the seed of taking a bad rebirth which adheres to the fabrications of beginningless time. These, Mahāmati, are the four distinguishing characteristics of verbal conceptuality.’

³⁰ i.e. they teach both verbally and non-verbally, according to the needs of individual sentient beings.

³¹ *Lankāvatārasūtra*, sDe 213a? bLo gros chen po byang chub sems dpa’ sems dpa’ chen pos don la rton par bya’i/ yi ge la rton par mi bya’o/ blo gros chen po yi ge’i phyir ‘brang ba’i rigs kyi bu [pho]’am/ rigs kyi bu mo’am bdag kyang don [dam pa] las nyams par byed cing gzhan yang khong du chud par mi byed do//

³² *sgra ji bzhin pa’i phyin ci log*

“That which was expressed is thus explained. By this reasoning, since sounds emerge from ‘a,’ they are unchanging. The changing is destroyed. The unchanging is not destroyed. That taught through words of unreal nature is the genuine beginning and endless nature.

“Just as it says in the *Teaching of One Method Scripture*:³³

This dharma was prophesied by words and speech.
Dharma and words are not seen here.
Entering the one true method of the Dharma,
One will touch the unexcelled, supreme tolerance.³⁴

“And, as the Lord said in the Caryā Tantra, *The Enlightenment of Vairocana*:³⁵

‘Lord of Secrets, furthermore, the distinguishing characteristics of secret mantra are not performed by all the Transcendent Lords; they do not enter into it; they do not rejoice in it.

“Why?” This [144] is the reality of all things. It is like this. Transcendent Lords may either emerge or not emerge. The reality of all things is aboriginally present. So also is the reality of the secret mantra of all secret mantras.

‘With regard to that, Lord of Secrets, the Lord of the Desire Realm has a vidyāmantra called “Intoxicator.” If he so desires, by intoxicating all the active devaputras he causes them to become unconscious and he manifests various delightful regions endowed with many various flowers. Also, manifesting various different delights and enjoyments, he gives them to the gods of Cupid’s Realm.³⁶ I also delight in it.

‘It is like this. Devaputra Maheśvara has a secret mantra called “mind-speed.” Creating the necessities of sentient beings in the world-realms of the great void of the

³³ *tsul gcig par bstan pa’i mdo, Ekanayanirdeśasūtra.*

³⁴ This verse is also found in the *Subhāṣita Saṃgraha*, p. 25, which reads: dharmā ime śabdarutena vyākṛtā dharmāś ca śabdaś ca hi nātra labhyate/ na caikatām cāpy avatīrya dharmatām anuttarām kṣāntīparām pṛṣīyatheti//.

³⁵ *rNam-par sNang-mdzad mngon par byang chub pa zhes bya ba spyod pa’i rgyud; Vairocanābhisambodhicaryātantra* (Tōh. 494 as *Mahāvairocana-abhisambodhi-vikurvita-adhiṣṭāna-vaipūlyasutrendrarāja-nāma-dharmaparyāya*; trans. Śilendrabodhi and dPal-brtsegs. sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, rGyud, Tha, 151b²-260a⁷).

³⁶ *gzhan ‘phrul bdang byed, Paranirmita vasavartin.* In Buddhist cosmology, this realm is considered to be the highest level of the ‘Desire Realm’ (‘*dod pa’i kham*s, *kāmadhātu*).

three voids, he manifests all delights and enjoyments and gives it to the devaputras of the Pure Abodes.³⁷ I also delight in it.

‘It is like this. For example an illusionist by means of secret mantra displays various different sights such as a pleasure park, a lake, a waterfall, or a person.

‘It is like this. For example, demi-gods display magical illusions through secret mantra.

‘It is like this. For example, secret mantras eliminate poisons and infectious diseases.

‘It is like this. For example, the goddesses called “Ma Mo” send plagues by secret mantra.

‘It is like this. For example, secret mantras eliminate the heat of fire and make it cold.

‘Sons of the family, on account of these examples, you should have faith in the power of secret mantra. That power of secret mantra does not come from the secret mantras. It does not come from substances. Its object does not even come from the yogin. Nonetheless, Sons of the Family, by the blessings of secret mantra you will not pass beyond the source of reality, for it is beyond the three times and [145] is accomplished from the inconceivable, profound dependent co-origination.

Thus, sons of the family, by understanding the nature of the inconceivable reality, you should always without lapse engage in the method of the secret mantra.³⁸

“In that way, having shown the inconceivable power and realization of outer and inner mantra, jewels and medicines; now an explanation is in order to show precisely the purification of the speech of the realms of perfected and unperfected sentient beings.

“It says in the *Enquiry of the Satyr King Scripture*³⁹:

‘Lord of Satyrs, from what does the speech (*sgra skad*) of all sentient beings emerge?’

‘Noble One, the speech of all sentient beings emerges from space.’

‘Lord of Satyrs, does not the speech of all sentient

³⁷ *gnas gtsang ma'i ris* [sic for *gnas gtsang ma'i rigs*], *Śuddhavāsakāyika*. In Buddhist cosmology, the realms collectively termed the ‘Pure Abodes’ are considered to be the highest levels of the ‘Form Realm’ (*gzugs kyi khams, rūpadhātu*).

³⁸ Reference not located.

³⁹ *mi'am ci'i rgyal pos zhus pa'i mdo*, [*Ārya-druma-]Kiṃnararājaparipṛcchā[nāma-mahāyāna]sūtra* (Toh. 157). The term *kiṃnara* (lit. “a man, or what?!”) refers to a mythical creature which is half-man half-beast (which MacDonell, p. 68, suggests is “in the service of Kubera”).

beings emerge from their insides?’

‘Noble One, what do you think? Does the speech of all sentient beings emerge from inside their body or from their mind?’

‘Lord of Satyrs, it is neither from the body, nor from the mind. Why? The body is an immobile and inactive lump--like grass, a clod, masonry, wood, or an hallucination. The mind is formless, undemonstrable, unobstructed, unaware, like a magical illusion.’

‘Noble One, from what other except body and mind will speech emerge?’

‘Lord of Satyrs, understand that the speech of sentient beings emerges from space.’

‘If there is no space, from where does speech emerge?’

‘Lord of Satyrs, from what other except space will speech emerge?’

‘Hence, Noble One, as many designations as speech has by this enumeration, know that all those emerge from space. The nature of space is speech. As soon as it is aware, it ceases. Having ceased, it rests in the nature of space. Hence, all things are [146] called “infinite (spacious).” Although that which is unaware is not “conscious,” it is expressed by speech and vocal symbols. That expression is [verbal] designation.

‘Whosoever in this way thoroughly knows that which is expressed through speech is not attached to things. Who is not attached, does not proceed. Who does not proceed, does not wander. Who does not wander is unchanging. That which is unchanging is unborn. That which is unborn is indestructible. That which is indestructible is immaculate. That which is immaculate is pure. That which is pure is stainless. That which is stainless is Clear Light Transparency. That which is Clear Light Transparency is the nature of mind. That which is the nature of mind is engaging. That which is engaging is the subduer of all signs. That which is the subduer of all signs is called “entering into faultlessness.” Whoever enters into the faultlessness of the bodhisattva attains tolerance of unborn things. Hence, the bodhisattva who enters into faultlessness is called “one who has attained the tolerance of unborn things.”

‘Whoever has attained tolerance, tolerates all. That one tolerates both the void and persons. “Why?” The void is not other than persons. Persons themselves are void. That one also tolerates both signs and signlessness. Why? The nature of signs is signlessness. That one tolerates both wishes and wishlessness. Why? The distinguishing characteristic of the nature of wishes is wishlessness. That one tolerates the natural nirvāṇa of all sentient beings. That one also tolerates the death, transmigration, and birth of sentient beings. “Why?” Death, transmigration, and birth have the nature of magical illusion. Noble One, in that way the bodhisattva who has attained the tolerance of the

birthlessness of things is not contradictory, for s/he is not in contradiction with all things.’

“In that way, the great yogin who abides in the speech vajra samādhi, [147] hearing the words expressing the faults and qualities of the realms of perfected and unperfected sentient beings, does not become attached, does not become overjoyed, does not become afraid, does not become terrified, does not dishonor [them]. Having heard the distinctive array of sounds of the prose and poetry⁴⁰ of the worldly and transcendent śāstras, s/he does not adhere to [them], does not dishonor [them], is not confused, for s/he understands the migration of all beings and that it is the nature of speech.

“Just as the Lord said in the *Scripture called ‘Engaging all Things:*⁴¹

‘Devaputra, the bodhisattvas who have penetrated the sound of fame, even if they are spoken of in untrue and disrespectful words for as many æons as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, they will not become angry with those [who do so]. If, for as many æons as there are grains of sand in the river Ganges, they are venerated, treated as a guru,⁴² revered and offered all sorts of comforting goods, robes, offering cakes,⁴³ bedding, medicines, and [other] goods, they will not generate great affection for that one [who does so].’

“In that way, the mantrin abiding in the Speech Vajra Samādhi will not be bound by the eight lords--gain, loss, fame, infamy, praise, blame, pleasure, and pain. S/he will not be overjoyed. Therefore, having subdued all worldly motivations, the one who seeks to find [the stage of] Mind Isolation which has passed beyond the Creation Stage⁴⁴ should please a

⁴⁰ *rgyun chags*; “poetry” seems the most appropriate rendering of this archaic and obscure term. The *Mahāvvyūtpatti* has *daṇḍaka* as a synonym (cf. L. Candra, p. 539), for which Monier Williams (p. 467) gives “a class of metres. . .” As the term stands in opposition to *rkyang pa* (Skt. *gadya*), the standard term for prose, I have rendered it accordingly.

⁴¹ *Chos thams cad rab tu ‘jug pa bstan par bya ba’i mdo; Sarvadharmāvatāra-nirdeśyasūtra??*

⁴² or, “elevated” (*bla mar byed pa*).

⁴³ *bsod snyoms, piṇḍa*.

⁴⁴ Might this be an indication that Ārydeva seeks to draw the dividing line between Creation Stage and Perfection Stage between Speech Isolation and Mind Isolation?

spiritual guide.”⁴⁵

⁴⁵ *dge ba'i bshes gnyen, kalyāṇamitra*. Literally, a “virtuous friend.”

**Lamp Chapter IV:
Resolution of Doubts concerning
Mind Isolation**

The Vajra Student asked: “Due to the kindness of the Mentor’s instruction, I have no doubts regarding [the attainment of] Speech Isolation and Mantra Reality by the process of Wind-Reality. Now, how should I educate myself if I seek to learn Mind Isolation? [148] O Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, please explain [this] in order to benefit those who aspire to the profound.”

The Vajra Mentor said: “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! This is not the sphere of activity of those who turn away from pursuing the authentic personal instruction of all the Transcendent Lords. It is extremely profound and supremely difficult to grasp. The nature of that mind which inquires about the sphere of activity of the buddhas is said, in the words of the Lord as taught in the Tantras, to be rootless, siteless, baseless, signless, shapeless and colorless, beyond the senses, and not the sphere of activity of dogmatists.¹ Therefore, those who desire to attain buddhahood in the Vajra Vehicle, having pleased a spiritual guide, should seek the nature of their own mind.

“As the Lord stated in the *Reality Compendium*,² ‘O Noble One, through equipoise, finely analyze your own mind;’³ and in the *Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*: “‘Enlightenment’ is knowing completely and precisely one’s own authentic mind;”⁴ and in the *Method of the Three Baskets*⁵:

Going alone, traveling long,

¹ Tog ke pa, tarkin

² *de kho na nyid bsdus pa'i rgyud, Tattvasaṃgrāha. The Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha, sDe-dge bKa'-gyur, rGyud, vol. nya, 1b1-142a7 (Tōh. 479)*

³ Reference not located.

⁴ Reference not located.

⁵ *sDe-snod-gsum gyi tshul, Tripitakanaya.*

Bodiless, abiding in the cave of the senses.
 The taming of the mind difficult to tame--
 That I have explained as the 'brahmin.'
 One will be liberated from the bondage of demons.

“Therefore, those who wish to directly realize the Illusion-like Samādhi abandon distraction and the obscurations; pleasing the Vajra Mentor who weilds/commands the authentic personal instructions of all the Transcendent Lords, they should understand the luminances and instinctual natures of the Three Consciousnesses in accordance with the explanatory tantras such as the *Glorious Compendium of Vajra Intuitive Wisdom*,⁶ and so forth.

“Just as it says in the *Journey to Lañka Scripture*:

‘Also, Mahāmati, in addition, [149] those bodhisattvas, great spiritual heroes, who desire to know the sphere of activity of the concepts of subject and object of their own mental perception, will do away with socializing, entertainments, sleep, and obscuration.

For them, the three consciousnesses are the cause of all things. It is like this: heaven, hell, animate, inanimate, subject, object, the wheel of the twelve links of dependent co-origination, virtue, non-virtue, conceptualization, light, darkness, those with the nature of male, female, or neuter, birth, abiding, destruction--in short, the spheres of activity of the senses of the three worlds are the three consciousnesses.’

“And, just as the Lord stated in the *Enquiry of Bhadrāpāla Scripture*:⁷

The Lord said, ‘Bhadrāpāla, machines are constructed by activity. That activity, though, has no form--it manifests from consciousness. Likewise, this machine of a body is constructed by consciousness--this consciousness-element enters various bodies. This consciousness-element, since it causes the birth of the body, is even its creator. This consciousness-element is also inexhaustible, since it depends on the Realm of Reality (*dharmadhātu*). This consciousness-element is of consummate intelligence, since it remembers abiding in former bodies.

⁶ *Śrī Vajrajñānasamuccāya*

⁷ Note that in the Tibetan text this entire passage runs together, as is typical of the selective quoting of Indian Buddhist texts. For the convenient reference of the reader, I have split the passage into the units in which it is found in the canonical version of this scripture.

‘This consciousness-element should be viewed as like the rays of the sun. For example, the rays of the sun fall on the smelly, the unclean, and corpses, yet they are not besmirched by that filth. The sun dispels bad odors, they do not recur. Likewise, this consciousness-element takes birth as beings such as pigs and dogs who eat shit and filth, yet this consciousness-element is not besmirched [150] by those negative activities.’⁸

Then, Mahābhaisajya, supplicating at the Lord’s feet, said this to the Lord: ‘What is the nature of the transmigration of consciousness from the body?’

The Lord replied, ‘Mahābhaisajya, just as you have requested of me just now, so it is. Excellent, excellent! That⁹ question is supremely profound! This is question to be answered by a transcendent lord. There is none but a transcendent lord who can teach of that consciousness.’

Then, Bhadrāpāla said to the Lord, ‘Lord, the young prince Mahābhaisajya is skilled in inquiring about the profound import. He has a refined¹⁰ mind and is skilled in criticism.’

The Lord replied, ‘That is so, Bhadrāpāla. This young prince Mahābhaisajya has created the root of virtue to see the Lord. Bhadrāpāla, this young prince Mahābhaisajya, having otherwise been a heretic for five hundred lifetimes thought like this: “What is this consciousness-element? Who[se]¹¹ is this consciousness-element? What is this consciousness-element like?” However, Bhadrāpāla, as he did not understand the coming and going of consciousness, I will eliminate this uncertainty.’¹²

‘Further, if you wonder, “what is the meaning of ‘consciousness’?” The seed (*bija/vija*) establishes the sprout of the body. Thought develops knowing and memory. Therefore, the seed (*b/vija*) and the knowing (*jñāna*) are called consciousness (*vijñāna*).’¹³

⁸ The above two paragraphs can be found in the sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, dKon-brtsegs, vol. cha, f.76a⁴-76b¹.

⁹ Kanjur: “this”

¹⁰ *zhib*

¹¹ Kanjur: “whose”

¹² These four paragraphs are found at f. 82a7-82b5.

¹³ This paragraph can be found at f. 75a⁷-75b¹ of the sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur. It occurs in the context of the Buddha answering important questions of Bhadrāpāla concerning the activity of karma and consciousness across lives.

‘For example, the fruits of the juniper (*rgya shug*), the ‘*bra go*¹⁴, the mango (*āmra*), the pear (*nyo ting*), the pomegranate (*se’u*), the wood apple (*vilva*) and the mane-fig (*kapittha*) trees have many tastes. They ripen with individual tastes such as hot, bitter, sour, sweet, salty, astringent, etc.. Some become hot. Some become sour. Some become sweet. Wherever the seeds from those fruits go, [151] there those tastes go also.

‘Likewise, wherever this consciousness-element transmigrates, there feeling transmigrates also. [There] merit and demerit and memory transmigrate also. Furthermore, this consciousness-element is conscious that “having abandoned the body, I abandon this body of mine.” Thus, it is known as the “consciousness-element.” It is conscious of virtuous action. It is conscious of non-virtuous action. It is conscious that “these actions are my constant companion [and] I am also their constant companion.” Therefore it is known as “consciousness.” Furthermore, it is conscious of all the activities of this body. Hence, it is known as “consciousness.”¹⁵

‘Consciousness does not abide anywhere in this body, yet without consciousness, a body will not be produced.¹⁶ Therefore, Bhadrāpāla, listen! Those who do not see reality, do not know¹⁷ this consciousness.’¹⁸

“In this way, Mahāyāna sutras teach that consciousness has no color, no characteristics, and no shape, being mere self-aware intuitive wisdom. Furthermore, it is

¹⁴ A kind of fruit, obviously. The *Tshig mdzod chen mo* (p. 1987) has two definitions. The first is the “āmra fruit” which, given that this is next in our list, seems unlikely. The second is the “*chi bi kha* fruit.” Monier Williams has “*Pterospermum ruberifolium*” for *cibuka* (which might alternate for *cibika*). If the transliteration is correct, this ought to be something like *chivikha*, but I could find no such entry in the dictionaries at my disposal.

¹⁵ These two paragraphs are found at *ibid.* f. 80a⁶-80b³.

¹⁶ This sentence is found at *ibid.*, f. 78b1-78b3. There is an elision here. The bKa’-‘gyur version reads: “. . .” (de bzhin du lus ‘di la mnam par shes pa gang na yang mi gnas te/ mig la yang ma yin/ ma ba la yang ma yin/ sna’i dbang po la yang ma yin no// sa bon gyi myu gu skye ba gang yin pa de ni sems pa chung ba yin no// mngal du skye ba de ni tshor ba chung ba yin te/ dper na myu gu ‘byung zhing dus tshigs dang ldan pa na me tog mams ‘grub ste/ me tog grub na ‘bras bu ‘grub pa yod pa de bzhin de mnam par shes pa’i khams ‘dis lus ‘grub par ‘gyur ro// lus grub pa na yan lag dang nyid lag gang la yang mam par shes pa mi gnas la/ mnam par shes pa med na yang lus ksyé bar mi ‘gyur ro//

¹⁷ Kanjur: “see”

¹⁸ This last sentence is found at 83b⁵-83b⁶.

said that without entering the Great Yoga Tantras such as the Vajra Vehicle *Esoteric Communion*, etc., not being able to know the authentic condition of one's own mind even over æons equal to the grains of sand in the river Ganges, one will not see conventional reality. Therefore, one should know precisely the authentic condition of the three consciousnesses through the kindness of guru's instruction, following the Great Yoga Tantras such as the *Compendium of Vajra Intuitive Wisdom*.

“I will engage in one brief explanation of the vajra-like words of that tantra:

Then the bodhisattva, the great spiritual hero, prostrated at the feet of the Lord. Bowing to the two feet of the Lord, again he asked: ‘O Teacher! The three consciousnesses are difficult to understand, [152] supremely difficult to understand. Lord, please explain the distinctions of the three consciousnesses! Please explain them, Blissful One!’

The Lord declared, ‘consciousness emerges from clear light transparency. That very thing is called “mind (*sems*)” and “mentality (*gid*).” Defilement and all things with purity as their nature have that as their root. From that emerges the dual-aspected conceptualization of self and other.

‘That consciousness emerges mounted on wind. From wind, fire. From fire, water. From water, earth. From those, the five aggregates, the six media and the five senses.¹⁹ All those are the mixture of wind and consciousness. Experiencing the utter luminance of the enacting of the appearance of the instinctual natures of the Three Consciousnesses, the instinctual natures will emerge through the cause of luminances.²⁰

“I will teach in summary that which is extensively explained by those abbreviated words. First, I must explain merely the enumerations of those three consciousnesses. This intentional explanation of the Lord clarifying the words ‘wisdom’ and ‘art,’ refers to the neuter words. The imminence intuitive wisdom is not explicit. Hence, the enumerations of

¹⁹ The Tog Palace Kanjur version reads *yul lnga*, “the five objects.”

²⁰ *Vajrajñānasamucchaya*, (Tōh. 447). This passage occurs in the Tog Palace Kanjur version at 260a⁷-260b⁵. The version nested here and translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po is much clearer than that preserved in the bKa’-‘gyur, translated by Jñānākara and Khu-ston dNgos-grub, and revised by Jñānākara and Tshul-khrims rGyal-ba. Except as noted above, the variants are not otherwise interesting.

the [terms] ‘mind,’ ‘mentality,’ and ‘consciousness,’ ‘imagined [nature],’ ‘dependent [nature],’ and ‘accomplished [nature],’²¹ ‘lust,’ ‘hatred,’ and ‘delusion,’ and the ‘three natures’ are [held] in common with the [exoteric] Universal Vehicle. The enumeration in this Vajra Vehicle runs: ‘luminance,’ ‘radiance,’ ‘imminence,’ ‘void,’ ‘extremely void,’ ‘great void,’ ‘mind’ and ‘mental functions,’ ‘delusion,’ ‘lust,’ ‘lust-free,’ and ‘moderate lust.’

“Teaching the enumeration of mind in that way, [153] now, relying on the door of speech, I will teach the distinguishing characteristic of the nature of reflexive awareness. The Lord has said, ‘mind has the character of space, free of shape and color.’ It is also shown by the Lord’s statement that ‘one should understand it as having the characteristic of luminance and the characteristic of experience.’

“Therefore, we should enter that personal instruction thus: at first, the Luminances; later, the Instinctual Natures.

“With regard to that, Luminance, Radiance, and Imminence are the Three Luminances. With regard to that, if one asks, ‘what is the distinguishing characteristic of Luminance?’ It is formlessness--bodiless and speechless. As it perceives all things, without exception, in the form of natural brightness (*gsal ba*), like the stainless autumn sky pervaded by the luminance of the disk of the moon, it is ‘Luminance.’ This is the First Void, the Luminance of Critical Wisdom, the Ultimate Spirit of Enlightenment. It is the cause of stabilizing the seed which relies on the door of speech, the ‘Aṃ.’ Since the intentional statement of the Transcendent Lords will not be understood by beings of small aspiration, it is visualized in the form of a moon disk. The clear, conventional forms of the mind (*sems, citta*) are a lotus, a female form, the left, nighttime, or softness.²²

²¹ These three are the “three natures” (*rang bzhin gsum, ngo bo nyid gsum?*) of the Cittamātra school of Buddhist philosophy.

²² Compare the verse in the *Pañcakrama* which teaches this point (PK II12-13): *saṃvṛti-sphuṭa-rūpeṇa niśā-saṃjñā pradarśitā// stri-saṃjñā ca tathā proktā mandākāras tathaiṃva ca/* Note continued on next page. . .

“If one asks, ‘what is the distinctive characteristic of Radiance?’ It is without body or speech, having the nature of formlessness which is lack of subject and object; it perceives all things without exception as stainless in nature, extremely bright (*shin du gsal*) like the autumn sky pervaded by light rays of the sun. It is the second completely wholesome (*kun du bzang po*) spirit of enlightenment.²³ Having the distinctive characteristic of the second stage, the Extremely Void, it is the cause of stabilizing the seed which relies on the door of speech, the ‘Aḥ.’ Since the intentional statement of the Transcendent Lords will not be understood by beings of small aspiration, [154] it is visualized depending on a sun disk. The conventional forms of the mental functions are a five-pronged vajra, a jewel, daytime, a male form, the right, or roughness.²⁴

“‘What is Imminence?’ In like manner, without body or speech, having the form of a nothingness characteristic of space, falling (passing out) into the midnight darkness is the imminence, with the nature of delusion, the Great Void. This is the explanation of the three consciousnesses.

“Having taught in that way the personal instruction of all the Buddhas [concerning] the distinctive characteristics of the Three Voids, I will now present the emergence of the instinctual natures corresponding to the emergence of each instinctual wisdom. With regard to that, there are thirty-three instinctual natures corresponding to the Intuitive Wisdom of Critical Wisdom:

vāma-saṃjñā punaś caiva candra-maṇḍala-pañcakajam//. In Tibetan: *kun rdzob gsal ba'i gzugs kyis ni/ mtshan mo'i ming de nges par bshad// de bzhin bud med ming du brjod/ 'jam po lta bu'ang de bzhin no/ gYon pa'i ming yang de nyid de/ zla ba'i dkyil 'khor padma can//*. Cf. Mimaki and Tomabechi (Tokyo, 1994). 16-17.

²³ i.e. the Second Void, or “a second Samantabhadra?”

²⁴ Compare the verse in the *Pañcakrama* which teaches this (PK II.21): *divā-puruṣa-saṃjñā ca kharākāraś ca dakṣiṇaḥ/ sūrya-maṇḍala-saṃjñā ca vajrasaṃjñā tathāiva ca//*. In Tibetan: *nyin mo skyes pa'i ming dang ni/ rtsub mo gYas par bstan pa yin/ nyi ma'i dkyil 'khor ming dang ni/ de bzhin du ni rdo rke'i ming//*. Cf. Mimaki and Tomabechi, *op. cit.* 18.

- 1) Freedom from attachment (*'dod chags dang bral ba*)
- 2) Moderate freedom from attachment (*'dod chags dang bral ba bar ma*),
- 3) Extreme freedom from attachment (*shin tu 'dod chags dang bral ba*),
- 4) Mental coming and going (*gang yid kyis 'gro ba dang 'ong ba dag*),
- 5) Suffering (*mya ngan*),
- 6) Moderate suffering (*mya ngan bar ma*),
- 7) Extreme suffering (*shin tu mya ngan du gyur pa*),
- 8) Peace (*zhi ba*),
- 9) Conceptualization (*rnam par rtog pa*),
- 10) Fear (*'jigs pa*),
- 11) Moderate Fear (*'jigs pa bar ma*),
- 12) Extreme Fear (*shin tu 'jigs pa*),
- 13) Craving (*sred pa*),
- 14) Moderate craving (*sred pa bar ma*),
- 15) Extreme craving (*shin tu sred pa*),
- 16) Grasping (*nye bar len pa*),
- 17) Non-virtue (*mi dge ba*),
- 18) Hunger (*bkres pa*),
- 19) Thirst (*skom pa*),
- 20) Feeling (*tshor ba*),
- 21) Moderate feeling (*tshor ba bar ma*),
- 22) Extreme feeling (*shin tu tshor ba*),
- 23) Knower (*rig pa po*),
- 24) Knowing (*rig pa*),
- 25) Object grasped (*'dzin pa'i gzhi*),
- 26) Individuating analysis (*so sor rtog pa*),
- 27) Shame (*ngo tsha shes pa*),
- 28) Compassion (*snying rje*),
- 29) Doting (*brtse ba*),
- 30) Moderate doting (*brtse ba bar ma*),
- 31) Extreme doting (*shin tu brtse ba*),
- 32) Doubting (*dogs pa dang bcas pa*),
- 33) Collecting (*sdud pa*), and
- 34) Envy (*phrag dog*).

There are forty instinctual natures corresponding to the Intuitive Wisdom of Art:

- 35) Lust (*chags pa*),
- 36) Perpetual lust (*kun du chags pa*),
- 37) Joy (*dga' ba*),
- 38) Moderate Joy (*dga' ba bar ma*),
- 39) Extreme Joy (*shin tu dga' ba*),
- 40) Rejoicing (*rangs pa*),
- 41) Rapture (*rab tu mgu ba*),
- 42) Amazement (*ngo mtshar ba*),
- 43) Laughter/Joking (*dgod pa*),
- 44) Contentment/Satisfaction (*tshim pa*),
- 45) Embracing/Fucking (*'khyud pa*),
- 46) Kissing (*'o byed pa*),
- 47) Sucking (*'jib pa*),
- 48) Stability (*brtan pa*),
- 49) Effort (*brtson pa*),
- 50) Arrogance (*khengs pa*),
- 51) Activity (*bya ba*), [155]

- 52) Robbery? (*dbrog pa*),
- 53) Force (*stobs pa*),
- 54) Delight (*spro ba, utsāha, autsukya*),
- 55) Application to the difficult (*dka' ba la sbyor ba*),
- 56) Moderate application to the difficult (*dka' ba la sbyor ba bar ma*),
- 57) Extreme application to the difficult (*shin tu dka' ba la sbyor ba*),
- 58) Vehemence (*drag pa*),
- 59) Fascination/Flirtation (*nam par sgeg pa, vilāsa*),
- 60) Spite (*'gres pa*),
- 61) Virtue (*dge ba*),
- 62) Clear Words (*tshig gsal ba*),
- 63) Truth/Reality (*bden pa*),
- 64) Untruth/Unreality (*mi bden pa*),
- 65) Certainty (*nges pa*),
- 66) Non-grasping (*nye bar mi len pa*),
- 67) Donor (*sbyin pa po*),
- 68) Exhortation (*bskul ba*),
- 69) Heroism (*dpa' ba*),
- 70) Shamelessness (*ngo tshar med pa*),
- 71) Pretension (*sgyu zin pa*)
- 72) Venom (*gdug pa*),
- 73) Cruelty (*mī srun pa*),
- 74) Scheming (*gya gyu che ba*).

The seven instinctual natures corresponding to the Intuitive Wisdom of Imminence are these:

- 75) Moderate Lust (*chags pa bar ma*),
- 76) Forgetfulness (*brjed ngas pa*),
- 77) Error (*'khrul pa*),
- 78) Not speaking (*mi smra ba*),
- 79) Sorrow/Depression (*skyo ba*),
- 80) Laziness (*le lo*),
- 81) Doubtful (*the tshom dang bcas pa*).

“If one divides the distinctive characteristics of the eighty instinctual natures according to direct perception, there are one hundred sixty; it is not [true] that since it is divided according to the categories of male and female abode, beings born from eggs, etc., in the night and day are active in the night and day.”

The Vajra Student asked: “If I have no doubts concerning the identity of eighty instinctual natures of mind which function during the day and night, and are the individual

introspective awareness of self and other, Lord and Teacher, Vajra-Mentor, please give me confidence by explaining according to the [scriptural] tradition.”²⁵

The Vajra Mentor said: “The Lord pronounced definitive words concerning the term ‘mantra’ in the *Esoteric Communion Tantra Appendix*:²⁶

That which emerges from the conditions of
sense organ and object, is mentality.
“Man-” is explained as mentality;
“-tra” means clarifying.²⁷

“From the eighty instinctual natures emerge the ninety-eight defilements [and] also the sixty-two [wrong-] views, and so on.”

The Vajra Student asked: “Critical wisdom and the Intuitive Wisdom of Voidness are just Voidness, luminous like the moon. The Intuitive Wisdom of Art is just the Extreme Voidness, radiant like the sun. Likewise, the Imminence Intuitive Wisdom is like darkness, with the characteristic of the Great Void. [156]

“In explanation of the [scriptural] statement that ‘those three consciousnesses have the distinguishing characteristic of space, pervade the actuality of formlessness, [and] are free of coming and going,’ [please tell me] how are they emitted from the body and [re-]collected day and night. How is it observed? How is it mindlessness? Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, please explain here how the hundred-and-sixty instinctual natures such as lust, lust-free, and moderate lust are the cause of experience.”

²⁵ i.e. giving a scriptural citation.

²⁶ *gSang ba ‘Dus pa’i rGyud Phyi ma, Guhyasamājottaratantra*--the Eighteenth Chapter of the *Esoteric Communion*.

²⁷ The verse reads: rkyen las byung ba gang dang gang/ dbang po dang ni yul gyis yid/ yid de man zhes bya bar bshad/ tra ni gsal bar byed pa’i don//. This verse varies significantly from that found in the Tog Palace Kanjur, Vol. Ca, f.86b⁶⁻⁷, also translated by Sraddhākaravarma and Rin-chen bZang-po: dbang po dang ni yul mams kyi/ rkyen gyis gang dang gang byung yid/ yid de mñ zhes bya bar bshad/ tra ni skyob par byed pa’i don//

The Vajra Mentor replied: “The Three Consciousnesses are rootless, siteless, baseless, characteristicless, colorless and shapeless, they are a reality which is beyond the senses. Even so, they are luminant. Hence, they constantly attend the wind-element; for which reason they can be known by inference [from the fact] that the wind-element, although formless, demonstrates functions such as fluctuation and movement. Likewise, although consciousness appears, being formless, it is to be known by inference since it is inferred from the instinctual natures such as lust, lust-free, moderate lust, and so on.

“As it says in the *Transmigration of Consciousness Sutra*:²⁸

‘Bhadrapāla, for example, although the consciousness-element does not possess form, it is demonstrable--being perceived in the form of its ungraspability. In regard to its demonstrability, from a tree shaking, moving, and making a rumbling sound, or from contact with heat or cold, although a feeling will be born, it is not perceived as having limbs, eyes, or face. It will be perceived from the pale, white color [of your face]. Likewise, Bhadrapāla, this consciousness-element will not be perceived as a form and will not appear as a form. You should understand the consciousness-element from its distinctive causal functions.’²⁹

“According to that argument, since the subtle elements and [157] the appearance of the Three Consciousnesses are formless, having become mixed like butter poured into butter, they accomplish all the world-transcending functions.

“Just as it says the *Unexcelled Intention*:³⁰

²⁸ *nam par shes pa 'pho ba'i mdo*. This is an alternative name for the teaching found in the *Bhadrapālaśreṣṭhi-paripṛcchāsūtra*.

²⁹ Reference not located.

³⁰ *dgongs pa bla na med pa, Anuttarasamḍhi*. This text is none other than the (Second Chapter of the) *Pañcakrama*. The *Unexcelled Intention* is the special name for this chapter as found in the colophon: “Anuttarasamḍhir ity aparānāma Sarvaviśuddhiviśuddhikramaḥ.”

The verses cited here constitute PK II.28-32a. The Sanskrit of these verse runs: samvitti-mātrakaṃ jñānam ākāśavad alakṣaṇam/ kiṃ tu tasya prabhedo 'sti samdhyā-rātri-divātmanā// ālokālokābhāsau ca tathālokopalabdhakam/ cittam tri-vidham ity uktam ādhāras tasya kathyate// vāyunā sūkṣma-rūpeṇa jñānam sammiśratām gatam/ niḥśṛtyedriya-mārgebhyo viśayān avalambate// ābhāsena yadā yukto vāyur vāhanatām gataḥ/ tadā tat-prakṛtiḥ sarvā astavyastāḥ pravartayet// yatra yatra sthito vāyus tām tām prakṛtim udvahet/. In Tibetan: rang rig tsam gyi ye shes ni/ nam mkha' lta bur mtshan nyid med/ 'on kyang de yi dbye yod de/ mtshan mo nyin mo mtshams bdag nyid// snang dang snang ba mched pa Note continued on next page. . .

The merely reflexive intuitive wisdom
 is characteristicless, like space.
 However, it has divisions.
 Lord of the interval, day, and night--
 Luminance, Radiance,
 and, likewise, Imminence--
 Mind has been explained as three-aspected.
 I will explain its basis.
 The mixture of subtle-formed wind
 and intuitive wisdom,
 emerging through the path of the sense-organs,
 perceives objects.
 When it is luminous,
 mounted upon wind,
 Then all those instinctual natures
 emerge wholly without exception.
 Wherever wind abides,
 There the instinctual natures function.

“And, in order to clarify this very point, an intentional explanation states: ‘Intuitive wisdom emerges in a moment--blazing and pervading the ten directions, like the sun [illuminating] space.’

“If you wonder, ‘How does intuitive wisdom emerge in a moment?’ It means it appears for one moment (*skad cig*), one instant (*thang cig*), a mere trice (*yud tsam*), the blink of an eye (*mig btsums*), or a mere hand-clap (*thal mo brdabs pa tsam*). ‘Like the sun [illuminating] space’ [means] since it brightens space, it is a space-brightener. By a similar meaning, it appears as the Three Luminances ‘blazing and pervading the ten directions.’ ‘Illuminating space’ is not a firefly.³¹ Hence, upon entering into the subtle element, the

dang/ de bzhin snang ba nyer thob dang/ sems ni mam pa gsum bshad nas/ de yi sgrub pa
 brjod par bya// rlung mams phra ba'i gzugs kyis ni/ shes dang yang dag 'dres gyur nas/
 dbang po'i lam nas byung nas ni/ yul mams la ni dmigs par byed// gang tshe snang ba ldan
 gyur cing/ rlung ni bzhon pa nyid gyur pa/ de tshe rang bzhin de dag kun/ ma lus lus pa
 med par 'byung// rlung ni gang dang gar gnas pa/ rang bzhin de dang de 'byung 'gyur/.
 Cf. Mimaki and Tomabechei (Tokyo, 1994). 19-20.

³¹ This remark seems rather cryptic in English as do most such traditional commentarial glosses in translation. Āryadeva is here clarifying that the words “*kha-dyotika*” or “*kha-dyota*” in the original Sanskrit (“that which illuminates space”) does not refer here to the equivalent expressions *khadyotika* or *khadyota*, meaning “firefly.” In the Tibetan, the words in question are “[*nam*] *mkha' snang [byed]*.”

Luminances fluctuate for a moment, an instant, a mere trice, the blink of an eye, or a hand-clap. Then, one will experience the instinctual natures in a moment, an instant, a mere trice, the blink of an eye, or a hand-clap.

“If you wonder, ‘What is mindlessness?’ It is delusion. Therefore, it emerges completely. [158] Then, by the cause of the wind-element, the instinctual natures--each mutually being the enjoyment-object of the other--will without exception be experienced in the continuum of self and other. In that way, the yogin who understands the categories of the appearance of the instinctual natures and their wind-mounts will know the fluctuation of the mental activities of all sentient beings of the past, future, and present.

“As the Lord said in the *Sutra requested by the Sublime Satyr King*:

“The completely perfected Buddha is endowed with the vision of unobstructed intuitive-wisdom. “Why is that?” Noble One, whichever past mental continua of sentient beings are exhausted, ceased, separated, or transformed, all these are known by the Transcendent Lord. From which causes those mental continua emerge, which causes the lack of which yields exhaustion and separation--whether virtue, non-virtue, specified or not specified³²--all these, with their modalities, their bases, and their reasons, are known by the Transcendent Lord. That which emerges as the mental continua of all sentient beings of the present--virtue, non-virtue, specified, not specified--which minds occur after which other minds: all these with their aspects, their region, the bases from which they come, are known by the Transcendent Lord. Whichever future mental continua and mental concomitants of all sentient beings--virtue, non-virtue, specified, not specified--which minds occur after which other minds: all these with their aspects, regions, and the bases from which they come, are known by the Transcendent Lord.

‘Son of the Family, therefore, the Transcendent Lord, Saint, [159] completely perfected Buddha is endowed with unobstructed intuitive wisdom.’³³

³² Certain phenomena were not specified by the Buddha as being virtuous or non-virtuous, such as space.

³³ Reference not located.

“By this reasoning, the one of intuitive wisdom who abides in the mind samādhi, having abandoned conceptual insistence on various external entities such as a wisher, a wish, and that wished for, will face the door of self-consecration. As it says in the *Root Tantra*:³⁴ ‘O Noble One, through equipoise, finely analyze your own mind.’

“Relying on the explanatory tantra in that way, following after the emergence of their own instinctual natures, not understanding the authentic condition of their own minds, those sentient beings who talk about karma, their own minds bound like a silkworm by karma and defilements created by conceptualization from beginningless saṃsāra, having themselves assembled a great heap of suffering, from one life to another they experience the ripening of their accumulated virtuous and non-virtuous karma, and [at death] they abandon the aggregates by the process of entering the Ultimate Reality maṇḍala. They arise from the wind-element, endowed with feeling, bound by desire, holding the memory of emerging from a cause alike to the Realm of Reality, with virtuous and non-virtuous thoughts, seeing everything like a five-year-old child, sense-faculties complete, enjoying scents as food, not reversible even by vajras and so forth, endowed with the power of miraculous powers [acquired through past] actions. Abiding for an interval of seven days, according to the fortune [determined] by the virtuous or non-virtuous karma arising from their own instinctual natures, the causes and conditions coalesce [and], in the manner of a Persian Water Wheel, they are caused to take rebirth again and again in the five realms [of existence] and they experience the sufferings of the life cycle (*saṃsāra*).

³⁴ It is interesting that Āryadeva should cite this passage as from the “Root Tantra,” as he has noted above that it is from the *Thatness Compendium (Tattvasaṃgraha)*. One would assume that the “root tantra” in this context would be the Esoteric Communion.

Tsong Khapa, in his *Extremely Brilliant Lamp of the Five Stages*, makes the comment that it “seems that the intention of the *Caryāmelāpakapradīpa* is that the *Tattvasaṃgraha* is a Root Tantra relative to the *Guhyasamāja*.” (Cf. Thurman, trans., *EBL*. 27.) It would seem that this is the relevant reference.

**Chapter V:
Resolution of Doubts concerning
Discernment of the Limits of Karma**

The Vajra Student asked: “Lord, [160] please explain the other varieties of consciousness also. Lord, if the luminances of the Three Consciousnesses are formless; the wind-element is also formless; and karma also formless--since, in that way, these are not conscious of one another, if the Lord speaks of them as voidness from scriptural authority, how is it that that body of mental nature is not bound by virtuous and non-virtuous karma from the beginningless life cycle? Likewise, when one has accumulated virtue and non-virtue by these hundred and sixty instinctual natures, then this very thing is born and dies in a moment, an instant. . .how then is there are perception of continuity¹ into a future life? Or, is that virtue and non-virtue from something else? Or is it the case that it emerges from the instincts of one’s own mind? Lord and teacher, Vajra Mentor, please remove these anxieties of mine.”

The Vajra Mentor replied: “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! The thorough understanding of the purification of karma is extremely profound. It is the sphere of activity of all the Buddhas. O Noble One, this is not [the sphere of activity] of beginners and advocates of karma.² Therefore, listen with great effort as you should understand in detail the purification of karma according to [scriptural] tradition and reasoning.

“First, I will present the characteristics of virtuous and non-virtuous karma. They are the ten paths of virtuous karma and their opposite, the ten paths of non-virtuous karma. Since the Lord, in the *Vajra Crown-protrusion Tantra*, has stated that all these karmic paths emerge from body, speech, and mind, we should refer to that [text]:

The Lord said: “Lord of Secrets, listen! There are three faulty activities of the body. Faulty activities of speech

¹ lit. “again and again.”

² *las su smra ba*

[161] are fourfold. There are three faulty activities of thought. Through these, sentient beings fall into hell.”

Vajrapāṇi said: “Lord, please explain the varieties of the faulty activities of body, the faulty activities of speech, and enumeration of the faulty activities of mind. Please explain this, O Blissful One!”

The Lord said: “Lord of Secrets, those faulty activities are [either] grave or ordinary. Killing or assaulting one’s parents or one’s guru are grave faulty activities [of the body]. The paths of non-virtue such as taking life, and so on, are ordinary faulty activities [of the body].

“What are the faulty activities of speech?’ Faulty activity of speech, such as speaking words of abandoning the Holy Dharma, and speaking badly of one’s parents or one’s guru are the grave faulty activities of speech. The ordinary faulty activities of speech are advising [others to commit] non-virtue, slander, idle chatter, and creating obstacles to virtuous actions by transcendent lies such as telling the faithful who are earnestly applying themselves to spiritual practice and undertaking virtue that there is no future life.

“The faulty activities of thought are that which is first of all confusion--the faulty activities of mind with the nature of thought, the faulty activities with the nature of mental concomitants, and the faulty activities with the nature of delusion.”

Vajrapāṇi asked: “Lord, please explain the faulty activities of mind, mental factors and delusion. Please explain them, O Blissful One!”

The Lord said: “Listen, O Lord of Secrets! The mind intent on killing, the mind of non-attachment and non-attachment to the ten [162] paths of virtuous karma are the faulty activities of mind. Arrogance, haughtiness, pride, wrath, intent to terrify³ beings, desiring the wife of another with a mind of attachment, stealing the wealth of another, deceiving or hating one’s guru are the faulty activities of mental factors. Rejecting or forgetting the ten paths of virtuous karma and the six perfections, having a face marked by doubt, and an extremely confused mind, are the ordinary faulty activities of delusion. In that way, these are the faulty activities of body, speech, and mind.

“Not knowing the above and not knowing the luminances of the instinctual natures which have the nature of being mounted on wind, one covets oneself thinking ‘my body, my speech, my mind.’ Having performed virtuous and non-virtuous karma with an egoistic mind, one becomes completely devoted to pleasant and unpleasant rebirths.

³ Following Peking *jigs*, sDe-sge reads *jig*, “destroy.”

“The one who has the intuitive wisdom which has realized the mind isolation by the process of the luminance of the instinctual natures, neither intends nor comprehends faulty and excellent activities of body, speech, and mind. ‘Why so?’ The virtuous and non-virtuous natures, emergent from the Three Voids, emerge for a fleeting instant through the force of their wind-mounts. Having experienced objects, [they] enter again and again into Clear Light Transparency. Just as it is said in the *Unexcelled Intention*:

Just as variegated clouds--
Having different colors and shapes--
Emerge in the sky and
Dissolve [back] into that;

Likewise, all [instinctual] natures--
With the Three Luminances as their cause--
Having engaged all objects
Enter into Clear Light Transparency.

As they do not so know the [instinctual] natures,⁴
Those hooded by the darkness of ignorance,
Perform virtuous and non-virtuous deeds, and
Wander in the five migrations.⁵

By performing the inexpiable sins, [163] and so on,
One will be roasted in hell.
By performing virtues such as generosity, and so on,
One will revel in the heavens.

Attaining again and again
These thousands of limitless births,
One suffers from ignorance [of the fact that]
This is the ripening of previous karma.

That process of the luminances of the instinctual natures
By which [common] beings are distressed--
By knowing that very thing, those having intuitive wisdom
will be liberated from the prison of existence.⁶

⁴ The Sanskrit text here has *svabhāva* (own nature) instead of the *prakṛti* ([instinctual] nature) mentioned in the previous verse (both *rang bzhin* in Tibetan). As such, this might be better read, “As they do not know their own nature.” Or, best, “As they do not know the (own-) natures [of the instinctual natures].”

⁵ Here the text is following the system which coalesces the God realm and the Demi-god realm.

⁶ ji ltar sprin ni sna tshogs shing/ mdog dang dbyibs ni tha dad pa/ nam mkha'i dbyings su byung nas ni/ de nyid du ni thim par 'gyur// de bzhin rang bzhin thams cad ni/ snang ba
Note continued on next page. . .

And in order to clarify this very point, the *Enquiry of the Satyr King* says:

The activities of mind are uncompounded [and] formless. Since it is divided according to [its] function, wind, also, is unobstructed. Since the one who understands the nature of the mind of all worlds is pure, it is not possible for defilements to arise [in such a being].⁷

Also, according to this reasoning, the great yogin who realizes directly Mind Isolation confronts liberation without regard for the fruits of virtuous and non-virtuous karma. Just as the Lord said in the *Diamond Cutter [Scripture]*:⁸

If even dharma is to be abandoned, what need to mention non-dharma?⁹

And also, in the Great Yoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion*:

Those who have abandoned intuitive wisdom
Perform the karmic path of the ten virtues.¹⁰

gsum gyi rgyu can te/ ma lus yul la zhugs nas ni/ 'od gsal bar ni 'jug [PK: zhugs] par 'gyur// de 'dra'i rang bzhin ma shes pas/ mi shes mun pas khebs pa mams [PK: ni]/ dge dang mi dge'i las byas nas/ 'gro ba lgar ni 'khor bar 'gyur// mtshams med la sogs byas nas ni/ dmyal la sogs par 'tshad par 'gyur [PK: byed]/ sbyin sogs dge ba byas nas ni/ mtho ris la sogs dag tu mchod// skye ba dpag med stong phrag ni/ 'di ni yang dang yang thob pa/ 'di ni sngon las mam smin zhes/ rmongs pa mams ni mya ngan byed// rang bzhin snang ba'i thsul gyis ni/ gang gis skye bo nyon mongs pa/ de nyid shes na ye shes can/ srid pa'i gzeb las grol bar [PK: mam grol] 'gyur// (*Pañcakrama* II.39-44).

The Sanskrit reads: payodharā yathā naike nānā-saṁsthāna-varṇakāḥ/ udbhūtā gaganābhogāl layaṁ gacchanti tatra vai// evaṁ prakṛtayaḥ sarvā ābhāsa-traya-hetukāḥ/ nirviśya viśayān kṛtsnān praviśanti prabhāsavaram// eṣāṁ svabhāvāvijñānād ajñāna-patalāvṛtāḥ/ kṛtvā śubhāśubhaṁ karma bhramanti gati-pañcake// ānantaryādikaṁ kṛtvā narakeṣu vipacyate/ śubhaṁ dānādikaṁ kṛtvā svargādiṣu mahiyate// ananta-janma-sāhasraṁ prāpya caivaṁ punaḥ punaḥ/ pūrva-krama-vipāko 'yam iti śocati mohataḥ// prakṛty-ābhāsa-yogena yena kliśyanti jantavaḥ/ jñātvā tam eva mucyante jñānino bhava-pañjarāt// Cf. Mimaki and Tomabechi, *ibid.* 21-22.

⁷ Reference not located.

⁸ *rdo rje gcod pa, Vajracchedikā*. The famous "Diamond Sūtra"--sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, shes-phyin, vol. ka, 121a¹-132b⁷ (Tōh. 16).

⁹ chos kyang spang bar bya na chos ma yin pa lta smos kyang ci dgos//. The sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur (218b?) preserves this translation: chos mams kyang spang bar bya na/ chos ma yin pa mams lta ci smos//.

¹⁰ *Guhyasamājantra*, Chapter 17. dge ba bcu yi las kyi lam/ byed pa ye shes spangs pa'o// (Cf. also Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. ca, f. 69b⁵⁻⁶). The Sanskrit reads: daśakuśalān Note continued on next page. . .

In that way, through the separation of sentient beings from spiritual friends, they do not realize the thorough knowledge of the condition of their own mind. Thus having conceived¹¹ self-grasping, possession-grasping, repayment,¹² and hoarding,¹³ through conceptualizing virtuous and nonvirtuous karma, they experience suffering from the beginningless life-cycle.

Just as the Lord said in the “Spiritual Friend Chapter” of the *8,000-line Perfection of Wisdom Scripture*:¹⁴

Subhūti asked: “Lord, if all things are isolated and void--how, Lord, can sentient beings experience defilement? How can [164] they be purified? Lord, isolation will not become defilement. It will not become purified. Lord, the void will not become defilement. It will not become purified. Lord, neither isolation nor voidness will become actually perfectly enlightened in the unexcelled, authentic, perfect enlightenment. Lord, if other than isolation and voidness, whatever thing [such as] a past actual, perfect enlightenment of unexcelled, authentic, perfect enlightenment or a present authentic, perfect enlightenment, or a future authentic perfect enlightenment is not perceived, Lord, please explain what you mean by that explanation. Please teach it, Lord. Please teach it, Blissful One.”

Thus he requested, and the Lord replied thus to the Venerable Subhūti: “Subhūti, what do you think? Have sentient beings engaged in the I-habit and property-habit for a long time?”

Subhūti said: “Lord, it is so. It is so, Blissful One. Sentient beings practice the I-habit and the property-habit.”

The Lord said, “What do you think, Subhūti? Are, nonetheless, the I-habit and the property-habit void?”

Subhūti replied: “Lord, they are void. They are void, Blissful One.”

karmapathān kurvanti jñānavarjitāḥ/ (Cf. Bhattacharyya, p. 129; Bagchi, p. 104; Fremantle, p. 374).

¹¹ *brtag nas, ?kḷptvā*

¹² *gsob pa*

¹³ *gsog*

¹⁴ *shes rab kyi pha rol tu phin pa brgyad stong pa'i dge ba'i shes gnyen gyi le'u; Āryāṣṭasāhasrikā-prajñāpāramitā-sūtrasya kalyāṇamitraparivarta?* (Tōh. 12).

The Lord said: “What do you think, Subhūti? Is it because of the I-habit and the property-habit that sentient beings wander in the life-cycle?”

Subhūti said: “Lord, it is so. It is so, Blissful One. Sentient beings wander in the life-cycle due to the I-habit and the property-habit.”

The Lord said: “Subhūti, in that way, sentient beings experience defilement. They also experience [165] [its] purification.”¹⁵

Similarly, the *Purification of All Karmic Obscurations Scripture*¹⁶ says:

“Monk[s], what do you think? Is the unproduced produced, destroyed, defiled, or purified?”

“That is not so, Lord.”

¹⁵ rab ‘byor gyis gsol pa/ bcom ldan ‘das gal te chos thams cad dben pa dang [K: chos thams cad] stong pa lags na/ bcom ldan ‘das ji ltar sems can rnams kun nas nyon mongs pa [K: r rab tu shes par; C: gda’ bar] ‘gyur/ [K: bcom ldan ‘das] ji ltar [K: sems can rnams] mam par byang [K: ba bar tu shes] bar ‘gyur/ bcom ldan ‘das dben pa ni kun nas nyon mongs par [C: yang] mi ‘gyur/ [K: bcom ldan ‘das dben pa ni] mam par byang bar [C: yang] mi ‘gyur ro/ bcom ldna ‘das stong pa ni kun nas nyon mongs par [C: yang] mi ‘gyur/ [K: bcom ldan ‘das stong pa ni] mam par byang bar [C: yang] mi ‘gyur ro/ bcom ldan ‘das dben pa’ am stong pa ni bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa’ i byang chub mngon par rdzogs par ‘tshang mi rgyal/ bcom ldan ‘das dben pa dang/ stong pa nyid las [K: gzhan; C: gung] na [K: yang] [C: chos] gang bla na med ba yang dag par rdzogs pa’ i byang chub mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas pa’ am/ mngon par rdzogs par ‘tshang rgya [K: bar ‘gyur] ba’ am/ mngon par rdzogs par ‘tshang rgya ba’ i chos de dmigs su ma mchis na/ bcom ldan ‘das bshad pa ‘di’ i don [K: bdag gis] ji [K: ltar; C: lta bur] ‘tshal bar bgyi/ bcom ldan ‘das bstan tu gsol/ bde bar gshegs pa bstan tu gsol// de skad ces gsol pa dang bcom ldan ‘das kyis tshe dang ldan pa rab ‘byor la ‘di skad ces bka’ stsal to// rab ‘byor de ji snyam du sems/ sems can rnams [C: ni] yun ring po nas ngar ‘dzin pa dang/ nga yir ‘dzin pa la spyod dam// rab ‘byor gyis gsol pa// bcom ldan ‘das de de bzhin no/ bde bar gshegs pa de de bzhin te/ sems can rnams ni [K: yun ring po nas] ngar ‘dzin pa dang/ nga yir ‘dzin pa la spyod do// bcom ldan ‘das kyis bka’ stsal pa// rab ‘byor de ji snyam du sems/ [K: ci; C: ‘on kyang] ngar ‘dzin pa dang/ nga yir ‘dzin pa stong pa yin [K: nam; C: mos]// rab ‘byor gyis gsol pa// bcom ldan ‘das stong pa lags so/ bde bar gshegs pa stong pa lags so// bcom ldan ‘das kyis bka’ stsal pa// rab ‘byor de ji snyam du sems/ ngar ‘dzin pa dang/ nga yir ‘dzin pas sems can rnams ‘khor ba na ‘khor ram// rab ‘byor gyis gsol pa// bcom ldan ‘das de de bzhin no/ bde bar gshegs pa de de bzhin te/ ngar ‘dzin pa dang/ nga yir ‘dzin pas sems can rnams ‘khor ba na ‘khor ro// bcom ldan ‘das kyis bka’ stsal pa// rab ‘byor de ltar na sems can rnams kun nas nyon mongs par [K: rab tu shes so; C: yang snang ngo] [K: ci ltar sems can rnams ‘dzin pa dang mngon par chags pa de ltar kun nas nyon mongs par ‘gyur gyi/ ‘di la su yang kun nas nyon mongs par ‘gyur ba ni med do/ rab ‘byor ci ltar ‘dzin pa med pa dang mngon par chags pa med pa de ltar ngar ‘dzin pa dang nga yir ‘dzin pa rab tu mi shes te/ rab ‘byor de ltar na sems can rnams] mam par byang bar [L: rab tu shes so; C: yang nang ngo]// (sDe-dge bKa’- ‘gyur 218a?-218b?).

¹⁶ las kyi sgrib pa thams cad mam par dag pa’ i mdo, *Sarvakarmāvaranaviśodhanasūtra*.

The Lord asked, “Monk[s], what do you think? Will unproduced things go to hell? To an animal birth? Or to birth in the world of the Lord of Death (*yamaloka*)?”

“Lord, the unproduced being non-existent what need to mention taking a bad rebirth?”

The Lord said, “Thus, monks, although all things are thus Transparency, childish alienated beings conceive of inauthentic things. They conceive fallacies. Thus conceiving of all things such as completing and hoarding, sentient beings migrate to hells, animal births, and the world of the Lord of Death. Then, monk[s], do sentient beings become defiled due to defiled mind? By the purification of mind, they become pure sentient beings.”

And, in the *Scripture of the Treasury of the Transcendent Lord*:¹⁷

I do not say that by not having faith in all teachings, those sentient beings with misplaced confidence [in themselves] and a high intention go to bad migrations on account of that. ‘Why?’ Because the defilements have no aggregates. From isolating all defilements, they will be produced from the meeting and accumulation of causes and conditions. Due merely to production, they will be destroyed. Whichever of those things are created and destroyed are destroyed through defilements.

And, Nāgārjuna,¹⁸ to clarify this very import, has stated:

If all this is void
And of the nature of non-production,
How does one wander because of karma
Here encountering pleasure and suffering?

As soon as one pretends to a self, [166]
By thus creating the stains of attachment, and so on,
Through dependence
The childish are wracked by suffering

This is all merely mind
Emerging in illusory aspect.
From that [comes] virtuous and non-virtuous karma
By that, one is born in pleasant and bad migrations.

Thus, by this reasoning, by scripture and reasoning, all those Transcendent Lords having the nature of the great compassion, having seen all those sentient beings who have fallen

¹⁷ *de bzhin gshegs pa'i mdzod kyi mdo, Tathāgatakośasūtra*

¹⁸ This passage does not appear in any of the major texts of Nāgārjuna that have survived.

into the whirlpool of suffering and are without a refuge or last resort,¹⁹ knowing the nature of defilement through the process of conventional reality, purify defilement. Having purified the conventional reality also by the ultimate reality, enter authentically into the Samādhi having the Nature of Authentic Method.

¹⁹ *dpung gnyen, parāyana*

**Lamp Chapter VI:
Resolution of Doubts concerning Conventional Reality**

The Vajra Student asked, “Having finely analysed the distinctive characteristics of body, speech and mind according to the teaching you just kindly explained, I wish to [find] certainty [regarding this]. Requesting the Master about the distinction of other samādhis, I wish to ask [about] the difference of the successively higher samādhis. From the beginning of the Creation Stage, until one [attains] the ultimate of the Body Isolation, there is the mere imagination of the character of the three vajras. Therefore, even in Body Isolation, there is no divine body; because the body is still merely a [physical] body of fine atoms.

The end of Speech Isolation, however, through the process of entering, and so on, comprehends merely the Vajra Recitation. There also there is no form of a deity, since sounds are like an echo. The end of Mind Isolation also, since it is nothing but the mere knowledge of only the luminances with respect to instintual natures, there one will not find the nature of the deity body endowed with the supreme of all forms, [167] because the mind is merely luminance.

By this reasoning, I will not find how to live in relation to conventional realities. Therefore, Mentor, through your direct teaching, give me the means to understand production as a deity by mere intuitive wisdom.”¹

The Vajra Mentor said: “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! I must make you understand the inconceivable Deity Reality, explained by all the buddhas, whose personal precept has come down through the lineage of gurus, and which is not the province of even the Lords of the Tenth Stage. That called “complete knowledge of the precise condition of one’s own mind” is not among the aggregates, elements, and media. This embodiment of a divine body endowed with all the marks [of a buddha] by the mere

¹ Tsong Khapa, in his *Extremely Brilliant Lamp of the Five Stages*, mentions this question of the Vajra Student and comments that the answer is “the import of the statement of the way to create the Magic Body from wind.” (cf. Thurman, trans., Ch. 2, p. 57)

perception of intuitive wisdom, which is described by the twelve similes such as magical magical illusion and dreams, is the mental nature body of the buddhas.”

The Vajra Student asked: “If it is said in scripture, ‘In the absence of its habitat body, there is no mind. In the absence of mind, too, body is not perceived,’ how then does one create a divine body endowed with all the marks such as hands, feet, and so forth, by merely mind only? Those with objectified views will not have confidence in this without scriptural and logical [support]. Therefore, O Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, please explain the art of easily actualizing the non-objectified Divine Reality.”

The Vajra Mentor said, “Excellent, O Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! Those who have entered the way of the sūtras or those meditators abiding in the Creation Stage, although they repeat and imagine it in examples such as ‘all dharmas are like magical illusion, like a dream, and like a reflection,’ will not understand through metaphors the completion of a divine body having the nature of the mind by merely knowing the personal precepts of Self Consecration. Therefore, I, following the Yoga tantras, will make you understand the causes and conditions for creating Vajrasattva. [168] In truth, mind is mere perception--free of shape and color, whose nature is (space-like) infinity, difficult to contact like ultimate reality. Thus, the three luminances of mere perception have wind as their support; since they are common, they are light; therefore, consciousness is bound by wind. Then, the two luminances of critical wisdom and art, with five-colored light rays and endowed with all the various qualities, emerge as a magical divine body.

“If you wonder, ‘what are these mounted upon?’ It is ‘wind.’ The Mind Vajra, mounted on a wind like itself, it is ejected wherever one wishes.

“The *Transmigration of Consciousness Sutra*² also clearly states:

² *rNam par shes pa 'pho ba'i mdo*. The scripture being quoted here, though under a different name is the same *Enquiry of Bhadrāpāla Scripture* cited above in Chapters Two Note continued on next page. . .

The Lord said, “Mahābhaiṣajya, I hurled my body from the top of a cliff and experienced many hundreds of thousands of tribulations for the sake of [learning] the meaning³ of half a verse. Mahābhaiṣajya, ask whatever you want and I will answer you.”

Mahābhaiṣajya then said this to the Lord: “Lord, what is the nature of this consciousness?”

The Lord replied, “It is like the nature of a magician’s [conjured] person, the nature of non-clarity, as the shadow of a person in water is not clear, the nature of the eye and space, and the nature of existence.⁴”

I must explain to you, Mahābhaiṣajya, since it has not been born yet, how one should initially regard a form which has just died. It is like this. Since it should be viewed as like the form of a person’s shadow occurring in water, it should not be viewed as an appearance occurring inside that. Also, Mahābhaiṣajya, that which is endowed with the head and hands and feet of that is also like a water-appearing person. That has neither cold, nor heat, nor bodily fatigue, and so on, since for that one, meat and fish meat and so forth are not possible; and [169] since the shadow cannot be destroyed by the elements. Therefore, one cannot describe the reflection of a man appearing in water with such words as ‘happiness’ and ‘suffering.’ Likewise, this consciousness also, just having abandoned the nature of a dead body, it becomes a body made of that. In that way, the causes evolve for the wandering of childish alienated beings [who are then] called “existence-betweeners.’ Those who have won the personal precept of all the Transcendent Lords from the lineage of gurus emanate themselves by this so-called ‘Self Consecration’ with the nature of Vajrasattva’s body like a picture on a wall or a reflection in a mirror. [They are] endowed with the supreme of all forms, a body one never tires of looking at, adorned with the thirty-two signs of a great being (*mahāpuruṣa*)--in short, adorned with the qualities of all the buddhas.”

As the Lord said in the *Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*:

The pure body like a rainbow--
By meditating on reality, you will attain.

and Four. At the end of this scripture, Ānanda asks the Buddha the name under which the teaching should be known. The Buddha replies that it should be known as the “Ejection of Consciousness” (*nam par shes pa ‘pho ba*) or the “Enquiry of Bhadrāpāla”; cf. f. 94b³.

³ This “meaning” might better be omitted.

⁴ This initial passage is found at sDe-dge f. 83a²-83a⁵.

“The meaning of this is as follows: ‘Rainbow’ is Indra’s bow. ‘What is that?’ It is manifestly marked by five-colored light rays. Just as a rainbow in the sky clearly appears with five distinct colors, this body also is marked in that way. This is the meaning of ‘the pure body like a rainbow.’ The meaning of ‘by meditating Reality, you will attain,’ is that, having won the authentic personal precept of the guru, by meditating on Reality and perceiving ultimate reality, you will attain.”

The Vajra Student asked, “Lord, I have a few other doubts. Why when sleeping a long time does one cast aside the body? Having gone in a dream to the Abode of the Thirty Three or another realm, one experiences the five objects of desire. Having come [back] to this realm again, why does one experience the present result of virtue and non-virtue? [170] Similarly, are the states of sleep and waking different or are they, rather, not [different]?”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! It is excellent to inquire about the characteristics of dreaming so as to eliminate the doubts of those who grasp at the view that the body has the nature of [being] a beginningless thing, and in order to clarify the explanation of the Self Consecration. Therefore, since you should understand well the divine body according to the sūtras and tantras--which [body] is the introspective self-awareness of everything and has been explained to be like a reflection through [the simile of] dreaming--listen with one-pointed mind! [It] is said:

In the aggregates, elements, media, and [sense] organs
Both those consciousnesses having been brought together herein,
The Great Void dreamer
Will see dreams by the force of wind.

The dream ceasing, without other distinction,
Desiring the fruits of a dream on account of conceptualization
Beings are sleeping day and night
Those who are unconscious sleep for a long time.

By that karma whose fruit has not [yet] ripened
Wind will again enter this being.
If the fruit ripens, this wind
Will go speedily to another worldly death.

Just as the Victorious Lords of the ten directions,

Though they have no marrow, bone or flesh in their bodies,
Enter into [material] elements for the benefit of sentient beings
And perform deeds with an emanation body;

By that process, the mind awakening from sleep
Is ensnared by result-oriented conceptualization.
Hence, all things are like a dream--
There is no true and false.

In order to clarify that very point, the *Purification of all Karmic Obscurations Sutra* says:

“Bhikṣus, what do you think? At the time of conceptualization in a dream when you sleep, do you experience the enjoyment of lust?” [171]

“Lord, we do experience it.”

The Lord said, “Do you not know it to be the enjoyment of lust by the mind?”

“That is so, Lord.”

The Lord said, “Do you see any difference or particular distinction between the dreaming mind and the waking mind?”

“Lord, we do not see even the slightest difference between the dreaming mind and the waking mind.”

The Lord said, “Bhikṣus, what do you think? Have I not taught that ‘all things are like a dream?’”

“It is so, Lord.”⁵

Also, in order to clarify this very point, the Lord said in the Great Yoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion*:

“All Transcendent Lords, it is like this. For example, the spirit of enlightenment, which causes the emergence of the intuitive wisdoms of all transcendent lords is like a vajra abode. That spirit of enlightenment does not abide in the body. It does not abide in the speech. It does not abide in the mind. Of whichever dharmas do not abide in the three worlds, there is no birth. This is that vajra abode born from intuitive wisdom. O Lord Sarvatathāgata, do not think that ‘I will see this dream as like a dream of this triple world.’ Also, do not think ‘I see all people as a dream.’

Those actions of the triple world are like a dream, resembling a dream, and born from dreaming. Likewise, it is said, All Transcendent Lords, one should know all beings and as many buddhas and bodhisattvas as there are in the ten directions, as being without self, like a dream. [172]

⁵ Reference not located.

It is also said in the Great Yoga Tantra called *Intuitive Wisdom Vajra Compendium* for the purpose of elucidating this very Magic-like Samādhi:

‘The great yoga of mind and mental factors is the samādhi of great bliss.’ That is signified by the simile of magical illusion. Therefore, all the Transcendent Lords equal in number with the grains of sand in the Ganges rivers of all buddhaverses are like magical illusions, like the reflection of moon in water, like a phantom double,⁶ like a mirage, like a dream, an echo, a city of the gandharvas, an optical illusion, a rainbow, lightning, bubbles in water, a reflection in a mirror. The samādhi of great bliss is signified by the twelve similes of magical illusion.⁷

In that way, all the Transcendent Lords of the realms of the ten directions, abiding for as long as saṃsāra exists by the magic-like samādhi, enjoy themselves through sporting and delighting in the five objects of desire. As they are endowed with the qualities of an Omniscient One, they travel from buddhaverse to buddhaverse by their mere wish [to do so]. Recalling the past, present and future sufferings of saṃsāra, those who desire liberation should propitiate a vajra mentor with great zeal and, having obtained the personal precept of the process of Self Consecration, should seek the art of purifying that!

⁶ *mig yor*. The *Tshig-mdzod Chen-mo* defines this as “one object perceived as two” (dngos po gcig la gnyis su snang ba’i ming) (Lhasa, 1984). 2092. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso, in his *Clear Light of Bliss*, calls this “the body’s shadow.” Cf. *CLB*, (London, 1992). 210. “Phantom” seems to be the best equivalent based on the Sanskrit equivalent (*pratibhāsa*).

⁷ Our text (Śraddhākaravarma and Rin-chen bZang-po) has: sems dang sems las byung ba’i mal ‘byor chen po ni bde ba chen po’i ting nge ‘dzin to/ De ni sgyu ma’i dpes nye bar mtshon pa ste/ de bas na sangs rgyas kyi zhing gangā’i klung gi bye ma snyed kyi de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad ni sgyu ma lta bu dang/ chu zla lta bu dang/ mig yor lta bu dang/ smig rgyu lta bu dang/ rmi lam lta bu dang/ brag ca dang/ dri za’i grong khyer dang/ mig ‘phrul dang/ ‘ja’ tshon dang/ glog dang/ chu’i chu bur dang/ me long gi gzugs brnyan te/ sgyu ma’i dpe bcu gnyis kyi bde ba chen po’i ting nge ‘dzin nye bar mtshon par ‘gyur ba yin te/.

The Tog Palace Kanjur (trsl. Jñānakara and Khu-ston, rev. Jñānakāra and Tshul-khrims rGyal-ba) has: sems dang sems las byung ba mnyam par sbyar ba ni bde ba chen po’i ting nge ‘dzin gyi thabs su gyur ba’o/ De sgyu ma’i dpes nye bar mtshon pa ste/ de’i phyir sangs rgyas kyi zhing gānga’i klung gi bye ma snyed kyi de bzhin gshegs pa mams ni sgyu ma lta bu dang/ chu zla dang/ mig yor dang/ mig rgyu dang/ rmi lam dang/ sgra brnyan dang/ dri za’i grong khyer dang/ mig ‘phrul dang/ dbang po’i gzhu dang/ glog dang/ chu bur dang/ me long gi gzugs brnyan lta bu ste/ sgyu ma’i dpe bcu gnyis kyi bde ba chen po’i ting nge ‘dzin nye bar mtshon par byed pa yin no// [Vol. Ca, f. 261b¹⁻³].

**Lamp Chapter VII:
Resolution of Doubts concerning the Ultimate Reality:
the Stage of Enlightenment with the
Joys of Purifying the Two Yogas**

The Vajra Student asked: “If I have no doubts concerning the Conventional Reality, now, I pray your kindness to bestow on me the great knowledge of your personal speech [concerning] the Ultimate Reality, the state of purified perception.”

The Vajra Mentor said: “Although the so-called ‘Conventional Reality’--the creation of a Vajrasattva body through the process of Self Consecration--can be shown through the twelve similes of magical illusion, the Ultimate Reality [173] is bodiless, cannot be exemplified, is free of all undertaking,¹ and introspectively discerned. Therefore, one will not come to know this except through teachings [direct] from the mouth of the guru. Just as [I] have said elsewhere:

Just as a lamp inside a pot
Will not shine outside,
If that pot were broken,
the light of the lamp afterward would be seen.

Likewise, the pot is one’s very body.
Reality is the lamp.
If broken by the guru’s word,
The intuitive wisdom of the Buddhas will shine forth.²

From space emerges space
Space perceives space--

¹ *rtsom pa*

² These two verses are found in the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa* (Tōh. 1806: sDe-dge bsTan-‘gyur, rGyud, col. ngi, f. 114b²-117a¹; these verses f. 115a⁷-115b¹; cf. also Pek. 2671, rGyud-‘grel, vol gi, f. 131a⁴⁻⁵) which is attributed to Āryadeva. It is possible that these verses are taken from elsewhere, though if he indeed means to refer to his own work it is very interesting. One wonders if Tsong-kha-pa took this into account in evaluating whether the *Abhibodhikramopadeśa* was the work of Āryadeva.

It is also interesting to note the similarity of this sentiment to the idea in the *āraṇyakas* and the *upaniṣads* that “*ātman* is *brahman* in a pot” [i.e. a body], and that breaking the pot allows one to “realize the primordial unity of the individual soul with the plenitude of Being that was the Absoloute.” D. G. White, *The Alchemical Body* (Chicago, 1996). 18.

That itself, from the guru's mouth,
Is yoga well-taught.

“Since by this reasoning it occurs in audible form, the unreal nature,³ free of first and last [and] free of subject and object, is shown through that sound which has the character of conventional reality.

“For the purpose of elucidating that very import--that the Ultimate Reality [is] the stainless nature like unconstructed space--the [Buddha] stated in the *Teaching of One Method Scripture*:⁴

This teaching is taught by words and languages.
Here one will not find teaching and words.
The one who enters reality by one actual way
Will reach the unexcelled, supreme tolerance.

“Then the student who understands cause and effect to be non-dual, having received the verbal transmission taught by the Guru, makes the maṇḍala of the community⁵ by the yogas and rituals explained in the Tantras. At midnight, [s/he] offers to the guru a well-educated consort with a body anointed with perfumed unguents [and] adorned with many ornaments, and offers proper worship with the secret and the other offerings. [Then,] in front of the guru one places one's right knee on the ground, folds one's palms together, [and] visualizing one's Mentor as being a manifest Transcendent Lord with a mind to protect [beings] from the life-cycle, one should pray to be enlightened [174] with this offering of praise:

Homage to you, Supreme Vajra Bestower of the Supreme!
Homage to you, Reality-limit incarnate!
Homage to you, Voidness-born!
I pay homage to the Buddha Enlightenment!

Homage to the great mentor

³ *dngos po med pa'i ngo bo nyid*

⁴ The very same verse from this text, the *Ekanayanirdeśasūtra*, has already been quoted above in Chapter III. See note there.

⁵ *tshogs kyi dkyil 'khor*

who has seen enlightenment!

O great spiritual hero, please explain
The great intuitive wisdom of all the buddhas,
The unexcelled Universal Void, [which is]
One with my own experience.

You who attained of enlightenment in this life,
Liberated from karma and birth,
There is no other leader in whom to find refuge,
If one abandons your lotus feet.

Hence, work to delight this supreme buddha,
The hero of beings, the Great Sage!

That holy one, having thus
Heard this supreme rite of supplication,
The Guru, Glorious Ocean of Qualities,
Feels compassion for the disciple.

With bright countenance
Overjoyed by his caring,
He should teach the noble commitments--
The supreme of the Yoga Tantras

Then, the Mentor, absorbed in meditation,
Should place the spirit of enlightenment
In a vase or a conch shell.

Then, calling that student,
[He] should teach the commitments
With the seals of the Victors
In the consecration of all the buddhas.

The second Vajradhara
Should give the initiation.
Proclaiming the good luck verses
And by various musical sounds
Give the initiation of the [Lord of] the Three Worlds.

Then requested by the
Student who pays homage with folded hands
give the Permission.

The sequence of initiations is this:
Garland, Water, Perfect Buddha
Vajra, Bell, Mirror,
Name and Mentor Permissions.

Then, the characteristic of Enlightenment
which comes from the lineage of Gurus,
[And] contains the personal instructions
Should then be given to that one.

“With respect to that there are two aspects to the stage of Enlightenment: the inner and the outer.

“I will first explain the outer. At the break of dawn, [175] having passed beyond the luminance of delusion, as long as the sun does not shine, here the appearance of the stainless Transparency is clarity and it has the characteristic of the Universal Void, free of body, speech, and mind. The rising of the sun is Radiance. The moment of the sun’s setting is Delusion. The time of the moon’s rising is Luminance.

“Having explained the definite teaching of the four outer aspects of voidness, now I will show by this process the Inner Enlightenment, with the character of introspective awareness. First, one sees a gathering of five-colored light rays like an optical illusion. The second is Luminance, like the rays of the moon. Third is Radiance, like the rays of the sun. Fourth--Imminence, like darkness. Then, in the instant that darkness is removed, Transparency is seen with the eye of intuitive wisdom--having the characteristic of always appearing with extreme brilliancy [and] one in nature with the Ultimate Reality. Having in that way realized the Universal Voidness, by these stages one focuses on the two kinds of meditation.

The stages of that are these: like a lump dissolving⁶ in the pure, stainless waters of rivers and ponds, likewise the yogin always reflects on causing the gradual Dissolution into that [by the Dissolving meditation]. The process of imaginative visualization which is like viewing the gradual disappearance of breath on a mirror is the Holistic meditation.

“Now, for the purpose of clarifying the errors of those who are obsessed with names, I will engage in enumerating a few different names for the Ultimate Reality. First there is ‘Transparency,’ and ‘Universal Void,’ ‘Buddha Intuitive Wisdom,’ ‘Vajra Intuitive Wisdom,’ ‘Unexcelled Intuitive Wisdom,’ ‘Stainlessness,’ ‘Thinglessness,’ ‘Appearanceless,’ ‘Selfless,’ ‘Nirvāṇa,’ ‘Sentient Beingless,’ ‘Lifeless,’ ‘Personless,’

⁶ lit. “abiding”

‘Cureless,’ ‘Birthless,’ ‘Ceaseless,’ [176] ‘Letter-less,’ ‘Wordless,’ ‘Non-objectified,’ ‘Unexcelled,’ ‘Unexpressed,’ ‘Inconceivable,’ ‘Limitless,’ ‘Numberless,’ ‘Beyond the Senses,’ ‘Placeless,’ ‘Characteristicless,’ ‘Uncompounded,’ ‘Signless,’ ‘Unmoving,’ ‘Objectless,’ ‘Non-Consciousness,’ ‘Discernment-less,’ ‘Inexhaustible,’ ‘Unincreasable,’ ‘Wordless,’⁷ ‘Obscuration-less,’ ‘One Method,’ ‘Peace,’ ‘Peacefulness,’ ‘Space-like,’ ‘Naturally Pure,’ ‘Beginningless,’ ‘Middleless,’ ‘Endless,’ ‘Going-less,’ ‘Coming-less,’ ‘Not far,’ ‘Not near,’ ‘Not one,’ ‘Not many,’ ‘Hard to reach,’ ‘Difficult to meditate on,’ ‘Dhyāna itself,’ ‘Authentic,’ ‘Reality Body,’ ‘Reality Limit,’ ‘Passionlessness Limit,’ ‘Realm of Reality,’ ‘Bodiless,’ ‘Atomless,’ ‘Limitless,’ ‘Accomplishment,’ ‘Secret Accomplishment,’ ‘Pure Perfection,’ ‘Pure View,’ ‘Pure Cause,’ ‘Pure Effect,’ ‘Pure Triple World,’ ‘Pure Merit,’ ‘Pure Sin,’ ‘Pure Defilement,’ ‘Pure Karma,’ ‘Pure Birth’; those and ‘Perfection of Wisdom,’ ‘Mother of all Buddhas,’ ‘Omniscient One,’ ‘Knower of all Forms,’ ‘Knower of all Aspects of the Path,’ ‘Suchness,’ ‘Suchness without error,’ ‘Equality,’ ‘Inexhaustible Stores of Merit and Wisdom,’ ‘Solitary Wisdom Itself,’ ‘Creator of all Bodhisattvas,’ ‘Mother of all Śrāvakas,’ ‘Creator⁸ of all Pratyekabuddhas,’ [177] ‘Benefactor of all Worlds,’ ‘Purifier of the Divine Eye,’ ‘Bestower of the Divine Ear,’ ‘Producer of Knowledge of Others’ Minds,’ ‘Producer of Recollection of Previous Existences,’ ‘Producer of Measureless Marvels,’ and ‘Terminator⁹ of All Defilements.’

“Likewise, the Great Yoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion* also describes the characteristics of Enlightenment through verses of the six spirits of enlightenment such as

⁷ This is the second time this appears in the list.

⁸ The text has here *bskrun/skrun* a synonym for *bskyed* found before in reference to bodhisattvas.

⁹ Here translating the causative in the (English) active voice (lit. “producer of being consumed/exhausted”).

'the objectless object of meditation,'¹⁰ etc.; and from the other Great Yoga Tantras it says
[things like]:

Transcending meditation on all branches
Having abandoned also thought and conceptuality¹¹
Transcending the drop born of humility¹²--
This is the supreme maṇḍala.

The entrance of all sentient beings,
Free of the stains of form and formless,
The mind, exhorted and realized as
a maṇḍala, like a circle (*maṇḍala*).

This is the limit of both existence and non-existence.
This is also the limit of purity and impurity.
Therefore, abandoning the two extremes,
The wise do not abide in the middle.

And,

The limit of space, the discerned import¹³
The great site of all beings
Being a glorious Treasure¹⁴,
is the "King of Treasures,"
[and] "Fulfiller of All Intentions."

¹⁰ These are the "famous" six verses from the second chapter of the Guhyasamāja. We have here a rather eccentric translation, to wit: *dnegos po med pa sgom pa'i dnegos*. The Tog Palace Kanjur (and Fremantle's "critical edition") has these verses: *dnegos po med pas sgom pa med/ bsgom par bya ba sgom pa min/ de ltar dnegos po dnegos med pas/ sgom pa dmigs su med pa'o// 1. dnegos po thams cad dang bral ba/ phung po khams dang skye mched dang/ gzung dang 'dzin pa mams [Frem. nam] spangs pa/ chos bdag med pa mnyam nyid pas/ rang sems gdod nas ma skyes pa/ stong pa nyid kyi rang bzhin no// 2. dnegos po 'di rnams ma skyes pa/ chos dang chos nyid med pa ste/ nam mkha' lta bur bdag med pa/ byang chub tshul 'di brtan pa'o// 3. chos rnams thams cad dnegos med cing/ chos kyi mtshan nyid nam par spangs/ bdag med chos las kun tu byung/ byang chub tshul 'di brtan pa'o// 4. ma skyes pa yi chos mams la/ ngo bo med de sgom pa' ang med/ nam mkha'i tshul du sbyor ba yis/ dnegos po dag tu rab tu bsgrags// 5. chos mams rang bzhin 'od gsal ba/ gdod nas dag pa nam mkha' bzhin/ byang chub med cing mngon rtogs med/ byang chub tshul 'di brtan pa'o// 6. (Tog Kanjur, vol. ca, ff. 9a⁵-10a³; Fremantle, pp. 191-195).*

¹¹ *kalpa* and *vikalpa*, *rtog dang rnam rtog*

¹² *gug*

¹³ *brtag pa'i don*

¹⁴ *'byor ba*

“If one wonders what is the condensed enumeration of names from the many words of intentional explanation, these words of indefinite referent with the difficult meaning of the words of the eighty-four thousand dharma teachings depend on the ultimate reality.”

Then the Vajra Student understood the two aspects of the Enlightenment Stage-- [outer and inner]--and the Two Meditations. Hearing the enumeration of the names of the Ultimate Reality, (s)he abandoned adherence to concepts [and], with bright countenance, folded his hands and said these words condensing the meaning of the teaching:¹⁵

Aho! Buddha! O, Buddha!
The explanation of the teaching is a great wonder, [178]
An realistic meaning, a pure meaning--
I pay homage to the Spirit of Enlightenment!

Then, the Vajra Mentor pronounced these verses as if viewing another mentor:

Free of all things
Abandoning aggregates, elements, and media,
Subject and object,
The selfless equality in the dharma--
Your own mind, unborn from the first
is of the nature of Voidness.

Then, focused on non-duality, he gave the Wisdom and Intuitive Wisdom¹⁶ Initiation.

By this process, The Glorious Lord Shakyamuni was roused from the Immovable Samādhi¹⁷ by the sound of all the Transcendent Lords' snapping their fingers and, sitting in front of the Tree of Enlightenment, manifested Clear Light Transparency at midnight¹⁸ and,

¹⁵ *ched du brjod pa'i tshig*. Chandra Das (p. 425) mentions the definition of *ched du brjod pa'i tshoms* as *chos kyi don gyi snying po bsdus te tshigs bcad du bsgrigs pa*.

¹⁶ *shes rab dang ye shes kyi dbang*

¹⁷ *mi gyo ba'i ting nge 'dzin*. The unexcelled yoga tantra system has its own account of the events which transpired under the Bodhi Tree on the night of the Buddha's enlightenment. See Lessing and Wayman, pp. 34-39, and Yangchen Gawai Lodoe, pp. 81-82 for details.

¹⁸ This assertion is the source of some debate in later discussions of the tradition. The *Sa Lam* of Yangcan Gawai Lodoe (trans. p. 83) discusses the discrepancy between this Note continued on next page. . .

arising from the Illusion-like samādhi, taught the Dharma for all beings. From that day it commenced and as long as the Dharma remains the lineage [will be passed] from guru's mouth to guru's mouth.

statement that Transparency is manifested at midnight and the statement in the *Brilliant Lamp* of Candrakīrti that this experience must take place at dawn.

**Lamp Chapter VIII:
Resolution of doubts concerning the realm of
Non-abiding Nirvana**

The Vajra Student asked: “If I have no doubts concerning my understanding of the Ultimate Reality, O Lord, how do I, having entered Ultimate Reality and become insubstantial, [subsequently] arise? What is the experience of confrontation here? What is the irreversable? What is the import of liberation? Why is one liberated? Who is liberated?”

The Vajra Mentor said: “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! The process of arisal from Clear Light Transparency is not the province of those who turn away from the personal precepts of the Transcendent Lords. As I will make you understand according to the Great Yoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion*, listen with one-pointed attention!

Having learned [179] the Creation Stage in this Vajra Vehicle, one attains the eighth [bodhisattva] stage. Being again and again born in fortunate rebirths, as long as one does not attain the Perfection Stage, one must please a spiritual friend. Having realized the body, speech, and mind [isolations], one attains the tenth stage; having attained and completely realized the Magic-like Samādhi, one attains purified perception. Having arisen from perceptionlessness, [that one] manifests the actions of a buddha through the process[es] of abiding in Integration, and will stand adorned with all the qualities of the Vajra-like Samādhi. As the Lord has said in the *Journey to Lanka Scripture*:

Mahāmati, since the effortlessly accomplished yoga, great compassion and skill in liberative art, and all the worlds of sentient beings are magical illusion, a reflection, equality, not formed by conditions, if those who are endowed with the signless consecration through isolation from external and internal objects and [through] viewing the mind as external gradually enter the realm of the stage-samādhis, they will attain the Magic-like Samādhi [by] meditating [on] regarding the mind of the Triple World as magical illusion.

Since that is so, Mahāmati, by engaging one’s own mind as mere non-perception, bodhisattvas who have attained stability in the Perfection of Wisdom free of birth and action will gradually attain the body of a Transcendent Lord who [consciously] transmigrates by the process [of

progressive] freedom from mind, mentation, and mental consciousnesses which approach the places of the heretics of the Buddha-fields--[a body] ornamented by liberative art, compassion, caring, power, psychic powers, and the power of emanating Suchness corresponding to the body of a Transcendent Lord in the form of a Samādhi-vajra. Therefore, Mahāmati, the bodhisattvas, great spiritual heroes, who have attained conformity to the body of the Transcendent Lords, should follow (*rjes su 'brang*) the mind only--free from the fabrications which conceive of its being endowed with aggregates, elements, media, [180] mind, causes, conditions, actions, and concepts of birth, abiding, and destruction.¹

Thus, as long as those who are equipoised in the Magic-like Samādhi do not attain realization of Ultimate Reality, they are “reversible.” Why? As long as the three luminances are not purified, there exist conceptualizations of consciousness. As long as there are conceptualizations, there is the continuity of defiling instincts. By the continuity of the defiling instincts, existence is perpetuated. That which is free of other energy is the pure state. As it says in the Yoga Tantra called *The Glorious Primal Supreme*:²

¹ blo gros chen po snying rje chen po dang thabs la mkhas pa'i lhun gyis grub [K: par gyur] pa'i sbyor ba dang/ sems can gyi khams thams cad sgyu ma dang gzugs brnyan dang/ mnyam pa nyid dang/ rkyen gyis ma brtsams pa dang/ phi nang gi yul mam par dben pa dang/ sems phi rol tu lta bas mtshan ma med pa'i byin gyis rlabs dang ldan pa mams gyis sa'i rim pa[C: 'i] ting nge 'dzin gyi yul la rjes su 'jug [K: pa dang; C: na]/ khams gsum bdag gi sems sgyu mar shin tu mos par rb tu sgom pa[K: s] sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge 'dzin rab tu [K: ']thob par 'gyur ro/ [C: blo gros chen pa de lta bas na] bdag gi sems snang ba med pa tsam la 'jug pas shes rab kyi pha rol tu phyin pa la gnas pa rjes su thob par skye ba dang/ bya ba dang [K: ldan pa'i; C: bral ba'i] byang chub sems dpa' mams ting nge 'dzin rdo rje'i gzugs lta bu de bzhin gshegs pa'i sku'i rjes su song ba de bzhin nyid kyi sprul pa dang ldan pa[C: 'I] stobs dang/ mngon par shes pa dang/ dbang dang/ snying brtse ba dang/ snying rje dang thabs kyis brgyan pa/ sangs rgyas thams cad kyi zhing gi mu stegs can gyi gnas su nye bar 'gro ba'i sems dang/ yid dang/ yid kyi mam par shes pa dang bral [K: pa; C: ba'i/nas]/ rim gyis gnas 'phos pa'i de bzhin gshegs pa'i sku rab tu [K: ']thob par 'gyur ro// blo gros chen po de bas na byang chub sems dpa' sems dpa' chen po de bzhin gshegs pa'i sku'i rjes su 'brangs ba rab tu [K: ']thob pa mams kyis phung po dang/ khams dang/ skye mched dang/ sems dang/ rgyu dang/ rkyen dang/ bya ba dang ldan pa dang/ skye ba dang/ gnas pa dang/ 'jig [K: par; C: pa'i] mam par rtog pa'i spros pa dang bral bar sems tsam gyi rjes su 'brang bar bya'oll. *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, 112a?-112b⁵.

² *dpal mchog dang po*[zhes bya ba'i rnal 'byor gyi rgyud], *Śrīparamādyā-nāma-mahāyānakalparāja* (Toh. 487)

It is like this: the state of purified lust is the state of the bodhisattva.
 It is like this: the state of purified hatred is the state of the bodhisattva.
 It is like this: the state of purified ignorance is the state of the bodhisattva.

Also, the advice of Vajra Mentor Kambala,³ in explaining the section on the literal nature from the Inner Self Sādhana:⁴

Likewise, the nature of the mind is subtle. Freedom from mind is the supreme state of yogis.⁵

By this reasoning, since the stainless nature of the body, speech and mind of whomever attains Transparency by this process of Enlightenment is the Universal Voidness itself, its nature is the Perfection of Wisdom which purifies the Three Consciousnesses. This which is unthinkable and inexpressible is the realm of nirvāṇa--formless, difficult to touch, freed from karma and [re-]birth, [and] brilliant in nature like the light of the sun, the moon, a flame or a jewel.

After that, there is the appearance of darkness, the occurrence of the Immanence-Luminance [181] and so on. After the Immanence-Luminance, the Radiance-Luminance will emerge--with the hot nature appearing as the brilliant light of the sun. After that, the Intuitive Wisdom of Critical Wisdom will emerge, pervaded by the Luminance of the cool nature of the brilliant light of the moon. Again, from the *Glorious Primal Supreme Tantra*:

From space, emerges space.
 The Universal Void is the great space.

Therefore, the host of luminances whose one foundation is voidness illuminates all world-realms like the sun. Since, conjoined with the subtle element,⁶ it has the nature of a Vajra Body--indivisible and indestructible like a shadow, free of transmigration, free of impurity-

³ *Rdo rje slob dpon Kamba la'i zhal snga nas.*

⁴ *nang gi bdag nyid sgrub thabs, Adhyātmasādhana.*

⁵ The *Subhāṣita Saṃgraha* (p. 65) has the following verse of Kambalāmbaraṇapāda cited from the *Adhyātmasādhana*: sthūlaṃ śabdamayam prāhuḥ sūkṣmaṃ cittamayam tathā/ cintayā rahitam yat tad yoginām paramam padaṃ//

⁶ That is, wind.

-it is free of all defiling instincts [and] attainment of mastery to do as one wants. That has the nature of form and it emerges like a fish [jumping] out of water or like one quickly awakening from sleep. [This] form has the nature of the Body of Supreme Joy (*mchog tu dga' ba'i lus*) and its name is “Mahāvajradhara.” Since it is definitely freed from the bonds of the life cycle (*saṃsāra*), it is called “liberated.”

In order to clarify this very point, it says in the *Secret Accomplishment*:⁷

That reality is to be known through personal experience.
It cannot be communicated through speech.
It is understood through devotion and meditation.
It cannot be understood in any other manner.

Having known reality, then meditate
Day and night with devotion
On that unexcelled state of peace,
The supreme nirvāṇa.

That which is emanated by the force of meditation
And the power of devotion--
The form born there is
What's more, the supreme born from joy.

A form which emerges in an instant
Sending forth and collecting
It illuminates all animate and
Inanimate things of these three worlds.

From the power of meditation on reality
[Is born] the peaceful embodiment of critical wisdom and liberative art,
Freed from all defilements [and]
Adorned with all the [auspicious] marks.

Born from the intuitive wisdom of voidness
The unmatched⁸ supreme peace⁹
Endowed with the supreme of all forms [182]
Which has abandoned [imagination of] subject and object

⁷ *dpal gsang ba grub pa, Śrīguhyasiddhi* (Toh. 2217) by Padmavajra. The full title of this work is *Sakalatantrasambhavaṣaṅcodanī-śrīguhyasiddhināma* or *rGyud ma lus pa'i don nges par skul bar byed pa dpal gsang ba grub pa zhes bya ba*, or *The Invoker of the Definitive Meaning of All Tantras called “The Glorious Secret Accomplishment.”*

⁸ *nirdvandvaṃ*.

⁹ Following the Tibetan; the Sanskrit reads “the supreme stage” (*paramaṃ padam*).

Intuitive wisdom, like magic, pure,
 Clear, stainless in nature,
 Transcending sound and smell and taste,
 Having likewise abandoned tangible form,

Only the one supreme will see [it]
 With the intuitive wisdom eye of samādhi.

Supreme like shadow-magic
 Endowed with the supreme shape
 By sending out waves of intuitive wisdom
 The limitless form of manifold aspect
 The very rainbow-like body will be attained
 By the one who meditates on Reality.

From the power of meditation-yoga
 And from preserving the commitments
 You will attain such a form,
 Inexpressible even for the Victors.

In the place where there is no body, speech, and mind--
 That supreme, all-pervading state--
 There, meditate on such a form
 in accordance with the Teaching.

Aho! Utter marvel!
 Aho! Peace beyond the senses!
 Aho! Supreme profundity!
 The supreme state of buddhahood!^{10/11}

¹⁰ Or, “the magical manifestation of the spirit of enlightenment” (*bodhicittavikurvanam*.
byang chub sems kyi rnam 'phrul).

¹¹ In the sDe-dge bsTan-'gyur (rGyud-'grel, vol. wi, f. 12a1-12b1) we have another (much better) translation preserved--that by Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita and Tshul-khriṃs rgyal ba. The passage in question runs as follows: rang gi rig pa'i de nyid de/ gzhan gyis brjod par nus mi 'gyur/ gus dang bsgom pas rtogs 'gyur gyi/ de ni gzhan du rtogs mi nus// de nyid shes nas nyin mtshan du/ gus pas bsgom par bya ba yin/ mya ngan 'das pa'i go 'phang mchog/ bde ba zhi ba bla med der// der ni gus pa'i stobs nyid dang/ bsgoms pa'i stobs kyis gang sprul pa/ der ni 'byung bar 'gyur ba'i gzugs/ kun dga' las byung ci yang mchog// spro zhing sdud par byed pa can/ gsal por yud kyis byung gyur pa/ sa 'og sa bla sa steng 'di/ rgyu dang rgyu min snang bar byed// de nyid bsgoms pa'i stobs kyis ni/ thabs dang shes rab dngos zhi ba/ nyon mongs kun las mam grol zhing/ mtshan rnams kun gyis rnam brgyan pa// stong nyid ye shes las byung zhes/ gnyis med mchog tu zhi ba nyid/ rnam pa kun tu mchog ldan zhing/ gzung dang 'dzin pa mam par spangs// rnam dag ye shes sgyu ma'i dangs (dngas?)/ gsal zhing rang bzhin dri ma med/ sgra dang dri dang ro las 'das/ de bzhin reg pa mam par spangs// ting 'dzin ye shes mig gnyis kyis/ mchog gcig pu de mthong bar 'gyur/ bzang po grib ma'i sgyu 'dra ba/ 'du byed bzang po dang ldan pa// [me yis thag pa bsregs pa bzhin/ nyon mongs 'ching ba las grol ba/] rnam pa sna tshogs lus rnams dang/ ye shes rlabs kyis phring las spro// dbang po'o gzhu dang 'dra ba'i sku/ de nyid bsgoms pas thob par 'gyur/ rnal 'byor bsgom pa'i nus pa dang/ dam tshig rnams ni bskyang byas pas// rgyal ba yis kyang brjod med pa'i/ de 'dra'i gzugs ni thob par 'gyur/ gang du lus ngag sems med pa'i/ Note continued on next page. . .

This very process of emergence is spoken of by the Transcendent Lords in the Mahāyoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion*:

Aho! Vajra! Aho! Vajra!
Aho! Vajra teaching!
Where there is no body, speech and mind
Meditate there on form!¹²

Also, the advice of the Master [Nāgārjuna]¹³ [says]:

There is no hollow¹⁴ in your body.
There is no flesh, bone or blood even.
In space, like a rainbow
You display your body.

gnas gang kun 'gro mchog gyur pa// der ni yang dag bstan dbang gis/ rang bzhin bsgom
par gyur la ltos// e ma ho ngo mtshar byed pa'o/ e ma ho zhi ba dbang po las/ e ma ho
mchog tu zhi ba nyid/ byang chub sems kyī nram 'phrul yin.

This latter translation seems to accord more closely with the Sanskrit, whose text (according to the recent Sarnāth edition) reads: svasaṃvedyaṃ tu tat tattvaṃ vaktumā(ma)sya [na] pāryate/ bhaktibhāvanayā gamyāṃ na gamyāṃ cānyathā nu tam (tat)// jñātvā tattvaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā bhaktibhāvamaharṇiśam/ tasmīn paramanirvāṇam (ṇe) pade śānte hyanuttare// tatastu bhaktisāmarthyā(d) bhāvanābalanirmitam/ tasmīnnutpadyate rūpaṃ kimapyānandajaṃ param// dhagityākārasaṃbhūtaṃ sphuratsaṃhārakāraṃ/ bhūrbhūvaḥ svamī (ri) daṃ sarvaṃ dyotayatsacarācaram// bhāvanātattvasāmarthyāt praññopāyātmakaṃ śivam/ sarvakleśavinirmuktaṃ sarvalakṣaṇabhūṣitaṃ// śūnyatājñānasambhūtaṃ nirdvandvaṃ paramaṃ padaṃ/ sarvākāraavaropetaṃ grāhyagrāhakavarjitaṃ// jñānaṃ māyopamaṃ śuddhaṃ svacchaṃ prakṛtinirmalaṃ/ śabdagandharasātitaṃ rūpasparśavivarjitaṃ// drśyate paramena samādhaū jñānacakṣuṣā/ chāyāmāyopamaṃ divyā (vyam) sarvasaṃsā(skā)rasamyutaṃ// sphurajjñānāgnimālābhir vividhānekavigrahaṃ/ indrāyudhanibhaṃ kāyaṃ labhante tattvabhāvakāḥ// bhāvanāyogasāmarthyāt samayānāṃ ca pālanāt/ idrśaṃ prāpyate rūpaṃ na vācyam yajjnair api// yatra kāyo na vākcittaṃ sthānaṃ yat sarvagaṃ param/ saṃpradāyavaśāt tatra yasya rūpaṃ vibhāvyate// aho suvismayakaram aho śāntamatindriyam/ aho paramagambhīraṃ bodhicittavikurvaṇam// These are verses 71 to 82 of the Third Chapter, “The Teaching about Enlightenment” (*abhisambodhinirdeśa*).

¹² GST Chapter Seventeen (Tog, ca, 73b4): e ma'o rdo rje e rdo rje/ e ma'o rdo rje yi bshad pa// gang du lus dang ngag sems med/ de ru gzugs ni nram par sgom//. (Bhattacharyya, p. 135): aho vajra aho vajra aho vajrasya deśanā/ yatra na kāyavākcittaṃ tatra rūpaṃ vibhāvyate//

¹³ *rJe bTsun gyi zhal snga nas kyis*; This is a citation from the Self-consecration Chapter of the *Pañcakrama*, verses 2 and 3: śauṣīryaṃ nāsti te kāye māmsāsthīrudhīraṃ na ca/ indrāyudhaṃ ivākāśe kāyaṃ darśitavān asi// nāmāyā nāśuciḥ kāye kṣutṛṣāsambhavo na ca/ tvayā lokānuvṛtyartham darśitā laukiki kriyā//.

¹⁴ *khong stong*, *śauṣīrya*; an “internal void” like the hollow of a tree.

There is no illness in your body or anything unclean.
Nor even do hunger and thirst occur.
You, in order to engage the world,
Display worldly activities.

Also, the *Ritual Compendium*¹⁵ says:

If one has attained the pure mind,
By meditating on the vajra body,
That one will attain a vajra body--
The stable body with no hollow inside.¹⁶

And the *King of Samādhi Scripture*¹⁷ says:
[183]

Candraprabha Kumārabhuta also explained the body
of the Transcendent Lord:

Space-like, upholding the excellent non-atomic form,
Scion of critical wisdom, without body or marks,
Ocean of good qualities, profoundly compassionate,
Please lay [your] matchless hand upon my head!

Also, in the *Noble 8,000-verse Perfection of Critical Wisdom Scripture*:

Subhūti said, “O Godlings! Nirvāṇa also is said to be like a
dream, like a magical illusion. Even if there were another
thing greater even than nirvāṇa, it too would be said to be
like a dream [and] like a magical illusion.¹⁸”

Therefore, its distinctive qualities are [these]: It does not possess form. It is not formless.

It is not true. It is not false. It is not substantial. It is not insubstantial. It is not permanent.

¹⁵ *rtog pa kun las btus pa, Sarvakalpasamuccaya* (Toh. 367 ?)

¹⁶ This quote does not seem to appear in the version of the *Kalpasamuccaya* found in the Urga Kanjur, vol. 78.

¹⁷ *Ting nge 'dzin rgyal po'i mdo, Samādhirājasūtra* (Toh. 127)

¹⁸ rab 'byor gyis smras pa/ lha'i bu dag mya ngan las 'das pa yang rmi lam lta bu sgyu ma lta bur smra'o// mya ngan las 'das pa las ches lhag pa'i chos gzhan zhig yod kyang de yang rmi lam lta bu sgyu ma lta bur smra'o//.

The canonical version is almost identical (slight variation in translation style--note also the elision): Lha'i bu dag mya ngan las 'das pa yang sgyu ma lta bu rmi lam lta bur smra [na chos gzhan lta ci smos// lha'i bu de dag gis smras pa/ 'phags pa rab 'byor mya ngan las 'das pa yang sgyu ma lta bu rmi lam lta bu'o zhes zer ram// tshe dang ldan pa rab 'byor gyis smras pa/ lha'i bu dag bdag ni gal te] mya ngan las 'das pa las khyad par du 'phags pa'i chos gzhan zhig yod kyang sgyu ma lta bu rmi lam lta bu'i zhes smra'o// *Aryāṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā, sDe-dge bKa'-gyur, 23a?-232a?*

It is not destroyed. It does not have an appearance. It is not without an appearance. It is not good (*dharma*). Nor is it bad (*adharmā*). It is not defiled. It is not purified. It is not saṃsāra. It is not nirvāṇa. It is not a permanent thing. It is not an impermanent thing. It is not a self. It is not an other. It is not inside. It is not outside. It is not worldly. It is not transcendent. It is not dual. It is not non-dual.

I will enumerate some of the various names of this utterly perfect Integration Body. They are explained as [these]: the form of the man of great knowledge (*mahāvidyapuruṣa*), that which abides in the style of the two realities, that which has the nature of natural Transparency, that which has the nature of liberative art and critical wisdom, that which has the nature of the three worlds, that which has the nature of the three times, that which has the nature of the three vehicles, that which has the nature of the three maṇḍalas, that which has the nature of art; likewise, holy man, supreme [184] man, great man, learned man (*ājāneyapuruṣa*), heroic man, steadfast man, tame man, taming man, supreme man¹⁹, charioteer of men, lion-man, space-man, universal man, man of purity; likewise, transcending saṃsāra, one who has reached the shore, bliss-winner, winner of fearlessness, ablaze with perfections, remover of thorns, without fabrications, monk, saint, one who has destroyed the impurities, owner of nothing,²⁰ wandering ascetic (*śramaṇa*), priest (*brahmin*), warrior (*kṣatriya*), child of the buddhas, undefiled, controlled, mentally liberated, liberated by critical wisdom, omniscient one, great elephant, he who has done what is to be done, he who has done deeds, he who has laid down his burden, he who has attained his own aim, he who has exhausted connection with existence, he who is mentally

¹⁹ Both sDe-dge and Peking have this repetition of “*skyes bu mchog*.” Perhaps these correspond to *paramapuruṣa* and *uttamapuruṣa*. There are, of course, lots of possible variations on this theme (*śreṣṭha*^o, *śreyah*^o, *agra*^o, *vara*^o, *pradhāna*^o, *pravara*^o, *mahā*^o, and so on).

²⁰ *akiñcana*, i.e. one who has voluntarily given up all possessions.

liberated by the authentic word, mind-controller, he who has crossed to the supreme, one who resides at the extreme limit of the life-cycle, intuitive wisdom body, and self-created.²¹

The Lord has stated the distinctive qualities of this very Vajra-like Samādhi in the *Hero's Progress Samādhi Scripture*:

Whichever holy person has attained these Hero's Progress Samādhis, resides in the realm of all the buddhas. They are masters of independent intuitive wisdom.

That bodhisattva who has not attained this Hero's Progress Samādhi, I do not call a "bodhisattva." That bodhisattva who has not attained this Hero's Progress Samādhi, I do not call "one who has attained psychic powers." That bodhisattva who has not attained this Hero's Progress Samādhi, [185] I do not call a "purified one." That bodhisattva who has not attained this Hero's Progress Samādhi, I do not call "one endowed with generosity, morality, tolerance, effort, meditation, wisdom, and art." That bodhisattva who has not attained this Hero's Progress Samādhi, I do not call a "learned one." That bodhisattva who has not attained this Hero's Progress Samādhi, I do not call "eloquent." Hence, noble ones, as they are free of vanity, bodhisattvas who wish to go forth on all the paths of progress should learn this Hero's Progress Samādhi.

²¹ *rang byung, svayambhū*

Lamp Chapter IX:
**Resolution of Doubts Concerning the Practice of the Bodhisattva, the Great
 Spiritual Hero with Elaboration of the Enlightenment of the Reality-Source,
 according to the Method of the *Union with all the Buddhas: Supreme Magic Bliss of
 the Dākinīs*¹**

The Vajra Student asked, “Having received the permission of the lama which defines the understanding of Reality by the process of bearing the fruit of the nature of learning and reflection, how does the yogi who desires to learn the perfection of omniscience abide at the time of the cause? How does s/he meditate? How does s/he perform spiritual discipline? Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, please instruct me!”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! It is wonderful that you have asked this so that those who have attained the cause and are ablaze with enthusiasm and those who have no regard for body or life, having turned away from grasping at their form in this life and desire to perfect the fruit of the eight lords of qualities² will be free from doubt. As I will explain to you sequentially the pure meditation and the pure practices of those who desire liberation, having eliminated the grasping at substantiality, listen!

“With regard to this, as the two realities are non-dual, [186] cause and effect are also non-dual. As cause and effect are non-dual, attainment and that to-be-attained (*thob pa dang thob par bya ba*) are also non-dual. As attainment and that-to-be-attained are non-dual, meditation and that to-be-meditated are also non-dual. In non-duality, an accomplisher, an accomplishing, and that to be accomplished are not perceived (*dmigs par mi 'gyur*). Since those are not perceived, if you consider, ‘in this [non-duality], what will

¹ That is, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-dākinijālasambara* (Tōh. 366).

² *yon tan gyi dbang phyug brgyad*; Yangchen Gawai Lodoe, p. 95-96 makes a special point of distinguishing the *yon tan gyi dbang phyug brgyad* from the *dbang phyug gi yon tan brgyad*. Geshe Losang Tsepel’s commentary (p. 96) mentions that the latter are mentioned in our text; however, it seems to be the reverse.

be meditated on? Who will perform practice?’--there will be no difference between the learner and the perfected one, as it has been explained that:

Visible things are nirvāṇa.
Deeds also are That.³

“However, if one speaks in a relative context, cause and effect are worldly appearance, furthermore the fault of being causeless will be the consequence. Therefore, do not have doubts about whether or not at the time of education there are or are not distinctive actors such as a meditator, meditation, and an object of meditation, an accomplisher, an accomplishing, and an object of accomplishment. In this regard, the accomplisher is understood as a conventional reality. The accomplishment is ultimate reality. The object of accomplishment is the non-dual intuitive wisdom. Therefore, the knowledge of the non-duality of cause and effect is here explained as meditation itself. As it says in the *Universal Secret Tantra*:

As the cause is sealed by the effect
And the effect also is sealed by the cause,
In [any] other meditation, accomplishments
Will not emerge in ten million æons.⁴

“[As for] the explanation of pure practice, having realized the non-dual intuitive wisdom, the times of meditative equipoise and non-equipoise become non-dual. Those being non-dual, who performs practices? That, without an actor, acts too are non-existent

³ *mtshong ba'i chos la mya ngan 'das/ bya ba byas pa'ang de nyid yin//* Or, “deeds are also that (i.e. “nirvāṇa”). Source is not stated.

⁴ *thams cad gsang ba'i rgyud, Sarvarahasyatantra* (Toh. 481). This verse runs as follows in our text: ‘bras bus rgyu ni rgyas btab cing/ rgyu yang ‘bras bus rgyas btab par/ bsgom gyi gzhan du dngos grub ni/ bskal pa bye bar ‘byung mi ‘gyur//.

The *Guhyasamājottaratantra* (Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. Ca, f.87a⁶⁻⁷) has the following verse: ‘bras bus rgyu ni rgyas gdab cing/ rgyu yis ‘bras bu rgyas gdab par/ sgom gyis gzhan du dngos grub ni/ bskal pa bye bar ‘byung mi ‘gyur//. This latter has better reading; I would provisionally edit the verse as follows: ‘bras bus rgyu ni rgyas btab cing/ rgyu yis ‘bras bu rgyas btab par/ sgoms gyis gzhan du dngos grub ni/ bskal pa bye bar ‘byung mi ‘gyur//. This could be rendered, “Meditate so that the cause is sealed by the effect and the effect by the cause. Otherwise, powers will not emerge in ten million æons.”

is general knowledge.⁵ Also, without spiritual discipline [187] one is not able to exhaust the instincts of beginningless defilement. This is explained in scripture and is common knowledge.⁶ As it says in the *Esoteric Communion Tantra*:

One should exhort again and again
The Great Victor, Vajrasattva.⁷

And also in the *Secret Accomplishment*:

Giving up stretching your legs
And casting out worldly friends,
Always with a mind of great enthusiasm⁸
You should accomplish supreme Vajrasattva.⁹
Abandon with sincere effort
Remorse and sleep and sloth, and so forth;
Otherwise, you will not accomplish
in a billion æons.¹⁰

Therefore, abandoning the force of the instincts of the beginningless defilements by equipoise in the signless samādhi, and having abandoned attitudes such as ‘if the one desiring to attain the effortless result practices, he practices’ or ‘he does not practice,’ one should overcome the eight worldly concerns¹¹ and perform the yogi’s practices as explained.

⁵ Literally, “certain throughout the world” (*’jig rten na nges pa*).

⁶ Literally, “famous in the world” (*’jig rten du grags pa*).

⁷ Reference not located.

⁸ Skt. “a mind of liberation” (*nirmuktamānasah*).

⁹ Skt. “Accomplish the command of Vajrasattva” (*sādhayet vajrasattvājñāṃ*).

¹⁰ Literally, “in a hundred ten-millions of æons” (*kalpakotiśata*).

These are the second and third verse of the Sixth Chapter (*sādhakasmātācintānimalikaraṇa-guhyacaryāsakalavibhāgakramanirdeśa*). The Sanskrit (according to the recent Sarnāth edition) reads: pādaprasārikam muktvā tyaktvā saṃsārapetaṅgam/ sādhayet vajrasattvājñāṃ nityanirmuktamānasah// kauṅṛtyastyānamiddhādīn parityajya prayatnataḥ/ anyathā naiva siddhiḥ syāt kalpakotiśatairapi//.

¹¹ *’jig rten chos brgyad*; to wit, seeking and avoiding (respectively) fame/infame, pleasure/pain, gain/loss, and praise/blame.

“Therefore, through the grace of the guru’s teaching, I will explain as best I can those authentic practices. With regard to that, when at first the Lord was performing practices as a bodhisattva, having observed the region and so on,¹² and descended from his abode in Tuṣita, he displayed the four procedures such as continuum¹³ and so on. Emanating in a manner free of passion for those of inferior aspiration, having caused them to realize the Four Noble Truths, he showed the practices free of passion. Also, for those adhering to the vast, having caused them to realize the objective selflessness of the eight types of consciousness and so forth, he taught the stages and practices of the perfections. Also, emanating the body of a Universal Monarch,¹⁴ for those aspiring to the profound, he

¹² This would refer to the tradition that the future buddha considers from Tushita the conditions of his final birth; the continent (Jambudvīpa), and so forth. . .

¹³ These four procedures (*tshul mam pa bzhi*) are explained in the *Pradipoddyotana* of Candrakīrti (verse 19-23), both in exoteric and esoteric terms. The four are continuum, foundation, definitive words, and cause. He explains [my translation]:

Birth in a human incarnation
Is said to be “continuum.”
Definite emergence from the middle of
The Queen’s retinue is the “Foundation.” 19.
The teaching of the vows in the Discipline
Is said to be the “Definite Words.”
Practice of the Teaching by those who desire the fruit [of Buddhahood]
That is called the “Cause.” 20.
This manner of passion-free teaching
Is accepted as four-fold.
In order to understand the import clear[ly]
I will explain according to the vehicle of the passionate teaching. 21.
Creation of the Buddhas of the Five Clans
Is said to be “continuum.”
Again becoming one clan
Is taught as the “foundation.” 22.
Holding the vajra and so forth
Is explained as “Definite words.”
Practices such as eroticism and so forth
Is explained as the “Cause.” 23.

¹⁴ *cakravartin*, ‘*khor los sgyur ba*

taught the (practices of the)¹⁵ dharma of passion in order that [they] might realize the two realities through passion.

“Hence, [188] the practices in the manner of the Śrāvakas and the [Mahāyāna] scriptures were not taught to those who discern all meanings of the body which incorporates two realities and take joy in the supreme fruit of great bliss. Since, although the Śrāvakas and so on--who aspire to an inferior [goal], behave according to concepts, lack self-accomplishment, enter into the paths of action such as generosity, morality, and so on, who do not have faith in the intuitive wisdom of Reality, who are called liberated and remote, who do not understand the arts of bliss, and who find joy in the practices such as the twelve ascetic qualities, etc.--may seek enlightenment for a long time, they will not however attain it, because they do not realize and understand the perfection stage.

Therefore, the Lord said:

To whoever is a real monk
Or one who takes joy in concepts
Or is old
To those, I do not teach Reality.

And, in the Caryā Tantra, *The Enlightenment of Vairocana*:

The intuitive wisdom without [liberative] art
And the [three] educations
Were explained by the Great Hero
In order to care for the śrāvakas.

Also, in the *Root Scripture*:¹⁶

Those who have abandoned intuitive wisdom
Perform the karmic path of the ten virtues.¹⁷

¹⁵ Only found in Peking edition.

¹⁶ This is the first mention of this. There is one previous mention of a “Root Tantra” (p. 160) and another on next page (190). It is strange that they he seems to alternate between the two.

¹⁷ This verse is from *Guhyasamājatantra* Chapter 17 (*daśakuśalān karmapathān*° . . . , Bagchi, p. 104). *dge ba bcu yi las kyi lam/ byed pa ye shes spangs pa'oll*. It was previously cited by Āryadeva in Chapter 5 *supra*.

Hence, the Lord said:

Monks, do not learn the śrāvaka vehicle!
Learn the practices of enlightenment!
By the practices of enlightenment, the buddha qualities
Will emerge of themselves purely from this cause.

“Therefore, from the distinctive cause, the distinctive effect results. Likewise, you should know that the distinctive effect will be attained by the distinctive enjoyment of the five objects of desire such as form, and so forth. Furthermore, one-pointedness of mind will not be won by ascetic practices, for they weaken the five senses. Just as the Lord said in the [189] *Glorious Prime Supreme Tantra*:

By unbearable vows of asceticism,
The body becomes thin and suffers.
Since suffering disturbs the mind
Disturbed, accomplishment will be elsewhere.

And also in the *Root Tantra*:

Since difficult ascetical practices are unbearable,
Relying on them, one will not accomplish.
Enjoy all desires--
Relying on them, one will quickly accomplish.”¹⁸

The Vajra Student asked, “If the Lord [Buddha] said that ‘Passion, hatred, and ignorance are the three poisons of the world,’ and, similarly, that since objects such as form and so forth are the cause which creates defilements, they are the cause of taking bad rebirth,’ how is it that this is not mutually contradictory with the statement that the one who relies on those will accomplish the unexcelled level?”

The Vajra Mentor replied, “Vajra Student, that which you have asked, in order to do away with the doubts of those who perform the practices of passion, is excellent. Hence, listen as I will teach the great import! The Lord said in the Sūtras, ‘defilements

¹⁸ This verse is the third verse of Chapter Seven, Bhattacharyya (p. 27) reads: *duṣkarair niyamais tivrāiḥ sevyamāno na siddhyati/ sarvakāmapabhogais tu sevayaṃś cāśu siddhyati//*.

become the condition for defilement of those with objectifying views (*dmigs par lta ba*) such as śrāvakas and so on, since they do not know the nature of defilements. If one knows their nature, they become the cause of enlightenment.’ Just as it also says in the Mahāyoga Tantra called *The Glorious Prime Supreme*:

Passion, hatred, and ignorance
When grasped, become poison.
If poison itself is pacified,
Poison eliminates poison.
By relying on the process of ambrosia,
It will even become ambrosia itself.¹⁹

Also, in the *Jewel Heap Scripture*²⁰, it says:

Kāśyapa, it’s like this. For example, the manure of a large city is beneficial to fields of sugarcane, orchards, and vineyards. Likewise, Kāśyapa, [190] the faeces of the bodhisattva’s defilements benefit the state of omniscience itself. It is like this, Kāśyapa. For example, poison which is restrained by mantra or medicine cannot kill anyone. Likewise, Kāśyapa, the poison of defilements restrained by critical wisdom and liberative art cannot cause a downfall.

Furthermore, it also says in the Mahāyoga Tantra called *The Tamer Amoghasiddhi*:²¹

The one who binds stupidity
Is called therefore a “liberated sage.”
Meditating on enlightenment
[He] reverses all this [saṃsāra].

The one who binds confusion
Makes a certain end to Raurava [Hell].
That very one will be liberated [and]
Will achieve bliss by the power of critical wisdom.

By this reasoning, since this is a distinctive exhortation and was exhorted by the distinctive one, it becomes the cause which produces the delightful, distinctive result; there is no other way to accomplish the winning of the result of unexcelled great bliss. Therefore, that one,

¹⁹ This would seem to be a reference to the practice of rasāyana, where such poisonous materials such as mercury are “detoxified” and become potent life-giving substances.

²⁰ *dkon mchog brtsegs pa’i mdo; Ratnakūṭasūtra*

²¹ ‘*dul ba don yod par grub pa zhes bya ba’i rnal ‘byor chen po’i rgyud; Vinayinamoghasiddhi-nāma-mahāyogatantra*

by the pleasures of food, residence, and so on, actualizes the perfection of omniscience endowed with the eight lords of qualities.

“Also, it says in the *Supreme Bliss*:²²

Therefore, bliss is attained
By all the buddhas by bliss itself.

Concerning that, the practices of a bodhisattva which emerge from passion are of three kinds: with elaboration, without elaboration, and thoroughly without elaboration. If one wonders, ‘what is practice with elaboration?’ It is this: the extensive enjoyment (*arali*) of all the Transcendent Lords as taught by the consolation of Vajradhara and the consolation of the Transcendent Lord is [practice] with elaboration. If one wonders, ‘what is [practice] without elaboration?’ It is the play of a few rather than the power of the necessity of always pervading. [191] If one wonders, ‘what is [practice] thoroughly without elaboration?’ Abandoning all associations, meditating with the food of meditation, living alone, and uniting in meditation with an intuitive wisdom consort²³ is [practice] thoroughly without elaboration. For example, wood which is burned will become ashes. A palmyra²⁴ leaf which is burned will also become ashes. A cotton leaf which is burned will also turn to ashes—everything [when burned] will become ashes. Likewise, by the three types of practice the sought-after level of Vajradhara will be born.

“Also, some practitioners, following the tantras such as the *Reality Compendium*, accomplish the Great Seal by means of hand postures, song-offerings, yogic procedures, with a mind always striving in yogas such as dance, and day and night [performing] the practices with elaboration. Likewise, some relying on the mahāyoga tantras such as the

²² *bde mchog; paramasukha*; i.e. the *Cakrasamvaratantra*.

²³ *ye shes kyi phyag rgya, jñānamudra*; i.e. an imagined consort.

²⁴ *tāla*; “the palmyra tree, *Borassus flabelliformis*,” Das p. 513. Das’ entry has *tala* only, as does the Peking edition. The sDe-dge edition has the more accurate *tāla*. Macdonell, p. 109, “palmyra or fan palm (from the sap of which sugar and an intoxicating liquor are prepared).”

Glorious Prime Supreme and so forth, attain the level of the Great Seal through the practices with elaboration [including] methods of adopting [yogic] postures and the music of all the Transcendent Lords [with] the nine types of æsthetic mood²⁵ and so forth. This *Esoteric Communion Tantra* only teaches [the practice] without elaboration and that thoroughly without elaboration.

“Now, you should enter the practices with elaboration through the Mahāyoga Tantra the *Glorious Union with All the Buddhas: Ḍākiṇi Magic Supreme Bliss*:

Then, the authentic explanation [of]
 The Marvelous Supreme
 Union of All Buddas
 Ḍākiṇi Magic Supreme Bliss
 Rejoicing in the Secret Supreme
 Always rest in the nature of all.

The reality of all the glorious Buddhas,
 Emergence of the bliss of Vajrasattva
 Supreme divine substance of the Transcendent Lords
 Decked with jeweled ornaments and the like,
 Endowed with the bell [and] the supreme victory banner
 With holy canopy spread [above],
 Vajra songs and the various offerings--
 Magically manifested songs and cymbals,
 Flowers, incense compounds,
 Lamps, perfumes, and so forth-- [192]
 The Union of All Buddhas
 The Supreme Bliss, Ḍākiṇi Magic will be accomplished [by you].

[You] will accomplish either in the Triple World,
 Or your own abode,
 Or in a pleasure grove or the like.
 There, at first, prepare a seat
 Soft and pleasant to touch
 Wrapped in variegated lotus cloth.
 There, [on] that universally pure seat,
 Through the Union of All Buddhas
 By emanating the Lord of Yoga,
 Emanate [as]
 The deity, glorious Vajrasattva.

All the elemental natures
 Emerge in that way from vitality-control.

²⁵ *nyams nam pa dgu*; usually *ro nam pa dgu*, but the import seems the same.

Circumambulated by the Seal
 Established facing your divine [self]
 A cast image or scroll-painting²⁶
 Gathered [and] well-drawn
 A marvelous reflection
 Create well the seals of the signs.

On all those seats
 Array them, just as they stand.
 Four-cornered, four doored
 Beautified with four arches.
 Place the door guardians--
 Vajra, jewel, lotus, and so forth.

Create the host maṇḍala--
 The well-educated women
 Endowed with your own deity [and]
 Marked with the seal of fortunate nature.

There are vast meanings to be derived from these words of scripture.

Initially only, in an isolated place pleasing to the mind, such as a pleasure grove and the like, a pure place free of those of bad fortune such as not being suitable, enter into a three-storied house of bricks endowed with variegated ornaments.

On the first story, put the kitchen.²⁷ On the second story, place the requisites for offerings of music, song, and dance such as guitars (*vinā*) and so on. On the third story, the glorious All-fortunate Supreme should stay, together with the yoginis.

Also, [193] one should imagine that the earthen house is a vajra-peaked celestial mansion on the King of Mountains, Mount Sumeru, very stable and so forth, [well-endowed with] various ornaments, [resting on] earth of vajra nature [made] of crystal, beryl, sapphire, emerald, and ruby; four-cornered with four doors; beautified with four arches; endowed with four pillars; beautified with eight pillars; fringed with ornamental nets and half-nets; ornamented with silks and flower garlands; well beautified by bells and flags; ornamented with yak tails and so on; next to all the doors and in each corner [it] has a half-moon and a vajra; the stairs, arches, doors, and so forth, are beautified with variegated lotuses.

²⁶ ??relief-work? 'bur ma (*phur ma*), *puṭaka*?

²⁷ *tshang mang*; alternatively, this could be *kakola*, "cardamom."

So it is taught. Concerning that, the practitioner, having received permission from the mentor should worship well the perfected and unperfected lords of yoga; [then], together with companions²⁸ and attendants²⁹ who have eliminated the pride of ordinariness, with a lion-like mind which shuns nothing, he should engage in accomplishing the Great Seal by this process.

“The process is this: Preceded by focusing on ultimate reality, one generates oneself in the body of Vajrasattva by the process of Self-consecration; adopting the attitude of the lord of the maṇḍala, one enjoys material objects. Then, in order to show that all Transcendent Lords are like the magic of women, some like Paramasukhamāyā stand directly before the Lord with the nature of continuum of passion. Some like Ahoṣukhā stand in the southern³⁰ direction with the nature of the continuum of joy. Some Ālokā³¹ stand in the western direction with the nature of the continuum of wrath. Some like Śaśī stand in the northern direction with the nature of the life-continuum. These are the companions.

“Some like Buddhabodhi, in order to purify ignorance, stand in the south-east. Some like Dharmacakra, [194] in order to purify the states of controversy and doubt [in] the three worlds,³² stand in the south-west. Some like Trailokavijayā, in order to eliminate hatred, stand in the north-west. Some like Kāmalatā,³³ in order to eliminate the darkness of passion, stand in the north-east.

²⁸ *lhan cig spyod pa*, ***sahacāriṇi*.

²⁹ *rjes su spyod pa*, ***anucāriṇi*.

³⁰ Tibetan has “right” (*gYas*), seemingly a literal translation of the Sanskrit *dakṣina* (“right, south”). Strange, as the context makes it amply clear the latter meaning is intended.

³¹ *sgron ma*, *Ulkā*?

³² Following Peking’s *brgal cing gdon pa*; sDe has *rgal cing gnon pa*, “crossing and suppressing.”

³³ ‘Dod-pa’i-lcug-ma.

“Some like Dhvaninalā³⁴ (the Flute Goddess) stand outside in the fire quarter (south-east). Some like Bahutantri³⁵ (the Many-Stringed Instrument Goddess), graceful, holding a lute, control the triple world and stand outside in the truth-less quarter (south-west). Some like Ekatantri³⁶ (the Single-stringed Instrument Goddess), playing a big drum and clearing away poison and plague, stand outside in the wind quarter (north-west). Some like Ghanatantri³⁷ (the Percussion Goddess), playing a mṛdaṅgam, stand outside in the powerful quarter (north-east).

“Some like Vajrapuṣpā³⁸ hold aloft a flower and stand outside in the south-eastern quarter. Some like Vajradhūpā³⁹ hold aloft an incense censer [and] stand in the south-western quarter. Some like Vajrālokā⁴⁰ hold aloft a great lamp [and] stand in the north-western quarter. Some like Vajralepanā⁴¹ hold aloft a conch-shell cup completely filled with perfumes [and] stand outside in the north-eastern blanket quarter.

“Some like Aśvamukha⁴² desiccate the three existences with breath from the mouth of Paramāśva [and] stand guarding the eastern door. Some like Vajra Varahamukha⁴³ gather all the three worlds [and] stand guarding the southern door. Some with the form of

³⁴ gLing-Bu-ma

³⁵ rGyud mangs

³⁶ rGyud-gcig-pa

³⁷ rGyud-stug-po

³⁸ rDo-rje Me-tog-ma, the Flower Goddess

³⁹ rDo-rje bDug-pa-ma, the Incense Goddess

⁴⁰ rDo-rje mar me ma, the Lamp Goddess

⁴¹ rDo-rje Byug-pa-ma, the Scented Ointment Goddess

⁴² rTa-gdong, “Horse-face”

⁴³ rDo-rje phag gdong, “Vajra Pig-face”

Vajrāloka,⁴⁴ survey the triple world [and] stand guarding the western door. Some like a frightening, ashen zombiess⁴⁵ give breath to the underworld, the world, and to heaven, reanimate⁴⁶ those reduced to ashes [and] stand guarding the northern door.

“Concerning that, the Lord, Universal Monarch of Great Bliss, preceded by an intention [to enter] the samādhi with the nature just described, generated the distinctive pride [that], ‘I will please all the Transcendent Lords abiding in my body maṇḍala.’ First,⁴⁷ [195] having experienced the three objects such as form and so on, after that in order to purify all the foods by the three rituals such as the purification [ritual] and so on, [he] recollected the intrinsically-existent inner fire-pit. Having generated the pride [that], ‘I offer to the mouth of the Samādhi-hero a burnt-offering (*homa*) in a three-peaked fire,’ he enjoyed the food. After that, having melted into bliss, it became the elixir of immortality (*rasāyana*).

“In that way the practitioner pleases the body-vajra by food, drink, and beverages.⁴⁸ Finally, by this process he should enjoy the fifth, objects of touch. Relying on hosts of goddesses such as the companions, and so forth, who are skilled in causing pleasure and the like, take a consort in accord to your desire and unite [with her]. Having generated the stable aspiration that ‘I shall perfect the Great Seal,’ perform the embracing (*āliṅgana*),

⁴⁴ rDo-rje snang ba, “Vajra Luminance”

⁴⁵ Skt. *vetālā/vetāla*; often this term is translated as “vampire” in Western works. Though I am not a real expert in the macabre, this term seems a little off the mark for, though it does mean a type of animated corpse, it tends to be understood with a much richer meaning (à la Dracula). As the Sanskrit term merely signifies an evil spirit which occupies and animates dead bodies, the closest English term would seem to be “zombie.” This also very nicely translates the sense of its Tibetan equivalent, *ro langs* (“animated corpse”).

⁴⁶ Literally, “give life to.”

⁴⁷ This section (from this “First” to the quote from the “*Root Sutra*” below) except some lacunæ is available in Sanskrit as a quotation in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*. cf. Wayman, *Yoga of the GST*, p. 349-360.

⁴⁸ The text has *bza’ ba dang bca’ ba dang btung ba*. The latter two both mean drinkables-I do not know of any distinction between them which would explain the redundancy.

kissing (*cumbana*), sucking (*cūṣaṇa*), striking with the nails (*nakhapraharāṇa*), [emitting] cries of pleasure (*sitkara*), [song of the] kokila [bird], humming of bees, hinting allusions (*nāli[kā]*), and so forth. [Then] having assumed the Transcendent Lord posture, the Vajra posture, the Precious Jewel posture, the Lotus Posture, the Karma posture and so forth, perform the actions. Then, having entered the equipoise of Art and Wisdom through the union of vajra and lotus, beginning from the crown all the Transcendent Lords with the nature of the aggregates, and so forth, descend from the seventy-two veins (*nāli*) like a stainless stream of water, as melting vowels and consonants, [passing] through the stages of passion, without passion and middling passion. Then, one perfects the introspective awareness which is the nature of the Perfection of Wisdom. The yogi who has thus attained the supreme [through] learning the glorious samādhi of great bliss matures all sentient beings through rejoicing (*rjes su gzung ba*) and dissolving (*tshar bcod*) in that very maṇḍala of the host.

“To some disciples who have the view of voidness, Lord [196] Śrīmahāsukha in the form of Vairocana teaches the samādhi of great peace which has the nature of non-abiding nirvāṇa, to wit ‘not void, not non-void,’ [and] annihilates the view⁴⁹ of voidness. Likewise, to the extremely wild and difficult to tame [he] with the samādhi of the King of Wrath, Glorious Vajra Heruka, annihilates bad views and works to benefit. Those with wrong views he, with the form of Padmanarteśvara, teaches the ultimate reality and controls. To the extremely base, miserly, and desirous ones, in the form of Glorious Vajrasūrya and with the Great Expanse samādhi annihilates defiled views. To those with extremely weak effort in the form of Paramāśva and with the Yoga of Wrath samādhi by vanquishing the enemy he annihilates those of weak enthusiasm.

“Concerning that, the Lord Mahāsukha, in order to make firm the nature of the play of the great *arali* of the Reality-source, does not change his mind and, in order to make

⁴⁹ Following Peking; sDe-dge edition has “one having the view” here.

each other joyful, by this process does the play of the buddhas: mudrā, mudrā-response, prostration, prostration-response, offering, offering-response, dance, dance-response, song, song-response, karma-symbol, and verbal symbolic-designation.

“Concerning that, I must teach the verbal symbols. ‘Om̐ Ati Ho’ shows the symbolic prostration. ‘Om̐ Pratika’ is another prostration. ‘Cchem̐ cchem̐’ is the prostration to the mentor. ‘Bhakṣa’ is the command to enter. ‘Cchem̐’⁵⁰ asks ‘am I welcome?’ ‘Ccha’ is a command to sit. ‘Kham̐’ is a command to eat. ‘Kha’ is a command to really eat. ‘Traṃ traṃ’ is meat. ‘Śraṃ śraṃ’ is blood. ‘Dreṃ dreṃ’ is a command to eat meat. ‘Jaṃ phaṃ’ is vajra-water (urine). ‘Soma’ is ambrosia-water. ‘Idaya’ is liquor. ‘Śaṃpari’ is beverages. [197] ‘Saṃvari’ is water. ‘Supriyaṃ’ is flowers. ‘Sanchayaṃ’ is fruits. ‘Jalakaṃ’ is clothing. ‘Skaṃ’ is a house. The ‘Kṣo’ are one’s own house. ‘Kamadaṃ’ is the deity’s house. ‘Kṣepana’ is the maṇḍala. ‘Bhodana’ is the mentor of the maṇḍala. ‘Upāya’ is the student. ‘Mitrataṃ’ is the bretheren. ‘Rañjina’ is the goddess. ‘Kovita’ is Vajrayoginī. ‘Tarmari’ is the dākinī. ‘Piglava’ is the mother. ‘Svamukha’ is the father. ‘Kayokya’ is the son. ‘Priṃ priṃ’ is the daughter. ‘Bahula’ is the beautiful one. ‘Loṭaṭa’ is going and coming. ‘Vahari’ is a command to eat. ‘Dhanuda’ is a command to give substances; ‘Śe śe’ is a command to go. ‘Pre pre’ is a command to come. ‘Traṃ’ is lack. ‘Vitrumo’ is wrath. ‘Chor’ is killing. ‘Jiva’ is protection. ‘Nira’ is freedom from passion. ‘Hri’ is passion. ‘Drava’ is substance.

“Offering according to the process, one should say ‘Suratas tvaṃ.’ When recollecting one’s deity, one should say ‘Surato ‘haṃ.’ One should say ‘anutarāgayāmi’ when accomplishing Vajrasattva. When accomplishing Śrī Vajravairocana, one should say ‘anubodayāmi.’ When accomplishing Śrī Herukavajra, one should say ‘anumodayāmi.’ When accomplishing Śrī Padmanarteśvara, one should say ‘anurāgayāmi.’ When accomplishing the Paramāśva, one should say ‘anuvarṣayāmi.’ When offering to any of the

⁵⁰ or ‘Cchoṃ’?

goddesses, one should use the five syllables ‘samayas tvam.’⁵¹ When recollecting one’s own deity, saying ‘samayo ‘ham’ is the offering to the host, the maṇḍala of Glorious Vajrasattva. [These] are the stages of the Chapter on Verbal Symbols.

“Now, I must teach the bodily symbols. Rubbing the top of the head is prostration. Touching the forehead is the prostration-response. Fluttering the right eyebrow is the ‘bodily accomplishments.’ [Fluttering] the left is ‘victory.’ Touching the left eye is ‘the woman is good.’ The right is ‘the man is good.’ Touching the left ear is ‘welcome.’ [198] The right is ‘well said.’ Touching the right nostril is ‘[requesting] incense.’ The left is ‘requesting perfumes.’ Moving the tongue to the right is ‘[requesting] meat.’ To the left is ‘requesting liquor.’ Touching the left armpit is ‘[requesting] food.’ Touching the right is ‘requesting vegetables.’ [These] are the stages of the Chapter on Body Signals.

In that way, those who have eliminated worldly meditation (*bsam gtan*) and abandoned all mental hopes--yogīs who are constantly joyous in mind and those who seem to have innate joy become absorbed in the interior aggregates just like King Indrabhūti. Having transformed into a vajra body, [he] became imperceptible, along with the hosts of [his] queens. Since they are endowed with the eight qualities, they move from buddha-verse to buddha-verse. As it states in the *Root Sutra*:

In the enjoyment of all the goddesses
Remain firm in whatever you enjoy.
Having united oneself with the great deity,
Make offerings to yourself.⁵²

All yogins make offering
By uniting with bliss.

⁵¹ It is not clear why the text specifies “five” here. A conventional count yeilds four. Perhaps the author is counting “sa-ma-yas-tu-am?”

⁵² This first verse is cited in the *Subhāṣita Saṃgraha* also as from the *Mūlasūtra*. It reads *sarvadevopabhogais tu sevyamāno yathāsukham/ svādhidaivatayogena svam atmānam prapūjayet//*. This redaction corresponds to the Tibetan better than the similar verse found in GST, Chapter VII. cf. Wayman, *Yoga of the GST*, p. 355. He notes that the *Pradipodyotana* MS suggests “*svam parāṃśca*” (which reading was, in fact, adopted by Fremantle, p. 214) but suggests his own reading of “*parātmānau*.”

Always experiencing [it],
You will accomplish by the supreme union.

By the bliss of that alchemy (*rasāyana*),
[Which is] the very essence of all the Buddhas,
You will attain the glorious vitality of Vajrasattva,
Youth, health, the supreme bliss.

The Great Body of all Buddhas,
The Sweet Speech of all Buddhas,
The Great Mind of all Buddhas,
The Great Offering of all Buddhas,

The Great Victory of all Buddhas,
The Spirit of all Vajradharas,
Chief of all Mundane Lords,
Spirit of all Wealth Gods,

If you find joy in these,
You will soar--coming and going as you please--
[Gaining] the great accomplishment of all goddesses,
You will become a Universal Monarch.⁵³

Again, [for] those less-wealthy yogis who cannot constantly perfect the extensive elaboration of the play⁵⁴ by the process just explained, I will explain the practices without elaboration and thoroughly without elaboration as taught in the [*Cakra*-]*saṃvara* [*Tantra*].

Every day, every month,
Or even every year,
According to the consecration [199]
You should do the dance of Buddha Saṃvara.

And,

Getting up, sitting down,
Or moving around, in whatever situation
Laughing or even speaking as appropriate.
Wherever [you are] any practice is appropriate.

And,

Whatever comes into the path of the senses
That should be taken as such a reality.
By the non-equiposed yoga,
All should be [experienced] as the nature of the Buddha.⁵⁵

⁵³ *'khor los sgyur ba*; “wheel-turner” also implies becoming a Buddha.

⁵⁴ Following Peking’s *rol pa*; sDe has *rol mo*, “music.”

⁵⁵ This verse may be (as the text implies) from the *Cakrasaṃvara Tantra*, but it also is found both in the *Pañcakrama* of Nāgārjuna (III.36) and the *Cittaviśuddhiprakaraṇa* of Note continued on next page. . .

So it says.

The elaboration of sport
 Show the way of the passion teaching,
 Space-like, since infinite,
 Similar to the limitless oceans
 In order for students to understand,
 I have taken up merely a few points.
 Is it possible for many beings to explain
 The teaching of passion?

Āryadeva (verse 76). The extant Sanskrit texts of both of these works read *susamāhitayogena*, rather than *asamāhitayogena*, but the Tibetan versions of all of these texts seem to uniformly follow the latter reading.

**Lamp Chapter X:
Resolution of Doubts concerning
Practices without Elaboration**

The Vajra Student asked: “If practice with elaboration has become clear, O Lord and Teacher, Vajra Mentor, please explain practice without elaboration.”

The Vajra Mentor said, “Excellent, Great Spiritual Hero, excellent! Listen with one-pointed attention as I shall explain according to the personal instruction on the Great Yoga Tantra, the *Esoteric Communion*.

“In a place agreeable to the mind such as described in the Tantras, that is,

On an extremely isolated mountain,
In a great wilderness region
Adorned with fruits and flowers,
Here, meditation is brought together.¹

[There] purify the earthen house as it has been explained, and create a celestial palace with a vajra-jewel peak with the qualities of four-corneredness, and so forth. After that, the great yogi who is free of the pride of ordinariness purifies an outer consort and, together [200] with his own student[s] belonging to the same [buddha-]clan, should undertake the accomplishment of the Great Seal by the process described below.

“That process is as follows: At first only focusing on the Ultimate Reality, emerge as Akṣobhya by the process of Self Consecration. Then, having entered, reside as the very Lord of the Maṇḍala. Then, eliminate ordinary pride. By visualizing the unchanging retinue as the deities of the maṇḍala such as Vairocana and so on who are living parts of the maṇḍala like your own body maṇḍala, please the deities of the retinue of the maṇḍala

¹ ri bo shin tu dben pa dang/ dgon pa chen po'i sa phyogs na/ 'bras bu me tog mams kyis brgyan/ 'dir ni bsam gtan bsdus pa'o// This is an eccentric version of the verse in the *Guhyasamājatantra*, Chapter 12, which, in the standard Śraddākaravarman/Rin-bZang translation, reads: dgon pa chen po'i sa phyogs su/ me tog 'bras bu sogs kyis brgyan/ ri bo dben pa'i sa phyogs su/ dngos grub thams cad bsdus pa bsgrub//. This latter is closer to the extant Sanskrit which reads: mahāvīpradeśeṣu phalapuṣpādyaḷaṃkrīte/ parvate vijane sādhyam sarvasiddhisamuccayam// (Cf. Bhattacharyya, p. 51; Bagchi, p. 40; Fremantle, p. 254). (It may be noted here that Fremantle's Tibetan edition (p. 255) is flawed here, misspelling *me tog* as *me togs* and reading the (nonexistent) lexeme *bsdud* for *bsdus*.)

without exception. [Then] together with your own consort enter into the ultimate reality through the either the process of the Holistic or that of Dissolution. Then, having arisen in an instant by the process of the Self Consecration due to the goddesses such as Locanā and so forth exhorting you with verses of the Four Pure Abodes² such as ‘You are the real Vajrasattva’ and so on, revel in the nine æsthetic modes in order to experience the taste of supreme joy. In that way, again and again entering the Reality-limit, again and again arise. By becoming the nature of the Five Transcendent Lords, experience the five objects of desire. To the extent that the mind does not become timid, to that extent one perfects the *arali* of all the Transcendent Lords. There one enjoys the three kinds of physical objects, such as one’s own body and so forth. One enjoys the three kinds of aural objects, such as songs and guitar. One enjoys the three kinds of scents, such as incense and perfume. One enjoys the three kinds of flavor, such as bitterness, spiciness, astringency, sourness, and saltiness.

“Then one should make love³ to a sixteen year old girl--a virgin with large and firm breasts whose sexual organs are unspoiled--such as a butcher,⁴ washerwoman,⁵ dancer,⁶ a

² *tshangs pa'i gnas bshi, caturbrahmavihāra*

³ *bgrod par bya*

⁴ *sme sha can* another word for a butcher (more commonly *bshan pa*); *khaṭṭiki* is a Sanskrit equivalent for a butcher or female meat-seller. In the similar list of such occupations in Christopher George’s edition of the *Caṇḍamahāroṣanatantra* (New Haven, 1974), the Tibetan translation reads *bshan pa mo*, but George nonetheless edits the Sanskrit to *khaṭaki* (“marriage arranger”), even though the reading *khaṭṭiki* is attested in one of his MSS (that of the Kyōto University Library) and two others (Royal Asiatic Society, London, and National Archives of Nepal) read *khāṭṭaki* and *khaṭṭaki*, both (especially the first) easily amended to *khaṭṭiki*. It is noteworthy that these are the three oldest MSS among those he used.

⁵ *btso blag mkhan; dhobini* (cf. *Caṇḍamahāroṣanatantra*, p. 33, though his Tibetan translation reads *khruś ma*).

⁶ *gar mkhan ma, naṭini*

garland-maker,⁷ an arrow-maker,⁸ [201], a labourer,⁹ anyone suitable without faulty limbs, [or] a woman friend,¹⁰ or another's [woman].

“Then, the yogī with the nature of non-conceptuality, in order to show that [s/he] has the nature of all things, creates himself by processes such as enjoying whatever commitment [substances] are reviled by the worldly; abandoning perception of the marks of worldliness, and residing in the extremely secret place, he enjoys himself. Likewise without forming the ritual gestures, without a maṇḍala, without a [ritual] fire-pit, not performing [ritual] actions toward stūpas, not reciting the [scriptural] texts, abandoning bodily fatigue, not prostrating to images [made of] stone or wood or [drawn on] cloth, not taking refuge in śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, with no regard for periods of time such as numbers of days, half-days, instants, or moments--all of these are perfected only by the inner nature.

“If, on account of not [having] the complete requisites, one is incapable of perfecting the entire¹¹ maṇḍala, that practitioner should, by the five aspects of Reality, cultivate himself according to this process in the practices without elaboration. The process is this: Some, like Rūpavajrī, holding aloft a soft lotus and a mirror, gazing with peaceful eyes, resounding with [the sounds of] all her strings of pearls [hitting against one another], swaying, with breasts large and slightly soft, clothes hanging free and showing a little of her lower body, in order to please the Great Blissful One (Mahāsukha), stand in the south-

⁷ *phreng brgyud ma, mālini*

⁸ *mda' mkhan ma*; *Caṇḍamahārosana (ibid.)* gives *kāṇḍakāri*; Candra Das gives the equivalent *iṣukāra* of which he says (p. 672), “n. of a low caste in ancient India who used to live by hunting. 2. an archer, an arrow-maker.”

⁹ *bzo byed ma; *karmakārini*

¹⁰ *rtsa lag tu gyur pa'i bud med*; n.b. that the *Kāma Sūtra* specifies that one should not lie with a woman who is a friend.

¹¹ Reading *bsdus pa'i dkyil 'khor as samastamaṇḍala*.

eastern direction. Some, like Śābdavajrī, gaze wide-eyed, reveling in an erotic manner,¹² skilled in explaining the teaching of practices of playfully enjoying passion, giving virtuous advice, singing and playing the guitar (*vinā*) like the song of the Kokila bird, stands in the southwestern direction. Some [202] like Gandhavajrī, gazing with smiling eyes,¹³ the tips of her fingers fingers red like copper [as if] beautified by a light [crimson] like a Bimba[-fruit], holding like a dancer a vessel with the nature of precious jewels with the tips of her hands wrapped in nets of lacework, anointed with scents such as saffron, aloe wood, musk, the snake-essence sandalwood,¹⁴ camphor, and the like, holding aloft a vessel which pervades all the ten directions with aromas, stands in the northwestern direction. Some like Rasavajrī, gazing with caring eyes, holding aloft a limitless vessel of gold, silver and precious jewels, [and] holding aloft [a vessel] filled with various vegetables of supreme tastes and like the great ambrosia, the food of the gods, stands in the northeastern direction. Some like Sparśavajrī ornamented with all the bodily marks, beautified with the three wrinkles, with an extremely thin waist like a victory banner, a large navel, turning to the right, [and] deep, heavy in the lower body, with leisurely and extremely sensuous gait, with a smiling face and a peaceful gaze, in order to please the Great Blissful One (Mahāsukha), settles in [one's] lap.¹⁵

“Then, in order to teach the joyous practices of the glorious great bliss: enticing by erotic techniques¹⁶ such as embracing,¹⁷ kissing,¹⁸ sucking,¹⁹ holding the breasts,²⁰ striking

¹² *sgeg pa'i nyams, śṛṅgāra-rasa*

¹³ *'dzum pa dang bcas pa'i mig, ?closed eyes?*

¹⁴ *uragasāracandana, tsandan sprul gyi snying po*--known as among the finest of sandalwood varieties.

¹⁵ Tib. *phang par*: could be Sanskrit *utsaṅga* or *upasthā* (“lap, embrace”). The latter seems to agree with the subsequent Tibetan phrase *nye bar bzhag*).

¹⁶ *ka ra na, karaṇa*

¹⁷ *āliṅgana*

[so as to cause] goosebumps,²¹ applying teeth and nails,²² massaging,²³ swaying,²⁴ ‘needling,’²⁵ elbowing/kneeing,²⁶ and so on, shaking her strings of pearls, ringing with the sounds of bracelets, head-ornaments, and anklets, equipoised on object, sense-organ, vajra, lotus, art, wisdom, intuitive wisdom, and knowable object, exhorting the *ālikāli* (vowels and consonants), and the three *nāḍi--madanapatra*,²⁷ *kurmakaṅṭha*,²⁸ and *śaśāṅka*²⁹-- through the *tryaṅku*,³⁰ all the Transcendent Lords with the natures of the aggregates and so forth [203] melt like a stainless stream. Having attained the stage of intuitive wisdom one will (authentically) know³¹ the state of supreme bliss.

“For the purpose of clarifying this very import, it says in the *Root Sutra*:

The one who desires the passionate intuitive wisdom
Always relies on the objects of desire.

¹⁸ *cumbana*

¹⁹ *cūṣana*

²⁰ *kucagrahaṇa*

²¹ *pulakatāḍana*; Wayman (*Yoga*, p. 351) translates this a “beating with bristling hair,” but *pulaka* clearly means some kind of “goosebumps” (a thrill when the hair stands on end).

²² Tibetan text reads *daśanakhadana*. Wayman (*Yoga*, p. 350) has *daśananakhadāna*--a reading found in Bendall. Professor Gary Tubb suggests (and I follow his suggestion) *daṃśa-nakha-dāna*.

²³ *mardana*

²⁴ *dola*

²⁵ *sūci*

²⁶ *kūrpara*

²⁷ love letter?

²⁸ tortoise-neck?

²⁹ the moon

³⁰ or *tryaṅgula*?

³¹ The texts say *rig*, but it may equally be *reg*, “touch.”

If there are none such as Rūpavajri, and so on, at that time one can accomplish [it] through orgasmic union with only Sparśavajri. [This is so] since, as all the Transcendent Lords are gathered in the body maṇḍala of the practitioner, all the goddesses are gathered in the body maṇḍala of Sparśavajri. Therefore, in order to explain [the statement] “with unwavering pride, cultivate non-conceptuality,” the *Root Tantra* also says:

Then, Vajrapāṇi, the Lord of all Transcendent Lords,
emerged from the body, speech, and mind vajras of the well-
undertaken consort spiritual discipline of all Transcendent
Lords.

By meditating the [ordinary] body, speech and mind
[As] the body, speech, and mind vajras,
If you make that your nature,
You will quickly attain accomplishment.

Concerning that, this is the consort spiritual discipline of the
body, speech, and mind vajras:

[In] the form with crown-ornament coif,
Great, of a whitish color,
Made firm by the vows of mantra
Do all according to the ritual.

One of sixteen years
Draped with all ornaments
Beautiful-faced, long-eyed,
Having found [this one], perform the consort spiritual discipline.
Enjoying the level of Locanā
Meditate by the vajra signs
A consort who knows the rites of mantra
Well-educated in the Mantras and Tantras.
Make her the Queen of the Transcendent Lords.
In the Buddha-enlightenment consecration,³²
The great spiritual discipline in four periods,
Make the secret offering.

Enjoy the food and drink
Trunk, root, and branch.
However, quickly become Buddha,
The Lord, the great ocean of intuitive wisdom,
By six months, all of that [204]
Will doubtlessly be accomplished.
The practitioner with a firm mind

³² *rab gnas*

Always takes sustenance in forest groves.
 Good, clean food
 Will be given out of fear.
 If one dies, the nature of the three vajras
 Will become the unchanging vajra.
 Goddesses, Nāginis, Yakṣiṇis,
 Even demi-goddesses and human women are suitable--
 Having found [these], perform consort spiritual discipline.
 Rely on the intuitive wisdom of the three vajras!

So it says.

If one accepts this,³³ there are six practices. By two and two embracing, holding hands, gazing, and laughingly making love, one experiences moment by moment the supremely joyful bliss. At the time of perfection, one will have an eternally-joyful form amidst the retinue.

In order to clarify this very point, it says in the *Assembly of All Deities Tantra*:³⁴

Uniting the two organs,
 After the rite of exertion,
 The mind attained with a joyous mind
 is called the 'Great Bliss.'³⁵

³³ de ltar 'dod pa na, alternatively, "if one has a such a desire."

³⁴ *lha thams cad yang dag par 'dus pa'i rgyud, Sarvadeva-samāgama Tantra*

³⁵ This verse is cited in the *Subhāṣita Saṃgraha*, p. 59, which reads *dvayendriya-samāpa[t]tyā dhyeyo sa vidhir antare/ harṣacittaṃ muneḥ siddhau mahāsukham iti smṛ[ta]ṃ*! Bendall cites a variant for dhyeyo, viz. *dhyā yā* or *jyāyān*. From the Tibetan translation, I suggest the emendation *vyāyāma-vidhir*. The last two lines would be better rendered from the Sanskrit, "the sage's accomplishment of a happy mind is known as the 'great bliss.'"

**Lamp Chapter XI:
Resolution of Doubts concerning
Practices thoroughly without Elaboration**

[The Vajra Mentor continued:] “Now, you must enter into the practices thoroughly without elaboration. In a place agreeable to the mind as described in the tantras, i.e.:

On an extremely isolated mountain
Or a place [by] a spring¹ or river
Or a charnal ground, and so forth,
Perform this summary meditation.²

“In order to procure food, you must summon a yakṣiṇī or a female servant.³ Or, having obtained enough food either for a supreme friend in accomplishment or for a big assembly, you should enter the practices thoroughly without elaboration by this process.

“The process is this: At the beginning only the practitioner should recollect the beginningless sufferings of the life cycle (*saṃsāra*). The one who desires the bliss of nirvāṇa should completely abandon all entertainments, and should meditate on the experiences (*‘du shes*) of suffering [of all beings] even up to masters of empires. Second, one should abandon even a sesame seed’s worth of the mind which grasps at substantial existence. Third, one who has faith in the [205] ultimate reality should have no regard even for body or life. Just as [the Lord] said in the *King of Samādhi Sūtra*:

‘Therefore, noble one, the bodhisattva, the great spiritual
hero, who desires this samādhi and desires to quickly [attain]
perfect buddhahood in the unexcelled, perfect enlightenment
should have no regard for life or body.’

“Likewise, one should not strive to procure the subtle worldly accomplishments and the eight great accomplishments, for one will become distracted and will regress. As it says in the Great Yoga Tantra, *The Uncommon Secret*:⁴

¹ *chu dogs*; I read *chu ngogs*. Cf. Das p. 419

² *ri bo shin tu dben pa’am/ chu ngogs ‘babs chu’i gnas mam dang/ dur khrod la sogs gnas nams su/ bsam gtan bsdu pa ‘di bya’o//*. This verse is very similar to that cited from the Seventeenth Chapter of the *Guhyasamāja* at the beginning of Chapter Ten, *supra*.

³ *mngag gzhus mo, *preṣakā? kiṅkarā?*

Then, furthermore in order to gain the accomplishment of omniscience one does not seek just any kind of accomplishment whatsoever. One should not strive to procure the Materialist⁵ accomplishment of speech, the servant accomplishment, the good vase accomplishment, the subterranean accomplishment, the political accomplishment, the prosperity accomplishment, the dominating accomplishment, and the destruction accomplishment. Why? For the purpose of the great accomplishment, one should not thus conceive a desire for the subtle accomplishments. One should [strive] with one-pointed mind only for the accomplishment of non-conceptuality.

Just as it says also in the *Secret Accomplishment*:

Effort in union and so forth should always
Be abandoned by the one who knows reality.

Having abandoned self-identification as Vajrasattva
One should not [identify] elsewhere.
Those who abide in the pure⁶ reality
Do not even undertake the yogas.

One who has investigated
With the yoga of the stage of selflessness,⁷
They will stand on the level of unreality
With the magnificent liberative art,
All that is enjoined by the esoteric treatises⁸
will be accomplished without conceptual thought.⁹

By the power of the yoga of meditation
All that bears the marks of accomplishment
Will reside with one
In a mere instant.¹⁰

⁴ *thun mong ma yin pa'i gsang ba zhes bya ba'i rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud,*

⁵ *'jig rten rgyang phan pa, Lokāyata.*

⁶ The Sanskrit reads “Secret Reality” (*guhyaattva*) here.

⁷ Following Peking and Sanskrit (*bdag med, nairātmya-*), sDe and Co read *bdag nyid*. The Translation of Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita also reads *bdag med*.

⁸ *kalpacoditam*

⁹ Following the reading of both Tibetan translations (*ma brtags par, nirvicāreṇa*); the Sanskrit (Sarnath edition) reads *nirvikāreṇa*, “by the unchanging one.”

¹⁰ *gSang ba grub pa, Guhyasiddhi*, Chapter 6, verses 45b-49a. The Sarnath edition (p. 43) reads: *prayogādīṃśca tattvena varjayet tattvavit sadā/ vajrasattvād ahaṅkāra muktṡā nānyatra kārayet/ prayogāśca na budhyante guhyatattve vyavasthitaiḥ//*
Note continued on next page. . .

“Therefore, set your objective with the enthusiastic [thought] that ‘abandoning an external consort, by entering into equipoise with an intuitive wisdom consort who abides in the heart, [206] I will extremely quickly perfect the level of Mahāvajradhara.’ Only alone reflect according to the process explained below.

“The process is this: As long as there is the container of the aggregate(s), there is the nature of the three consciousnesses. The movement of the luminances of the instinctual natures is perceived as self¹¹ and other. How so? First is the luminances. Second is the instinctual natures. That, conjoined with wind, wanders in the ten directions. By what? By the mental functioning, day and night, of the hundred and sixty instinctual natures such as passion-free, middling passion, and so forth, and wrath, peace, joy, suffering, hunger, thirst, feeling, and the like; obstructed by delusion itself, arising again, [one] wanders through the force of wind. The body being stirred up by that, as long as the eye organ and so on perceive objects, that very thing will be perceived, for one has been so habituated from beginningless time. Then, by habituation from one birth to another, by learning the teaching of selflessness and having understood the yoga of mixing,¹² one becomes mixed as one with the luminances of the instinctual natures. By this process, one should perceive the ultimate reality. The process is this. The aggregate(s) and so on enter the subtle element. The subtle elements enters mind. Mind enters delusion. By such a yoga, one is caused to fall asleep. Concerning that, at this time, at the moment that mind and intention enter delusion, one loses awareness. After that is the nature of the inexpressible intuitive wisdom--Clear Light Transparency. Also, if liberated, one will find the intrinsic nature of

nairātmyapadayogena yāvat tat pratyavekṣyate/ niḥsvabhāvapadasthaya divyopāyayutasya
ca// siddhyate nirvikāreṇa yat kiñcit kalpacoditam/ bhāvanāyogasāmarthyāt
svayamevopatiṣṭhate// tat sarvaṃ kṣaṇamātreṇa yat kiñcit siddhilakṣaṇam/

¹¹ All redactions read *dag dang gzhan*, “purity and other”; I emend this to *bdag dang gzhan*.

¹² *nam par bsres pa'i sbyor ba*

wind. At the time another dream arises, as long as consciousness is not fluctuating, having fallen asleep, one will view the Clear Light Transparency. That introspective ultimate reality free of body, speech and mind is called the ‘inner [207] enlightenment.’

“By this process, one should terminate (*gsad*) the hosts of Transcendent Lords who reside in the body maṇḍala and, having caused [them] to enter suchness, one will obtain the accomplishments of good fortune (*skal pa bzang po'i dngos grub*). This is the meaning of ‘without any regard for the practices with elaboration and without elaboration, here you will extremely quickly transform¹³ your own body.’ This very import is stated in the Great Yoga Tantra, *Analysis of the Intention*:

Seeing inner things such as form, and so forth,
Is called “Transcendent Insight” (*vipāśyana*).
Visualizing Akṣobhya, and so on, according to number
Is “Peaceful Abiding” (*śamatha*).
The insubstantial suchness of those
Is explained as “peace.”
In the maṇḍala of suchness
The yogi enters buddha[hood].

Also, the *Assembly of all Deities Tantra* says:

By the unbearable fire of Nirvāṇa
Not even ashes will be left.
Therefore, in that sense, there are here no
Sense organs, objects, and elements.

“Having by this process ascertained the nature understood by scripture and reasoning--the mother of all the buddhas--all clinging to objects and revelry is abandoned.

“By this process, one performs merely the practices of a Bhusuku.¹⁴ The process is this: “Bhu” is the activity of eating. Such a one abandons mindfulness and entertainments, and thinks of nothing such as asceticism and spiritual discipline. “Su” is sleeping. Since these consciousnesses are marked by delusion, they perceive directly. Through this very

¹³ Following Peking’s *brjes*; sDe read *brjed*, “forget.”

¹⁴ *Bhu-su-ku*, “one who eats, sleeps, and defecates.” This term is left untranslated in this text. The most famous Bhusuku in Buddhist literature is Ācārya Śāntideva.

delusion which is like a hook, consciousness is not mixed with anything. Perceiving Clear Light Transparency itself, [it is] the stainless nature. “Ku” is going to the toilet. In order to defecate and urinate, such a one is mindful and abandons entertainments; one does not think of the natures of body, feeling, object, and sense organ.

“I will also explain the practices thoroughly without elaboration by the process related in the *Scripture Explaining the Insane Spiritual Discipline*.¹⁵ [208] That process is this:

At the time of firm non-conceptuality
Abandoning residence and the worldly
If one integrates all practices
There at that time, one will see the Buddha.

By everywhere eliminating doubt,
Intelligently act like a child.
When the yogī is passion-free
Then perfection increases.

Endowed with all sins and
Abiding in the sin of ignorance,
By the yoga of the insane spiritual discipline
In six months one will unerringly accomplish.

Perceiving oneself as a Buddha,
All desires completely satiated,
When irrepressibly optimistic
And sincere, the body emerges.

The supreme, unexcelled enlightenment
Will be attained without exertion.
The gratification of all desires
Will be accomplished without exertion.

Moving and sitting and standing,
Visualize [it] as the supremely profound place.
The one wise in the intuitive wisdom of Transparency
The yogī of eternal character
Makes the mind-jewel firm
By this meditative yoga.

The one who enters the Buddha-enlightenment

¹⁵ *smyon pa'i brtul zhugs bshad pa'i mdo*; perhaps the *Unmattavratānirdeśasūtra*. This text, we know from its citation in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*, is the *Buddhakāpāla Tantra*. Cf. Bendall, *op. cit.* 62.

Will be consecrated
 Such a one having entered
 As long as their mind does not grieve
 By the goodly equipoised mind
 Should meditate, striving for that.

Subsequently, doing whatever
 Gives him joy
 The one with slightly opened eyes
 Will attain vast enlightenment.

Laughing or talking or sitting or,
 Some, dancing--
 Since, for as long as they do not become tired,
 They will apprehend the mind of meditation.

Endowed with such commitments
 The non-conceptual yogi,
 Abandoning the certainty of time,
 Will attain the unexcelled level.

“In that way, in accordance with the divisions of small, middling and great and [also according] to age, by repeating the three types of practices for a half a month, a month, or six months, the signs of having attained the accomplishment of the Great Seal will emerge. With regard to that, [209] the signs are these: a form subtle, light to the touch, pervasive, attainment itself, luminous, stable, powerful, able to transform [itself] at will.¹⁶

“Also, the dream signs [are stated] in the Great Yoga Tantra the *Esoteric*

Communion:

The one who has attained the supreme intuitive wisdom of enlightenment
 Sees [himself] like a buddha’s body;¹⁷
 Or, one quickly sees his selflessness as¹⁸
 The perfect enjoyment body of a buddha.

He sees the spiritual heroes of the three worlds
 Making offerings to him.

¹⁶ These are, I believe, the Eight Qualities of the Powerful (*dbang phyug gi yon tan bgyad*). Cf. Yangchen Gawai Lodee, p. 96.

¹⁷ The canonical versions read “*sangs rgyas ‘od ni bzung por mthong*,” not “*sangs rgyas sku dang mtshung par mthong*.” The Sanskrit reads *jñānasuprabham*, “. . . sees the beautiful intuitive wisdom.”

¹⁸ The Sanskrit reads “he quickly sees himself or the Buddha’s perfect enjoyment body.”

He sees [himself], the great intuitive wisdom body,
 Always being offered
 The five objects of desire
 By the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

In dreams he sees his own body as
 The great form of Vajrasattva, and
 The Supreme Vajra¹⁹ of great renown,
 And the Secret Vajras of great renown.

The great buddhas, bodhisattvas,
 And vajra-holders pay homage.
 These types of dreams will be seen--
 Of being given the accomplishments of body, speech, and mind.

Delightful divine girls
 Decked with all ornaments--
 If one sees a boy or a girl [like this],
 That one will win the accomplishments.

One sees all the buddhas of the ten directions
 Abiding in the [Buddha-]verses,
 Their minds overjoyed,
 Granting the delightful treasury of dharma.

The one fixed in the meditation vajra
 By the yoga commitments will see [himself]
 In a body turning the wheel of dharma
 Surrounded by all sentient beings.²⁰

The Vajra Student asked: “If a practitioner even though he sees reality but, having been distracted by the farming, work, trade, and official duties by the force of habituation to

¹⁹ Sanskrit reads “Vajradharma.”

²⁰ Sanskrit reads “all Buddhas” for “all sentient beings.”

This passage is from the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*, Chapter Fifteen. The passage reads: bodhijñānāgrasamprāptam paśyate jñānasuprabham/ buddhasambhogakāyam vā ātmānam laghu paśyati// traidhātukamahāsattvaiḥ pūjyamānam sa paśyati/ buddhaiśca bodhisattvaiśca pañcakāmaguṇairdhruvam/ pūjitaṃ paśyate bimbaṃ mahājñānasamaprabham// vajrasattvaṃ mahābimbaṃ vajradharmaṃ mahāyaśam/ svabimbaṃ paśyate svapne guhyāvajramahāyaśāḥ// praṇamanti mahābuddhā bodhisattvaiśca vajriṇaḥ/ drakṣyate idrśān svapnān kāyavākcittasiddhidān// sarvālaṃkārasaṃpūrṇāṃ surakanyāṃ manoramāṃ/ dārakān dārikāḥ paśyan sasiddhimadhiḡacchati// daśadiksarvabuddhānāṃ kṣetrasthān paśyate dhruvam/ dadanti hr̥ṣṭacittātmā dharmagañjaṃ manoramam// dharmacakragataṃ kāyam sarvabuddhaiḥ parivṛtam/ paśyate yogasamaye dhyānavajrapatiṣṭhitaḥ// (Cf. Fremantle, p. 340; Bhattacharyya, p. 108; Bagchi, p. 87-88).

previous instincts, does not perform the three types of practices, or, if other practitioners do not perform the practices since they cannot perfectly perform the rites as related in the Tantras on account of not having the complete requisites--at the time of death will they go to another existence or will they, rather, attain Vajradharahood?"

The Vajra [210] Mentor replied:²¹

There is nothing to clarify with regard to this.
There is nothing to present.
Look at reality itself!
If you sees reality, you will be liberated.

“[These] are words which relate to one who abides on the Perfection Stage. It is like this: ‘seeing reality’ means, by the seeing reality, all bad views such as permanence, destruction, and transmigration will be stopped. However, relying on [conventional] designation, one should definitely perform a pure transmigration. These aggregates and so on are not ejected to another world, since that would result in the faulty consequence of permanence. After death in another world, it does not emerge from another either, for this would result in the faulty consequence of [being produced] without a cause. It is like these [analogies]: a butter-lamp flame from a butter-lamp flame, an impression from a seal, and an echo from a sound--one cannot say that they are either the same or different. Therefore, it says in the *Holy Golden Light Scripture*:²²

The Buddha will not pass beyond sorrow.
The Dharma will not decline.
In order to tame sentient beings
Passing beyond sorrow is shown.²³

²¹ Note that this is (perhaps) the only time in the entire work when the Vajra Master does not honor the disciple’s question with a “sādhu.”

²² *Suvarṇabhāṣasūtra*, gser ‘od dam pa’i mdo

²³ This verse appears near the end of Chapter Two of Nobel’s edition of the *Suvarṇabhāṣottama-sūtra*, which reads: *na buddhaḥ parinirvāti na dharmah parihyate/ sattvānāṃ paripākāya parinirvāna deśayet//*. Cf. Nobel (Leipzig, 1937). 19. Some Tibetan versions follow our text which has “tame” (*gdul*), while others follow the version attested in the Sanskrit, “ripen” (*smiṇ*). Otherwise all versions seem to agree.

[Likewise,] the *Journey to Lanka Scripture* says:

Here, there is no birth and destruction
By any condition whatsoever.
Only imaginary conditions
Are produced or destroyed.²⁴

“By this reasoning, the Lord Śākyamuni having performed all his [twelve] deeds, made a show of passing beyond sorrow. Likewise, one who has realized the perfection stage, having done everything, passes beyond sorrow in the world. Have no doubt about this.

“Therefore, the one who knows Reality, although he has not performed the practices as explained on account of not having the complete prerequisites, having abandoned all views [and] realized that ‘death is the ultimate reality, birth is the conventional reality,’ having entered the Clear Light Transparency on the hundred-fold path (? *brgya lam*, “sometime” *kadācit*?), he generates the firm resolution that ‘having cast off the ordinary aggregates, [211] I will arise by the process of Self-consecration.’ If he resides by fixing the mind on that, that one will not give up that fixation of mind in another birth. Therefore, [he] will become omniscient. Hence, it says [in scripture]:

By whatever and whatever resolution
Humans apply their minds,
By that, it becomes of that nature--
Like a variegated jewel.

“Therefore, by transforming all this into the distinctive, since it is wholly transformed, the distinctive result will emerge. Here it is explained:

Whatever is born is called ‘conventional.’
The name of death is ‘ultimate reality.’
Who finds those two stages by the kindness of the guru
is a future buddha.

Those two realities being Integrated,

²⁴ *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, sDe-dge bKa’-‘gyur, f. 140b³-140b⁴: ‘di la gang yang rkyen nams kyis/ skye ba med cing ‘gag pa med/ btags pa’i rkyen nams kho na ni/ skye zhing ‘gag par ‘gyur ba yin//.

As if it had not been explained, there is no distinction of those two.
 Two names ultimately (*mtha' ma*) only the same
 The one who knows that is here liberated from bondage.

If someone falls from the peak of the king of mountains,
 Even if they don't want to plummet, they will.
 If one gains the beneficial verbal transmission by the kindness of the guru,
 Even if they don't want to be liberated, they will be.

Beings do not have the power to realize the Reality of the words of meaning in the world. They are like a drop of sesame oil in the water of a great ocean constantly agitated by a fierce wind. Therefore I, having taken up some little bit, have collected [it] as a lamp for the minds of the fortunate beings who fear the ultimate and conventional.



Here ends the *Lamp of Integrated Practice*, composed by the great mentor Āryadeva. It was translated, edited, and finalized by the Indian abbot Śraddhākaravarma and the editor/translator-monk Rin-chen bZang-po.²⁵ Herein are thirteen hundred Indian verses (*śloka*), comprising two volumes.²⁶

Sarvamaṅgaḷam

²⁵ This is the common colophon for all four editions--sDe, Co, Pek, and sNar.

²⁶ This sentence is only found in the Pek and sNar editions.

Chapter IX: Brief Guhyasamāja Works of Āryadeva

The Investigation of Mental Purification (*Cittaviśuddhi-prakarāṇa*)

Homage to the feet of the holy Guru!

Homage to Mañjuśrī, the Ever-Youthful!

I

Without beginning or end, peaceful,
Neither thing nor no-thing,
Non-conceptual, non-objectifying
Non-abiding, non-dual,

II

Without example, unexplainable,
Inconceivable, undemonstrable,
Without support, without foundation,
Unchanging, uncompounded,

III

Buddha, the universal refuge,
[Whose] body [is] made of compassion,
Teaching by various liberative arts
Beings of various inclinations,

IV

To the [method of] great attachment, I pay homage!
Homage to you, Lotus Lord of Dance!
I will explain just a little bit here
In order to understand my own mind.¹

V

By the method of yogic practice (*yogācāra*)
All is certain.
All this is to be told here.
Therefore, this is how one should practice.

VI²

¹ This reading is attested by all the Tibetan versions. Patel's reconstruction reads, "from the observation of my own mind" (*svacittapratyavekṣaṇāt*), which seems to make more sense in this context. Patel cites the testimony of "JS" as evidence. Though he refers to this text several times in his work, nowhere is its referent explained. I imagine this is the *Jñānasiddhi*, but have not been able to find the reference.

By whichever wrathful actions
 Beings are bound
 If united with liberative art, those very [actions]
 Liberate [one] from the bonds of existence.

VII

It is only from the purity of the mind,³
 That a pure fruit is born.
 This is extremely extensively
 And clearly taught in the Universal Vehicle.

VIII

As things and persons are selfless
 The Sage taught Mind Only.⁴
 Thence, the creation of all [things]
 Is cogent and convincing.⁵

² This verse is also found in the *Hevajra Tantra* verse II.ii.50, raising interesting questions concerning the relationship of these two traditions. Of even more interest is that the author of the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha* cites it from the CVP--not *Hevajra*, which might seem to have more authority. Cf. Snellgrove, *Hevajra Tantra* (London, 1959) and Bendall, *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha* (Louvain, 1905). 38.

³ Or, “only from the purity of the being.” The Tibetan versions differ on the reading of this line. Patel’s reconstructed Sanskrit follows the CRV which reads *sems can kho na nam dag pas*, yielding *viśuddhereva sattvasya viśuddham jāyate phalam*. CAV reads *sems [tsam/can] nam par dag pa’i phyir*. It is difficult to decide which of these two readings to follow. It is easy for scribes to confuse *sems tsam* and *sems can*. One wonders if this reading was influenced by the association of the expression *sems tsam* with the *yogācāra* (*rnal ’byor spyod pa*) mentioned two verses above and the *cittamātra* (*sems tsam*) mentioned just below.

If, however, one takes *sattva* as meaning “character,” or even “mind,” the different readings do not present a problem and conform to the obvious intention of the verse. Cf. verse XVI *infra*.

⁴ The first two lines of this verse are very troublesome. The sDe and Pek version as they stand would suggest the translation: “[Both] things and persons without distinction were taught by the Sage as mere intuitive wisdom.” However the Sanskrit text of H. P. Shāstri seems to add a better meaning and I have followed it above: *dharmapudgalanairātmyāccitamātram jagau muniḥ*. Patel has °*nairātmyam* which would give us “Mind Only, [which is] the selflessness of things and persons, was taught by the Sage.”

IX

And this is what he told the people
Who were held by the power of conceiving real existence.
In scripture also it was spoken clearly
And extensively by the Compassionate One.

X

Of [all] things (*dharmas*), mind is foremost.
Mind is chief, the swiftest.
Preceded by mind
[One] speaks and acts.⁶

XI

Though a monk urge his own aged father
“Go quickly!” and
He dies from a fall,
There is no inexpressible sin connected therewith.

⁵ Following Shāstri here (*tato 'pi sarvam utpannam gamakam sunirākulam//*) This accords with the Tibetan preserved in the sDe-dge of the CAV, “Proper and in accord” (*rigs pa dang yang rab tu mthun*). This could also be read as, “well in accord with reason,” but the construction of the Sanskrit text favors the former reading, as does the *yang* in the Tibetan line). Patel suggests the emendation *āgamātyanukūlakam*, “extremely in accord with scripture,” following the CRV which reads “it does not contradict scripture” (*lung dang shin tu 'gal ba med*). There are at least three reasons for favoring the reading of Shāstri. First, Shāstri’s reading is perfectly good, based on the MS, and is attested in a good Tibetan version. Second, Patel’s reading would make the reference to scripture in the next verse redundant. Finally, it is appropriate for the author to emphasize its reasonableness, given that the subject matter. This is classic post-Nāgārjunian Buddhist doctrine: since everything is selfless, dependent co-origination works; if it were not empty/selfless, nothing would be able to be originate. Cf. Nāgārjuna, *Prajñānāma-mūlamādhyamikakārikā*, XXIV.20, “If all this were not empty, there would be neither creation nor destruction” (Thurman, trans.) (*yadi aśūnyam idaṃ sarvam udayo nāsti na vyayaḥ*); and XXIV.14, “Everything works properly which works properly with emptiness, and nothing works properly which does not work properly with emptiness” (*sarvaṃ ca yujyate tasya śūnyatā yasya yujyate sarvaṃ na yujyate tasya śūnyam yasya na yujyate//*)

The Tibetan versions read the third line in different ways, the CAV reads, “Therefore [it all] originates like this” (*de lta na yang 'di lta 'byung*); the CRV reads, “Hence, this all arises from that” (*de bas 'di kun de las skyes*).

⁶ Reading *prakṛṣṭena* for Śāstri’s *praduṣṭena* or Patel’s *prasannena*. Patel is following the Tibetan of the CRV. The translator of the CAV seems to have read *prayatnena* (‘*bad pa*).

XII

If an extremely sick Saint
Tells his disciple,⁷ a nurse-monk,
“Wring my neck!”⁸
There is no fault in that.

XIII

But one who kills with another intention
Does not partake of faults.
If there is no negative mind, there is no fault--
[This is] stated clearly in the Discipline.⁹

XIV

Even if, for whatever reason, one excavates a stūpa,
with a mind to renovate it,
Even from performing [such] a proximate inexpressible sin,¹⁰
There is only a heap of merit.

XV

With a good intention placing a pair of boots
On the head of the Sage and
The removal of the same by another--
Both receive the fruit of kingship.¹¹

⁷ Skt. *ādiṣṭah*; this word is not found in the Tibetan translations which otherwise correspond to the Sanskrit nicely.

⁸ Literally, “press my neck” (*madgalaṃ paripiḍaya*).

⁹ The sDe and Pek versions read the following in their second half:
Such is taught clearly in Scriptural Tradition--
Thus, a virtuous mind has no faults.

¹⁰ Skt. *upānantarya*, Tib. *nye ba'i mtshams med*; An additional five added to the Five Inexpressible Sins (*mtshams med lnga*): copulating with a female Saint, killing one who definitely has the spirit of enlightenment, killing members of the community who are studying, to deprive the community of its assembly hall (*'du sgo*), and destroying a stūpa.

¹¹ This is an important verse, for it expresses an idea which is common in the Mahāyāna--that even opposite acts produce merits identical to the quality of their intentions. A story is still commonly told by Tibetan Buddhist teachers about a man who saw a statue of Buddha getting wet from a leaky roof and placed the only thing he had free--his boots--on its head to keep it dry. Another man came along and saw this and, thinking it inappropriate to place footwear on the head of a Buddha, removed them. It is said that both men became kings later as a result of their good merit.

XVI

Hence, merit¹² and sin
Are distinguished¹³ on the basis of intention.
Since it is thus stated by Tradition,
There are no faults belonging to one with a virtuous mind.

XVII

Whosoever unites with their deity
Striving to accomplish the aims of beings--
Though he enjoy the objects of desire
That yogi will be liberated, not defiled.

XVIII

Just as an expert in poison
Deliberately takes poison, causing it to be destroyed;
Only this one, not becoming confused
Will produce freedom from disease.

XIX

Regarding all beings
As like an illusion, a mirage,
The city of the gandharvas, a dream--
Who is enjoying¹⁴ what? and how?

XX

Children delight in¹⁵ forms.
The intermediate become free of lust.
Knowing the nature of form, and so on¹⁶,
Those of supreme mind become liberated.

¹² Here Shāstri's Sanskrit edition reads *karma* for *punya*, but this does not seem to be a good reading. The reading *punya* is corroborated by the cited passage in the *Subhāṣita Samgraha* (Louvain, 1905). 38.

¹³ Following the Sanskrit *vyavasthitih*, "distinction." The Tibetan translation has a literalistic *nam par gnas*.

¹⁴ Following the Sanskrit *bhujyate* (\sqrt{bhuj} in *Ātmanepada* means "to enjoy carnally," cf. Macdonell, p. 206); this is corroborated by the Tibetan *spyod* which also can carry this meaning.

¹⁵ Following Patel's *rajyanti*; Shastri reads *majjanti*, "are absorbed in"--either is appropriate in this context.

¹⁶ Tib. *sogs*; the corresponding *ādi* is not found in the Sanskrit which has *svabhāvajñā*. . *rūpasya*. . .

XXI

Keeping in mind all the commitments¹⁷ (*samaya*),
 [Comprising] the rite of worshipping the deity,
 [And] regarding [them] as pure,
 That which is enjoined by [the tradition of] mantra¹⁸
 Is to be enjoyed without hesitation.

XXII

By the union of the three syllables¹⁹
 It is to be cleansed, understood, and likewise illuminated.
 The Transcendent Lords are to be pleased
 By the peaks of the thumb and ring finger.²⁰

XXIII

That which is true to the childish
 Is of course²¹ false to the yogi-s.
 Those who by this go to the end²²
 Are not bound, nor are they liberated.

XXIV

That one who thinks “[there are] saṃsāra and nirvāṇa”
 Is one who sees unreality.
 That one who thinks “[there are] neither saṃsāra nor nirvāṇa”
 Is one who sees reality.

XXV

The great demon of conceptuality
 Casts one down in the ocean of saṃsāra.
 Those Great Ones who are free of conceptuality
 Are freed from the bonds of existence.

¹⁷ Seemingly a reference to “commitment substances,” rather than commitments themselves.

¹⁸ *Mantracoditam*.

¹⁹ Shāstri reads “sprouts” (*aṅkura*), for “syllables” (*akṣara*)

²⁰ This verse seems to be referring to the “inner offering” in which the “five meats” and “five ambrosias” are purified, transformed, and increased by the letters Oṃ Aḥ Hūṃ and then used as an offering by flicking it with the thumb and ring finger.

²¹ Skt. *khalu*--not found in the Tibetan.

²² Shāstri reads *kāyenaiva tu samprāptam*--“But those who have attained it/reached it by the body. . .” I follow Patel above who is following the *Cittaratnaviśodhana*. The *Cittāvaranaviśodhanaprakaraṇa* in sDe and Pek reads De *tsam zhig tu longs spyad pa*, “Those who enjoy it a little bit (or, ‘right away’).”

XXVI

They are troubled by the poison of doubt
Just as beings as troubled by poison.
Casting that very thing out from the root,
The Compassionate One acts.

XXVII

For example, if a crystal is pure
It will be colored by other colors.
Likewise, this precious jewel[-like] mind
Is colored by the hues of conceptions.

XXVIII

If the mind-jewel is isolated
From the color of ordinary²³ conceptions, [it is]
Primordially pure, unarisen,
Lacking intrinsic reality, stainless.²⁴

XXIX

That which is reviled by children
Is to be performed with exertion
Through union with one's deity,
Since that is the cause of a stainless mind.

XXX

By the virtuous²⁵ mind of the yogi
Confused²⁶ by the poisonous fire²⁷ of passion
Amorous women, when loved,
Bring the result of the liberation of desire.

²³ The Tibetan reads *tha mal*, i.e. *prākṛta*^o, for which the Sanskrit reads *prakṛta*^o, “in nature.” Shāstri has *prakṛte* and Patel has *prakṛtyā*. The editors seem to be seeking to avoid the poetic *faux pas* of having both the second and third syllables light. Āryadeva seems to be willing to flout this convention, as he does for instance in verse 32 *infra*, “*dvādaśayojana. . .*” (Also in verse 58).

²⁴ This list of four attributes is repeated in the first pāda of verse XXXIV *infra*. One notes the lack of editing here by Shāstri who here reads *nījarūpam* for *niḥsvabhāvam*.

²⁵ The Tibetan translations all read *dge ba* here. Shāstri's edition reads *śuddha*, “pure,” while Patel has the expected *śubha* (amended on the testimony of the Tibetan?).

²⁶ Here again Patel's version follows the Tibetan (*saṃmugdhā* for *rmongs pa*, “confused”) while Shāstri reads *saṃyuktā*, “connected.”

²⁷ Here the Tibetan versions seem to have become corrupted, all reading *chags med*, “passionless,” for *chags me*, “fire of passion.”

XXXI

For example, meditating on oneself as a garuḍa,
The “garuḍa” drinks the poison.²⁸
Performing the requisite devenoming
He is not overcome by poison.

XXXII

A[n iron]²⁹ wheel twelve yojanas³⁰ across
Revolves on the head,
As soon as the Spirit of Enlightenment is generated
It is dispelled, I have heard.³¹

XXXIII

Having generated the Spirit of Enlightenment,
There is nothing prohibited
For the one who has set his mind on Perfect Enlightenment
With the intention of caring for beings.

XXXIV

Primordially pure, unarisen
Lacking intrinsic reality, stainless,
Seeing with the intention of [benefiting] beings
[That one] is neither bound nor liberated.

XXXV

The yogi according to the rites
Considering the manifold qualities of the deity,
Enjoys the mind of passion.
By passionate enjoyment, he will be liberated.

XXXVI

If one wonders,³² “What to do?
Where to obtain various³³ potent substances?”
Just as some who are overcome by poison
Eliminate poison by poison itself.

²⁸ Following Shastri and Bendall (*gāruḍiko viṣaṃ piban*); Patel emends to *viṣamākṛṣya sampiban*, based on his reading of Bendall’s MS, which would yield “extracting the poison, one drinks it.”

²⁹ The Sanskrit has simply *dvādaśayojanavyāsaṃ cakram*, “a wheel twelve yojanas in diameter;” but the Tibetan specifies that the wheel is made of iron (*lcags [las] byas [pa]*).

³⁰ According to MacDonell, p. 248, a distance about equal to nine miles; hence, coincidentally, the wheel here would have a diameter of about 108 miles.

³¹ This is an obscure tradition. It may refer to the wheel which is said to revolve over the head of kings (unlikely); or to the “wheel of sharp weapons” of karmic retribution.

³² Added by the Tibetan translators of the CAV

³³ Or “marvelous” (*vicitra*).

XXXVII

[Like taking] water from the ear by water
 [And] a thorn by a thorn
 So the wise remove³⁴
 Passion³⁵ with passion.

XXXVIII³⁶

For example, as launderer removes
 The grime from clothes by grime,
 Likewise the Wise Ones
 Eliminate grime by grime.³⁷

XXXIX

Just as a mirror becomes clean
 By rubbing it with dust,
 Just so the Wise should rely on faults
 To purify faults.³⁸

XL

Just as an iron ball placed in water
 Sinks to the bottom,
 [Yet] that which has become a vessel
 Carries others and floats itself,

XLI

Likewise, the mind which has become a vessel
 By the rite of wisdom and art,
 Enjoying desire, one is freed³⁹
 And causes the liberation of others also.

³⁴ The Tibetan translation of Jñānakara (CAV) has the literalistic ‘*dzin par byed* for the Sanskrit *uddharanti*. The CRV has the preferred *sel bar byed*.

³⁵ The *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha* edition has an unconvincing variant here--reading *mahārāga*^o, “great passion,” for *tathārāga*^o, “so. . .passion.”

³⁶ The Peking edition of the CAV (and the sNar-thang also by Patel’s account) lacks the third and fourth lines of this verse. The sDe-dge CAV has lines which are in substantial agreement with those of the sNar-thang CRV.

³⁷ Here, of course, we are dealing with “spiritual grime,” corresponding to the Sanskrit *mala* and Tibetan *dri ma*.

³⁸ The Sanskrit has “the wise should practice the destruction of faults by faults,” *sevitas tu tathā vijñair doṣo doṣavināśanaḥ*.

³⁹ Following Shastri.

XLII

[When] desire [is] served by the ignorant
 Desire becomes bondage.
 That very Desire, served by the Wise,
 Is a bestower of liberation.

XLIII

That milk destroys poison
 Is known in all worlds.
 [Yet] if that same thing is drunk by snakes
 It causes the poison to greatly increase.

XLIV

Just as geese are skilled at drinking
 Milk mixed with water.
 Likewise, the wise are liberated
 Passionately enjoying poisonous objects.⁴⁰

XLV

Just as if one enjoy according to the rites
 Even poison becomes ambrosia;
 For children, butter cakes and so on
 Become poison when eaten improperly.

XLVI

Here that mind which is purified
 By wholesome causes⁴¹
 Appears non-conceptual, non-objectified,
 Naturally stainless.

XLVII

Just as even a small fire
 When joined with butter, wick, and so on
 [Becomes] a stainless, unwavering lamp
 Destroying the enduring darkness;

XLVIII

Just as a seed of the Banyan⁴² [Tree],
 Though small, if the concomitant conditions are present,
 Is the founder of a large tree
 Having root, branches and fruits.⁴³

⁴⁰ The Tibetan versions add “which have been purified.”

⁴¹ Skt. *hetubhiḥ*, The Tibetan *gtan tshig* usually refers to a cause in the logical sense, i.e. “reasoning.”

⁴² Also known as the Nyagrodha Tree (*Ficus Indica*). Here the term used in the Sanskrit is *vaṭa*, rather than *nyagrodha*, but the significance is the same.

XLIX

From the union of turmeric and lime powder
 Another color [is produced], it is said.
 From the union of critical wisdom and liberative art
 The wise [know] the Realm of Reality (*dharmadhātu*).

L

Ghee⁴⁴ mixed with honey⁴⁵
 Will itself become poison.
 That very thing, enjoyed according to the rite,
 Is the supreme alchemy (*rasāyana*).⁴⁶

LI

Just as copper touched by mercury
 Becomes faultless gold
 Likewise, if purified by intuitive wisdom
 The afflictions are real virtue-makers.⁴⁷

LII

Those who are devoted to the Individual Vehicle
 Are afraid of death at every step,
 And the mind set on victory in battle
 Remains far away.

⁴³ This verse has become corrupted in the Tibetan CAV. The Sanskrit and the Tibetan CRV preserve the proper sense. The CAV has only three lines for this verse which read: *ji ltar phra ba'i sdong po las/ ji ltar lo ma 'bras bu yis/ rgyan pa'i shing chen 'byung bar 'gyur//*. This is basically nonsense which means “Just as from a subtle [tree] trunk, just as a great tree adorned with leaves and fruit will emerge.”

⁴⁴ There is no suitable other term here. “Clarified butter” is a different substance, at least culinarily, if not [al]chemically.

⁴⁵ One wonders if, perhaps, there is an equivocation here on the term *madhu*--the difference, then, would be between mixing ghee with honey and mixing it with wine.

However, this notion seems to be confirmed as a tenet of ayurvedic dietetics. Consider the testimony of a recent ayurvedic cookbook: “equal quantities of ghee and honey are a bad combination (ghee is cooling, but honey is heating and they have different post-digestive effects),” thus creating a toxic effect. Cf. Usha and Vasant Lad, *Ayurvedic Cooking for Self Healing*, (Albuquerque, 1994). 46.

⁴⁶ Perhaps a reference to the *madhuparka* used in certain ceremonies.

⁴⁷ Patel's edition reads *jñānaśuddhyā tathā kleśāḥ samyak kalyāṇakārahāḥ*. Shāstri's editions reads *jñānavṛddhās tathā kleśāḥ kleśāḥ*^o. The reading given in the *Subhāṣita Samgraha* (Louvain, 1905. 40) is *jñānavidas tathā samyak kleśā[h]*. As both Tibetan translations agree, I think it wise to follow Patel's emendation, with the caveat that we read *samyakkleśāḥ* for *kleśāḥ samyak*.

LIII

But that one who has mounted the Universal Vehicle
 Armored in the dharma of compassion
 Having a bowstring,⁴⁸ bow, and arrow of critical wisdom
 [And] the intention of caring for beings,⁴⁹

LIV

That courageous champion of great skill in battle
 Of unyielding mind undaunted,⁵⁰
 Having achieved victory in the battle difficult to win
 Saves others, as well.⁵¹

LV

Animals are tormented,
 Devoted to merely their own ends.
 Those who work for the ends of others
 Are rare and happy⁵² beings.

LVI

Those greedy for their own ends
 endure the sufferings of wind and cold.
 How, then, would those pursuing the ends of [other] beings
 Not endure [them]?

LVII

As even the sufferings of hell
 Are to be endured by the compassionate,
 What need to think⁵³ of the present
 Sufferings of wind, cold, and so on?

⁴⁸ Interestingly, Shāstri's edition has *krpānaya*^o here where Patel has reconstructed *prajñātantu*^o. I am taking *tantu*, "thread," as meaning "bowstring" here.

⁴⁹ Again *uddharaṇa*--"upholding, delivering."

⁵⁰ Skt. *atandrita*; the Tibetan has *gnyid sangs nas*, "free of sleep[iness]."

⁵¹ Major double entendre in these verses, playing on the martial sense of many Buddhist terms. A more "religious" reading would be:

That great hero of great liberative art
 of stable mind unwearied
 Having achieved victory in the battle difficult to win
 Liberates others as well.

⁵² *dhanya*; could be "fortunate" or "blessed."

⁵³ Skt. "who would think. . .?"

LVIII

One should not perform unpleasant⁵⁴ activities,
 Nor a rite involving fasting,
 Here there is no bathing or ritual purity
 Village religion⁵⁵ should be abandoned.

LIX

Nails, teeth, bone, and marrow,
 Are produced as modifications of the father's semen.
 Flesh, blood, and hair
 Emerge from the mother's blood.

LX

As a body which thus emerges from the impure
 is full of impurity,
 How can such a body be purified
 By a bath in the Ganges?

LXI

Just as an impure vessel, though washed with waters
 Again and again will not become pure.
 Likewise, this body⁵⁶ filled with impurity
 Will not become pure.

LXII

A dog who fords the Ganges
 Cannot become purified.
 Likewise, ritual bathing is fruitless
 For the man whose mind is set on the Dharma.

LXIII

If religion (*dharmā*) could come from bathing,⁵⁷
 Fishermen would attain the goal.
 What need to mention the fish and so forth
 Who stay there night and day?

LXIV

It is certain that sin could never
 Be destroyed by washing,
 Since one sees the lust and so on
 Flourishing among habitual ritual bathers.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Following Shastri's version which reads *aniṣṭa*; the Tibetan CRV reads *sdug bsngal* ("suffering") and the CAV reads *dka' thub*, "penitential;" Patel feels that Shastri has misread the MS and reconstructs the beginning of the verse with *kaṣṭa* (not all that different in sense from Shastri's reading).

⁵⁵ *grāmadharma*, presumably meaning "religion of the simple folk."

⁵⁶ Skt. and CRV have "body" (*piṇḍa*), CAV repeats "vessel" (*phur ma*).

⁵⁷ CAV reads "if bathing made one pure;" CRV reads "if bathing were the dharma."

LXV

Lust, hatred, ignorance,
Jealousy, and greed are always⁵⁹
Known as the roots of sin.
These are not purified by washing.

LXVI

These beings are born here
On account of grasping at me and mine.
The cause of that is delusion.
That delusion is considered error.

LXVII

Just as one [initially] sees silver in mother of pearl
And, recognizing it as mother of pearl, no longer does;
From seeing selflessness,⁶⁰
It also perishes from the root.

LXVIII

Just as one sees a snake in a rope
And, once one recognizes it as a rope, no longer does;
That being will never again
Perceive that rope as snake.⁶¹

LXIX

Here also, in that way, the perception of a being⁶²
Is eliminated by the vajra intuitive wisdom.
That will not recur there--
Just as no sprout will come from a roasted seed.

LXX

The body created from the purity of selflessness⁶³
Is naturally stainless.
Children incorrectly imagine dharma
In the suffering of that.

⁵⁸ *tirthasevin*: much like the term *tirthika*, the classical enemies of the Buddhists.

⁵⁹ Following the Sanskrit and CRV; CAV has “lust, hatred, ignorance, pride, view, and doubt are all.”

⁶⁰ Or, “that also as a result of selflessness.”

⁶¹ Lit. “That snake-perception will not there [in that rope] / Recur in this being.”

⁶² or “truth.”

⁶³ Following Shastri (*nairātmyaśucisamsrṣṭaḥ pīṇḍaḥ*); Patel’s *saṃghātaḥ* would yield “the body is a conglomerate of purity and selflessness.”

LXXI

Seeing the rising and setting of the moon
 One conceives of a lunar day.
 By the rising and setting of the sun
 One distinguishes day and night.

LXXII

The terms “east” and so forth
 Are created by conceptual perception.
 Weekdays, lunar⁶⁴ and solar⁶⁵ divisions of the zodiac, and so on,
 Are conceptually posited by the whole world.

LXXIII

Perceiving cold, heat, and rain,
 Seasons are conceived of.⁶⁶
 The fruition of one’s own karma here
 Is spoken of in terms of good and bad astrological influences.

LXXIV

[If] a wise man has set out to clean
 the wish-fulfilling jewel of the mind
 which is smeared with the mud of delusion,
 How can delusion increase again?

LXXV

Without regard for weekdays, lunar days,
 Divisions of the zodiac, place, and time,
 Pass the time happily
 Non-conceptually, without aim, fearlessly.

LXXVI

Whatever comes into the paths of the senses
 That should be taken as such a reality.
 All should be experienced as buddha-nature
 By means of the well-focused yoga.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ *nakṣatra*, a term for the twenty-eight (or twenty-seven) constellations through which the moon passes, each occupying that proportion of the ecliptic through which the moon moves in one day.

⁶⁵ *rāśi*, a term for the twelve signs of the zodiac or the twelve “solar signs,” each occupying one-twelfth the ecliptic--the proportion through which the sun moves in one month.

⁶⁶ These are the three seasons which are posited in India.

⁶⁷ This verse is taken from the *Pañcakrama*, Chapter III “The Self-consecration Stage,” verse 36. Slightly odd that he would be quoting from this chapter, as the self-consecration stage follows after the *cittaviśuddhi*, or mind-purification, stage.

The translation provided is based on the reading of Patel which seems most likely, to wit: *yadyad indriyamārgatvaṃ yāyāt tattat svabhāvataḥ/ susamāhitayogena sarvaṃ buddhamayaṃ vāhetll*. The reading *susamāhita-* is attested in all the Sanskrit MSS (that of the *Cittaviśuddhi-prakarāṇa* and all MSS of the *Pañcakrama* which contain this verse), though strangely all the Tibetan versions would suggest a reading of *asamāhita-*, a reading Note continued on next page. . .

LXXVII

The eye is Vairocana Buddha.⁶⁸
 The ear is Vajrasūrya.⁶⁹
 The nose is Paramāśva himself.
 The mouth is Padmanarteśvara.

LXXVIII

The body is Śriheruka, the king.
 The mind is Vajrasattva.⁷⁰
 The perfect yogi who is compassion itself
 Should always act in this way.

LXXIX

The philosopher, rich in intellect and stable in mind,
 Accomplishes the non-conceptual [samādhi].
 Doing all deeds just as he desires,
 So he consumes all and does all.

LXXX

[He] does all he desires⁷¹
 Does [all] according to his tastes--
 Standing up, sitting down
 Walking around, or sleeping.⁷²

[Laughing, conversing--
 Whatever [he does] he does in that way.]⁷³

LXXXI

Even one who does not enter the maṇḍala or
 One endowed with all obscurations,
 Even those of little merit become accomplished
 Who unite with the personal tutelary deity.

which Mimaki and Tomabechi follow in their recent edition of the PK.

⁶⁸ CAV reads “the chief, Vairocana.”

⁶⁹ Shastri reads Vajrasūnyaka. The conventional list would suggest Vajraprabhā.

⁷⁰ This enumeration of the correspondences of enlightened beings to the senses and so forth is not that of the Guhyasamāja Tradition. It seems to follow the “Mother Tantra” systems of Hevajra or Cakrasamvara. In this list Heruka corresponds to Akṣobhya, Vajrasūrya/Vajraprabhā to Ratnasambhava, Paramāśva to Amoghasiddhi, and Padmanarteśvara to Amitābha. Cf. *The Great Stūpa of Gyantse*, p. 50.

⁷¹ CAV reads *karma* for *kāma*, yielding “[He] does all deeds.”

⁷² Tib. reads, “in his own way,” for “sleeping.”

⁷³ These lines are not found in the Sanskrit text, but are found in both the Tibetan translations.

LXXXII

The one who knows reality
 Accomplishes all buddhas
 And all heroes--⁷⁴
 Of this there is no doubt.

LXXXIII

Just as the world of the yogi
 Is sublated by the ordinary world
 The yogi-s are sublated by the distinctions of [their] mind
 by higher and higher ones.

LXXXIV

Great critical wisdom and great liberative art,
 Great caring and the aspiration
 Are taught in the Universal Vehicle
 As the range of the Great Being.

LXXXV

That which is esteemed by many
 And not attained for countless æons,
 Buddhahood, will be attained here in this life--
 There is no doubt about this.

LXXXVI

The greatness of the Universal Vehicle
 Is stored up in the form of merit and intuitive wisdom.
 The delightful state of omniscience will be attained
 Immediately in the present life.

LXXXVII

Concern about scripture or tradition
 Is not held⁷⁵ in the Universal Vehicle.
 The distinction⁷⁶ of the vehicles is illuminated
 By the distinction between aspiration and higher aspiration.

⁷⁴ The Tibetan seems to read:

By this, all the buddhas and
 All the heroes
 In this very life attain knowledge of reality

⁷⁵ Tibetan: "is inappropriate"

⁷⁶ Patel reads "non-difference" (*yānābhedah*), perhaps a typographical error; I follow Shastri's *yānabhedah*.

LXXXVIII

This is a different vision.⁷⁷
 And other enlightened deeds.
 Another purification of mind and
 Another fruit are spoken of here.

LXXXIX

Just as in a stainless mirror near to hand
 A stainless eye perceives
 Forms very clearly,
 Pure and stainless in nature;

XC

Intuitive wisdom [appears] clearly
 For the yogis whose minds are
 Free of the net of agitating conceptions
 Through the spotless mirror of stainless critical wisdom.

XCI

Just as fire flares up suddenly
 In a sun-stone
 [When] struck by the light of the sun,
 And one is able to accomplish one's aim;

XCII

Likewise, the sun-stone-like mind
 Free of the net of conceptuality,
 Being struck by the light of the sun of critical wisdom
 Ignites the mind of the yogi.

XCIII

Just as a fire is ignited
 From fiercely rubbing two sticks,
 Which is pure in the beginning, middle, and end
 And illuminates all things without exception;
 They know that intuitive wisdom of the yogis which comes
 From critical wisdom and liberative art.

XCIV

[For example,]⁷⁸ just as this single flame
 Transferred to another wick,
 According to setting and need,
 Illuminates brightly.

⁷⁷ The Tibetan translations read *adhimokṣa* ("inclination") for *bodhimokṣa*.

⁷⁸ Not found in the Sanskrit text.

XCV

Meditating on Wisdom and Art,
Emanating limitless bodies,
One should undertake actions
According to the various inclinations of beings.

XCVI

Just as one who knows the procedure
Extracts ambrosia (butter) from whatever milk, [and]
[Just as] a faultless, cool pleasantness
Removes all disease;

XCVII

From expertly churning the milk of critical wisdom
With the great liberative art,
The pure Realm of Reality arises
Which destroys good and evil.⁷⁹

XCVIII

Just like a creeping vine develops
Endowed with flowers and fruit,
Just so is instantaneous enlightenment
Endowed with the two stores [of merit and wisdom].

XCIX

[Power, wrath,]⁸⁰ movement, paralysis,
Rain,⁸¹ attracting, and so forth--
The yogi delighting in meat and wine
Is not defiled by activity.

C

Why look in a mirror
[For [your own] wrist-bangles?]⁸²
Hence, one can see the power of mantras
In the Universal Vehicle even today.

⁷⁹ The last two pādas of this verse appear in numerous variants throughout the extant Sanskrit MSS. I have followed the version that contains the most general import, to wit *śubhāśubha-vināśanaḥ*. Other readings imply something like pleasure and pain (*sukhāsukha°*, or *satsukho duḥkhanāśanaḥ*).

⁸⁰ These are missing in the Sanskrit MS, but can be reconstructed based on the Tibetan and the citation of this verse in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*. From this verse until the second half of verse 111 (and then later in verses 116, 117d, 119, 120a, and 126), there are occasional lacunæ in the MS--I have bracketed and noted each of them below.

⁸¹ Perhaps *dharṣana* ("assault"), a possible reading noted by Bendall (p. 40), who nonetheless follows the Tibetan in reading *varṣana*.

⁸² This pāda is missing in the Skt. MS.

CI

[One does not conceive truly here]⁸³
 The relationship of mother to daughter;
 The Transcendent Lord said beings are
 [Like a wisp of smoke from an iron censor.]⁸⁴

CII

The semen has the nature of the five elements⁸⁵ and
 The blood is also like that--
 This body [is] verily made of that.
 Who is high caste? Who low caste?⁸⁶

CIII

Monks, [all]⁸⁷ bodies are verily
 [Of the nature of the five aggregates--]⁸⁸
 Impermanent, suffering, empty.
 There is no caste, nor one with caste.

CIV

A certain person born from the womb of a fisherwoman,
 [Is a Caṇḍāla.⁸⁹
 Performing austerity (*tapas*), he became a brahmin.
 Therefore, caste is an illusion.

CV

Mother, sister, daughter,
 Mother-in-law, and niece,
 Priest-, warrior-, and merchant-women,
 [And] slave women⁹⁰--by those who know the rites,⁹¹

⁸³ Lacuna in the Skt. MS.

⁸⁴ Lacuna in the Skt. MS. This verse is very obscure in the Tibetan and the fact that the middle two *pādas* of the Sanskrit are missing does little to help matters.

⁸⁵ The Sanskrit MS reads *pañcabuddha*^o for *pañcabhūta*.

⁸⁶ Our text uses special words here: “Who is a *vipraḥ?*”--another term for a brahmin--and “Who is an *antyajaḥ?*” (lit. “lowest birth”)--another term for *sūdras*. I have translated more loosely to avoid too many technical terms.

⁸⁷ Lacuna in the Skt. MS.

⁸⁸ Lacuna in the Skt. MS.

⁸⁹ That is, of “the lowest and most despised class, a fisherman.” Cf. Sarat Chandra Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*. 663.

⁹⁰ That is, “Brahmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra women.”

⁹¹ Lacuna in Skt. MS.

CVI

[Missing a limb, degenerate (*hina*),
 Reviled, of low caste--
 Women should always be worshipped
 By the manifestations⁹² of the intuitive wisdom vajra.]⁹³

CVII

[The mantri always with wide eyes
 And smiling face
 Meditates on his own tutelary deity
 [And] fixes his mind on perfect enlightenment.⁹⁴

CVIII

One should look at what one sees in that moment.
 Whatever needs to be heard, should be listened to.
 Free of truth and untruth
 One should speak words undauntedly.]⁹⁵

CIX

Bathing, anointing (*abhyañjana*), clothing, and so forth
 Food, drink, and so on,
 Should be regarded as the diligent rite of worshipping
 The personal tutelary deity.⁹⁶

⁹² Patel, following the citation of this verse in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*, has restored this as *prabhāvana*, “splendour” or “power”; however, the Tibetan versions read *nam bsgoms*, which would reconstruct more exactly as *vibhāvana*, which I have followed in my translation.

⁹³ This verse is missing in the Skt. MS, but is found in the *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha* and in the Tibetan translations.

⁹⁴ These last two lines follow the CRV Tibetan edition; the CAV reads, “generates the spirit of perfect enlightenment, with the mind of his own deity.”

⁹⁵ These verses missing in Skt. MS.

⁹⁶ This verse is cited in the *Subhāṣita*^o. The CAV reads, “Regarding bathing, anointing, clothing, etc., food, drink, etc. as of the nature of the personal tutelary deity, one should worship according to the rite.”

CX

[Songs, instrumental music,⁹⁷ and likewise dance,
The disciplined one does it all according to the [liberative] art.⁹⁸
Here he does not lust⁹⁹
After all objects.

CXI

Abandoning one's own nature
One is not to mortify oneself with penance]¹⁰⁰
Just as one should meditate easily because of comfort,¹⁰¹
This is a future Buddha.

CXII

By the enjoyment of all desires¹⁰²
Fearlessly you enjoy with abandon.
Fear not! [As]¹⁰³ you have no sin!
The commitment is hard to transgress.

CXIII

Sticks prepared by mantra and so forth,
Become divine.
What need to mention the body of intuitive wisdom?
It is difficult to do actions based on confusion.

⁹⁷ CAV reads “drumming” (*brdung ba*), for CRV’s “music” *rol mo*. Patel reconstructs this as *vādyam*, which import of “instrumental music” fits nicely next to the “songs” (*gitam*) which precedes.

⁹⁸ Following CAV *thams cad brtul zhugs can gyis spyad*; CRV reads *thabs bcas brtul zhugs can byas spyad*, “The artistic ascetic does does.” Patel follows CRV.

⁹⁹ CAV reads *chags pa*, “lust after;” CRV has the interesting (and acceptable) *zhen pa*, with its beautiful dual meaning of “desire” or “adhere conceptually to.”

¹⁰⁰ These lines not found in the Skt. MS.

¹⁰¹ Shastri’s edition reads *cittam yathā sukham dhyāyan*. This is restored by Patel as *sukhādyaṭhā sukham dhyāyet*--it is not clear where he gets the optative. Perhaps it is a better reading in the MS. Both Tibetan translations read “just as pleasure is known from pleasure” (*ji ltar bde bas bde ba bzung*).

¹⁰² Following the Sanskrit. CAV reads “yogis” for “desires.” CRV reads “beings.”

¹⁰³ Found only in CAV.

CXIV

Abandoning the self-habit¹⁰⁴ which is ordinariness,
 [And] focused in meditative absorption
 These actions should be performed
 By the method¹⁰⁵ of critical wisdom and liberative art.

CXV

Just as a “mud-born” lotus
 Is not stained by the faults of the mud,
 Just so, the faults of the instincts of conceptuality¹⁰⁶ .
 Do not stain the yogi.

CXVI

[For example, a moon [reflected] in water
 Is not stained by the faults of the water.
 Like a variegated reflection¹⁰⁷
 In not stained with the faults of perception.¹⁰⁸]¹⁰⁹

CXVII

The jewel of mind is stained
 By the muds of beginningless instincts.
 [If one washes it with the waters
 Of critical wisdom and liberative art,
 It will become brilliantly clear.]¹¹⁰

CXVIII

For he wise of the stable mind
 In union (*yoga*) with their own tutelary deity,
 The sun of mind shines forth,
 Freed from the clouds of bad views.

¹⁰⁴ CAV reads “ordinary pride” (or “pride of ordinariness”) (*tha mal pa yi nga rgyal*), for what the Sanskrit reading *prākṛtatvam ahaṅkāraṃ* which I have followed. The import of both is basically the same.

¹⁰⁵ CAV reads “union” or “yoga” (*sbyor ba*) for “method/procedure” (*vidhāna*).

¹⁰⁶ Both the Tibetan translations read “various instincts” (*bag chags sna tshogs* (*vicitra-vāsanā*)), for *mam rtog bag chags* (*vikalpa-vāsanā*). Either could work, but the latter seems preferable.

¹⁰⁷ Again, the Tibetan reads *sna tshogs*. Patel feels this should be corrected to *mam rtogs* [sic] as in the previous verse. The rationale for this is not clear to me.

¹⁰⁸ Literally, “sight.” The CRV has an interesting reading: “If one sees [it] as a reflection, [it/one?] is not stained by various faults” (*gzugs brnyan lta bur mthong ba nal sna tshogs skyon gyis gos mi 'gyurll*).

¹⁰⁹ This verse is missing in the Skt. MS.

¹¹⁰ Lacuna in the Skt. MS.

CXIX

[From ascertaining the ultimate import
Discerned by the blade of critical wisdom,
The Realm of Reality will emerge
From its covering of delusion.

CXX

[When] the pot of conceptuality [is] instantaneously
Broken by the hammer of critical wisdom¹¹¹
The naturally stainless and clear
Lamp of intuitive wisdom shines forth.

CXXI

The elements [are] well-known—¹¹²
Earth and water and fire and wind—
They are constituted¹¹³ in a different manner by the wise
Through the yogic power of mantra.

CXXII

Abandoning all doctrines (*vādam*)
One should perform [mantra speech].¹¹⁴
You will accomplish even bliss¹¹⁵
By the power of that mantra.

CXXIII

The Three Jewels¹¹⁶ are not to be abandoned—
Likewise, the Guru and the Spirit of Enlightenment.
Living things are not to be killed.
The commitments are to be consecrated.

¹¹¹ Lacuna in Skt. MS.

¹¹² *Suprasiddha* attested in the Sanskrit and confirmed by CRV (*rab tu grags pa*). CAV reads *rab tu gsal ba*, “brilliant/clear” (*prasanna*)—likely a scribal error in the text used by the translators of CAV.

¹¹³ Following the Sanskrit *kriyante*, confirmed by the *byed* of CRV. The CAV makes the analogy clearer by using ‘*byung bar byed*, “emerges,” which plays on the ‘*byung ba* of the “elements” (*bhūta*, ‘*byung ba*).

¹¹⁴ Lacuna in Shastri’s edition supplied by Tibetan and *Subhāṣita-saṃgraha*.

¹¹⁵ Following Patel’s *saukhyabhāva*. Shastri’s text reads “even the subtle deity” (*sūkṣmadeva*), CRV reads “divine bliss” (*lha’i bde ba*, *devasukha?*).

¹¹⁶ Shastri reads “the woman-jewel” (*striratna*).

CXXIV

Wine, blood,¹¹⁷ and camphor,
 Combined with red sandalwood [and]
 A sage's vajra-water--
 Consecrate these five.

CXXV

By other commitment substances¹¹⁸
 Which elevate the mind
 In order to pacify the turbulence of the winds,¹¹⁹
 Please the mind vajra.

CXXVI

[A condition of impurity¹²⁰ should not be feared
 By the effortless play¹²¹ of the non-conceptual yoga.
 The mantri performs all
 With a prepared¹²² mind.]¹²³

CXXVII

One will be overcome by the poison
 Of a mere leg of a mosquito.
 [Likewise,] even the slightest atom of doubt
 Is endowed with the misery of death.

CXXVIII

The wise either skillfully attack
 Or skillfully retreat.
 The middle thing is pointless!
 One will be defeated.

¹¹⁷ Patel's *madhu raktam*. Shastri reads *mahāratnam* (which is attested by CAV), but CRV suggest *mahārakta*. Patel's reading seems to be the only one that produces five substances.

¹¹⁸ Reading Shastri's *dravya* for the *lha yi* of CAV reconstructed by Patel as *divya*. CRV's *bzang po (bhadra)* seems to suggest an error for *dravya*.

¹¹⁹ Following Skt. and CRV. CAV reads "wind and fire" (*rlung dang me*).

¹²⁰ Patel follows CRV's *mi gtsang*; sDe-dge CAV reads *mtshams med*.

¹²¹ Patel reads *brtsen* for *brtson*--reconstructing *lila*--a rather forced reading, but not an impossible sense.

¹²² *mnyam par sbyor ba, samāyukta*.

¹²³ This verse does not appear in the Skt. MS.

CXXIX

The guru's command, seal, and shadow, too,
Should not be stepped over.¹²⁴
One should grasp their qualities—
Never their faults.

CXXX

The teacher is the supreme deity,
[And] is to be vigorously worshipped.
He [is] himself Vajradhara, the king,
Residing before your very eyes.

CXXXI

Just as a pure water-jewel
Purifies dirty water;
The jewel of faith likewise
Is said to purify the mind-gem.

CXXXII

If lacking the eye of critical wisdom
The faithful will become confused;
Hence, one should generate the critical wisdom
With the qualities of tradition and reasoning.

CXXXIII

The faithful and learned, endowed with critical wisdom
Whose nature is compassion
In order to clear away the suffering of beings
Should know the liberative art of bliss.

CXXXIV

By whatever virtue I have accrued
From composing this *Purification of Mind*,
Having attained a pure mind
By that may beings attain happiness.

The Investigation called, "Purification of the Obscurations of Mind," composed by the Master Āryadeva is complete.

¹²⁴ *na lañghayet*; doing double-duty here for "step over" (e.g. the shadow) and "transgress" (e.g. the command); perhaps also "insult" (e.g. the seal).

The Discernment of the Self-Consecration Stage
(Svādhiṣṭhāna[krama]prabheda)

In Sanskrit: Svādhiṣṭhānakramaprabheda
 In Tibetan: bdag gi byin gyis brlab pa'i rim par dbye ba

Homage to Glorious Vajrasattva!

I

I pay homage to the Intuitive Wisdom Body
 Which has demolished all views.
 Out of caring [for beings] I will explain
 This *Discernment of the Self-Consecration*.

II

To the extent that one conceptualizes “existence”
 That much is the eternalist view.
 Since it conceptually adheres to permanence,
 This does not have the distinguishing characteristic of Magic [Body].

III

To the extent that one conceptualizes “non-existence,”
 That much is the nihilist view.
 Since it conceptually adheres to destruction,
 This does not have the distinguishing characteristic of Magic.

IV

Whoever conceptualizes the middle
 between “existence” and “non-existence,”
 Since they conceptually adhere to a middle,
 This does not have the distinguishing characteristic of Magic.

V

That which was spoken of as Conventional Reality
 The distinguishing characteristic of the Buddha’s Body
 That, taught here as Magic,
 [It] is called the “Self-Consecration.”

VI

That which pervades all
 The Three Worlds--animate and inanimate--
 Those of lesser merit will not obtain it.
 Those will obtain it who have been prophesied.

VII

Here there are no purification rites,
 Restraint, asceticism, [or] arduous trials.
 One will accomplish by means of the unarduous,
 Unrestrained, pleasant, and delightful.

VIII

Knowing in that way, one who knows reality
should constantly recollect it.
By the sorcery of the Universal Magic¹
That one will accomplish buddhahood.

IX

The yogi who engages² in magic--
That one will always be protected by the gods.
By the Magic-like Samādhi,³
This one will become omniscient.

X

The Vajra Weapon⁴ and the Great Force,
Youth, Health,⁵ The Supreme Bliss--
Having attained the Buddha Sorcery,
He goes and rises up as he wishes.⁶

XI

By merely looking at them,
Sentient beings come under one's control.
Through the Magic-like Samādhi
One will procure all one desires.

XII

“All things are like a dream [or] magic,”
Although this was stated by all the Buddhists,
They do not know the truth
If they are averse to the Self-consecration.

¹ *thams cad sgyu ma.*

² Literally, “abides by/through” (*gnas pa*); I am following a Sanskrit reading of *māyāsthāṃ*.

³ *sgyu ma lta bu ting nge 'dzin--the famous māyopamasamādhi.*

⁴ Tibetan reads “Great Vajra.”

⁵ Following the Tibetan reading *lang tsho nad med*; the published Sanskrit text reads *sarvamārogya*, which might then be emended to *yauvanārogya*.

⁶ Following the Sanskrit *yātyutpatati svecchayā*; Tibetan reads *kye ba 'byung ba rang dags so*, “One purifies elements [and] birth.” The Tibetan orthography is not clear, however.

XIII

The nature of mind in the form of a reflected image,⁷
 Consciousness endowed with wind--
 Being confused about the similes of Magic
 One will definitely not see one's own intuitive wisdom.

XIV

Although having perfected learning
 Over limitless myriads of æons,
 The one lacking the Guru's instruction
 Will not find the Self-Consecration.

XV

Hence, abandoning pride,
 The one who desires the fruit of Buddhahood
 By riding in the Vajra Vehicle
 Should diligently attend⁸ and delight the Guru.

XVI

Discerning the stage which is extremely difficult to find,
 I will thoroughly explain this.
 The yogi who understands [and] practices
 will accomplish, manifesting all Buddhas.

XVII

The four elements--earth, and so forth--
 And, likewise, the four voids [and]
 The eight kinds of abode
 Should be known as the causes of creation and destruction.

XVIII

From Transparency, the Great Void.
 From that, Art emerges.
 Born from that, Wisdom.
 From that, wind emerges.

XIX

From wind, fire is born.
 From fire, water emerges.
 That born from water is earth.
 From⁹ those, sentient beings emerge.

⁷ Following the published Sanskrit, which reads *chāya*; the Tibetan reads *gzhu*--presumably for the Sanskrit *cāpa*. The context could support either reading.

⁸ *bsgrims*

⁹ Peking and sDe-dge both read *la* ("in/on") here. The reading *las* ("from") seems preferable.

XX

Earth dissolves into water.
 Water dissolves into fire.
 Fire enters into the subtle element.
 Wind then dissolves into mind.

XXI

Mind becomes mental factors.¹⁰
 Mental factors having entered into delusion,
 That again returns to Transparency,
 This is the cessation of the Three Existences.¹¹

XXII

In this way the wheel of existence
 Continues to roll on without beginning or end
 Until one sees the self
 By the Magic-like samādhi.

XXIII

Introspective awareness is like magic.
 It is not the domain of philosophers.
 Although it abides in one's own body,
 Those of little merit will not find it.

XXIV

That supreme one is known in one's own body;
 It is the unchanging one;
 And it is known by similes
 Through the grace of the guru

XXV

Like treasure and gems hidden
 Under earth and, likewise, water, and so forth
 Likewise, the Omniscient One [is hidden] in the body, [and]
 The confused do not see it.

XXVI

Illusion, mirage,
 A city of the Gandharvas,
 A rainbow,¹² a mirror-image
 An image of the moon in water, an echo,

¹⁰ Peking and sDe-dge both read *sems ni sems las 'byung las 'gyur* (“mind comes to be from mental factors”). I have emended the reading to *sems ni sems las 'byung bar 'gyur*l.

¹¹ *bhavatraya, srid pa gsum*.

¹² Literally, “the bow of Śakra (Indra)” (*brgya byin gzhu*).

XXVII

A dream, an hallucination, clouds, lightning, and
bubbles of water--
Magic is described in detail by twelve similes,
But its character is one.

XXVIII

By that, this extremely brilliant form
Is objectified in a visual form.
By teaching the three magics
It is definitely proclaimed.

XXIX

As a mirror-image and
A rainbow and, alternatively,
The third, the moon in water,
One should meditate on that body.

XXX

The five great Buddha Clans themselves,
[Are] taught in the [*Lamp of*] *Integrated Practice*.¹³
The different gods and goddesses
Emerge from the five clans.

XXXI

The wrathful ones, the male and female messengers,
The male and female servants, the assorted emissaries,
Although these are said to not truly exist
They are shown for the purposes of beings.

XXXII

In that way, the yogi himself
Emanating all and collecting it [again]
Even the extensive maṇḍala and so forth,
Abides in the Magical Samādhi.

XXXIII

Through the Self-consecration¹⁴
He applies the various colors.
He is free of grief, fear, and aversion,
Terror and, likewise, confusion--
Since those sufferings do not exist.

¹³ *Sūtaka*; the Tibetan translation renders this as *spyod pa bsdus*, i.e. the *sPyod-pa bsdus pa'i sgron ma* (*Caryāmelāpaka-pradīpa*) of Āryadeva.

¹⁴ Tibetan reads “Magical” (*sgyu ma lta bu*), for “Self-consecration” (*svādhiṣṭhāna*).

XXXIV

Likewise, wickedness, bad-temper,
 Unpleasant sights and sounds,
 Unpleasant smells and tastes,
 Bad textures, and so forth--
 Things whose nature is unpleasant
 Should be purified by the Self-consecration.¹⁵

XXXV

Actions [such as] feces, urine, and so forth,
 Diseases [such as] fevers¹⁶ and so forth,
 Natures [such as] old age, and so forth,
 Those are cured by the medicine of Magic.

XXXVI

Whichever things increase the life-cycle (*samsāra*)
 For the childish--
 For the yogī, those very things
 Do not increase the life-cycle.¹⁷

XXXVII

The childish are considered to be bound
 By pleasure and the five objects of desire.
 But by that very thing, one can achieve
 The buddhahood of the yogis!

XXXVIII

Lust, happiness, and fondness,
 Likewise, love and compassion,
 Equanimity and joy,
 Power and, likewise, enthusiasm,

XXXIX

Valor, heroism, fury, and
 Violence, likewise, impetuousness,
 Also the other instinctual natures [of luminance],
 Should be restrained by [the truth of] the Self-consecration.

XL

Either endowed with one seal
 Or four seals
 By standing in the circle of ladies
 One should recollect the Self-consecration.

¹⁵ Again, the Tibetan reads *sgyu ma lta bu* for *svādhiṣṭhāna*.

¹⁶ Tibetan reads instead “diseases such as cold and plague” (*grang dang rims sogs nad*).

¹⁷ Tibetan has a different reading for the last two lines:
 By those very things the yogin
 Enters the state of great bliss.

XLI

Beautiful forms, sounds, and smells,
Likewise, tastes and textures
Are eternally experienced by the yogi
Abiding on the level of Great Bliss.

XLII

Strings, percussion,
Bells, and wind instruments--
The yogi enters the Self-consecration
By the four types of instrumental music.

XLIII

There are nine æsthetic moods¹⁸ named in dramaturgy,
Such as the erotic, and so forth--
By the Magical Samādhi,
The yogi should always enjoy them.

XLIV

That which was taught in the Yoga Tantras
The extensive rites, signs and so forth
Seeing them as like magic[al illusion]
The yogi engages in them.

XLV

Opening and closing one's eyes,
Laughing and, likewise, speaking,
Going, staying, sleeping, or eating,
One should always recollect the Magic Body.

XLVI

The one who sports in the form of the Lord of Beings¹⁹
Imagined with various conceptions,
Standing in the manner of great passion,
That expert should enjoy.

XLVII

Having obtained this Self-consecration
Which demolishes all views,
One could do or not do anything--
One proceeds just as one desires.

¹⁸ Literally “nine flavours of dance” (*gar gyi ro dgu*)--the (relatively) famous *rasa*-s of the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.

¹⁹ The Sanskrit reads “Games of other worlds in which there are. . .” (*jagatyanyāśca yāḥ kṛidā. . .*). The Tibetan seems to read something like *jagatindrākārāḥ. . .*

XLVIII

One need not do stūpa rituals.
 One need not recite the scriptures.
 By the process of Self-consecration
 One performs rituals and recites [scriptures].

XLIX

In the same way, one need not pay homage to deities.
 One need not prostrate to monks.
 By the very process of Self-consecration,
 Rather, one prostrates to all.

L

One need not array mantras.
 Likewise, one need not perform hand-gestures (*mudrā*).
 One need not recite mantras.
 Again, perform them as if a reflection.

LI

Knowing that it is only mind that is perceived
 External objects do not exist.
 Likewise, having meditated on Magic,
 Recollect Thatness!

LII

If through the limitless rite of meditation
 And the samādhi of the Mantra-body,
 Magic is not found,
 All is merely for the fruits of the earth.²⁰

LIII

Body, residence, and enjoyments
 Stages, perfections, and so forth,
 The play of Buddha-sorcery--
 All is the product of magic.

LIV

Just like in a stainless mirror
 Forms appear well-endowed with all their parts;
 Just so the Vajradhara-body always [appears]
 With the eighty minor and [thirty-two] major marks.

LV

Just as Indra's bow²¹ appears colored
 Likewise Vajradhara also [appears] of white color, and so forth.
 Just as it indicates the good karma of the world,
 He fulfills a perfect form of immaculate limbs.

²⁰ *Syāt sarvambhūmiphalāya*. I am not certain what this is supposed to mean, but I have translated the words as best I could.

²¹ That is, the rainbow.

LVI

Just as from the sky's expanse, one and only moon-form rises--
 The resident of gold, silver, and gems, conch shell, crystal, and coral,
 Beryl and copper, lead,²² and so on--
 [And] the one who enters that becomes extremely brilliant.

LVII

[Likewise,] there is one inexhaustible, magnificent personal form
 Magical in nature, which pervades all worlds,
 Taking various forms among beings--
 The Saviour Mind Vajra is like that.

LVIII

The five [aggregates]--form and so on--the media,
 Known as "the eighteen," and the five elements,
 The five intuitive wisdoms, objects, and all beings without exception
 Are Magically produced--here those are not different from Vajradhara.

LIX

Mountains and the eight great oceans
 The continents and the divisions--the hells and so forth--
 Whatever is seen, animate or inanimate--
 The nature of that is the Omniscient One. Do not consider it different!

LX

Those who are liberated from conceptions of existence and liberation
 Through having thus understood that all beings are the nature of their own minds,
 Do not wander in the oceans of existence.
 Homage to those who have gone to the opposite shore of the life-cycle!

The *Discernment of the Self-Consecration Stage*, by the Great Teacher Āryadeva, is complete.

Sarvamaṅgalam

²² Peking has *steng* merely; sDe-dge reads 'jon mo *steng*; I emend to *mchon mo steng*.

Personal Instruction in the Enlightenment Stage
(*Abhibodhikramopadeśa*)

Homage to Mañjuśrī, the ever-youthful!

Bowling to Vajrasattva,
I will explain the Enlightenment Stage.

Among the eighty-four thousand
Teachings of the Great Sage,
The characteristic of Enlightenment
Is said to be the quintessence.

There are two types of Enlightenment--
explained as “outer” and “inner.”

The outer [is] that of the Sūtras and the Yoga Tantra.
The Sage entered into the Immovable [Samādhi].
All Victors exhorted him, [saying,]
“By this, the ultimate is not achieved.
Supreme one, like the center of space,
Having achieved the state of Clear Light Transparency,
Take birth in a Joyous¹ Form!”
Meditating the Universal Void in that way
He became buddha in the essence of enlightenment.
The bodhisattva [Sarva] Arthasiddha
By the Transcendent Lords of the Four Clans
By the examination of the Five Enlightenment,

In that way, that bodhisattva
meditating on the Five Enlightenment [130a]
In Akaniṣṭha and the summit of Sumeru
[As] Vairocana in the Vajra Realm
[Is] the outer method of Buddhahood.

The inner is the inner method of Secret Mantra:
For the sake of passionate beings
The Lord Vairocana
Became equipoised in the samādhi
Of the method of great passion.

Emanating himself in the forms of the assembled retinue
Blissful [in] aspect [with] the three luminances
By the non-conceptual, overpowering Transparency
[He] creates the celestial mansion of Self-Consecration.

¹ Reading *rab dga'* for *rab 'ga'*. As the *rab tu dga' ba'i sa* (*pramuditabhūmi*) is the first bodhisattva stage, this probably refers to the achievement of such a level.

Magically transforming into the Lord of Mantra
 Stationed in the center with three faces
 Explaining the Dharma, gradually emitting the retinue,
 That is the inner enlightenment.

Again, the outer-inner:
 Relying on a consort
 One passes beyond the experience of the process of the three luminances.
 That Universal Void Transparency
 Found through the personal instruction of the guru
 Is explained as the outer-inner.

The inner-inner [is] without a consort.
 First is the mirage, in the manner of five[-colored] lights.
 Three non-conceptual experiences of bliss
 Beyond those three, those three themselves--
 The pure nature of the universal void--
 Is found through the personal instructions of the guru.

The meditation undertaken
 By the yogī who enters in such a way
 That which is the purity of the Three Luminances
 [Is] the Universal Void Clear Light Transparency.

Analyzing animate and inanimate [being]
 By arguments from scripture and reason
 Transforming it into Clear Light Transparency
 Subsequently, one makes oneself like that.
 By the process of Dissolution--[this is] the common [procedure].

By meditating on the five enlightenments
 That also is the meditation of entering.

In particular, the entering mediation,
 The three luminances without subject-object [dichotomy],
 Divine Thatness, the Magic Body,
 Is explained as Self-Consecration Stage.

Those who [practice] the Holistic
 From head to foot
 Until it enters [130b] the heart--
 Just as breath exhaled on a mirror
 dissolves away--
 The yogī enters the Reality Limit.
 That which is not the Universal Void
 Is explained as the Holistic.

Also, the Three Luminances are the authentic.
 The Three Luminances of Magic examined
 By arguments of objective selflessness
 That very thing analyzed by reasoning
 Is the Universal Void Clear Light Transparency.
 That is the common dissolution.

Also, in particular, by the process of the emergence
 Of the three Luminances, the Magic Body
 A mental body like a mirage
 The Self-consecration itself
 From head to foot
 Into the heart, the Three Luminances
 Having shrunk into a collected drop,
 In the nature of a mirror
 Unobjectified Universal Void Clear Light Transparency
 Is explained as the Holistic.

Just as a lamp inside a pot
 Will not shine outside,
 If that pot were broken,
 The light of the lamp subsequently would be seen;
 Likewise, the pot is your very body.
 Thatness is the lamp.
 If broken by the guru's word,
 The intuitive wisdom of the buddhas will shine forth.

If one objects that, "clear luminance, unperceived"
 Is like an nihilist viewpoint:
 Luminance/non-luminance, existence/non-existence, and so forth--
 If the reason which examines all those
 Establishes luminance, existence, and so on,
 Non-luminance, non-existence, and so on will [also] be established.
 If luminance, existence, and so on are not established,
 From whence will non-luminance, non-existence, and so on be established?

The middle, free of extremes, is also not perceived.
 The universal void, clear light transparency
 Is free of all [conceptual] elaboration whatsoever--
 Where is there a nihilistic view?

The character of that has neither existence nor non-existence,
 No luminance, non-luminance, permanence, destruction,
 Male, female, neuter, color, shape,
 Creation [Stage], Mantra, or Mind-objective,
 Two Truths, saṃsāra, nirvāṇa, etc.,
 Virtue Body, nor Sin Body.
 There is no body, nor qualities [131a] whatsoever.
 It is free of all verbal designations.

²Aho! Samantabhadra's
 Vajra body, speech, mind, and so on,
 [Born] by the procedure of birthlessness
 Birth is known as pure.

² The verses from here until "without enlightenment, without conceptuality/ This manner of enlightenment is firm," are drawn from the Second Chapter of the *Guhyasamāja Tantra*.

If birth itself is non-birth,
 Birth and non-birth are non-dual.
 Insubstantiality is the substance of meditation
 The object of meditation is non-meditation.

Since, in that way, substances are insubstantial,
 Meditation is non perceived--
 Free of all substantiality,
 Abandoning aggregates, elements, and media,
 Subject and object.
 By the equality of objective selflessness
 Since one's own mind is originally unborn,
 It is the nature of voidness.

Since these substances are unborn,
 There are no things and no reality.
 Selfless like space,
 The manner of enlightenment is firm.

Since all things are insubstantial,
 Abandon the characteristic of things.
 Emergent from selfless things,
 This manner of enlightenment is firm.

Unborn things have
 No nature and no meditation.
 By the yoga of the space-procedure
 Things are known as pure.

Things by nature [are] Clear Light Transparency--
 Originally pure, like space,
 Without enlightenment, without conceptuality,
 This manner of enlightenment is firm.³

Enlightenment, Buddhahood,
 The Reality of Self, Realm of Reality,
 Suchness and other such words
 All are enumerations of that.

Whoever is unproduced, uncontrived,
 Uncontaminated, unchanging suchness
 With the character of the space of enlightenment
 Is called "enlightenment."

Realizing that very thing, at the time of insight meditation,
 For the purposes of others. . .
 Like fish jumping out of water
 By the process of Self-consecration
 By control, arises in a body and work to benefit [others].

³ End of the verses quoted from the GST.

Still the two realities appear subtle
 Then, the intuitive wisdom of Integration is born. [131b]
 With regard to all things
 There is nothing which cannot be borne
 [And] no concept of fear or anxiety.

Abandoning all duality
 Indivisible Integration itself
 By understanding that, one becomes certain
 Practice also is non-dual.

The mantri acts like a lion.
 By learning the Integration samādhi,
 He achieves the Reality Body of the Consummate Integration.
 Like a precious wish-fulfilling jewel
 By the power of non-conceptual prayer
 The qualities such as the Form Body and so forth
 Showing a pure face to disciples.

In later discordant times
 Without relying on the profound transmission of personal instructions
 Becoming a Chief through appropriately-established reasoning,
 One will uphold our holy tenets.

Performing the rites merely by the secret import,
 Without aspiring to the profound ultimate view
 Once again falling into error
 That one will forsake the aims of self and other.

A wild, rutting elephant
 By a trainer with a hook
 Although it assaults another⁴ elephant
 Is subdued by the hook itself.
 That is not the wealth⁵ of kings.
 It causes the loss of wealth of both self and other

Likewise, the wild elephant
 Of a dualistic⁶ reason
 Damaging also the dualistic reason
 Causes the destruction of duality itself.
 That is not in secret mantra
 It causes the loss of the secret wealth of self and other.

⁴ Pek reads “a young” (*gzhon*) for “another” (*gzhan*).

⁵ Following sDe *dkor*; Pek reads *skor*.

⁶ sDe reads “non-dualistic.”

The One with the form of a Lion, pridefully
 With the words of a fox,
 That which is not the profound equality
 Conquers the assault of/on the view of voidness.

Though a precious jewel disappear in the mud
 Its light and qualities are like its [former] appearance;
 Although the medicine of the ultimate view disappear,
 It will blaze and shine in the skillful mind.

In the Era of Contention when discipline is weak
 There are two chief appropriately-established reasonings.
 When conventional wisdom is chief,
 Although there is not enough of the earlier pure [scriptural] traditions
 At the time of the ultimate view of secret mantra [132a]
 Mental and sensory direct perception and
 Inference is insufficient
 The personal instruction of the profound tradition should be taken as authoritative.

Whoever is moved by pride
 That one shows disrespect for the Teaching.
 Dishonoring the Stage of Authenticity
 He falls into the Avici Hell.

Whoever disparages the Mentor
 And dishonors the Universal Vehicle
 Whichever person derides the yoga
 Of Secret Mantra and Tantra
 That one will not achieve accomplishment.
 That one will always be beset by demons.⁷

Like iron collects on a loadstone
 Undesirable, undelightful [things]
 In this life, various undesired [things] will collect.
 Later, one will fall into the extreme of the three bad rebirths.

Not knowing the ultimate reality of things,
 [And] desiring external things,
 By concepts of negativity
 The mind-jewel will be stained.

Adhering conceptually to illusory perceptions
 Conceiving exteriority as ultimate reality--
 How will those with bad views
 Achieve unexcelled enlightenment?

⁷ Or “beset by doubts” (*gdon gyis 'dzin*).

With the pride of words of conceptual designation
 Not relying on the guru, not respecting him,
 Aspiring to inferior views,
 Not casting out conceptual views of the Three Secrets
 Not aspiring to the ultimate import
 By critical wisdom which makes reasoning chief
 Dishonoring the profound ultimate
 Do not teach Thatness to that one.

Whoever respects the guru
 [And] fearlessly tolerates the Universal Void
 Faithfully aspiring to the ultimate import
 To that one bestow the guru's kindness.

I, having explained this supreme secret in reliance on the personal instructions of the Ārya Nāgārjuna, dedicate [the merit so] that all [beings], having been purified in the conventional reality, may reach non-objective enlightenment, the realization of the ultimate import.

The Enlightenment Stage and its Result, the personal instruction composed by the Mentor Āryadeva is finished. The Indian Abbot Śraddhākaravarma and the Translator-monk Rinchen bZang-po translated, revised, and finalized it.

Appendix I: Miscellaneous Supplementary Documents

A. Tibetan Text of Important Sections of Tāranātha

From Chapter Seventeen (f. 43a⁶-43b¹)

གྲུབ་ཐོབ་མཉམ་གྱི་ཡང་སྐྱུ་ལའབ་སྲས་ཀྱི་སློབ་མར་གྲགས་པ་ནི་དུས་འདི་སྐབས་ཤུང་བ་ནི་མིན། སྤྱི་ཞལ་མཐོང་བའོ།

From Chapter Twenty-two (f. 52a¹-52a⁷):

ས་ར་ཉ་དང་། སྐྱུ་ལའབ་སྲས་དང་། གྲུབ་ཐོབ་བུམ་རིམ་ལོ་བར་དུ་བརྒྱན་བཞུགས་བརྒྱན་པར་རྗེས་སུ་བརྒྱུང་བ་ནི། ཡོངས་སུ་གྲགས་པ་ལྟར་ཡོད་པ་མངོན་ལ། གཞན་དུ་དེ་ཡན་ཆད་ཀྱི་སློབ་དཔོན་རྣམས་གསང་སྲགས་སླ་མེད་ཀྱི་བརྒྱན་པ་ལ་བཞུགས་པའང་ཆེར་མ་མཐོང་ངོ། སློབ་བརྒྱུས་སློབ་མེ་ལས་ཁུངས་སུ་མཇུག་པའི་པད་མ་བརྒྱ་དང་། ཀུན་ལ་པ་ཤུང་ཡང་། དང་པོར་ནི་འཕགས་པའི་ཡུལ་དུ་འགྲོ་བའི་དོན་མཇུག་པ་མ་ཤུང་བར་མངོན་ལ་ཕྱི་མའི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ནི་མ་མཐོང་ངོ། དེ་བས་ན་བུམ་མེ་ཆེན་པོ་དང་། སྐྱུ་ལའབ་སྲས་སོགས་ཀྱིས་མཇུག་པའི་སླ་མེད་ཀྱི་བརྒྱན་བཞུགས་ཡོད་པ་འདི་ཀུན་ལས་གཞན་པའི་སྲགས་སླ་མེད་ཀྱི་དགོངས་འགྲེལ་ཡང་འདི་ཡན་ཆད་དུ་ཆེར་མེད་པར་གྲགས་ཤིང་། བརྒྱན་བཞུགས་དེ་དག་ཀྱང་དབུ་མ་རིགས་ཚོགས་ལ་སོགས་པའི་གཞུང་བཞིན་དུ་ཡོངས་སུ་བརྒྱུས་པ་ནི་མ་ཡིན་ཏེ། སྤྱི་བུང་ཆུབ་རིག་པ་འཇོག་པའི་གནས་བརྟེན་པ་དེ་ཁོ་ན་ལ་གཏད་པས། སྤྱི་སྐྱུ་ལའབ་སྲས་ཀྱི་དུས་སུ་དར་བར་གྱུར་པ་ཡིན་ཏེ། དེའི་ཕྱིར་འཕགས་སློབ་དང་སངས་རྒྱུས་ཐོད་པའི་སློབ་སོགས་ལ་བརྒྱན་ཐབས་ཉེ་མོར་འབྱུང་བའི་རྒྱ་མཚན་ཡང་དེ་ཡིན་ནོ། དཔེར་ན་བོད་ཀྱི་ཡང་དག་སྣང་གི་ཚོས་དང་། གཏེར་ཚོས་རྒྱུན་གསོ་བ་མེད་པ་རྣམས་དང་འདྲའོ།

From Chapter Twenty-nine (f. 101b⁴-101b⁶):

འདིའི་དུས་གདོལ་པའི་བྱ་ཞིག་ལྷ་རྒྱུད་ལ་མཇུག་ཀྱིས་བརྒྱབས་པས་ཚོས་ཉོལ་ཤེས་སུ་བྱུང་། བསྐྱེད་པས་གྲུབ་པ་ཐོབ་སྟེ། འཕགས་པ་སྐྱུ་ལའབ་སྲས་ཀྱི་སྲགས་གཞུང་མཐའ་དག་ཉེད། ཅི་རིགས་པར་བཤད་དེ་མ་ཉམ་གྱི་པའོ། ཡང་ཀོང་ཀ་ན་རྒྱ་སློབ་དཔོན་སྣང་བའི་ཞབས་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་དེས་ཞུ་གྲགས་ལ་དངོས་སུ་མཉམ་ཉན་ནས། སློབ་གསལ་གྱི་སློབ་པ་མཇུག་པའང་བྱུང་། དེ་བཞིན་དུ་པའི་ཉེ་སྐྱུ་གཅན་འཇོག་ཟེར་བས་ཀྱང་སྐྱུ་བྱུང་དང་མཇུག་ཟེར་ཏེ། ཚོས་འཕགས་སློབ་མཐོ་དར་བ་ཅམ་བྱུང་། སྤྱི་སྐྱུ་ལའབ་སྲས་ཀྱི་སྲགས་ཀྱི་ལུག་པར་དར་པོ། མཐའ་ལ་ཉི་ཟླ་རྣམ་གཉིས་དང་། ས་ལ་གསལ་བ་རྣམ་གཉིས་ཟེར་བ་བྱུང་སྟེ།

D. Chart of the Hundred Buddha Families
according to Āryadeva's *Lamp of Integrated Practice*

I. The Five Aggregates (25 families)

	Akṣobhya	Vairocana	Ratnasambhava	Amitābha	Amoghasiddhi
Form aggregate (Vairocana)	Indiscernible forms merely introspectively known	Forms with shapes such as in-/outside, long/short, etc.	Form as self, other or both	Inner and outer forms with the five colors	Inner and outer appearances of sun and moon
Feeling (Ratnasambhava)	Feelings arising from bile, and conjunction of the humours	Ambivalence	Feelings arising from phlegm and wind	Pleasure	Pain
Discernment (Amitābha)	Discernments of bipeds	Discernments of inanimate and unchanging beings	Discernments of quadrupeds	Discernments of those without legs	Discernments of many-legged creatures
Volition (Amoghasiddhi)	Mental volitions	Physical volitions	Volitions of the three worlds	Verbal volitions	Liberative volitions
Consciousness (Akṣobhya)	tactile consciousness	visual consciousness	auditory consciousness	olfactory consciousness	gustatory consciousness

II. The Four elements (20 families)

	Akṣobhya	Vairocana	Ratnasambhava	Amitābha	Amoghasiddhi
Earth element (Locanā)	Filth, small intestine, bile, and heart	hair, bone, excrement, liver, and heart	body hair, nails, pus, and heart	Teeth, skin, flesh, and heart	Sinews, flesh, ribs, and heart
external earth element	Videha	Mount Sumeru	Jambudvipa	Godāniya	Uttarakuru
Water element (Māmaki)	Urine	Phlegm and tears	Sweat	Blood	Saliva
external water element	Oceans	Rain	Rivers	Spring water	Pond water
Fire element (Pāṇḍaravāsini)	Heat of the heart	Heat of the head	Heat of the navel	Heat of the limbs	Heat of the stomach
external fire element	Enduring fire	Flint-struck (arising from stones)	Magnifying glass ignited	Arisen from wood	Forest fires
Wind element (Tārā)	Vitality wind	Pervasive wind	Evacuative wind	Ascending wind	Metabolic wind
external wind element	Eastern wind	Zenith wind	Southern wind	Western wind	Northern wind

III. The Five Media (25 families)

	Akṣobhya	Vairocana	Ratnasambhava	Amitābha	Amoghasiddhi
Visual medium (Kṣitigarbha)	grape-like visual sense organ	Seer of the three forms	white of the eye	Peripheral vision (side-long glance)	Eye movement
Aural medium (Vajrapāṇi)	Gnarled aural sense organ	Nature of the ear	Hearer of the three sounds	Ear orifice	Ear root
Olfactory medium (Khagarbha)	Spoon-like olfactory sense organ	Nature of scent	Inner center	Smeller of the three scents	Nose orifice
Gustatory medium	Half-moon shaped gustatory sense organ	Nature of taste	Tongue root	Tip of the tongue	Taster of the three tastes
Tactile medium (Sarvanivaraṇaṣkambhin)	Feeler of the three contacts	Tactile sense organ	Nature of bones	Nature of flesh	Nature of skin
Mental sense medium (Mañjuśrī)					

IV. The Five Auxiliary winds (25 families)

	Aksobhya	Vairocana	Ratnasambhava	Amitabha	Amoghasiddhi
Rising and moving wind (visual)	Forms of postures, play, and flirtation	Seeing forms	Forms craved after	Forms desired, not-desired, and ambivalent	Forms which perform all functions
Re-moving wind (aural)	Wrathful and peaceful sounds of the letter Hūṃ	Sounds in ear, head, or hair	Songs and continual sounds	Palatal, labial, and vocal sounds	Musical sounds such as drum, clapping, snapping, streams and groves
Authentically moving (olfactory)	The inexhaustible scent	All scents	Scent of all limbs	Grasper of the particulars of the three scent	The taste scent
Well-moving wind (gustatory)	Bitter tastes	Sweet tastes	Astringent tastes	Salty tastes	Particulars of six tastes such as hot and sour
Certainly moving (tactile)	Passion of the central channel and passion-free contact of vagina and penis	Touch of a single session on a [meditation] rug	Objects which are embraced	Objects which are kissed	Objects which are inhaled?

V. The Five Intuitive Wisdoms (5 families)

	Aksobhya	Vairocana	Ratnasambhava	Amitabha	Amoghasiddhi
Five intuitive wisdoms	Reality Realm (<i>dharmadhātu</i>)	Mirror-like	Equality	Individuating discernment	Function accomplishing

Appendix II: Glossary of Technical Terms

n.b. Sanskrit equivalencies marked with ** are hypothetical reconstructions.

A. English-Tibetan-Sanskrit

aesthetic mood	ro, nyams	rasa
aggregate	phung po	skandha
alchemy	bcud kyi len	rasāyana
alienated being	so so'i skye bo	prthagjana
ambrosia	bdud rtsi	amṛta
animate	rgyu ba	cara, upacāra
arrogance	rgyags pa	mada
art of accomplishment	sgrub thabs	sādhana
asceticism	dka' thub	tapasyā
authentic	yang dag pa	samyak
being	'gro ba, sems can	gati, jata
bile	mkhris pa	pitta
Body Isolation	lus dben	kāya-viveka
burnt offering	sbyin sreg	homa
caring	brtse ba	kṛpā
cause	rgyu	hetu
characteristic, distinguishing	mtshan nyid	lakṣana
characteristic		
chief	gtso bo	
Clear Light Transparency,	'od gsal	prabhāsvara
Transparency		
clod	<i>bong ba</i>	loṣṭa
concentration	bsam gtan	
concept	(mam par) rtog pa	(vi-)kalpa
conceptual	(mam par) rtog pa'i	(vi-)kalpa°
conceptual adherence	mngon par zhen pa	abhiniveśa
condition	rkyen	pratyaya
confusion	rmongs pa	moha, mūḍha
consciousness (aggregate)	mnam par shes pa('i phung po)	vijñāna (skandha)
construction, [conceptual]	mnam par rtog pa	vikalpa
construction		
continuum	rgyud	saṃtāna
creation stage	bskyed rim	utpattikrama, utpanna°
critical wisdom	shes rab	prajñā
defilement	nyon mongs	kleśa
deity	lha	deva, devatā
delusion	ma rig pa	avidyā
direct perception	mngon sum	pratyakṣa
discrimination (aggregate)	'du shes (kyi phung po)	saṃjñā (skandha)
Dissolving [Samādhi]	rjes su gzhiig pa'i	anunāśa (?)
distraction	gYeng ba	
divine	lha'i	devasya, devatāyāḥ
Dogmatist	rtog ge pa	tarkin
earth (element)	sa (yi khams)	prthivī
effortless	lhun gyis grub pa	anābhoga
element	khams, 'byung ba	dhātu, bhūta
enlightenment	[mngon par] byang chub	[abhi]bodhi

equipoise, meditative	mnyams par bzhag pa	samādhi, samāhita
equipoise		
Era, Contentious	rtsod dus	kāliyuga
Era, Perfect	rdzogs ldan	kṛta yuga
Era, Threefold	gsum ldan	treta yuga
Era, Twofold	gnyis ldan	dvāparayuga
erotic	sgeg pa	sṛṅgāra
erudition	thos pa	śruta
Esoteric Communion	gsang ba 'dus pa	Guhyasamāja
ethics	tshul khrims	śīla
external object	phyi rol gyi dngos po	bāhyabhāva
feeling (aggregate)	tshor ba('i phung po)	vedanā (skandha)
fire (element)	me (yi khams)	tejas
fire-pit	thab khung	kuṇḍa
flirtation	steg pa	
form, matter	gzugs (kyi phung po)	rūpa (skandha)
Four Procedures	tshul bzhi	
generosity	sbyin pa	dāna
gradual	rim gyis	kramaṇa
habit, instinct	bag chags	vāsanā
haughtiness	dregs pa	garvita
hero	sems dpa'	
hidden	sbas pa	gupta, guhya
Holistic [Samādhi]	ril bur 'dzin pa'i	piṇḍagraha°
ignorance	gti mug	moha
Illusion-like Samādhi	sgyu ma lta bu'i ting nge	māyopamasamādhi
	'dzin	
immaculate	dang ba	
immediate	cig car	
Imminence	nye bar thob pa	upalabdhi
impurity	zag pa	āśrava
inanimate	mi rgyu ba	acāra
inner experience	sems kyi snang ba	
instant	thang cig	lava
instinct, habit	bag chags	vāsanā
Integration	zung 'jug	yuganaddha
intention	mos pa	adhimokṣa
intentional explanation	dgongs par bshad pa	
intuitive wisdom	ye shes	jñāna
large intestine	gnye ma	
level	go 'phang	pada
liberation	thar pa	mokṣa
liberative art, art	thabs	upāya
literal	sgra ji bzhin pa	
liver	mchin pa	
Lord	bcom ldan 'das, bdag po	bhagavān
Luminance	snang ba	āloka
lust	chags pa	[ati]sneha
lymph	chu ser	
Magic Body	sgyu lus	māyādeha
magic, magical illusion	sgyu ma	māyā
magical transformation	byin gyis brlabs pa	adhiṣṭhāna
mantra	sngags	mantra
marrow	rkang pa	

marvel	rdzu 'phrul	
masonry	rtsig pa	
media	skye mched	āyātana
mentality	yid	manas
mentor	slob dpon	ācārya
mercury	dngul chu	rasa
method, procedure, manner	tshul, rim pa	
mind	sems	citta
Mind Isolation	sems dben	citta-viveka
Mind Objective [Stage]	sems la dmigs pa	cittāmbana
mirage	smig rgyu	
moment	skad cig	kṣaṇa
momentary	skad cig gi	kṣaṇika
natural instinct	rang bzhin	prakṛti
nature	rang bzhin, ngo bo nyid	svabhāva,
nervous system	klad rgyas	
non-conceptual	nam par mi rtog pa	avikalpa
non-dual	gnyis su med/gnyis med	advaya
non-virtue	mi dge ba	akuśala
objective (adj.)	chos kyi	dharmasya
obscuration	sgrib pa	āvaraṇa
optical illusion	mig 'phrul	
parameter	mtha'	koṭi
passion	'dod chags	rāga, kāma
Perfection Samādhi	rdzogs pa'i ting nge 'dzin	
Perfection Stage	rdzogs rim	saṃpannakrama
personal instructions	man ngag	
phantom	mig yog	pratibhāsa
phlegm	bad kan	kapha, śleṣman
play	nam par rol pa, 'gying bag	lilā
postures	'gying bag	
power	mthu	
practices	spyod pa	caryā
practitioner	sgrub pa po	sādhaka
pride	ngo rgyal	māna
primary texts	dang po'i bstan bcos	
procedure, method	tshul	
process	rim pa	krama
process, manner	rim pa, go rims	krama, anukrama
pure	dag pa	
pus	rnag	
Radiance	mched pa	[āloka-] ābhaṣa
rainbow	'ja' tshon, lha'i dbang po'i	
	gzhu	
Reality	de kho na nyid, de nyid	tattva
Reality Body	chos sku	dharmakāya
Reality Limit	yang dag pa'i mtha'	bhūtakoṭi, bhūtānta
Realm of Reality	chos kyi dbyings	dharmadhātu
reasoning, reason	rigs pa	
reflexive awareness	rang gi rig pa	
revel, revelry	rol po	lalita
ritual text	rtog pa	kalpa
sage	thub pa	muni
saint	dgra bcom pa	arhat

samādhi	ting nge 'dzin	samādhi
scripture	mdo, gsung rab	sūtra, pravacana
scripture, scriptural tradition	lung	āgama
seal	phyag rgya	mudra
secret	gsang ba	guhya
Self-Consecration	bdag byin brlab	svādhiṣṭhāna
sentient being, being	sems can	jana, sattva
sinews	rgyus pa	
Six Parameters	mtha' drug	ṣaṭkoṭi
small intestine	rgyu ma	
Speech Isolation	ngag dben	vāk-viveka
sphere	yul	
spirit of awakening	byang chub sems	bodhicitta
spiritual discipline	brtul zhugs	vrata
spiritual friend	dge ba'i bshes gnyen	kalyānamitra
spiritual hero	sems dpa' chen po	mahāsattva
stage	rim pa	krama
state	gnas	avasthāna
student	slob ma	śiṣya
subjective	bdag gi	pudgalasya
suchness	de bshin nyid	tathatā
Superficial Reality	kun rdzob bden pa	saṃvṛtti-satya
teaching	chos, bstan pa	dharma, śāsana
thing	chos	dharma
throat	lkog ma	
Transcendent Lord	de bzhin gshegs pa	tathāgata
Transparency, Clear Light	'od gsal	prabhāsvara, prabhāsa
Transparency		
trice, mere trice	yud tsam	muhūrta
Ultimate Reality	don dam bden pa	paramārtha-satya
uncompounded	'dus ma byas	asamskṛta
undeceived	mi slu ba	
union	sbyor ba, mnyam sbyor	yoga, samayoga
universal monarch	'khor los sgyur ba	cakravartin
Universal Vehicle	theg pa chen po	mahāyāna
Vajra Recitation	rdo rje bzlas pa	vajrajāpa
Vajra Vehicle	rdo rje theg pa	vajrayāna
Vehicle of Secret Mantra	gsang sngags kyi theg pa	guhyamantrayāna,
		guhyamantranaya
view	lta ba	drṣṭi
virtue	dge ba	kuśāla
void	stong pa	śūnya
voidness	stong pa nyid	śūnyatā
volition (aggregate)	'du byed (kyi phung po)	saṃskāra (skandha)
water (element)	chu (yi khams)	ab(dhātu)
wind (element)	rlung (gi khams)	vāyu(dhātu), prāṇa, vāta
wind, ascending	steng du rgyu ba'i rlung	udāna
wind, authentically moving	yang dag rgyu ba	saṃcaraṇa**
wind, certainly moving	nges par rgyu ba	niścaraṇa**
wind, evacuative	thur du sel ba'i rlung	apāna
wind, fire-aligned	me dang mnyam du	samāna
wind, pervasive	khyab byed kyi rlung	vyāna
wind, re-moving	rnam par rgyu ba	vicaraṇa
wind, rising and moving	ldang zhing rgyu ba	

wind, vitality
 wind, well-moving
 worldly beings, the worldly
 wrath
 Śrāvaka Vehicle

srog gi rlung
 rab tu rgyu ba
 'jig rten pa
 khro ba
 nyan thos kyi theg pa, theg
 dman

prāṇa
 pracaraṇa**
 laukika
 krodha
 śrāvakayāna, hinayāna

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 • Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. 96 (rGyud ca), 95b⁵-163b²; Translated by Dharmaśrībhadrā and Rin-chen bZang-po.
- Sarvabuddhasamāyoga-dākinijālasambara-nāma-uttaratantra* (*dPal sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro ma sgyu ma bde ba'i mchog ces bya ba'i rgyud phyi ma*).
 • sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. ka, 151b¹-193a⁶; translated by Lha Rin-po-che (Tōh. 366).
 • Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. 95 (rGyud nga), 241a¹-295b²; No translator given, though the next text in this redaction is said to have been translated by Smṛtijñānakīrti and revised by gZhon-nu Grags-pa (There is said to have been a version by Smṛti before Bu-ston's time, might this be it?)
 • Urga Kanjur, vol. 78 (rGyud ka), 151a¹-193a⁶.

Sarvakalpasamuccaya-nāma-sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālasambara-uttarottara-tantra (rTog pa thams cad 'dus pa zhes bya ba sangs rgyas thams cad dang mnyam par sbyor ba mkha' 'gro sgyu ma bde ba'i mchog gi rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma).

- sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. ka, 193a⁶-212a⁷; Translated by Smṛtijñānakīrti and revised by gZhon-nu Grags-pa (Tōh. 367).
- Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. 95 (rGyud nga), 295b²-321a⁴; Translated by Smṛtijñānakīrti and revised by gZhon-nu Grags-pa.
- Urga Kanjur, vol. 78 (rGyud ka), 193a⁶-212a⁷.

Sarvarahasya-nāma-tantrarāja (thams cad gsang ba zhes by ab rgyud kyi rgyal po). [The Universal Secret Tantra]

- Tōh. 481, sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. ta, 1b¹-10a¹. Translated by Padmākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po. [Tibetan translation]
- Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. 98 (rGyud ja), 178a⁵-189a²; Translated by Padmākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po. [Tibetan translation].
- Urga Kanjur, vol. 86 (rGyud ta), 1b¹-10a¹; Translated by Padmākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po. [Tibetan]

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- Ed. Lokesh Chandra. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987. [Sanskrit edition]
- sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. nya, 1b¹-142a⁷ (Tōh. 479).
- Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. 97 (rGyud cha), 295b⁶-485a⁴; Translated by śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po.

Śrijñānavajrasamuccaya (dPal ye shes rdo rje kun las bsdu pa). [Glorious Compendium of Vajra Intuitive Wisdom]

- Tōh. 450

Śri-khasama-tantrarāja-nāma (dPal nam-mkha' dang mnyam pa'i rgyud kyi rgyal po). [The Infinite Tantra]

- sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. ga, 199a⁷-202a¹ (Tōh. 386).

Śriparamāditantra/śriparamādināmamahāyānakalparāja (dPal mchog dang po'i rgyud or dPal mchog dang po zhes bya ba theg pa chen po'i rtog pa'i rgyal po). [The Prime Glorious Supreme Tantra]

- sDe-dge bsTan-'gyur, rGyud vol. ta, 150b¹-173a¹ (Tōh. 487). Trans. Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po [Tibetan translation]
- Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. 99 (rGyud nya), 1b¹-35a³. Trans. Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po [Tibetan translation]
- Urga Kanjur, vol. 86 (rGyud ta), 150b¹-173a⁴; Trans. Śraddhākaravarman and Rin-chen bZang-po.

Śūraṅgamasamādhi Sūtra (dPa' bar 'gro ba'i ting nge 'dzin gyi mdo) [Hero's March Samādhi Scripture].

- Tōh. 132, sDe-dge bsTan-'gyur, mDo, vol. da, 253b⁵-316b⁶. Trans. Śākyaprabha and Ratnarakṣita. [Tibetan translation]
- Tog Palace Kanjur, vol.

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- Emmerick, R.E., transl. *The Sūtra of Golden Light*. London: Luzac & Company, 1970. [English Translation]

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- sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol ka, 213b1-246b7; Translated by Padmākara and Rin-chen bZang-po, revised by Prajñākirti and Mar-pa Chos-kyi Grags-pa (Tōh. 368).
- Urga Kanjur, vol. 78 (rGyud ka), 213a¹-246b⁷.

Tāranātha. *bKa' babs bdun ldan gyi brgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba rin po che'i khungs lta bu'i gtam* [*bKa' babs bdun ldan gyi rnam thar*]. 1600.

- Tseten Dorji, ed. *Five Historical Works of Tāranātha*. Tezu: Tibetan Nyingmapa Monastery, 1974. [Tibetan facsimile edition]
- See Templeman, *The Seven Instruction Lineages*, *infra*. [English translation]

-----. *Dam pa'i chos rin po che 'phags pa'i yul du ji ltar dar ba'i tshul gsal bar ston pa dgos 'dod kun 'byung* [rgya gar chos 'byung]. 1608.

- Tseten Dorji, ed. *Five Historical Works of Tāranātha*. Tezu: Tibetan Nyingmapa Monastery, 1974. [Tibetan facsimile edition]
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- *Collected Works*, vol. ca (vol. 8 of bound edition).

- . *rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i man ngag rim pa lnga rab tu gsal ba'i sgron me zhes bya ba* [The Personal Instruction in the King of Tantras the Glorious Esoteric Communion called the "Extremely Brilliant Lamp of the Five Stages"].
 • Peking edition, vol pha.
 • See Thurman *infra*. [English translation]
- . *rGyal khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang chen po'i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad rnam par phye ba (sngags rim chen mo)* [Great Exposition of the Stages of Secret Mantra].
 • Collected Works, vol. ga.
 • *sNgags Rim Chen Mo*. Lhasa(?): mTsho-sngon Mi-rigs dPe-skrunkhang, 1995.
- . *rGyud kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgya cher bshad pa sgron ma gsal ba'i dka' ba'i gnad kyi mtha' gcod rim po che'i myu gu* [The Precious Sprout, eliminating Extreme Views in regard to the Difficult Points of the "Brilliant Lamp Commentary" on the King of Tantras the Glorious Esoteric Communion].
 • *Collected Works*, vol. ca.
- . *rGyud thams cad kyi rgyal po dpal gsang ba 'dus pa'i rgya cher bshad pa sgron ma rab tu gsal ba'i tshig don ji bzhin 'byed pa'i mchan gyi yang 'grel* [Annotations on the extensive commentary of the Esoteric Communion].
 • *Collected Works*, vol. nga (vols. 6 and 7 of bound edition).
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- . *dPal gsang ba 'dus pa'i bshad pa'i rgyud ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa'i tikā* [Commentary on the Communion explanatory tantra, Compendium of Vajra Intuitive Wisdom].
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 • sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, Shes-phyin, vol. ka, f. 121a¹-132b⁷ (Tōh. 16).
- Vajrajñānasamucchāya-nāma-tantra (ye shes rdo rje kun las btus pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud)*. [Compendium of Vajra Intuitive Wisdom Tantra].
 • Tōh. 447
 • Tog Palace Kanjur, vol. 96 (rGyud ca), 259b⁵-265a⁵; Translated by Jñānakāra and Khu-ston dNgos-grub, revised by Tshul-khrims rGyal-ba.
- Vajramālā. (Śrīvajramālābhīdhāna-mahāyogatantra sarvatantraḥṛdaya-rahasya-vibhaṅga, rNal 'byor chen po'i rgyud dpal rdo rje phreng ba mngon par brjod pa rgyud thams cas kyi snying po gsang ba rnam par phye ba zhes bya ba)*. [The Vajra Garland Tantra].
 • Tōh. 445, sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. ca, 208a¹-277b³. Translated by Sujanaśrijñāna and Zhi-ba'i 'Od. [Tibetan translation]

Urga Kanjur, vol. 82, p. 208a¹-277b¹. [Tibetan translation]

Vajramaṇḍalālamkāra-nāma-mahātantrarāja (dPal rdo rje snying po rgyan zhes bya ba'i rgyud kyi rgyal po chen po). [The Vajra Maṇḍala Ornament Tantra]

• Tōh. 490, sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur, rGyud, vol. tha, 1b¹-82a⁷. Translated by Sugataśrī, Sa-skya Paṇḍita, and bLo-gros brTan-pa. [Tibetan translation]

• The Tog Palace Kanjur has three texts with this title:

1) Vol. 99 (rGyud nya), 182a4-291b7; Translated by bLo-gros brTan-pa after a partial translation by dPal-ldan Chos-rje

2) Vol. 99 (rGyud nya), 291b7-405a7; Translators as above, revised by Bu-ston Kha-che [This text is not in the sDe-dge bKa'-'gyur], and

3) Vol. 96 (rGyud ca), 265a6-293a7; Translated by Kamalagupta and mNga'-bdag Lha Ye-shes rGyal-mtshan (with the idiosyncratic Sanskrit title, Vajrahṛdayālamkāra.

Vajroṣṇiṣa Tantra (rdo rje gtsug tor gyi rgyud). [Vajra Crown-protrusion Tantra]

• no extant editions

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dbYang-s-can dGa'-ba'i bLo-gros. dPal gSang-ba 'dus-pa 'phags lugs dang mthun pa'i sngags kyi sa lam rnam gzhas legs bshad skal bzang 'jug ngogs zhes bya ba. [The Presentation of the Stages and Paths of Mantra in accordance with the Ārya Tradition of the Esoteric Communion, called "Eloquent Entryway of the Fortunate"]].

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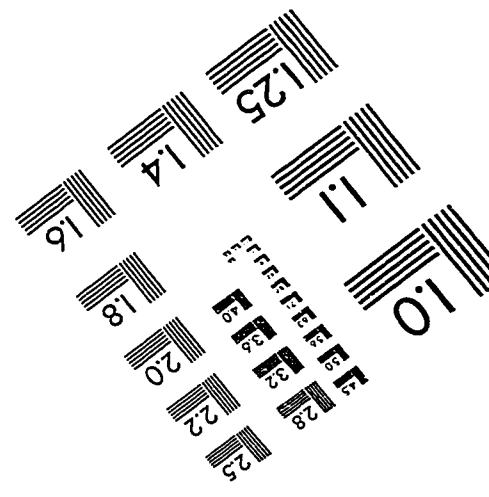
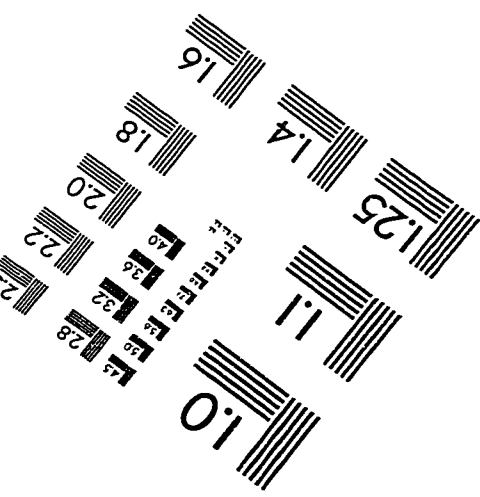
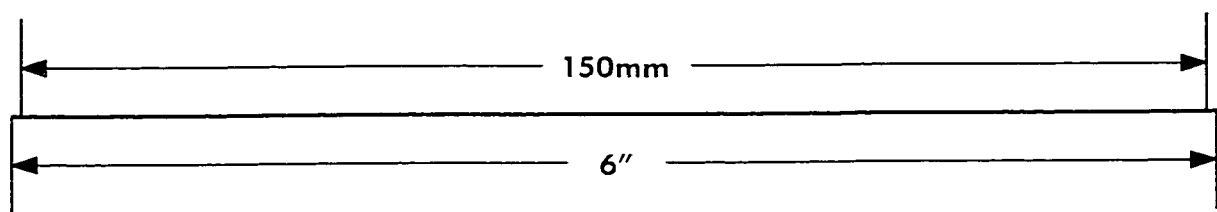
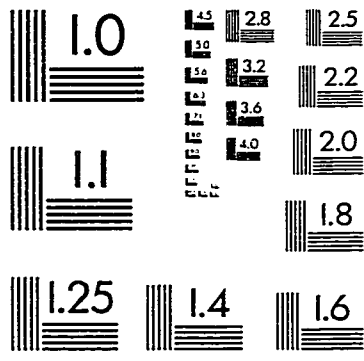
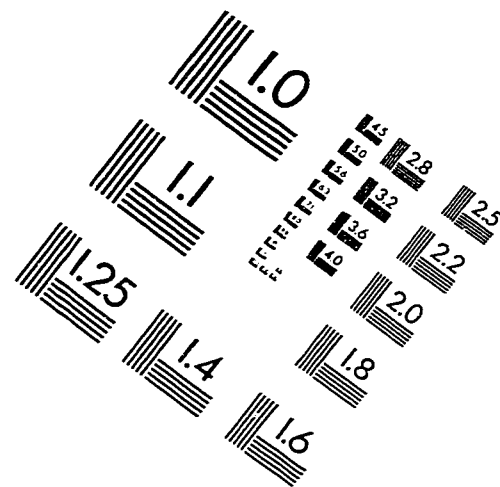
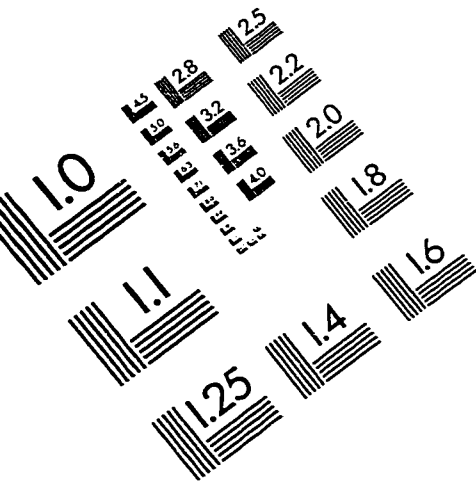
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