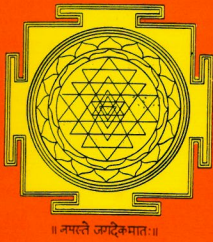


A PROJECT ON BHARATIYA-SAMSKRITI-SARVASVA-KOSHA



Kalpatharu Research Academy Publication

Chief Editor : DAIVAJNA K.N. SOMAYAJI

YOGA-TANTRA-SAMPRADĀYA

YOGA AND TANTRA IN INDIA AND TIBET (PART-I)



By

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

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YOGA-TANTRA SAMPRADĀYA : YOGA AND TANTRA IN INDIA AND TIBET -

PART-I, by Vidyalankara, Sastra-Chudamani, Sangita Kalaratna, Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao, and Published by Daivajna K.N. Somayaji, Chief Editor and Director, Kalpatharu Research Academy, No. 1, Shankarmutt, Shankarapuram, Bangalore - 560 004, Phone: 6524847, Fax : 6514078, E-mail : kra@bgl.vsnl.net.in

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PREFACE

Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore, has been encouraging Research and publishing volumes of great significance to the revival of the real values of Indian culture. Indological enterprises, Western as well as India, have no doubt devoted attention to the various aspects of Indian culture for nearly a century; but largely without recognizing that there is a traditional Indian outlook (Sampradaya). The efforts of the Academy are being directed to this much neglected dimension of study. All our publications have this core-content.

An illustration of this approach was our volume Darsanodaya (Early Indian Thought), brought out last year. A continuation of this volume is being presented now to the scholarly world. This volume entitled "Yoga-Tantra-Sampradaya" ("Yoga and Tantra in India and Tibet") fills a lacuna in Indological research; it presents a characteristically Indian appraisal of these two branches, Yoga and Tantra, as they developed in India, and as they were grafted into Tibetan religion at a subsequent period. It is hoped that this will be received by scholars and students, as the earlier publications of the Academy have been received.

The Academy is fortunate and proud to have secured the help of the renowned Indologist, Vidyalkara, Sastra Chudamani, Vedanta-nidhi, Sangita-Kalaratna Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao, who combines traditional learning with modern research. He is a reputed scholar in Sanskrit, Prakrit and Pali; and is well acquainted with several other languages including Tibetan. He has given an account of Tantra and Yoga, as they are contained in Tibetan scriptures. We are grateful to him for this volume, as for the other volumes published by the Academy.

We acknowledge with humility and devotion the blessings showered on us by the Jagadguru of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham, His Holiness Sri Bharathi Tirtha Mahaswamiji; and we are grateful to Sri V.R. Gowrishankar, the Administrator of Sringeri Sharada Peetham for his keen interest and encouragement. Also we are grateful to Sri Kamal M. Morarka of Mumbai for his kind & continued contribution for our Research & Charitable Programmes.

We are deeply indebted to the authorities of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Govt. of India, for their generous financial assistance. We also thank the Govt. of Karnataka for their support in our endeavor, and to the Omkar offset printers for having produced this volume neatly and in short time.

Bangalore
Sri Pramathi Vyasa Poornima
28th July 1999

DAIVAJNA K.N. SOMAYAJI
CHIEF EDITOR AND DIRECTOR
KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

INSTITUTION FOR :

- * Promotion of Research-Oriented studies in Veda, Vedanga, Agama, Jyoutisha, Vedanta, Yoga and Ayurveda.
- * Study of Sanskrit language in particular and other related languages.
- * Propagation of Vedic Phonetics.
- * Establishment of Veda Patashalas in Guru-Kula system.
- * Running of Oriental Libraries (Prachya-Granthalaya).
- * Collection, Preservation and Publication of Old Manuscripts.

INTRODUCTION

A sequel to *Darśanadaya* (Early Indian Thought), which was brought out last year, the present volume focuses attention on the tradition of Yoga-Tantra complex, as it evolved in India; and how it was conveyed to Tibet through Indian Siddhas and Āchāryas. Many aspects of this tradition were lost in India during the middle ages when the universities of Nālandā and Takshashilā were destroyed by the Muslim invaders; but Tibetan scholars and students along with the Indian masters who fled to safety of Himalayan ranges, translated the original Sanskrit texts into Tibetan, and these have been preserved. The Tibetan translations and Tibetan chronicles help us to reconstruct the nature and approach of Yoga-Tantra tradition in India. This is what has been done in the present volume.

The author is grateful to Sri Daivajna K.N. Somayaji, Director, Kalpatharu Research Academy, His Holiness the Jagdguru of Sri Sringeri Sharada Peetham who is the Chief Patron of Kalpatharu Research Academy, and Sri V.R. Gowrishankar, the Administrator of the Sringeri Sharada Peetham and the Chairman of the Kalpatharu Research Academy, and Sri Babu of Omkar Offset Printers who merits our deep appreciation for the excellent quality of the production of this volume.

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

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नमस्ते जगदेक मातः
 चतुर्भुजे चन्द्रकलावतंसे
 कुचोन्नते कुङ्कुमरागशोणे ।
 पुँड्रेक्षुपाशाङ्कुशपुष्पबाण-
 हस्ते नमस्ते जगदेकमातः ॥



H.H. Sri Sri BHARATI THEERTA MAHASWAMIJI

HUMBLE DEDICATION TO OUR CHIEF PATRON

भारतीकरुणापात्रं
भारतीपदभूषणम् ।
भारतीपदमारूढं
भारतीतीर्थमाश्रये ॥



॥ श्री शृङ्गेरी श्रीजगद्गुरुमहासंस्थानम् ॥

श्रीमत्परमहंसपरिव्राजकाचार्यवर्य पदवाक्यप्रमाणपारावारपारीण
यमनियमासनप्रणायामप्रत्याहारधारणाध्यानसमाध्यष्टाङ्गयोगानुष्ठाननिष्ठ
तपश्चक्रवर्त्यनाद्यविच्छिन्न श्रीशङ्कराचार्यगुरुपरम्पराप्राप्त षड्दर्शनस्थापनाचार्य
व्याख्यानसिंहासनाधीश्वर सकलनिगमागमसारहृदय सांख्यद्वयप्रतिपादक वैदिकमार्गप्रवर्तक
सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रादिराजधानी विद्यानगरमहाराजधानी कर्णाटकसिंहासनप्रतिष्ठापनाचार्य
श्रीमद्राजाधिराजगुरुभूमण्डलाचार्य ऋष्यशृङ्गपुरवराधीश्वर तुङ्गभद्रातीरवासि
श्रीमद्विद्याशङ्करपादपद्माराधक श्रीजगद्गुरु श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थस्वामिगुरुकरकमलसज्जात

॥ श्री जगद्गुरु शृङ्गेरी श्रीमद्भारतीतीर्थमहास्वामिभिः ॥

अस्मदत्यन्तप्रियशिष्य श्री नरसिंह सोमयाजि विषये नारायणस्मरणपूर्वकं विरचिता
आशिषस्समुल्लसन्तु ।

वैदिकान्ववाये लब्धजनिर्भवान् ज्योतिर्विद्यामभ्यस्य तद्द्वारा बहून् जनान् उपकुर्वन्नास्ते । वेदागमशास्त्रेषु
भूयसीं ब्रह्मावावहन् तत्प्रचाराय कल्पतरु संशोधनप्रतिष्ठान नाम्नीं संस्थां प्रत्यस्थापयत् । सा च संस्था
विशिष्टान् ग्रन्थान् प्रकाशयन्ती बरीवर्ति ।

शृंगगिरि जगद्गुरु महासंस्थाने पारम्परिकीं भक्तिमास्थितवतो भवतो मनसि संस्थामेनां शृंगगिरि मठीयां
विधातुं सङ्कल्पः उदभूदिति विज्ञाय मोदामहे । अत एव अदसीयानि प्रकाशनानि इतः परं मठीयत्वेनैव
प्रकाशयिष्यन्त इत्यपि भवान् निरचिनोत् । दुर्लभाः भारतीयसंस्कृतिप्रबोधकाः विशिष्टाः ग्रन्थाः
संस्थायानया प्रकाशयन्तां तेन च भवदीयो मनोरथः फलेग्रहिर्भूयात् श्रीशारदाचन्द्रमौलीश्वरयोरनुकम्पया
भवान् इतोधिक श्रेयः परम्पराभिः समभिवर्धतामिति चाशास्महे ।

शृङ्गगिरिः

ईश्वर भारपदशुद्धदशमी भार्गववासरः

12.9.1997

इति नारायणस्मरणम्

CHAPTER ONE

TANTRA AND YOGA IN INDIA

INTRODUCTION :



Proper appreciation of Tantra as a discipline and as practice has suffered from a dual disadvantage. The enthusiasts of Tantra have sought to project an image of it that is at once so highly esoteric and mystical, so that the scholar who has a modest opinion of his own

intellectual abilities is easily scared away. The opponents of Tantra, on the other hand, seek so to highlight the antinomian and sexual elements in the several cults which claim to be Tantric, that the decent citizen who has an eye for propriety promptly shies from it. Few are aware that, in fact, while the former attitude is unjustified, the latter is also unwarranted. It is true that some Tāntrik texts work with extremely abstract ideas, and employ elaborate and sometimes irrelevant symbolism, often camouflaging the intention. It is also true that some Tāntrik rituals, as described and practised, are wholly unconventional and appear

even outlandish. But these are but deviations and perversions, altogether alien to the spirit and significance of Tantra as an ideology.

The Tantra was certainly folk in origin, and the elements of sophistication were naturally minimal. It concerns itself with the problems and predicaments of the common man, and pertained almost entirely to his daily life. There was an unmistakable emphasis on the individuals in the folk culture, somewhat contrary to the aggregate orientation of the Vedic tradition. But extravagance in individual behaviour was never suggested, encouraged or accepted. Tāntrik culture was bound rather with the ideal of 'quiet contemplation' than with the goal of 'joyful life' here or

hereafter, that we find reflected in the Vedic hymns. In fact, the Vedic temperament of buoyant and ecstatic involvement was to a great extent tempered as a result of Tāntrik impact, as can be seen in the Upanishadic ideology. The Tantra is neither so forbiddingly esoteric nor so nauseatingly bizarre: it is a simple, wholesome approach to the problem of good living in a world of mixed forces.

The expression 'tantra' has been variously derived, and differently explained. It is taken to signify a system of thought, a body of practices or a collection of books. Like the other word *yoga*, this word too has many meanings, both common and uncommon, both normal and abnormal. As will be

explained later, the original meaning appears to have been in the context of weaving on a loom: it was a vocation-derived word. Tantra is the loom whereon the threads are 'spread out' or 'extended' (root *tan*). It also signified the pattern or design that emerged out of this spreading or extension. In the latter sense, it stood for a book, or a chapter thereof, where arguments and explanations illustrated and clarified a theme (like *Shashṭi-tantra*), or stories illustrated a point (like *Pañcha-tantra*). Originally referring to individual manuals, it came in course of time to stand for a whole literature mainly of religio-magical interest. More significantly, 'tantra' suggested the *act* of spreading out, or the *process* of extension: techniques, methods, practices, even



ploys and tricks. The expression thus came to mean any skill, or competence in cleverly combining the methods and techniques.

We read in *Īśāna-Śiva-guru-deva-paddhati* that the word Tantra is derived from the root 'tattri' (meaning 'to explain') and signifies

the ability to hold in mind ('tattrīti dhātor iha dhāraṇārthāt'). Thus it combines the skill in explanation, and also the act of carrying conviction. It also means guarding, defending, maintaining. *Pingalā-mata* says:

तनुते त्रायते नित्यं तन्त्रमित्थं विदुर्बुधाः ॥

We have an interesting definition by an eminent authority, Kātyāyana; 'Tantra is the co-occurrence of actions'. That is to say, it is an organisation of several behavioural acts, a synthesis - incidentally precisely what Yoga means. Āyurveda makes use of the word 'tantra' in the sense of 'body', and another word 'yantra' in the sense of its machinery. Body is a collection of organs (*aṅgas*), an organisation of forces (*dhātus*,

doshas and *malas*), and a pattern of becoming. Even in its extended sense, 'yantra' means a geometrical pattern, a synthesis of lines and 'seed-letters', a total representation. And 'mantra' likewise is an organisation of sound-systems, such as letters and words with some uncommon potency, or merely a magic formula. Tantra technically is a process of relating the unusual patterns (*yantra*) with uncommon formulae (*mantra*). Basic to both patterns and formulae is the belief that the human body is the ground where they operate. *Yantras* are merely extensions or externalisations of both the lines of forces imagined as working within the individual; and *mantras* are in the nature of making concrete and explicit the subtle vibrations that occur within. Tantra

refers to the common field wherein these forces and vibrations operate, viz., the body, not the gross physical body alone, but the 'subtle' body, unseen though elaborate, and effective though invisible.

That the body we can see and touch contains within it a body we can neither see nor touch is a very ancient thought, common to most people in the world. The Tantra ideology developed this amorphous thought into a sort of internal dynamics, or psychical energy-system, within the individual. It is the individual context that becomes significant in the Tāntrik tradition: instincts, impulses, aspirations and inhibitions of the individual are sought to be so organised that they functioned effectively, purposefully



and unitarily. By such reorganisation of the internal forces, one not only overcomes the natural limitations but heightens his natural efficiency. The actions involved in this organisation or reintegration are the 'rituals' which are both symbolic and suggestive. This pattern of actions is sought to correspond to the pattern of the inner field-forces and this is what is meant by Tantra; and the yoking of actions to the field-forces within is Yoga. The two expressions, Tantra

and Yoga, emerged from the same source, and become meaningful in the same context.

The Tāntrik tradition thus focusses its attention on the individual: his physical structure, mental mechanism, modes of consciousness, and organismic motivations. The Vedic tradition, on the other hand, concerns itself mainly with the cosmos, subject to the capricious forces, which, however, are amenable to coercion. The early Tāntrik tradition did not stretch its imagination beyond the immediate surroundings of the individual. And at a later date when, under Vedic influence, it came to develop an interest in the world beyond, it comforted itself with the conviction that the microcosm was essentially

homologous with the macrocosm. The cosmos was in fact merely an extension, if not a projection, of the individual. The universe was in fact contained within the individual.

When we find similar ideas in the Upaniṣhadic phase of Vedic literature, influence of the Tāntrik ideology is to be inferred. The characteristic Tāntrik philosophy, as can be gleaned from mediaeval texts like *Tantrāloka*, *Śāradātilaka*, *Mṛgendrāgama* and *Tripurā-rahasya* is doubtless heavily indebted to the Vedic outlook, although it contains a core that goes back to pre-Vedic culture. The classical Tāntrik concepts such as *bīja*, *bindu*, *saṁvit*, *kalā*, *maṇḍala*, *prakāśa*, *vimarśa*, *ahantā*, *idaṁtā*, and *kañcuka* are clearly concessions to the growing

cosmic involvement as a result of interaction with the Vedic thought-system. Even when this involvement came to pass, the interest in the individual was not compromised. In the individual-two aspects of life merited the total attention of the Tāntra; breathing and sex. In common with primitive thought elsewhere, the Tantra feared that exhalation of the bodily air, and ejaculation of the seminal fluid, were tantamount to expenditure of life-energy, and thereby the hastening of death. In order to prolong life, it was considered necessary to restrain breath, and arrest the seminal discharge. *Prāṇāyāma*-techniques of breath-control, and procedures like *yōni-mudrā* and *vajroli-mudrā* to prevent 'the *bindu* catching fire' (viz. ejaculation) were advocated in



Tāntrik texts. A text, the date of which is uncertain, *Goraksha-sāṃhitā*, brings out the intimate relationship between the breath (*prāṇa*) and the semen (*bindu*); the two are in fact equated. It is understandable that the Yoga-Tantra complex attempted properly to understand sex, and to harness the sexual drive to reach spiritual objectives.

Employment of sex-imagery is no doubt frequent in the Tāntrik lore. But it worked both ways: making it adorable, and making it abominable. Sex in itself is neutral, like the air we breathe; and it is natural, too. Its expression depends upon individual maturity, motivation and mental habits. It is true that several erotic and orgiastic cults that

are at once enigmatic and seductive to the common man grew out of certain unhealthy motivations and anti-social tendencies. But such cults do not suggest the essential orientation of the Tantra.

The attempt to discover, recognise and emphasize mystic meanings in what are patently absurd and outlandish, can sometimes be overdone. There have been secret societies devoted to exotic and unbridled sexual indulgence (*guhya-samāja*), and to murderous crimes have masquaeraded as esoteric Tāntrik cults, and to an extent have got away with it. There are those who seriously explain that copulation “makes respiration rhythmical and aids concentration: it is, then, a substitute for *prāṇāyāma*”, and they

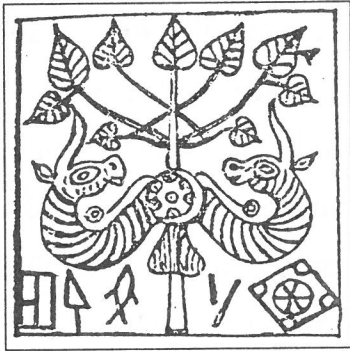
always, and can conveniently, cite from Tāntrik texts of uncertain date and dubious authority. They make it appear that eroticism is the very essence of Tantra; and their appreciation of this aspect of Tantra is not entirely one of understanding. The attractively got up books on 'Tantrik Art' that are flooding our book-shops these days illustrate this fact. It is unfortunate that in these circumstances Tantra more often than not brings to the Indian mind associations which are horrible and disgusting. Actually, however, sex in Tantra is employed not for direct gratification, but for 'reversal' (*parāvṛtti*) and restraint (*saṁyama* or *dhāraṇā*).

Tāntra is not to be mistaken for a collection of mystic cults holding unusual and outlandish ideas. It is a

simple, serious, sober and realistic philosophy of life, which only takes into account our normal impulses and aspirations. Sāṁkhya-Yoga, Āyurveda and the early Upanishadic texts more truly represent the Tāntrik tradition than all the mystifying cults that commonly go by that name. In fact, regulated but effective living, eschewing excesses, was the basic Tantrik outlook. Preservation of health, acquisition of power to live effectively, and safeguarding of the community from individual aggression were the three objectives that were invariably emphasized. Control of breathing was meant to secure the first two objectives; and control of impulses, especially the sexual, took care of the third. There was however considerable experimentation and theorizing,

before the methods were standardized and advocated. The employment of medicinal and psychedelic drugs, alchemic techniques, and attempts at sex-sublimation were included in such experimentation.

THE TWO TRADITIONS



The earliest literary employment of the expression 'tantra' occurs in the *RgVeda* (10, 71, 9, although the occurrence is solitary).

त एते वाचमभिपद्य पापया तिरिस्तन्त्रं तन्वते ॥

The context is the common trades, which only the lay-folk with unrefined speech take to, but not the learned or Soma-extracting priests. The word 'tantra' is used here along with 'work'. Sāyaṇa, in his commentary on the above, explains that 'tantra' is an agricultural implement (plough or loom) which is 'spread out' (*vistāravanti*) or 'worked' (*kurvanti*).

तन्त्रं कृषिलक्षणं तन्वते विस्तारयन्ति कुर्वन्ति ॥

Atharvaveda (10, 7, 42) uses the word more specifically in the sense of 'loom'; and Pāṇini takes the word 'tantraka' to mean a piece of cloth just taken out of the loom (*Aṣṭādhyāyī* 5, 2, 70). It is possible that this was the original connotation

of the word. But it soon came out of its shell, and came in course of time to signify a system composed of aspects, as for instance in *Āpastamba* (*Śrauta-sūtra* 1, 15, 1, tantra is defined here as 'aṅga-samudāya'). This line of development is rather intriguing because it had by then already acquired a ritualistic involvement. *Āpastamba's* commentator explains that it is a ritual procedure with multiple details. A curiously extended meaning in the same context is furnished by *Śabara*: "when what is performed but once serves many purposes - even as a lamp lit up in the midst of many priests".

On *Pūrva-mīmāṃsā-sūtra* 11, 4, 1

यत् सकृत्कृतं बहूनामुपकरोति, यथा
ब्राह्मणानां मध्ये कृतः प्रदीपः ॥

(cf. also *Śāṅkhāyana-śrauta-sūtra* 1, 16, 6 : यत्सकृत्कृतं बहूनामुपकरोति तत् तन्त्रमित्युच्यते ॥)

However, the precise ritualistic import is more suggested than evident here. What perhaps was meant is that in the event of one being unable for some reason to go through the entire sequence of rituals, performance of a detail thereof would suffice to bring about the desired fruit. Alternately, it referred to some detail which is employed in diverse sequences in the self-same manner, but with different benefits.

Tantra as a discipline appears to be a later interpretation. The *Sāṃkhya* for instance, styled itself as a 'tantra' (*Īśvara-kṛṣṇa's Sāṃkhya-Karikā*, 70 तेन च बहुधा कृतं तन्त्रम् ॥)

and Saṅkara (on *Brahma-Sūtra*, 2, 2, 1) recognises it as such; Pāñcharātra was known as 'Sāttvata-tantra' (*Bhāgavata* 1, 3, 8). Kauṭilya uses the word in the sense of fundamental canons employed for explaining and expounding a system of thought. (*Artha-śāstra*, 15th adhikaraṇa, called tantra-yukti). This interpretation appears to have gained ground, and tantra came specifically to mean a well-organised body of thought, with its own logic and rationale (cf. *Charaka-samhitā*, 12, 36, 'tantrasya yuktayah'; also *Suśruta-samhitā*, uttara-tantra 65, 32). It was even looked upon as tantamount to 'authority' or tradition. But the word was still used rather sparingly with reference to the orthodox systems. Kullūka-bhaṭṭa's distinction between Vedic tradition



and Tāntrik tradition was the prevailing view in the mediaeval ages. Kullūka-bhaṭṭa's period was between 1150 and 1300. He comments on *Manu-smṛiti* 2,1 : श्रुतिश्च द्विविधा वैदिकी तान्त्रिकी च॥ This is also the view of *Agni-purāṇa* (372, 34). In many works, the term 'nigama' stands for the Veda and 'āgama' for the Tantra.

That the ritualistic import lingered on even when Tantra came to signify 'discipline' is brought out by the references in the some *Purāṇas* and in *Bhāgavata* (11th Skandha) that speaks of three kinds of worship, Vedic, Tāntrik and mixed.

वैदिकी तान्त्रिकी मिश्र इति त्रिविधो मखः ॥

It can safely be assumed that at first the differences between the Vedic tradition and Tāntrik tradition were almost irreconcilable. Each camp looked upon the other as antagonistic to itself, perverse and purposeless. If the *Purāṇas* proclaimed that the Tantras were prepared only in order to confound the wicked (*dushtānām mohanārthāya*), the Tantras like *Kulārṇava* claimed that a Tantra is like an honourable house-wife (*kula-*

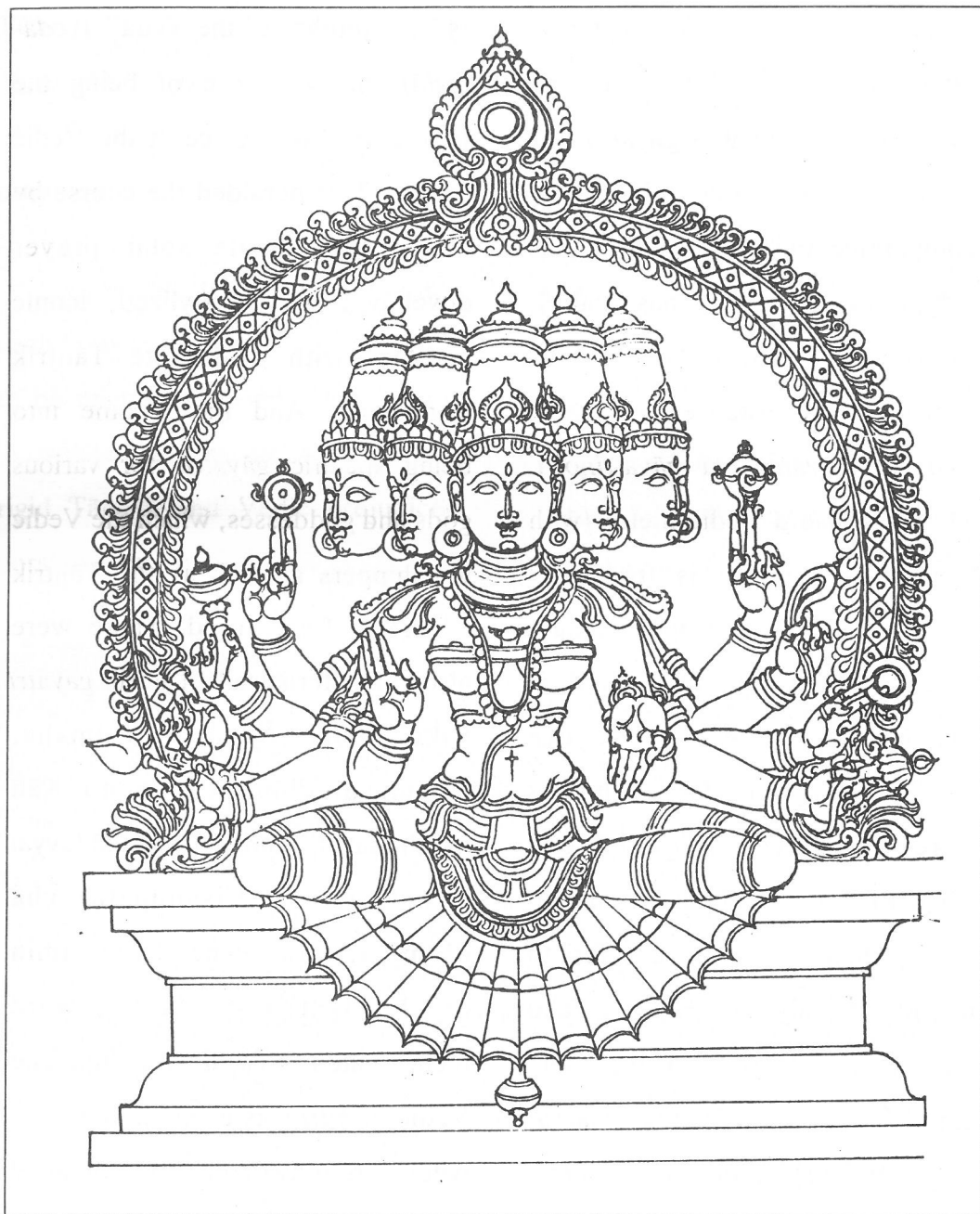
vadhū) while the Veda with its accessories like *Purāṇas* and *Śāstrās*, it like a common harlot (*sāmānyaganikā*). The orthodox view, projected mainly by Kumārila and Śaṅkara, holds that Tantra was meant for the degenerate, the uneducated, the fallen, or the infirm, and that its rituals were fraught with dangers of all sorts. But the Tantrik enthusiasts hold even now that the Vedas, being old and antiquated, cannot lead to much good. *Kāka-chaṇḍeśvara-mata*, for instance, says: वेदानां च वयोऽर्थेन न सिद्धिस्तेन जायते ॥ There was obviously a struggle for ascendance, and each tradition geared itself up to meet most of the needs of both the folk and the elite. And in the process, almost naturally and necessarily each modelled itself after the other, assimilated the

attractive particulars of the other. The Tāntrik adherents sought to show that the tantra after all had Vedic foundation, Vedic sanction and Vedic authority. The Vedic puritans took over many of the hand-gestures (*mudrās*), spells (*mantras*) and magic designs (*maṇḍalas*) that the Tāntriks employed, together with their methods of exposition. The new attitude is made clear by Aparārka's counsel in his gloss on *Yājñavalkya-samhita* (p.19) that the Tantras should not be condemned outright, although they are not entirely valid or uniformly authoritative.

The reconciliation between the two divergent traditions was partly effected by the orthodox affiliating the Tantra to the 'Saubhāgya-kāṇḍa' of *Atharva-veda*. Bhāskara-rāya's

Setubandha as also *Śukra-nīti-sāra* (4,3,39) speak of: आथर्वणं चोपवेदस्तन्त्ररूपः स एव हि॥ and the Tāntra writers relying heavily on Vedic texts like *Taittirīya-āranyaka* and describing their scriptures as continuation of the Upanishadic tradition. The Vedic rituals adopted numerous Tāntrik details, and the Tantra abandoned its cruder cultic ideology in favour of the austere aspirations of the Upanishads.

The transformation of the Vedic hymnal *Gāyatrī* into a feminine divinity is an illustration to the point. In the Veda, the celebrated solar hymn (known as *Gāyatrī*) occurs at several places (e.g. *RgVeda* 362,10; *Yajur-veda* 3,35: 22, 9: 30,2: 36,3) and is so called because "the hymn saves the one that recites it"



(*gāyantam trāyata iti*). The hymn is actually known as *gāyatra*, and one who has mastered it is *gāyatrīn* (or *gāyatrī*). It is a masculine noun (comparable to *dehī*, one who has body, or *dhanī*, one who has wealth), and is used as such in the Vedic context (as, for instance, in *Rgveda*, 1,10,1, “*gāyanti tvā gāyatrīṇo*”). *Gāyatrī* is also a Vedic metre (with 24 syllables) which is frequently employed, although the nomenclature ‘*gāyatrī*’ in the popular mind is associated only with the above mentioned hymn. The hymn is addressed to the Sun (*Savitā*, and hence it is also called *Sāvitṛī* “*savitur iyam*”: Manu, for example, refers to this hymn only as ‘*Sāvitṛī*’), and there is no association with any feminine deity at all. But the *Atharva-veda* (19.71.1) describes this hymn

as “the mother of the Veda” (*veda-mātā*), in the sense of being the source and sustenance of the Vedic corpus. This heralded the course by which the simple solar prayer developed into a stylized, iconic goddess with a definite Tāntrik framework. And there came into being specific *gāyatrīs* for various gods and goddesses, which the Vedic worshippers as well as the Tāntrik adherents freely used. There were also characteristically Tāntrik *gāyatrī* (like “Om Ādyāyai vidmahe, Tripurāyai dhīmahi, tan no Kālī prachodayāt” and “Om Mahādevyai cha vidmahe, Viṣṇupatnī cha dhīmahi, tan no Lakṣmīh prachodayāt”) which were incorporated in Vedic worship. The Vedic *gāyatrī* was even employed in witchcraft and sorcery under general

Tāntrik directions (cf. *Vishṇudharmottara*, 1.165.55-63, for *abhichāra* purposes, “viparītam prayojayēt”).

Although the two thus met, each in its essential import continued to be uncompromising. This is how in isolated areas, the original and rigid Tāntrik and Vedic prejudices persist even to this day.

The credit for bringing together Vedic wisdom and Tāntrik tradition should go, according to some thinkers, to the great Śamkara. His name is honoured not only in the Vedāntic tradition, but in the Tāntrik tradition as well. Besides the well-known commentaries on the triple source of Vedāntic wisdom (Upanishads, Brahma-Sūtras, and the

Gītā), he is said to have written the celebrated Tāntrik works *Prapañcha-sāra* and *Saundarya-laharī* and also others like *Chintāmaṇi-stava* (according to Bhāskara-rāya, and listed in Burnell’s Catalogue of Tanjore MSS), *Lalitātriśatī-bhāshya* (which is supposed to have been prepared in Kashmir) and *Tārā-pajjhatikā* (dealing with worship of Tārā, the great Tāntrik Savioress).

It is true that in Śamkara’s commentarial literature (*prasthāna-traya-bhāshya*), there is no reference whatever to Tantra, nor even a suggestion of any tāntrik ideology. But the persistent belief that he was also a Tantra-master makes the issue enigmatic. There is a suggestion that we must postulate two Śamkaras to get out of the impasse. Whatever the

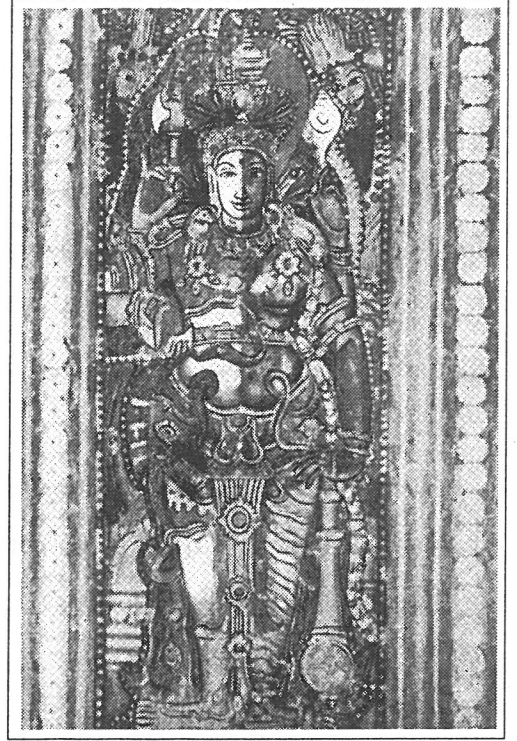
truth of the matter, we follow here the prevailing view of one Śamkara, who was a Vedāntin as well as a tāntrika. For while it is not probable, it is not impossible.

Like in the Vedāntic traditional line of teachers, in the Tāntrik line also he is said to have been preceded by legendary sages (like Vaśiṣṭha, Śakti, Śuka and Vyāsa) and by historical personages, like Gauḍapāda and Govinda. However, in the Tāntrik tradition, Govinda does not immediately follow Gauḍapāda: there are four or five other teachers that intervene. Gauḍapāda and Govinda are described here as great Tāntrik adepts. Besides the well-known *Kārikā* on the *Māṇḍūkya Upanishad*, Gauḍapāda is said to be the author

of two Tāntrik works: *Śakti-Sūtras* (according to Bhaskāra-rāya) and *Subhagodaya-stuti* (on which the great Tāntrik writer Lakṣhmī-dhara has commented). He is reputed to have been partial to Śrī-Vidyā school of Tantra. Govinda, about whom we know very little in the Vedāntic tradition and whose Vedāntic works have not survived at all (if indeed he wrote any), was a great name in the Tāntrik tradition. A well-known work *Jayadratha-yāmala* is ascribed to his authorship. Recovered from Nepal, this work suggests the impact of Trans-Himalayan cults on the purely Indian Tāntrik tradition. Tārā, as will be shown later, was introduced into India from the Himālayan regions. And the ascription of a manual of Tārā-worship to Govinda's successor, the great Śamkara, is not

altogether fantastic. We know that the great temple at Kāñchī (in South India) with which Śaṁkara's association was continuous and intimate, was dedicated originally to Tārā. There were several Tārā shrines in the country at one time, and Śaṁkara's name is connected with most of them. Śaṁkara inherited from Gauḍapāda his interest in Śrī-Vidyā, and popularised the worship of the Mother-Goddess in the form of the mystic diagram *Śrī-Chakra*. Unlike in the Vedāntic tradition, Govinda becomes in the Tāntrik tradition an effective teacher of Śaṁkara's.

Śaṁkara's immediate disciple, Padma-pāda figures in both the traditions. In the Tāntrik tradition, he is credited with a commentary on his master's *Prapañcha-sāra*, entitled

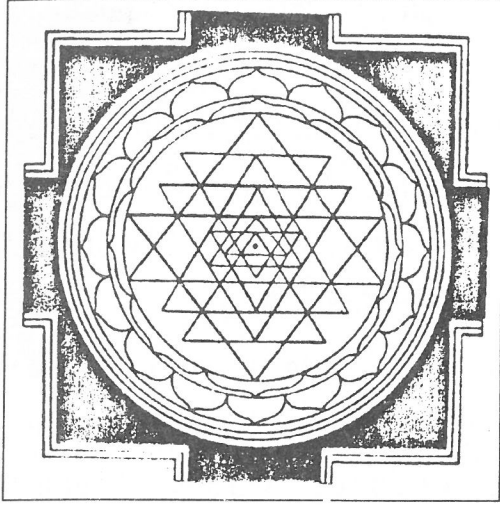


Sambandha-dīpikā. There were other disciples of Śaṁkara like Bodha, Gīrvāṇa, Ānanda, Viṣṇu-śarma, Lakṣhmaṇa-deśika (the author of *Śāradā-tilaka*, a standard Tāntrik work), Mallikārjuna of the Vindhyās, Trivikrama of Jagannāth-Puri, Śrīdhara of Bengal, and Kapardin of Banaras who helped spread the

Tāntrik teachings in different parts of the country. The establishment of the four or five *āmnāyas* (cultic centers) in the different corners of India, which is ascribed to Śaṁkara, is not without an interest. These are all associated with Śakti-pīṭhās (Tāntrik Centers) and rituals conducted here have an unmistakable Tāntrik background. In fact, the very concept of *āmnāya* is a Tāntrik one: *Śrī-Vidyāraṇaya-tāntra* for instance, speaks of five *āmnāyas*, *ūrddhva* (upland), *pūrva* (eastern), *paśchima* (western), *uttara* (northern) and *dakṣiṇa* (southern).

Śaṁkara's interest in Tāntra was also not accidental. The practical significance of the doctrine of the so-called Advaita-vedānta that he espoused and expounded (It

should, however, be noted that Śaṁkara himself never identified the system as Advaita; the expression 'advaita' used by him was only descriptive of Brahman; he called the system Aupanishada-darśana) can never be understood, or appreciated, unless we take into account Śaṁkara's Tāntrik leanings. Advaita was not meant to be a mere intellectual discipline; it was not only an approach to Reality (a *darśana*), but a means to reach it (an *upāsana*). When the Upanishads distinguished between two kinds of knowledge, the higher (*parā*), and the lower (*aparā*) and included all Vedic lore in the latter, the position was identical with the Tāntrik outlook; and the distinction between transcendental and transactional levels of Reality, which the Mahāyāna Buddhists



(principally the Mādhyamakas after Nāgārjuna) as well Gauḍapāda and Śaṃkara accepted, can be traced to a Tāntrik source. Both the levels are in fact powers, the latter binding, and the former freeing, the individual. They are in fact synonyms of the unconditioned (nirguṇa) Brahman and the conditioned (saguṇa) in Vedānta. It is said that, in Śaṃkara's view, *Advaita-upāsanā* pertains to the former, while the *Śrī-Chakra-pūjā* to the latter. The involvement

of *Śrī-Chakra* in all the Centers with which Śaṃkara was connected (like the Śāradā shrine of Śringeri, the Kāmākṣhi shrine at Kāñchi and Mūkāmbikā shrine of Kollūr) was the natural outcome of the recognition that Tantra is the translation of theory into practice.

It would appear that Gauḍapāda prepared the way for Śaṃkara. It is significant that Śaṃkara singles out from among several predecessors that he cites, Gauḍapāda for a unique description: 'knower of tradition, (*sampradāya-vit*). (*Brahma-Sūtra-bhāṣya* 1,4,14 and 2,1,9, 'Vedāntārtha-sampradāya-vit') And his regard for tradition is expressed by the following remark : "Although acquainted with all scriptures, if one is ignorant of tradition he should be

disregarded as a fool” (*Gītā-bhāṣya*, 3,2, सर्वशास्त्रविदपि असम्प्रदायवित् मूर्खवदुपेक्षणीयः ॥) What then is the tradition that, according to him, Gauḍapāda knew? Not the Vedic tradition, for he severely criticises the Mīmāṃsakas who solely rely on Vedic wisdom; nor the Vedāntic tradition that strictly follows the Vedic texts, for he criticises also his predecessors (all of whom were Advaitins) like Brahma-datta, Bharṭṛ-prapañcha and Bharṭṛhari, who answered this description. Gauḍapāda, however, was remarkable in many ways. He distinguished between transactional and transcendental levels of Reality, classified wisdom into absolute and relative, suggested the illusory nature of the phenomenal world (*māyā*), and postulated the theory of appearance by

transformation (*vivarta*). His position doubtless was similar to that of Mahāyāna Buddhism, and there are well-founded indications in the *Kārikā* that he favoured the Mādhyamaka view. But he insisted on the relevance of scriptural authority, and undertook to interpret an Upanishadic text. What he sought to show was that the views that had emerged from the Tāntrik quarters (viz. the Mahāyāna Buddhism) were also the views of the tradition stemming from Upanishads. He appears to concede that the Upanishads already incorporated the Tāntrik ideas. This perhaps was the tradition (*sampradāya*) that Śaṅkara was referring to.

Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara thus may be said to have reestablished



the synthesis of the old Vedic tradition and the Tāntrik tradition. It has been held that the Tāntrik ideology is clearly reflected in the *Taittirīya-āranyaka*, a text that the Tāntrik writers of Vedic persuasion frequently rely upon (cf. R. Shamasastri, *Indian Antiquary*, 1906, p-262). The very first section thereof

is devoted to a ritual connected with the sage Aruṇa-Ketaka. There is an Upaniṣhad, which probably grew out of this section, *Aruṇopaniṣad*, which projects the greatness of the goddess *Aruṇā* (also mentioned in *Vāmakeśvara-tantra*). Aruṇas were in fact a group of sages (like Ketus and Vātaraśanas), whose origin was mythically traced to the carcass of Prajāpati. The other groups (like the Vrātyas, Vaikhānasas, Vālakhilyas and Śramaṇas) were likewise participants of both traditions, and their origin was traced to the different limbs of the same Prajāpati. It is interesting in this connection to note that Śaṅkara describes Gauḍapāda as a follower of Prajāpati (cf. *Chhāndogya-bhāṣya*, 2,23,1), who perhaps symbolized the synthesis that Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara sought to reestablish.

The new synthesis was not without its justification. Both traditions had encouraged mystical tendencies in different periods, and were gradually moving away from popular hold. The movement that Gauḍapāda and Śaṅkara spearheaded was in fact a reaction against the excessive mysticism of the Mīmāṃsakas on the one hand and of the Mahāyāna Buddhists on the other, around the early centuries of the Christian era. The new movement appealed to reason and supported quietism. Iconic worship (*pratīkopāsanā*) had already come to stay; the adherents of both traditions, had favoured it, and therefore rituals of diverse types had cropped up. Quiet contemplation which was alike the essential feature of the two traditions was receding to the

background. The *Brahma-sūtra* (4,1,3-12), however, suggested 'aham-grahopāsanā' (introverted absorption) as an alternative technique to iconic worship; and this had scriptural sanction as well as support from Tāntrik ideology. Śaṅkara's system as an *upāsana* was a natural development of this suggestion.

The Tantra is a collective expression; it comprises numerous tribal and regional cults, admitting of several systems of classifications. But it is interesting that all of them have certain common working principles such as the indispensability of a *guru*, the necessity of initiation (*dīkshā*), secretiveness of ritual performances, employment of symbolism and so on. In a sense,

Tantra is most adequately described as 'symbolic wisdom, directly communicated through a teacher' (*saṅketavidyā guruvaktragamyā*). Its symbolism presents a real difficulty for students of this lore, especially of Western extraction. We do not know precisely when this discipline allowed itself to be written down. But we have a mass of Tāntrik manuals, digests, handbooks, instruction sheets and picture-books, right from the fourth or fifth century onwards, till comparatively recent times, most of them in Sanskrit (sometimes in corrupt Sanskrit). The 'Tantra written down' is obviously paradoxical, for it is by definition what is got orally from the teacher, and there is a severe injunction that books are never to be substitutes for teachers. It is surprising that not only

theoretical explanations, even instructions for actual practice (like *Sādhana-mālā*, *Sādhana-samuchchaya* and *Sādhana-vidhi*) exist in hundreds. Probably, scholars could not resist the temptation to write; and when they were motivated by compassion for fellow-creatures (as the Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Tāntriks ostensibly were), they had an additional incentive. But they were well aware of the Tāntrik prejudice against publicity, for the Tantra is essentially a confidential affair, strictly private to the practitioner and his master. In order to reconcile their urge to write with the injunctions against writing, they found an expedient method in employing 'symbolic speech'. They no doubt wrote in a language which all could read but few understand.

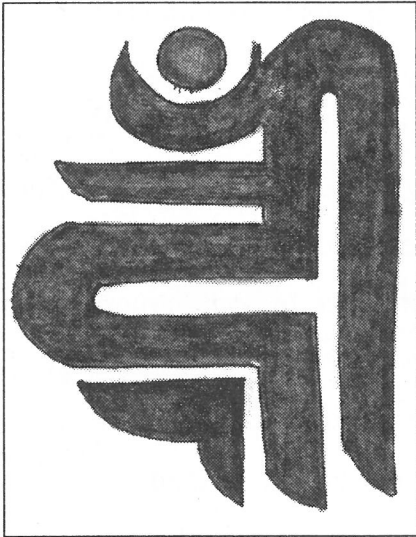


This language, or rather the style of writing, is technically known as '*sandhā-bhāṣhā*' (or *Sandhyā-bhāṣhā*, which is, however, a mistake), translated as 'intentional language'

(Vidhuśekhara Bhaṭṭāchārya), 'enigmatic language' (Burnouf), 'mystery-language' (Kern), 'language intentional' (Eliade), or 'hidden sayings' (Max-Muëller)¹. It is obvious that the Tāntrik tracts were originally meant only for private use, for carefully limited circulation; the presentation of a copy would invariably be accompanied by oral clarifications and essential explanations. For others, naturally, the writing made little sense; and when taken literally, it would either confound them or lead them astray.

The strangeness of the language used in Tantra was further due to the fact that characteristic expressions were taken over, when details of alien cults were incorporated. The sixth century work *Jayadratha-yāmala*, recovered from Nepal,

contains some monosyllabic words (*ekākshara-samullāpa*) described as those used by yoginīs, and they are identified as the Trans-Himalayan dialects Paisācha and Bhoṭa (presumably Tibetan). The yoginīs appear to have been mainly of non-Indian extraction. The Tantras of extra-Indian origin like the *Mahā-Chīna-Tantra* and the *Nīla-Sarasvatī-Tantra* mention that the yoginīs employed the secret language *Sandhā-bhāshā*).



It is not only the language of the Tāntrik texts that is symbolic. Tantra is in fact committed to a symbolism in a more essential particular. The source of this commitment is not far to seek. One of the basic propositions of Tantra is the primacy of the individual as the product and source of energy. The individual, in this view, is a miniature universe; macrocosm is not only contained within the microcosm, but has a certain parallelism with it. The forces that operate in the world are all dormant within the person, functioning however at a different plane. But when they are organized adequately and harmonised effectively, man would become the receptacle of some extra-ordinary power. The more practical and mundane forms of

Tantra speak of mastery over elements and magical attainments (*Siddhis*), but the more spiritual forms insists on 'great liberation even while alive' (*jīvanmukti*) as the proper goal. The 'immortality' of the body, which was the Taoist and alchemical preoccupation all over the world, was also an objective in many Tāntrik cults in India. Besides magic, sorcery and witchcraft, Indian enthusiasts also evolved exercises for tranquillity and liberation. What is relevant for our discussion here is the series of techniques they developed which were meant to harmonize and channelise the psychic energy; and this goes by the name of 'sādhana' - a sort of 'internal spiritual alchemy'.

The purpose of Sādhana is to transform the individual and to

harness the energy that is locked up in the body, and that normally conditions him to rather narrow and unsatisfactory conditions of existence, so that he begins to function more effectively, more meaningfully and more correctly. Naturally, therefore, Sādhana involves a set of exercises, physical (like breath-control and effective bodily postures) and mental (like contemplation, concentration and visualization). Sometimes extreme forms of asceticism, or curious sexual practices, are also included, rarely though. Rejection of convention, withdrawal from normalcy, performance of some gruesome and disgusting rites are found in many a Tāntrik procedure. Even bodily postures are confined to a few elementary types, although hand-

gestures and finger-manipulations (*mudrās*) loom large. The main emphasis, however, is on mental exercises; and thought control is the gateway to gain mastery over psychic energy. *Sādhana*, whatever the variety of affiliation, is the procedure by means of which the four basic

aspects of the individual, namely the vital current, mind, consciousness and energy, are harmonized.'

All practices are directed towards collecting and organising psychic energy. An early and common device that the Tantra employs is the 'maṇḍala', the detail of Indian psychology that evoked Carl Jung's interest enormously. Maṇḍala has been variously translated by experts as 'cosmogram', 'cosmogenic model', 'map of the soul', 'cosmic plan', 'symbol of Kosmos', and 'layout of the psyche'. Basically it is a visible geometrical design, frequently a circle (*chakra*), denoting the entirety of existence, and forces are symbolically projected on it, and arranged according to a theme. It is



a topological concept, involving the reconstruction of subjective space. Represented externally, it symbolises the layout of the entire earth; the central point signifying the mountain Meru, round which all the continents, subcontinents, realms and states of existence are arranged stylistically. But the world has meaning only as related to man, and man is the chief concern of the Tantra. Each individual therefore absorbs the world into himself, or conversely gets himself absorbed into the world. The relating process that goes on in every one of us normally does not 'center' the world properly in the individual, nor does it 'center' the individual in the world correctly. The Tantra recognises that all our misery is due to this improper centering, and sets out to teach the

effective procedure for correct centering³.

THE SPACE WITHIN



If the cosmos is extended in one dimension of space (*mahākāśa*, physical space), the individual psyche is extended in another dimension (*chittākāśa*, subjective space). The growing distinction between the two dimensions is the source of subject-object duality, which is fundamental to normal experience.

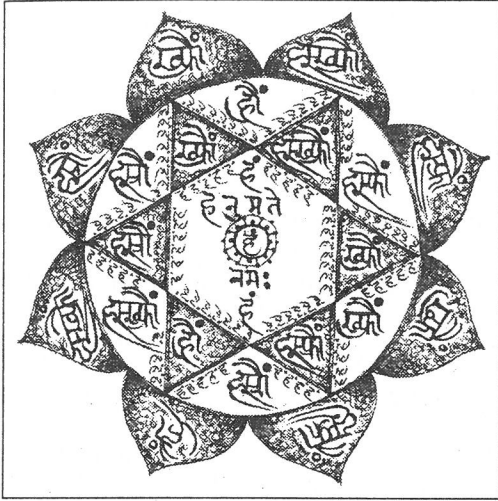
The course of life is busily concerned with the almost impossible task of balancing the two dimensions, unaware of the fact that the two can really be unified only in the third dimension of space (*chidākāśa*, the space of pure consciousness). The *Maṇḍala* device seeks to center the dimensions evenly; it is therefore correctly described as 'a centering technique'. The human body is itself a *maṇḍala*, the psyche being the dimensionless point that is the very centre (*bindu*). Even as a point describes a circle in its spread, the psyche unfolds itself into a *maṇḍala*. This inner space is projected onto the symbolic outer space (the material *maṇḍala* as a design, a diagram, or a model), by a creative process of visualization. The hand-gestures and finger-manipulations

(*mudrā*) representing the bodily processes (*kāya*), the utterance of mystic formulae (*mantra*), representing verbal behaviour (*vāk*), and symbolic diagrams (*yantra*), representing mental functions (*chitta*) are aids in this process of projection. The Tantra extensively uses the imagery of seed (*bīja*), sprout, evocation and tree. The external *maṇḍala* is the soil, mantra the water, *mudrā* the sunshine, and mantra the manure. The guarding of the external *maṇḍala* by protective spells and devices is also attended to. In the words of Tucci: "A *maṇḍala* delineates a consecrated place and protects it from invasion by disintegrating forces ... it is much more than just a consecrated area that must be kept pure for ritual and liturgical ends. It is above all, a map

of the cosmos. It is the whole universe in its essential plan, in its process of emanation and of reabsorption". The Tantra design is always enclosed in the protective circle or square serving both as a contour and a cover of defence. It is important that the practitioner should get into it, and thereby become invincible, adamant, and firm (*vajra*). For achieving this entrance into the *maṇḍala*, one has necessarily to leave the normal world of distractions and fragmentations behind, and pass into an altogether different world of symbols and visualizations. *Maṇḍala*'s description as 'the mansion of gods and goddesses' is a symbolic world, an emanation from his own depths, and an expansion of his own consciousness; after the ritual or

contemplation is over, he withdraws this symbolic sphere into himself. The latter process is technically styled 'reabsorption'; it is resumption of the normal and everyday coordinates of being, knowing and doing.

It was mentioned earlier that the body itself is a *maṇḍala*, and that this was a basic premise of the tantra. There is a notion, held almost universally in India, that an individual has three bodies⁴: a 'physical' body (*sthūla-śarīra*), the 'psychical' body (subtle, *sūkṣhma-śarīra*) and the 'casual' body (*kāraṇa-śarīra*). The physical body is made of the five elemental forces, and is sustained by food. The psychical body, on the other hand, is constituted by the vital currents, the organs of sensations and actions, mind and



consciousness. This is no doubt founded on physical structures, but its essential nature is psychological. The third body viz., the causal, is not relevant to our discussion here. The physical and psychical bodies, although distinct both by constitution and in function, are related to each other intimately, and the points of contact are described as 'spiritual centers' (*chakras*) and pictured as lotuses (*padmas*). Lotus is a flower that has caught Indian imagination,

not only by its beauty and delicacy, but by its multiplicity of petals, as well as by its vitality and purity.

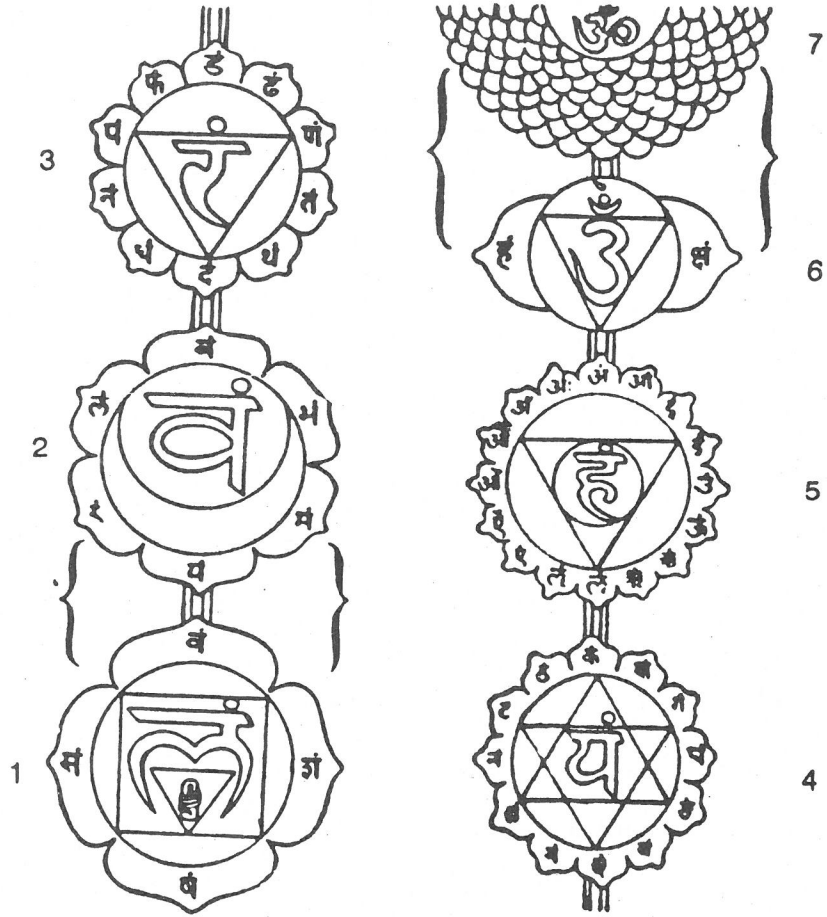
Attempts, often fantastic, have been made to identify these centers with anatomical regions and physiological functions known to the modern mind. But it is important to note that these do not belong to the physical body as such, nor to the psychical structure as such. It is true that they are located, in the Tāntric texts, along the *brahma-daṇḍa* or *meru-daṇḍa*, by which we usually understand the spinal column. But the description of the column as encasing a subtle channel (known as *sushumṇā*) extending from the spinal base to the cranium is obviously abstract. Further, each center (also termed plexus or vortex) is looked

upon as a network of very subtle, altogether invisible, arteries (*nāḍīs*). The human body is said to consist of seven hundred million of these arteries, some gross and others subtle, along which the vital currents flow continually, in order to keep the body-mind complex alive and active. The principal of these arteries is the *sushumṇā* (also called *avadhūtikā*), just mentioned. Inside the *meru-daṇḍa* (roughly corresponding to the spinal column) is a fine but hollow canal, extending from the region of penis to the head, called 'diamond' (*vajra* or *vajriṇī*), and inside this is another artery, exceedingly fine like the thread of the spider's web, or as thin as the thousandth part of the hair, called 'wonderful' (*chitriṇī*). And this latter in its turn encloses the artery known

as *brahma-nāḍī*, the essential but highly abstract life-current.

The chakras are composed of complex networks of arteries, arranged along the *sushumṇā*. The Tāntrik texts of the Haṭha-yoga persuasion enumerate as many as thirty of such centers⁵, ranging from the big toe of the foot to the top of the head. Each of these has a characteristic colour, number of petals (when pictured as a lotus)⁶, elemental association, a particular sense-organ, an organ of action, a variety of the vital current (*prāṇa*), a seed-syllable, a symbol, a male deity and his consort, and representative animal.

Of these centers seven are regarded as especially important, six inside the body and one outside it.



Shat-chakras:

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------|
| 1. Mūlādhāra | 5. Viśuddha |
| 2. Svādhishtāna | 6. Ājñā |
| 3. Manipūra | 7. Sahasrāra |
| 4. Anāhata | |

The last one, named *sahasrāra* (after the picture of an inverted, thousand-petalled lotus, and known to Buddhists as *ushṇīṣha-kamala*, the crown-lotus), is imagined to be located four finger-breadths above the crown of the head. Although outside the physical body, it is a part of the psychical structure, but at its topmost level. Here is supposed to be the source of the 'liquid of immortality', the liquid that drips on the cranium continuously, and thus makes one alive and active. It is clearly a mystical and abstract center. The other six form a group, 'the six-centers' (*ṣaṭchakra*), arranged in an order along the *sushumṇā*. The lowest in location is styled 'the root-basis' (*mulādhāra*), pictured as a triangular space, red in colour, within a square

of yellow, right in the middle of the body: it is called 'the earth-*maṇḍala*'. Its physical location is said to be in the sacral plexus or perineum (?), or between the base of the genital organ and anus. It is the lower limit of the *sushumṇā* canal, and here two other arteries, celebrated in Tāntrik exercises, meet.

In Tāntrik lore, the central *sushumṇā* is flanked on its left with *idā* and on its right with *piṅgalā*, two subtle psychic arteries both arising from the 'root-basic' center, and running parallelly and close to the *sushumṇā*, until they cross and the right-left positions are reversed. The two arteries signify opposite poles, and male-female components, within each individual. *Idā* (also called *lalanā*) is the river Gaṅgā, *piṅgalā*



the river Yamunā; and *sushumṇā* is the hidden stream, Sarasvatī. The three together constitute the sacred triple-stream (*triveṇī*), commingling at the 'root-basic' center. *Rudra-yāmala* (6.49) speaks of *iḍā* as the moon, *piṅgalā* as the sun, and *sushumṇā* as the fire. The imagery of sun and moon has been a persistent one in Tāntrik literature;

the Nātha-siddha Tāntriks even wear large ear-rings symbolising sun and moon. Moon stands for Śiva, the static but enduring element both in the universe and in man; it is the repository of nectar (*amṛta*); its normal location is said to be the highest center (*sahasrāra*); its white colour signifies the male aspect (*pāṇḍur-bindu-chakra*). Sun, on the other hand, is the dynamic but ever-changing element both in the universe and in man; it stands for Śakti, the female aspect, and is represented as 'reddish ovum' (*lohita-bindu-mahā-rajās*); it is located in the 'root-basic' center (*mūlādhāra*). "In the *mūlādhāra* is Śakti and in *sahasrāra* Śiva" (*mūlādhāre vasate śaktiḥ sahasrāre sadāśivah*). Further, the *iḍā* and *piṅgalā* arteries are described as possessing the following opposing

characteristics: day, night;
 exhalation-inhalation; food
 (*upabhogya*) - consumer (*bhoktr*);
 vowel (*āli*) - consonant (*kāli*); semen
 - ova; creation - destruction; *prāṇa*
 - *apāna*; *śamsāra-nirvāṇa*. The
 opposing characteristics are all
 summarised in the moon-sun
 imagery: moon has a cooling effect
 on the system while the sun dries up
 the system; one builds up the body
 and the other breaks it down. In the
 mystical parlance, one determines
 the individual involvement in the
 phenomenal vortex, while the other
 burns up this bond and releases the
 individual.

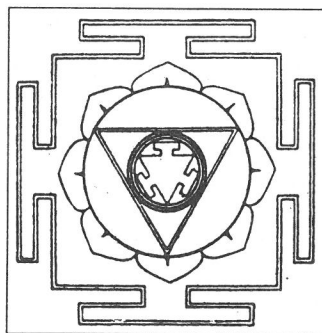
But it would be an error to look
 upon man as a helpless victim of two
 contending forces. As a matter of
 fact, the two are complementary and



make for a 'biunity' (Dr. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy's expression), a male-female configuration which is essential both for creation and release. In the ordinary individual, in the state of normalcy, unity is not recognised, or consciously achieved; and hence the misery in life. The

union of *idā* and *pingalā* at the lowest centre (where most of us mostly function) is described as the darkest phase of the moon (*amāvāsyā*). Commingling with the hidden Sarasvatī (viz., the *sushumṇā*), the triple-streams are 'freed' (*muktā-triveṇī*), that is to say, they flow separately. But when the individual takes up the Tāntrik life, or practices Yoga, the openings of *idā* and *pingalā* at the 'root-basic' center are blocked, and the currents are forced to move along the central *sushumṇā*. The three streams are now commingled into a unitary flow (*yuktā-triveṇī*), which reaches its culmination in the center between the eye-brows. This is described as the brightest phase of the moon (*pūrṇimā*). In some texts, however, the expressions

muktā and *yuktā* with reference to the triple-flow (*triveṇī*) are used in a sense exactly opposite to the one mentioned above. The 'root-basic' center is described as 'joined or yoked' (*yuktā*) as regards the three streams, while the center between the eye-brows is described as 'freed' (*muktā*). The presupposition here is that the confluence of the three streams is responsible for individuality, while the cessation of the confluence, achieved by *sādhana*, would release the individual from narrow phenomenal existence.

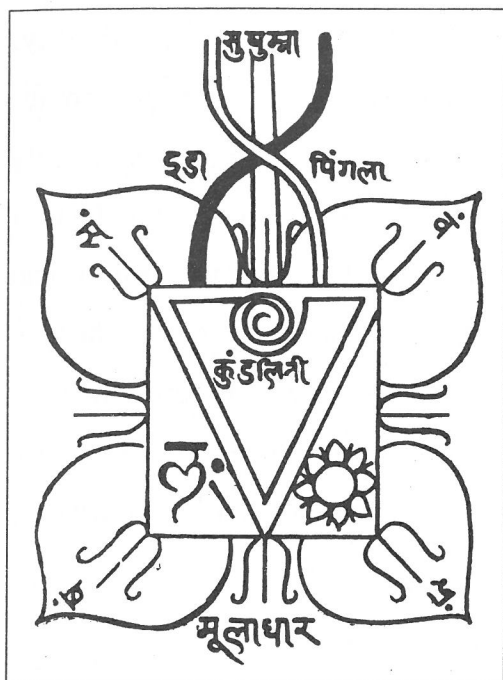


The center located above the 'root-basis' is known as 'self-supporting' (*svādhīṣṭhāna*), and is pictured as a colourless crescent, representing the water element, identified with 'prostatic plexus'(?), or located in the navel region. If the 'root-basic' center is the source of all desires, the 'self-supporting' centre provides all the excitement; the two together are responsible for the instincts of sex and survival. The psychological traits originating at this level (the *vṛttis*) are given as; affection, suspicion, contempt, infatuation and cruelty.

The third center, 'jewel-filled' (*maṇipūra*), is said to be located in the lumbar or 'epigastric plexus'(?); it is more usual, however, to take it as a 'navel center' (*nābhi-padma*).

Red in colour, it signifies fire. The psychological traits associated with this center brings out the 'burning' character; shame, jealousy, fear, remorse and disgust. Curiously, this center is spoken of as responsible also for sleep and thirst.

The 'unstruck' (*anāhata*) center, situated in the heart, and known as 'cardiac plexus'(?), is imagined as a hexagon with two interlacing triangles, grey-blue in colour. The Buddhist texts, however, locate this center at the throat, and give its form as semi-circular, and its colour as green. Associated with the element air, it provides the individual a subjective frame of reference, viz., an ego. Among the psychological traits originating here are hope, worry, effort, the feelings of 'I' and



junction of the spinal column and modulla oblongata behind the throat (located at the crown of the head by Buddhist authors). Governing the organs of expression and articulation, this center is associated with the following mental traits; faith, joyousness, guilt-feeling, restraint, respectability, friendliness, sorrow, agitation, enthusiasm and detachment.

‘mine’, arrogance, egoity, covetousness, double-dealing, indecision, regret, and discrimination.

The perfectly ‘pure’ (*visuddha*) center, golden in colour and circular in shape (white disc in Buddhist texts), is located in modern accounts at the ‘laryngeal plexus’ (?) or at the

The sixth center is styled ‘alround understanding’ (*ājñā*); the Buddhist texts describe it as the ‘third eye of wisdom’, the center of formless contemplation. Situated between the eye-brows, or a little above, formed by two white petals representing sun and moon, this center governs efforts at concentration as well as states of

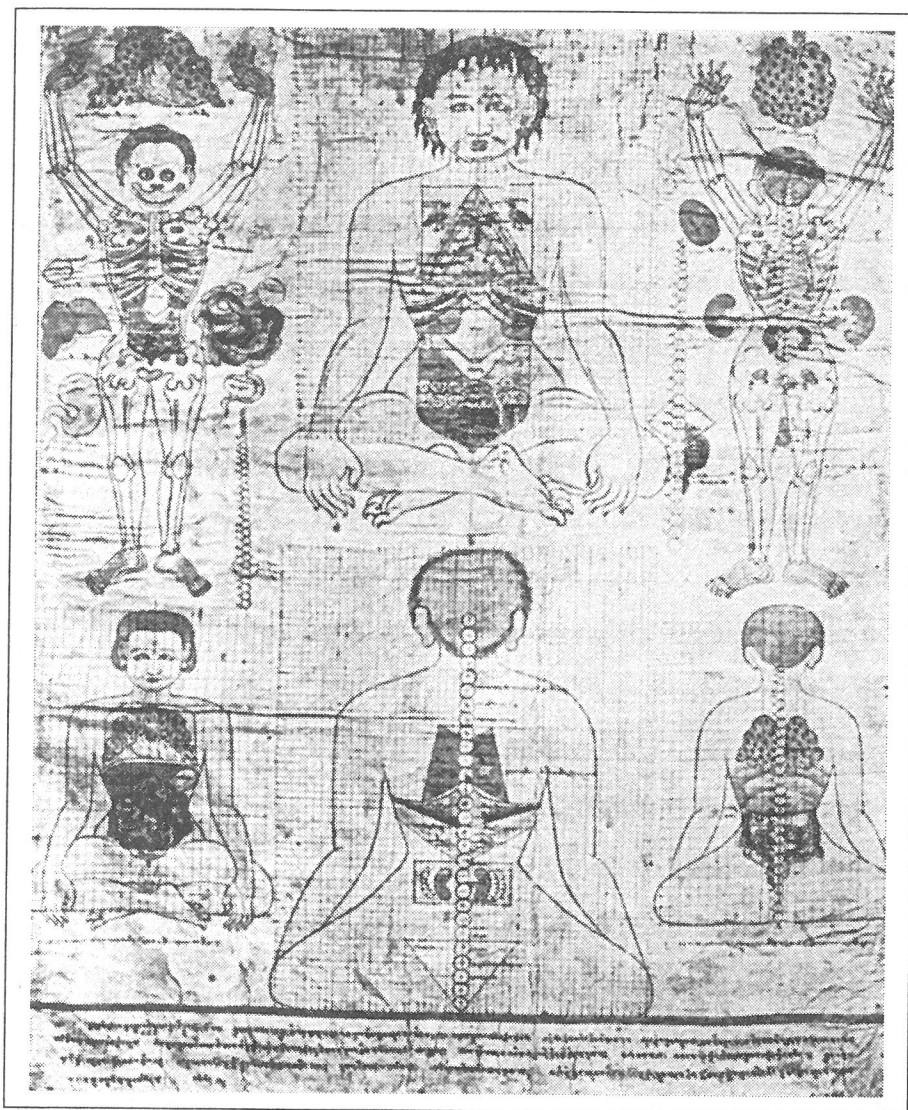
trance. Some Tāntrik texts call this center 'the highest house' (*parama-kula*) and 'the breaking up of the triple-confluence' (*muktā-triveṇī*).

Although these six centers are the ones widely known and frequently enumerated in the Tāntrik manuals, sometimes another center is mentioned, 'the center of mind' (*manaśchakra*). Located just above 'the center of understanding', this is said to be the secret center responsible for all perceptual processes and dream states. Above this center is 'the moon center' (*soma-chakra*), also infrequently mentioned. Said to be situated in the middle of the cerebrum, the psychological traits associated with this center are all morally positive and constructive: softness, courage,

perseverance, humour, humility, concentration, poise, industriousness, emotional stability and generosity. This is the highest center within the psychophysical system, immediately below the one that is outside the system, viz., *sahasrāra* (described as 'the house without a support', *nirālabapurī*)⁶.

KUNḌALINĪ

It should be remembered that the concept of *chakras* is essentially esoteric. And, therefore, attempts at discovering the physiological correlates are bound to be both far-fetched and misleading. The *chakras* are more properly different levels of psychological reality, and their 'petals' symbolise the dimensions thereof. Read, for instance, the



following description of the four higher *chakras*, and their mystical significance becomes at once apparent: The *maṇipūra* is a lotus of 64 petals turned upwards, their colours being yellow, and the seed-syllable being *Āh*; the *anāhata* is a lotus of eight petals, blue-black in colour, turned downwards, the seed-syllable being *Hūm*; *viśuddha* has 16 petals of red colour turned upwards, with the seed-syllable *Om*; and the *sahasrāra* has 32 petals all white in colour and turned downwards, the seed-syllable being *Ham*. This Tāntrik account is slightly different from the Yoga account (which, for instance, gives the number of petals of the six *chakras* as 4,6,10,12,16 and 2 respectively, accommodating the fifty letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, and gives their seed-

syllables as *laṁ*, *vaṁ*, *raṁ*, *yaṁ*, *haṁ* and *om*). The description is derived from visualizations, and not from reflection. The *chakra* ideology is thus a product of mystical contemplation which taps the fundamental energy dynamics at work within our constitution.⁷

More significantly, the *chakra* ideology would be meaningless without reference to the more fundamental, if also more mysterious, concept of *kuṇḍalinī*. The psychophysical space (*maṇḍala*), which we call an individual, is a field for energy to operate. We have seen above how the *chakras* represent several levels of this energy dynamics. But the source of energy is hidden and inarticulate, and the full potential is normally not realised.

The vast storehouse of great energy in its normal state is pictured as a serpent sleeping with its tail in its mouth, making three coils and a half, lying right at the entrance of the *sushumṇā* blocking it. Because of its characteristic form, the hidden energy-store is called '*kuṇḍalinī*', meaning 'coiled', like an ear-ring. This form is abandoned only when the energy wakes up, and becomes active -- a case with none but the great yogins. Normally, it is profoundly asleep all through our lives, and we are not even vaguely aware of its existence. Tantra and Yoga prescribe procedures to arouse it.

This storehouse of energy is linked with the 'root-basic' center of our constitution. Situated, according

to one account two finger-breadths above the anus and two finger-breadths below the genital organ, the 'root-basis' appears as a lotus, and in the middle of the lotus is a triangular space, figuratively called womb or vulva (*yonī*), attached to the lower end of the *sushumṇā* canal, already described. Inside this triangular space towards the bottom is perched 'the self-born emblem' (*svayambhū-liṅga*), shining like molten gold and facing downward. Above this 'emblem' in the *kuṇḍalinī*, "fine as a fibre of the tender lotus stalk, gently blocking the mouth of the *sushumṇā* door". Although sluggish and asleep, it (or she, because the usual supposition is that *kuṇḍalinī* is a goddess) gleams like a chain of bright lights in a dark night. As long as this energy-store is

asleep, is outward oriented (*bahir-mukha*), the subject-object duality persists, the body is heated and cooled alternately, so that it is gradually worn out, and man is phenomenally bound. But as soon as it is aroused (*jāgaraṇa* or *utthāpana*), it becomes tense and stiff like a rod, and begins to ascend the *sushumṇā* tract. On its upward journey, it passes through the six centres, striking against the outward petals and turning them up: this denotes the total transformation of orientations and attitudes. According to some texts *kuṇḍalinī* pierces the lotuses, and burns them up: it is in this sense that *kuṇḍalinī* is called 'the mystic fire'.

Of interest in the accounts concerning the action of the aroused



kuṇḍalinī is the view that each center gets animated and illumined as the 'serpent power' passes through it. Besides the mystic import of the energy-store that the *kuṇḍalinī* is, it is considered as the place of origin for the vital currents that sustain life (*vāyu*), for the seed of life that

ramifies into phenomenal involvement (*bindu*) and for the sound that unifies and differentiates (*nāda*). These three, responsible for individuality and survival, animation and articulation, function in a passive and constrained manner when the *kuṇḍalinī* is sluggish; but they become active and free on *kuṇḍalinī*'s arousal. It means a reorganisation of ones energies and orientations, a restructuring and a revitalisation.

There are certain signs (which are by no means all of them pleasant) that suggest that *kuṇḍalinī* has been awakened; bodily heat increases, sweating occurs copiously, there are all over the body sharp sensations like scorpion-bite, and so on. But the urge to continue the exercise is so imperative that after this stage

one does not give up. As he perseveres, however, these signs give way to more abstract and less distracting signs. It is interesting that these are at first essentially vigorous auditory hallucinations (the expression has been used guardedly) like sounds made by the sea at a distance, peals of thunder and roar of the waterfalls. Then the sounds become softer and more pleasant; jingling and tinkling of ornaments worn on the body, bell, the musical notes from a lute or flute. Finally the sound becomes exceedingly subtle like the humming of a bee. At this stage, it is reported that one feels dizzy, and salivation becomes copious; the heart-beat gets fainter but steadier; bodily sensations are benumbed, and immediate surroundings seem to fade away.

Later, one begins to hear distinctly the exceedingly subtle sound that is internal and emanates from the very essence of the individual; this is 'the voice of inner silence', unstruck, and inarticulate. Simultaneously in some cases, but frequently reported as subsequently, one begins to 'see things': dots of bright light, flames of fire, orb of brilliance, gleaming lines of diverse colours, and geometric patterns of great variety and light. Higher stages are said to be characterised by 'sights' of stars, bright and whirling circles, dense fog and smoke, mirage, tiny dots of dazzling hue between the eye-brows or on the forehead, a steady light from an oil-lamp which no wind disturbs, and great illumination within. It is recognised that such signs (*nimittas*) are subject to laws

of individual differences; they depend considerably not only on the particular techniques employed for the awakening of *kuṇḍalinī*, but on the practitioner's temperament, talent, early experiences and situational involvements.

Besides the six centers, in the upward journey of *kuṇḍalinī* three 'knots' (*granthis*) are also said to be pierced through: the basal knot (at the *mulādhāra* center) called "Brahma's knot", the middle knot (at the *anāhata* center) called "Vishṇu's knot", and the top knot (at the *ājñā* center) called "Śiva's knot". After piercing through the six centers, commingling with the moon's orb (that the thousand petals of this lotus constitute) causes nectar to ooze out⁸. After reaching its

destination, which marks the culmination of the Sādhana, the *kuṇḍalinī* returns home (i.e., *mūlādhāra*) by the same path. During its ascent, the individual is reported to experience illumination, and during its descent (or return) it is said to suffuse the individual with ambrosial delight⁹. The lowest center is the home of energy (*Śakti*), while the highest center is the residence of consciousness (*Śiva*). Life keeps them apart, and hence stresses of all sorts fall to the lot of man. Sādhana can bring them together, and the union of the two will eliminate all stress, and secure the delight of being. This achievement is styled '*parāvṛtti*' (total transformation), where not only the normal stress-producing conditions disappear, but even the ordinary cōrdinates are



transmuted. It is a case of regeneration of the individual, revitalisation in one sense and reintegration in another.

Basic to the Tāntrik ideology is the conception of life as a configuration of vital currents (*prāṇa*). Sun's energy is said to produce and preserve in all living beings the conditions necessary for life. In man, the solar energy divides itself into ten aspects or currents, five major (*prāṇa*, *apāna*, *samāna*, *vyāna* and *udāna*) and five minor

(nāga, kūrma, krakara, devadatta, and dhanañjaya); they support the body, and are responsible for all action. The expression 'prāṇa' signifies ideas of primacy (*pra*) and subtle force (*ana*). Prāṇa is the home of spirit (*jīva*), called picturesquely 'the swan' (*haṁsa*, *ham* signifying outward flow and *sa* inward flow), the mythical bird that constantly moves out of the celestial lake *Mānasā* on the Himalayan heights and back to it. *Prāṇa* moves along the seven hundred million arteries or nerve channels (*nāḍīs*) that compose the body, although its chief centers are the heart (*hṛt*), navel (*nābhi*), nose-tip and the great toes. As the *prāṇa* moves along the arteries, consciousness is occasioned as a by-product, as an epiphenomenon. The movement of *prāṇa* normally is



irregular, spasmodic, jerky and strained because of our stimulations, urges, excitement and activity; and, therefore, normal consciousness is narrow, stressful and shallow. Most of the Tāntrik techniques emphasize that it is not consciousness that should be sought to be corrected,

but the basic vital currents that should be handled in order that consciousness spontaneously gets expanded, relaxed and deep. And it is thus that 'control of breath' (*prāṇāyāma*) figures prominently in all such techniques.

India has developed an elaborate theory of the breathing process. Breath alternates during the course of the day between the left nostril (connected with *iḍā*, representing moon, and in effect cooling) and the right nostril (connected with *piṅgalā*, representing sun, and in effect heating). Normally, breath passes through the arteries 960 times an hour. From midnight and noon, it flows copiously along the nerves, and from noon to midnight along the blood vessels;

precisely at midnight and noon, it is equal in both systems. At sunrise it ascends through the sun along with the course of the sun, and towards sunset it descends into the blood vessels. During our normal respiration, inhalation is an active process, and exhalation a passive one. Thoughts arise and cease in accordance with the respiratory rate. In an ordinary individual, thoughts are muffled, clouded, excited, inadequately articulated, pass with inordinate speed, or jostle confusedly, because his breathing habits are improper; weather, health, diet, diseases, rest, anxiety, guilt-feelings and cares have an impact not only on the rate of respiration, but on the amount of air inhaled and exhaled. If breath does not alternate between the nostrils, but continues

in one nostril beyond the normal period of an hour and fifty minutes, it is symptomatic of impairment of health, due to either excess of heat or of cold. If the breath moves in and out through a single nostril for as long as 24 hours, the derangement of humours is serious; if the condition prevails for two or three days, the illness is grave enough.

The science of *prāṇāyāma* recognises the need to change quickly the flow of breath, to regulate the flow of the vital currents in the arteries, to suspend the breath inhaled, to keep out the exhaled breath for a period. These are techniques to gain mastery over thoughts. The time required for a thought to emerge into awareness would be 12/25 of a second; when

the retention is of a longer duration, the thought would require as long as one to one and a half seconds. That is to say, the thought is 'fixed' or held out (*dhāraṇā*). The thought-arousal is totally suspended if one can restrain the breath inside his body for 13 1/2 minutes without a flurry; this goes by the name of 'samādhi' (one-pointedness, or settling the mind). The Tāntrik texts suggest several devices for 'thoughtlessness' (*un-manī* or 'no-mind exercises'), like the *Śaṁbhavī-mudrā* where the mind is absorbed as a result of gazing intently on the nose-tip or at objectless space, also regulating the breath in the arteries at the same time.

During 24 hours, the number of respirations is calculated by the

Yoga-chūdāmani-upanishad to be 21, 600 (15 respirations for a minute and 900 for an hour). These are distributed among the seven centers (the seventh being the *manaśchakra*) as follows: *mulādhārā* 600 respirations taking a total of 40 minutes; *svādhishṭhāna*, *maṇipūra* and *anāhata*, each 600 in 6 hours and 40 minutes; *viśuddha*, *ājñā* and *manas*, each 1000 in one hour, six minutes and 40 seconds. The breath that is exhaled is believed to be accompanied by the mystic utterance of “ham-sa” (‘I am he’, a Vedāntic *mahāvākya*). The *prāṇā* is looked upon as the mystic fire that leaves the system with ‘ham’ and enters it with ‘sa’; the spirit (jīva) is imagined to be performing passively but ceaselessly the ritual of muttering ‘ham-sa’, which is the nature of the goddess of life (‘hamsa-japa’ in

paropāsanā)¹⁰. The sound of this mystic muttering is generated at the *mūlādhāra*, and is articulated at the *anāhata*, which in fact is the prime support of the spirit. The purpose of the practices included in the *Sādhana* of this category is to make this muttering conscious and deliberate, so that the sound rises above the *anāhata*, and carries the *kuṇḍalīnī* along with it.

The hamsa is here identified with the self as well as the deity:

हंसो गणेशः विधिरेव हंसः ।
हंसो हरिर्हंसमयश्च शब्दः ॥१॥

हंसो हि जीवो गुरुरेव हंसः ।
हंसो ममात्मा परमात्म हंसः ॥२॥

देहो देवालयः प्रोक्तो जीवो देवः सनातनः ।
त्यजेदज्ञाननिर्मल्यं सोऽहंभावेन पूजयेत् ॥३॥

अहं देहो न चाऽन्यास्मि ब्रह्मैवाहं न शोकभाक् ।
सच्चिदानन्दरूपोऽहमात्मानमिति भावयेत् ॥४॥

There are also details of this 'ajapājapa'. Haṁsa as the seer, avyaktā-gāyatri as the metrical form, and the Supreme self as the deity:

ॐ अस्य श्री अजपामन्त्रस्य हंस ऋषिः,
अव्यक्ता गायत्री छन्दः, परमात्मा देवता। हं
बीजं, सः शक्तिः, सोऽहं कीलकं, मोक्षार्थं जपे
विनियोगः ॥

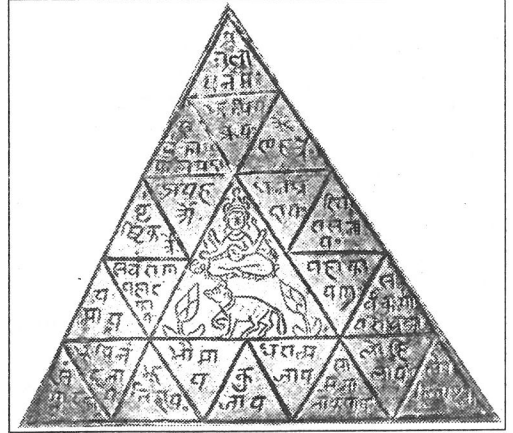
Dhyāna:

अग्री षोमगुरुद्वयं प्रणवकं बिन्दुत्रिणेत्रोज्ज्वलम्
भास्वदरूपमुखं शिवांग्रियुगलं पार्श्वस्थसूर्यानिलम्।
उद्यद्भास्कर कोटि कोटिसदृशं हंसं जगद्व्यापिनं
शब्दब्रह्ममयं हृदम्बुजपदे नीडे सदा संस्मरेत् ॥

It is also visualized as a personalised spirit, at once tranquil (saumya, śānta) and ferocious (āgneya, ugra).

उद्यद्भानुस्फुरित तद्विदाकारमर्धाम्बिकेशं
पाशाभीती वरद परशुं संदधानं कराब्जैः।
दिव्याकल्पैर्नवमणिमयैः शोभितं विश्वमूलं
सौम्याग्नेयं वपुस्वतु नश्चन्द्रचूडं त्रिणेत्रम् ॥

TANTRA-YOGA



The Tantra is obviously not attractive to the multitude, because it involves attitudes which are different from, and sometimes contrary to, those which are normally held, and also because it requires great effort in accomplishment. And the Tantra's externals and the superficialities are likely to induce in one who has been brought up in the spirit of conventional morality an aversion for the discipline as a whole.

The Tantra itself recognises this, and therefore, makes the Tāntrik practices as little known to others as possible. The secrets are revealed to none but the really serious and the fully ready. And thus 'initiation' (*dīkshā*, *abhisheka*) is made an indispensable prerequisite for the practitioner. The Tāntrik initiation is not to be confused with mere 'instruction' (*upadeśa*); it is communication of certain secret doctrines by transforming the recipient entirely. The process involves elaborate and careful preparation, where texts occupy a secondary role, the primary task being the ritualistic involvement with the teacher. It has already been mentioned that the importance given to a teacher in the Tantra is very great. Says a text: "There can be no

salvation without initiation, and there can be no initiation without a teacher"¹¹; "For one without initiation there is no progress, nor success; therefore one must by all means get initiated by a teacher"¹². The expression '*dīkshā*' ('initiation') is a compound of two ideas, "to give" or "to endow" divine qualities (*dī*), and "to destroy" or "to remove" (*kshā*) the sins and obstructions, thereby freeing the individual from phenomenal fetters¹³.

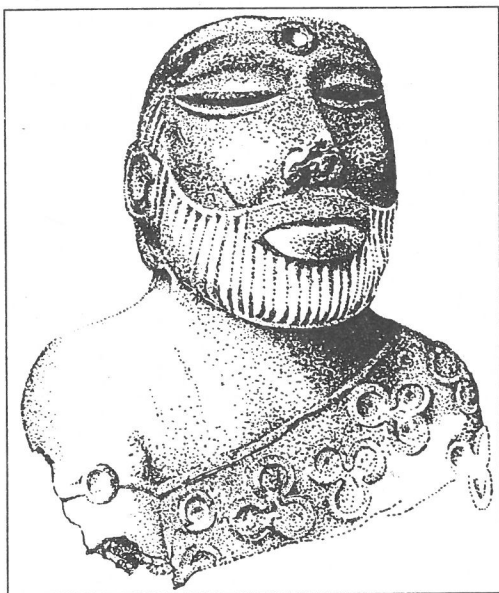
One may reasonably expect that the Guru will observe and study the novice's talent and temperament, and then decide on the particular initiation that is likely to benefit him; for initiation places a profound and direct responsibility on the teacher with regard to his pupil's success in his

career. It is a personal transmission of unseen but great power from the teacher to the pupil as effectively as possible, and as secretively as feasible. The Tantra emphasis tradition based on such personal communication, and frowns on picking up practices from books and hearsay. It insists that one who gets initiated must guard the details thereof zealously, for revealing them in public would lead him to unpleasant states of existence¹⁴.

Initiation means for the individual a total transformation: his whole being is now uprooted from normal moorings and keyed to a different structure-function. Formally, during initiation the individual is given a new name, and the ritual sequences suggest a rebirth.

The initiated is no longer the son of his parents, the member of a profession, or affiliated to a caste. He has ritualistically given up all old associations, and is thus dead for all practical intents. He is ready to grow up in a new setting. Initiation is of two types, or rather at two levels: (1) initiation for life, which makes the initiated altogether a different individual, functioning with entirely new coördinates, becoming dead to his old modes of behaviour, old associates and old situations; (2) initiation for a particular ritual, which is temporary. The latter is frequently known as 'entrance into the circle' (*chakra*). A citation from *Mahānirvāṇa-tantra* will make the position clear; "When one enters into the Bhairavī-Chakra, names and castes are lost; conventional

inhibitions do not apply. One is exactly like the other. But coming out of the circle, each assumes his name and caste again, and attends to his job as an ordinary work-a-day man”¹⁵. It may be mentioned in passing that the ‘*chakra*’ cult in some parts in India degenerated into orgiastic clubs, with antinomian and outlandish rites. And this was directly responsible for the disrepute which Tantra fell into.



Initiations differ also according to whether the rituals are external, or are merely mental. The Tantra is classified into *Kulāchāra* and *Samayāchāra*. The former is engaged with external rites and rituals, while the latter is characterized by internal worship, conducted in ones own ‘heart-lotus’, without necessarily having to recite the sacred formulae, or to make offerings to fire, or to engage in any worship detail whatever¹⁶. *Samayāchāra* is an interesting contemplative technique, where visualizations are all important. In fact, the *Vajrayāna sādhanā*, the Buddhist *Mahāyāna* thought-practice complex, developed out of this technique. And in this kind of abstract worship, instructions, explanations and guidance from an adept become indispensable and all important. It is, therefore, that *Samayāchāra* is said to be learnt only from the teacher¹⁷.

The novice here retires after instruction by the teacher to a solitary place, and practises contemplating alone. The other kind of Tantra is

always community-oriented; practice is done in groups, and there are well-defined rituals available for observation and imitation.



In the Tantra, two kinds of 'sacrifices' are recognised: one external (*bahiryāga*), and the other internal (*antaryāga*). It is acknowledged that the latter (performed in Samayāchāra) is the superior one. One indulges in external acts of worship, only until wisdom dawns¹⁸. While external worship is not condemned, it is recognized as decidedly inferior. However, the need and usefulness of such worship for certain types of men are also suggested. Three types of Tāntrik dispositions are mentioned: animal or common disposition (*paśu-bhāva*), heroic or

energetic disposition (*vīra-bhāva*), and divine or spiritual disposition (*divya-bhāva*). Under sixteen years, the aspirant is generally ignorant and incapable of understanding the merits of the path or the significance of the goal. If he is religiously inclined, he spends his time earnestly studying scriptures, formally worshipping deities and diligently performing rituals (albeit mechanically), and leads a disciplined life, without however going to excesses, but being keen on spiritual advancement. Notwithstanding this, his mind is still underdeveloped, and his feelings still immature. This phase of religious life tied to instincts and urges is known as 'animal disposition'. It is no doubt low, but has the capability of passing on to higher stages.

Then the individual grows older and becomes mature, as a result of study, experience, or contact with the right teacher. Then he begins to understand the subtleties, and becomes steadfast in the practice of virtue; his actions reveal courage and conviction. Nothing can frighten him, or tempt him off the path he has chosen. He perseveres, endures and pushes on, against all odds. He is described as having the 'heroic disposition', also termed 'great disposition' (*mahābhāva*). He has conquered his anger, greed, passion, envy and worry; and he has neither inhibitions nor reservations, fears nor anxiety, while he engages himself even in the rather gruesome experiments like the *śava-sādhana* (experiments with a corpse in a crematorium).

The next stage is that of 'divine disposition'. Here, the practitioner is almost like a denizen of the celestial realm, having abandoned the dualities of good and bad, pleasure and pain, right and wrong, and being perfectly tranquil and pure at heart; he is not driven by instincts, nor is he prey to temptations.

Vāmakeśvara-tantra defines 'disposition' (bhāva) as a psychic process, quality of the mind, capable of being handled only at the psychological level¹⁹. The above classification of dispositions into three types is with regard to the mental energy that is brought to bear (*śakti-prādhāyāt*). And there is a supposition that the physical constitution too is of three types - superior, midling and inferior.

The superior is characterised by the dominance of the *sāttvik* element (wisdom), the midling of *rājasik* element (energetic action), and the inferior of *tāmasik* element (lethargy-ignorance-infatuation). The variety of Tāntrik practice that suits and benefits each type of individual must be determined by the master, because successful practice presupposes temperamental facility. One of the texts suggests the name 'dakṣiṇa' for the inferior, the name 'Vāma' for the midling, and the name 'uttara' for the superior types (*Parānanda-sūtra*²⁰). For the inferior ('animal disposition'), Vedic rituals, worship of gods like Śiva and Viṣṇu are recommended; for the midling ('herioc disposition') the 'siddha' and 'vāma' rituals, and for the superior ('divine disposition') only 'kaula' rituals.

The classification of personality into three types is elaborated in some of the Tāntrik manuals, and it is linked with the concept of 'seven-fold conduct' (*saptāchāra*)²¹. After detailing the seven paths, a text sums up: "Many are the paths mentioned by those who are adepts in practice and experts in scriptural lore; but one must follow the path suggested to him by his teacher and no other"²².

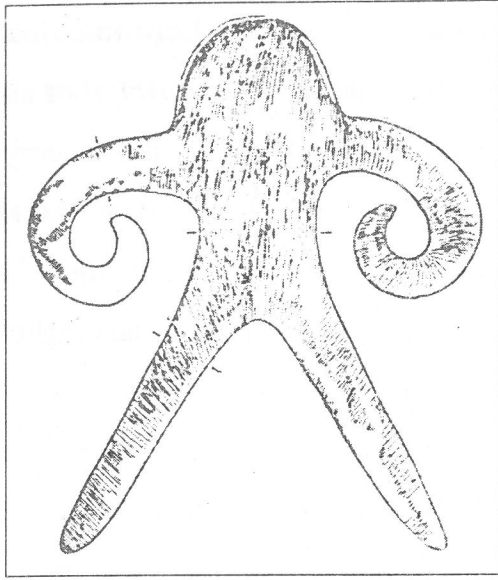
The more interesting view, however, is the arrangement of the three 'dispositions' mentioned above in a sequential order. The 'animal disposition' is said to be the primary stage, universal in its scope: "all are animals, as ground for human beings on earth, to be founded upon"²³. And it is considered a necessary

stage; and every one, however evolved, must start only here. When wisdom begins to shine, the 'heroic disposition' will set in; and then 'gradually' (*krameṇa*) one becomes 'divine' in his disposition. The three dispositions are accommodated to the major stages of life: childhood, adulthood and old age. And in some texts, the consecrations (*abhisheka*) are made the turning points of the three dispositions. The normal householder, being initiated into some mantras, starts at the 'animal' stage. He lives according to conventional norms, fulfilling all ritualistic expectations. Then, when he obtains the *śāktābhiṣeka* (consecration as a Tāntrik practitioner), he continues to live at home, but is indifferent to normal cares and worries of domestic life as

well as social participation; he is called a 'householder recluse' (*grhāvadhūta*). When, in this condition, he advances and gets 'the full consecration' (*pūrṇābhisheka*) the 'herioc' stage starts. He now stays away from home and commences visiting cemeteries for pyre-practice (*chītā-sādhana*), crematorium-practice (*smaśāna-sādhana*), esoteric circle-practices (*chakra-sādhana*), practices with women consorts (*yoginī-sādhana*), and indulges in the five 'm's (wine, fish, flesh, holy gestures and copulation). The last practice is Yogic; the articles mentioned are in fact symbolic and refer to accomplishments in the psychic centres. Unscrupulous masters and uncultured students, together with the forces of ignorance and

temptation, have helped to bring lasting infamy on this practice. The practitioner at this stage also practices the 'six actions' of sorcery and witchcraft; pacification (*śānti*), possession (*vaśīkaraṇa*), hold-up (*stambhana*), rousing enmity (*vidveshaṇa*), driving-away (*uchchāṭana*) and killing (*māraṇa*). After the 'herioc' stage, the practitioner becomes eligible to 'the great empire consecration' (*mahā-sāmrājya-dīkshā*), but this means giving up all worldly involvement, and devoting oneself entirely to the yogic attainment of Brahman. He is now on the last lap of his pilgrimage. His disposition is naturally 'divine'; he is now above the human frailties and beyond the agitations that plague the common folk.

The Tantra is primarily a practical discipline and its philosophy



was never finally or rationally crystallised. The need for it was never strongly felt, and much of the instruction given and received was oral and situational. Some of the Tāntrik texts, like *Śāradā-tilaka*, do deal with philosophical matters, but these accounts are neither systematic nor consistent. It is hard, therefore, to define and describe what may be called the Tāntrik philosophy. The presuppositions of the Śaiva,

Vaiṣṇava, Śākta and the so-called Buddhist Tantras are all different; and the functional role of the concepts in each Tantra varies. The common idea, of course, is that of 'energy' (*śakti*), which is a sort of Tāntrik counterpart of the Vedāntic *māyā* and the Sāṃkhyan *Prakṛti* ²⁴. The Tāntrik tradition being theistic, they point to the supreme and absolute, but qualified Lord (*saguṇa-parameśvara*), whom some Tāntrik texts describe as 'glorious with being, sentience and bliss' (*sachchidānanda-vibhava*). In Him is inseparably merged the infinite and transcendental energy (*śakti*) as His dimension or aspect (*kalā*); but this is beyond the phenomenal context. But the Lord by His free will sets energy into motion and brings forth creation - as oil is pressed from the

oil-seed²⁵. Creation is merely the manifestation of energy, and the texts illustrate the process by drawing attention to the rise (or rather revival) of remembrance in a person who wakes up from deep sleep. His memory which had merged in him, lost as it were, appears as soon as wakeful awareness is established. There is conjured up 'a vision of void', as a result of which emerges the undifferentiated and diffuse light-sound nucleus (*parā-nāda*), 'filling the void'. This void-essence focusses itself and crystallises into the 'transcendental drop' (*parā-bindu*), which is a sort of materialization of the Lord's 'action-energy' (*kriyā-śakti*). This 'drop', being creative, structures itself into two categories: 'the phenomenal drop' (*aparā-bindu*), highlighting the aspect of

self-awareness in the Lord (the *Śiva* category) and 'the seed' (*bīja*) of all creation, emphasising the energy aspect of the Lord (the *śakti* category). This splitting is accompanied by a secondary light-sound complex (*aparā-nāda*), which is described as 'the great sound' or 'the sound-absolute' (*mahā-nāda* or *śabda-brahma*). In fact, this light-sound complex is what holds the two categories together, and thus symbolises their union (*yuganaddha* or *samarasa*).



The thought-transference from macrocosmic level to the microcosmic led the Tantra to find in man

the counterpart of this 'great sound' in 'the coiled serpent' (*kuṇḍalinī*). It is the causal energy in man (*śakti*), represented by a triangle consisting of the three categories mentioned above as its sides; 'the drop' (*bindu*), 'the seed' (*bīja*) and 'the sound' (*nāda*), all emerging from the materialised 'transcendental drop' (*parā-bindu*). Even as the entire creation issues from the 'sound-absolute', man's being and behaviour arise out of the 'coiled serpent-power'. It is 'coiled' in the sense of being inactive normally; it rests in itself, perfectly self-contained, turned on itself and devoid of all outward orientation. The secondary 'light-sound complex' (*aparā-nādā*) or 'the great sound', located in between the eye-brows, is imagined to enter the central psychic canal, *sushumṇā*, and

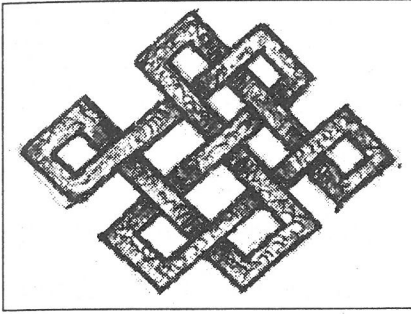
flow down to the 'basal center' (*mūlādhāra*), and rest there in the form of *kuṇḍalinī*.

The purpose of Tāntrik sādhanā is to rouse this slumbering giant, who, when roused, would return to the psychic center between the eye-brows, ascending along the *sushumṇā* canal. *Kuṇḍalinī* in its initial wakefulness is described as 'visarga' ('sending forth') 'discharge', 'departure', and also the mark of hard aspiration after the modifier in the Sanskrit alphabet). It is represented (as in the alphabet) by two dots one placed on top of the other. The dot on the top is identified with 'fire' (*agni*), while the one below with 'moon' (*soma*). We have seen above that this symbolises male-female configuration or biunity. The

aspirate mark has no doubt two components, but it is not indicative of duality; it points out rather to the fact that these two are necessary structural elements involved in a unity; each divorced from the other would be non-existent and meaningless. In the Tāntrik texts, this stage of initial but incipient activity on the part of the awakened energy is styled 'awareness-instant' (*chit-kalā*), which booms and buzzes, and develops into a pleasurable prospect of activity (technically described as 'bliss', *ānanda*). Carrying the sound-imagery further, *kuṇḍalinī* is said to comprise of all audible (*akshara*) and visible (*varṇa*) sound; and the first flush of awareness is the initial sound-form 'a', from which in due course the entire alphabet proceeds. This

'awareness-sound' as it arises in the 'root-basic' center is termed the 'transcendental speech' (*parā-vāk*), characterised by mere intention or will (*kāma*), which is unspecified but fundamental. It is not a *desire for* something, or a *will to* do any particular thing; but the glimmer of volition which lies at the back of all life. In fact, we read in the Tāntrik accounts that life proceeds only from this intention or *will*; life (*prāṇa*) is the phenomenal counterpart and an emergent of the transcendental 'awareness-instant'. If the former is symbolised by 'a', the first letter of the alphabet, the latter as the final effect is symbolised by 'ha', the last letter, and also pictured as a swan (*haṁsa*). 'Aha' thus represents the totality of origin and effect, of the transcendental and the phenomenal,

of awareness and activity; 'parama-hansa' is a word that denotes 'the whole man' in whom the elements are perfectly integrated.



The Śaivite Tantra looks upon 'a' as Śiva (pure awareness or illumination, *prakāśa*), the absolute being; and 'ha' is *śakti* (the energy aspect thereof, or the inherent expressive activity, *vimarśā*), the phenomenal emergence²⁶. The two are paralleled by Brahman and Māyā in Advaita Vedānta. The coming together of the two categories (the union being symbolised by the

terminal 'm') is signified by the Sanskrit expression 'a-ham' ('I' or ego), which also comprehends in itself the entire alphabet. The mass of this union is technically termed 'mithuna-piṇḍa' (the pair-body or two-in-one), or 'Śiva-Śakti (awareness-energy)²⁷. When 'awareness' and 'activity' thus unite in the act of 'visarga', the unity is spoken of as 'kāma-kalā, (aspects of desire). 'Awareness' (*prakāśa*), when implicit in 'activity' (*vimarśā*), is represented by a white coloured 'drop', also called 'sound' (*nāda*), denoting female energy. The two drops really are two aspects of the 'transcendental drop', but in its phenomenal phase (called *Kāma*, the aspects of which are the two coloured 'drops'). 'Awareness' is linked to fire, and 'activity' to the butter that

melts in its heat; and interaction between the two is described as 'bliss' (*ānanda* or *hārdha-kalā*).

The 'transcendental drop' is the *kuṇḍalini* in its original condition, altogether uninvolved in individuation, and unrelated to the phenomenal evocations. In this condition it is called 'mahāmāyā'. But when 'awareness-activity' arises in it, the pristine state of quiet is disturbed, and it becomes individuated, bound to phenomenal conditions²⁸. This is the 'coiled serpent power' that the Tantra seeks to handle. In the normal individual, however, the free power of activity lies hidden, or is in a dissolved state within 'awareness' (*antarlīna-vimarśā*). This condition is what is described as 'coiled'; *kuṇḍalinī* is

said to be asleep here. And in such a condition, 'awareness' is impotent and inert (*Śiva* is here figured as *śava*, a corpse). When, owing to the Tāntrik practices, 'the power' stirs up, then the 'I-ness' (*aham̐tā*) or egoity is instituted. In this context, egoity means merely 'self-awareness', the individuated power discovering its own identity. As against it, there is projection of the same power onto the phenomenal canvas; and consequently there appears the external world of things and events. The source of this externalisation is spoken of as 'non-egoity' (*anaham*). When 'self-awareness' interacts with the projected phenomenal world, we have the relating process, 'thisness' (*idam̐tā*).



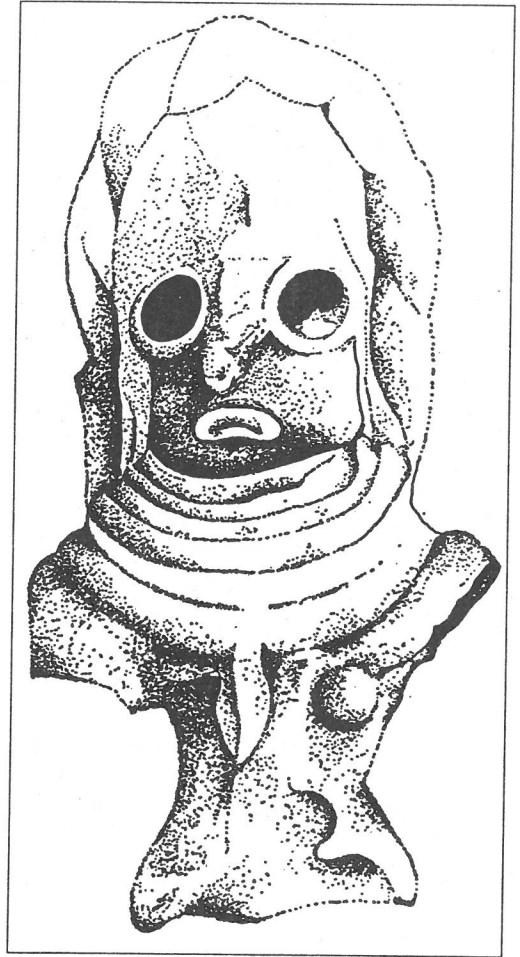
The Nātha tradition takes the same stand, but elaborates on individual development. The abstract world as projected by the awareness-energy complex out of an initial stir (*spanda*) of inspiration (*sphūrti*) is described as the 'transcendental structure' (*parā-piṇḍa*), a materialization that is cosmic in its import. But as individuated with the nucleus of 'egoity', it becomes transactional, and it is termed 'individual structure' (*vyasṭi-piṇḍa*). In each individual, however, the transcendental structure is reflected; the entire universe is contained within one's body²⁹. The awareness-energy complex occurs in the individual as

spirit and body; the spirit is *Śiva* and the body is *Śakti*. The dichotomy in our thought and action is unnatural, and therefore stressful. The goal of the Nātha practitioner is to realise in one's own being the identity of *Śiva* and *Śakti*, to integrate the two apparently divergent dimensions, and to perceive the entire universe as the expression of *Śiva-Śakti*. The Nātha practice suggests a procedure which is both natural (*sahaja*) and effective for transmuting the body into the spirit³⁰, thereby achieving enduring and unbroken inner identity. This procedure is called 'harmonising' (*samarasa*) the immanent, the transcendent and the universal into one reality. Our ordinary consciousness is fragmented, torn into states and conditions and processes, and therefore our identity

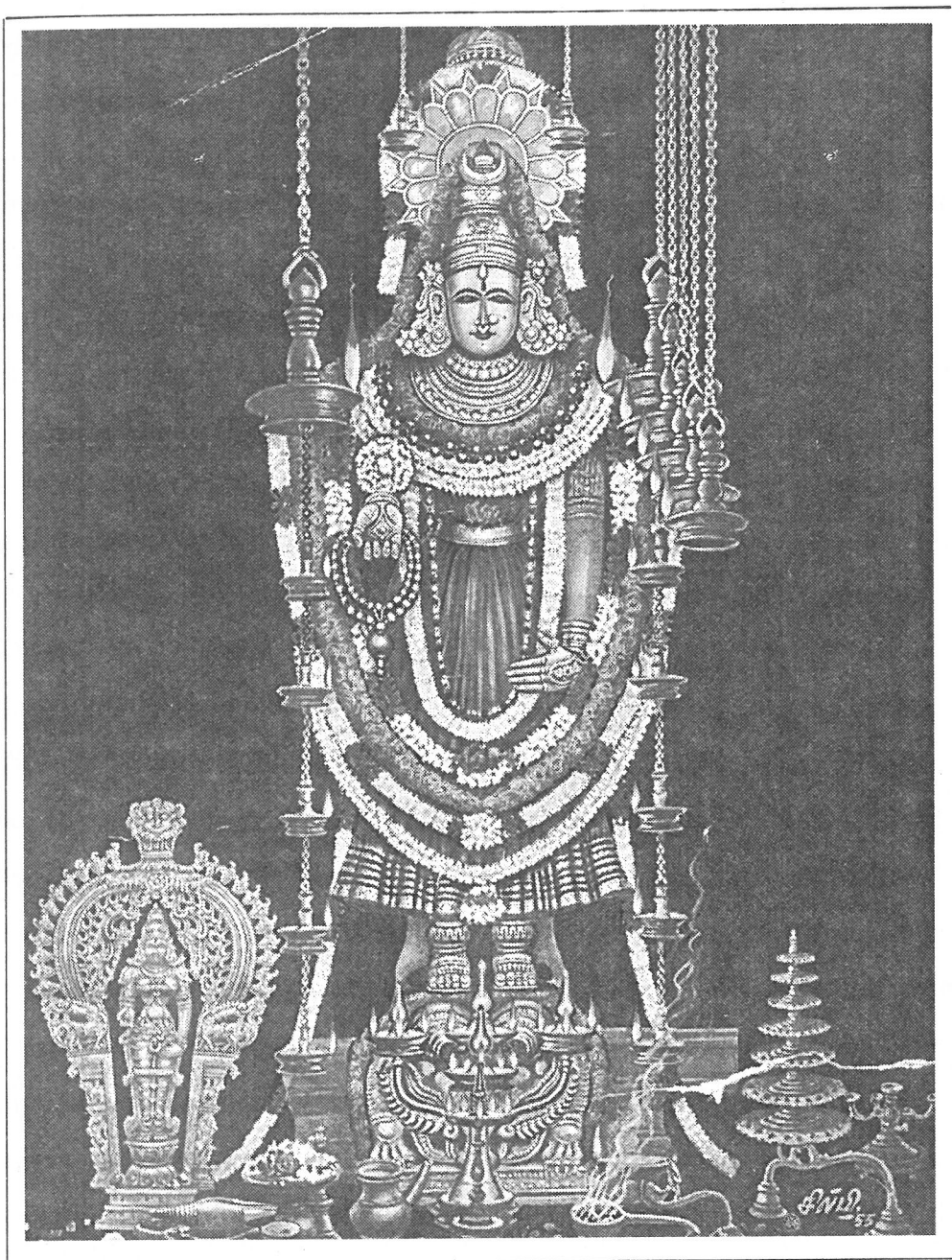
is involved in a crisis. The 'splitting' causes pain because of its unnaturalness, and ego-involvement in each detail frustrates the basic self-awareness (*ahamtā*). The Yogī, like a Taoist, recommends a perfectly natural, and therefore relaxed, and easy life; the mind should become 'sky-like' (*kha-sama*), freed from all specific fixations.

TANTRA-LITERATURE

Considering the anxiety displayed by the Tāntrik adherents to keep their lore a well-guarded secret, it is surprising that we have a very large number of Tāntrik works, most of them well preserved in public institutions (like royal libraries) and not a few of them given wide publicity. The extent of Tāntrik



literature is vast, and the content various, so various in fact that an adequate classification is almost impossible. Besides, most of the Tantras that we possess are indefinite



about their philosophical positions, sectarian affiliations and authorship. Not a few of them are rambling in their accounts, and grandiose in their claims. And they are most obviously late compositions, their dates extending from the 10th century to the 18th. Themes overlap, ideas are repeated, and verses are reproduced in the Tāntrik works so much that it is difficult to determine borrowals. There are, however, some criteria for classifying the Tāntrik texts that appear to be rather old. One of them is based on the 'āmnāya' concept: (1) works of eastern 'āmnāya' (predominantly belonging to the *mantra* path); (2) works of the western 'āmnāya' (karma path); (3) works of the northern 'āmnāya' (jñāna path); (4) works of the southern 'āmnāya' (*bhakti* path); and

(5) works of the central 'āmnāya' (comprehensive or mixed).

Another is based on the 'guṇa' idea: (1) the texts emphasizing *sāttvik* nature (The Tantra proper); (2) those which are *rājasik* in nature (e.g., the *yāmālas*); and (3) those which are *tāmasik* (e.g., the *ḍāmaras*).

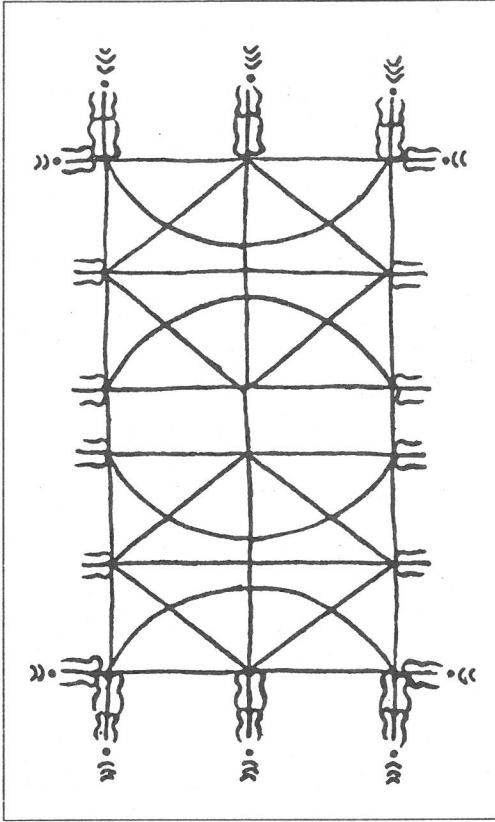
Still another relies on geographical areas of prevalence; Gauḍa (Bengal and neighbourhood), Kāshmīra (and the frontier areas like the Swāt valley, called in the old texts *Uḍḍiyāna*) and Kerala (South India). It appears that this was a widely accepted classification of traditions (*sampradāya*). There is a classification based on whether the texts follow Vedic religion (*veda-mārga*), Buddhism, or Jainism. There

are some Tāntrik texts that advocate secrecy (*vāmāchāra*), others that do not mind publicity (*dakṣiṇāchāra*), and still others that are 'mixed' (*miśra*), i.e., following *vāmāchāra* in secret and *dakṣiṇāchārā* in public.

Although the Tantra is mostly an approach to Śakti, and therefore properly described as Śākta, there are Tāntrik texts purporting to extol Śiva or Viṣṇu. Accordingly, they are designated Śaiva or Vaishṇava Tantras. The Śaiva Tantra includes pure Śaiva, Pāśupata, Kāla-gamana and Kāpālīka. The Tāntrik works of the Śaiva persuasion are traditionally twenty-eight in number, while those of the Vaishṇava are 108. The former (also called Śaiva-āgama) are again grouped into two categories: Śaiva proper (10 works, like Kāmikāgama,

Kāraṇāgama, Suprabhedāgama and Ajitāgama), and Raudra (18 works, like Vijayāgama, Nihśvāsāgama, Kiraṇāgama, Svāyambhuvāgama and Rauravāgama). The Vaishṇava works are principally grouped under Vaikhānasa (like the Saṁhitās of Marīchi, Bhṛgu, Atri and Kāśyapa), Pāñcharātra (like Jayākhya-saṁhitā, Pushkara-saṁhitā and Śātvata-saṁhitā) and Tantra-sāra (followed by Mādhva devotees).

The Sāktas are either Kaulas or Samayāchārins. While the differences between them are numerous, we may roughly describe the former as given to external rituals, while the latter as preferring 'internal worship' (*antaryāga*). The Kaulas are worshippers of Kālī³², and maintain secrecy in their rituals³³. And their



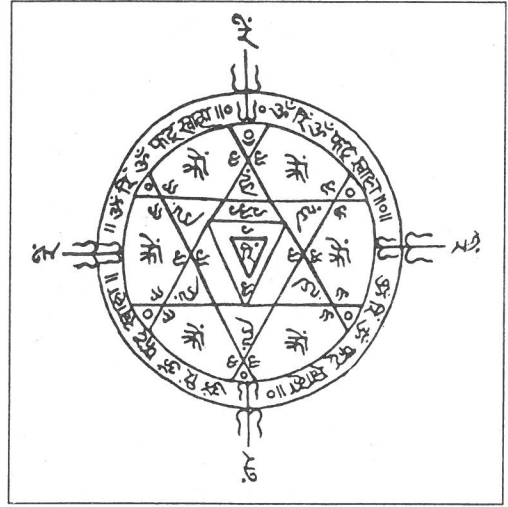
rituals include drinking wine, eating meat and fish, hand-gestures and sexual indulgence (the famous five 'm's'). But they also insist that the Kaula path is not for one who lacks control over his impulses and senses³⁴. There are several Kaula sects like 'pūrva-kula' (who take

five 'm's only symbolically), 'uttara-kula', 'kāpālīka', and 'digambara' (all of whom resort to outlandish rituals). They all identify themselves with Bhairava, and worship in a nude state the Goddess³⁵. The Kaulas are said to assume numerous garbs : they are śaktas (or Kaulas) within, but Śaivas in appearance, and pass for Vaiṣṇavas in assemblies³⁶. The Samayāchārins, on the other hand, are more restrained in their ideas and practices; they are given to symbolic Śrīchakra worship, and their philosophy is based on the 'centers' in the body. They have a five-fold canon named after the Vedic sages Vasishṭha, Sanaka, Śuka, Sanandana and Sanatkumāra.

Most of the Tāntrik ideas got crystallised at the hands of the Siddhas and the Nāthas, who lived

during the early centuries of the Christian era. The Apabhramśa *dohas* and the *charyāgītis* of the Siddhas and the Sanskrit works of the Nāthas (especially Goraksha-nātha) are important sources of Tāntrik ideas. Under the impact of the Siddhas and the Nāthas, a rich Tāntrik literature sprang up during the middle ages. Kāshmir Śaivism and South Indian Śaiva Siddhānta have very interesting works bearing on Tantra. Kāshmir Śaivism is well represented by Somānanda's *Śiva-dṛṣṭi*, Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* and *Tantra-sāra*, and Kshemarāja's *Pratyabhijñā-hṛdaya* and *Spanda-sandoha*. Śaiva-Śidhānta treatises are all in Tamil. Important among them are Māṇikka-vāchakar's 'Tiruvāchakam', Meykaṇḍadevar's *Śivajñānabodam*, Sakalāgama-paṇḍita's

Śivajñānasiddhiyār and the writings of Tirujñāna-saṁbandar. Appar and Sundarar made important contributions towards crystallising Tamil Śaivism.



The Tantra drew both Jainism and Buddhism within its fold in the early centuries of the Christian era. In both these religions, worship of gods and goddesses in the form of *Yakshas* and *Yakshīs* and adoration

of teachers (like tīrthaṅkaras, dhyāni-buddhas and bodhisattvas) became important involvements. In Jainism, each of the twenty-four Tīrthaṅkaras (the ford-making Jinas) came to possess his own characteristic *Yaksha* and *Yakshiṇī*. Most of these spirits or divinities was directly borrowed from the folk cults (like Garuḍa, Kubera, Gomedha, Kimimāra, Brahma, Vara-Nandi, Gomukha and Tumburu); some of them were already well-known in Tāntrik circles (like Kālikā, Vajra-śṛṅkhalā, Bhrukuṭī, Gaurī, Jvālāmālinī and Mahā-mānasī). It is small wonder that what appealed to popular fancy was the cult of these Tāntrik divinities, and therefore numerous Jain Tāntrik manuals came to be composed by celebrated Jaina saints. *Bhairava-Padmāvatī-kalpa*,

Jvālāmālinī-kalpa, *R̥shi-maṇḍala-mantra-kalpa*, *Jagatsundarī-prayoga-mālā*, *Śrīchintāmaṇi-kalpa-sāra* and *Vidhi-prapā* are good illustrations of what may be called Jaina Tantra. The Buddhist development on the Tāntrik framework forms the subject-matter of the subsequent chapters, and therefore little about it needs to be said here.

A large proportion of extant Tāntrik works is still in manuscripts. Of those that have been printed, many belong to the Kaula and Samaya persuasions. *Kubjikā-tantra*, *Saura-samhitā*, *Kiraṇa-tantra*, *Jayākhyā-samhitā*, *Parameśvarī-tantra*, *Kulārṇava*, *Mahā-nirvāṇa-tantra*, *Bhava-chūḍāmaṇi*, *Muṇḍamālā-tantra*, *Prayoga-sāra*, *Kāmikāgama*, *Jayasimha-*

kalpadruma, *Jñāna-saṅkalinī-tantra*,
Vāmakeśvara-tantra, *Śrīkrama-*
tantra, *Tantrarāja-tantra*, *Kaulāvali-*
nīrṇaya, *Śākti-saṅgama-tantra*,
Rudra-yāmala, *Śāradā-tilaka*,
Pārānanda-sūtra, *Paraśurāma-kalpa-*
sūtra, *Kaula-rahasya*, *Matāṅga-*
parameśvarī-tantra (with
 Rāmakaṇṭha's comm.), *Bhairava-*
ḍāmara, and *Kāka-chaṇḍeśvara-mata*
 are some of the better known texts.
 Most of them are still in their Sanskrit
 original. John Woodroffe (Arthur
 Avalon) has done much not only to
 translate some Tāntrik works into
 English, but to expound the concepts
 involved in them. Chintāharaṇ
 Chakravarti, Haraprasād Sastri,
 Bhavatosh Bhattacharya, M.P. Pandit,
 Kapāli Śāstri, Prabodha Chandra
 Bāgchi, M.Eliade, G.Tucci, P.H. Pott,
 Gopīnāth Kavirāj and Hazāriprasād

Dvivedi are some of the scholars
 whose writings have illumined many
 a dark niche in the Tāntrik mansion.

Of the numerous Tāntrik works
 that are still in manuscript form, and
 are included in catalogues, a large
 number deal with rituals connected
 with particular deities (like *Kurukullā-*
paṭala, *Ekajaṭā-sādhana*, *Kumārī-*
tantra, *Gaurī-yāmalā*, *Tārā-nigama*,
Tārīṇī-nirṇaya, *Bhairavī-yāmala*,
Mātāṅgi-tantra, *Vārāhī-tantra*,
Lakṣmī-kulārṇava, *Bhūta-ḍāmara* and
Mallāri-māhātmya), and some are
 general works (like *Tantra-dīpikā*,
Tantrādarśa, *Tāntrika-darpaṇa*,
Prayoga-sāra, *Bṛhat-tantra-sāra*,
Śāktāgama-sarvasva, *Mantra-tantra-*
prakāśā, and *Nigama-kalpa-druma*).
 Some contain the view-points of
 particular sages or schools (like

Pippalāda-mala, *Piṅgalā-mata*,
Kauleśa-koṭi-prabheda, *Goraksha-*
mahārtha-mañjarī, *Dattātreyā-*
saṁhitā, *Pheru-tantra*,
Vaiśaṁpāyana-saṁhitā, *Soma-*
śambhu-siddhānta, *Gauḍapāda-*
Śakti-sūtra and *Vidyānanda-*
nibandha). Some deal with magical
rites (like *Abhichāra-kavacha*, *Yoni-*
tantra, *Shaṭ-karma-dīpikā* and
Sautrāmaṇī-tantra), and some are
simple worship manuals (like
Liṅgārchana, *Pūjā-sāra*,
Kṛṣṇārchana-chandrikā, *Kādi-mata*,
Kālī-kalpa, *Śrīchakra-krama* and
Śyāmā-saparyā-krama). Some are in
the nature of lexicons and glossaries
(like *Māṭṛkā-kośa*, *Saṅketa-paddhati*,
Māṭṛkārṇava, *Mudrā-nighaṇṭu*,
Gūḍhārtha-dīpikā, and *Keralīya-*
tantra-śāstra). Some describe regional
cults (like *Kāmarūpa-dīpikā*,

Kāmākhyā-tantra, *Chīnā-tantra*,
Jayadratha-yāmala. *Muṇḍa-mālā-*
tantra, and *Bālā-vilāsa*); *Mahāchīna-*
tantra, *Rudra-yāmala*, *Tārā-tantra*,
Svatantra-tantra and *Nīla-sarasvatī-*
tantra indicate Tibetan and Chinese
origin of some of the Indian cults.
There are Tantras (like *Mahā-nīrvāṇa*,
Śakti-saṁgama, *Muṇḍa-mālā*,
Shaṭkarma and *Mahāchīnāchāra*) that
recommend aggressive and erotic
measures, and there are those (like
Kulārṇava, *Pārānanda* and *Śrīkrama*)
that insist on austerity.

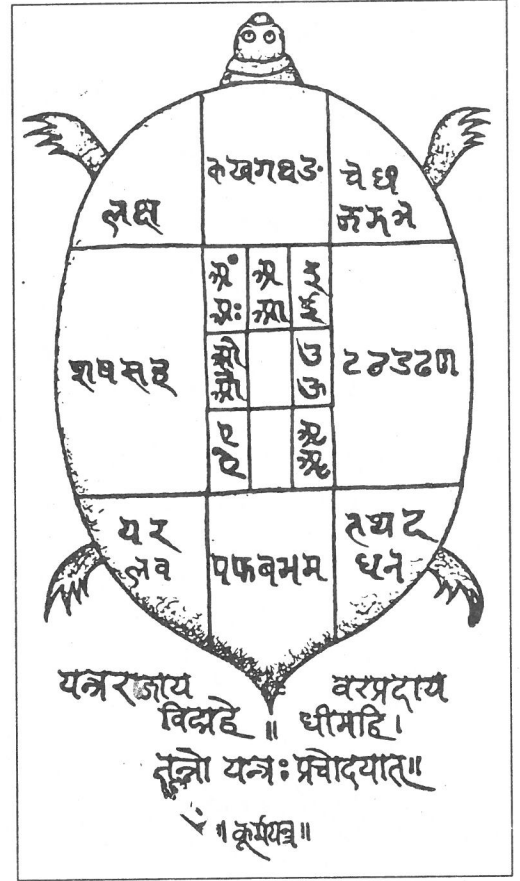
There are also several lexicons
(*nighaṇṭu*) of Tāntrik interest. The
seed-syllables (*bījāksharas*)
extensively used in Tāntrik practice
are often listed and their synonyms
are given, along with their meanings
in *Bīja-nighaṇṭus* and *Mātrikā*

nighaṇṭus. The following are among the large number of seed-syllables occurring in some of these lexicons, and which are commonly employed.

ॐ	Praṇava, tāra, tejo-bīja, veda, naigama, brahma, vinaya, pradīpa, agni.
ऐं	Vāg-bīja, tattva-bīja (speech, sound, principle)
क्लीं	Kāma-bīja, kandarpa, kāma rāja (eros, desire, will)
ह्रौं	Śakti-bīja (energy)
हो	Śiva-bīja
क्षि	Prthivī (earth)
प	ap (water)
स्वा	vāyu (air)
हां	ākāśa (space)
आ	pāśa (betters)
वौ षट्	āhvānana (invitation)
क्ष्वीं	vishāpahāra (removal of poisons)

चः	chandra (moon)
ह	gagana, vyoma (sky)
श्रीं	lakshmī (prosperity)
इं	Vishṇu
इ	Hara (Śiva)
वं	jala (water)
रं	agni (fire)
यं	vāyu (air)
हं	ākāśa (space)
ग्लौं	bhū (earth)
घः	grahāṇa, vairi-vadha (capturing)
श्रीं	amṛta (ambrosia)
हंस	vishāpahāra (antidote to poison)
हूं	varma, tri-tattva, krodha (protection, destruction)
क्रौं	aṅkuśa, nirodha (elephant-goad, restraint, command)
हूं	vidveshaṇa (causing enmity, friction)

जूं	vidveshaṇa (causing enmity, friction)
फट्	visarjana (discharge, elimination)
बषट्	dahana (burning)
वोषट्	ākārshaṇa (attraction)
संवोषट्	ākārshaṇa (attraction)
ब्लौं	ākārshaṇa (attraction)
ब्लूं	drāvaṇa (driving away)
ग्लौं	stambhana (paralysing)
क्षम्ल्व्यूं	piṇḍa (मलवरयुंकारसंयुतकूटम्)
स्वाहा	śānti, homa (peace, oblation in fire)
स्वधा	pausṭhika, pitṛ-tarpaṇa (strength, oblation to manes)
नमः	śodhana (purification)
ह्रीं	māyā, śakti, tattva (ह Śiva, र Agni ई weaver of the illusory world, anusvāra or bindu, sound generating all these)
कूट	ksha-kāra
सान्त	the syllable ह (सकारस्यान्तः) (the letter coming after स)



षान्त	the syllable स (षकारस्यान्तः) (the letter after ष)
वर्णान्त	the syllable ह (the last letter of the alphabet)
मान्त	the syllable य (after the group ending with म ends)
रान्त	the syllable ल (after the letter र)

टान्त the syllable ठ (after the letter ठ)

The initial letters of the names of gods are used in worship as bīja-mantras; the bīja-mantra personifies the deity itself; as it is uttered, the divine form evolves.

श्रुणु देवि प्रवक्ष्यामि बीजानां देवरूपताम् ।
मन्त्रोच्चारणमात्रेण देवरूपं प्रजायते ॥

e.g. गं गणपतये नमः ।
सं सरस्वत्यै नमः ।
चं चन्द्राय नमः ।
रं रामाय नमः ।
हं हनुमते नमः ।
वं वासुदेवाय नमः ।
दुं दुर्गायै नमः ।
वें वेङ्कटेशाय नमः ।

There are also groups of seed-syllables, like

एं ह्रीं श्रीं (tri-bīja)
आं ह्रीं क्रों (pāśādi-bīja-traya)
ओं ह्रीं श्रीं क्लीं

In five-fold worship rituals of Tāntrik variety also involve seed-syllables:

आह्वानं (१) स्थापनं (२) देव्याः
सन्निधीकरणं (३) तथा ।
पूजां (४) विसर्जनं (५) प्राहुर्बुधाः
पञ्चोपचारकम् ॥

ॐ ह्रीं नमोऽस्तु भगवति ।
१ एहि एहि संवौषट् ॥
२ तिष्ठ तिष्ठ ठः ठः ॥
३ मम सन्निहिता भव भव वषट् ॥
४ गन्धादीन् गृह्ण गृह्ण नमः ॥
५ स्वस्थानं गच्छ गच्छ जः जः जः ॥

There are also manuals like *Puraścharanārṇava* dealing with the puraścharaṇa of mantras, which must be practised before (purah) all acts in which the mantras are employed (charaṇa). According to *Kulārṇava* (17,87) the deity in this procedure is worshipped in five sequences (pañcāṅgopāśana) (pūjā, japa, tarpaṇa, homa and bhukti or bhojana);

it is then that the deity moves to and fro in front of the devotee:

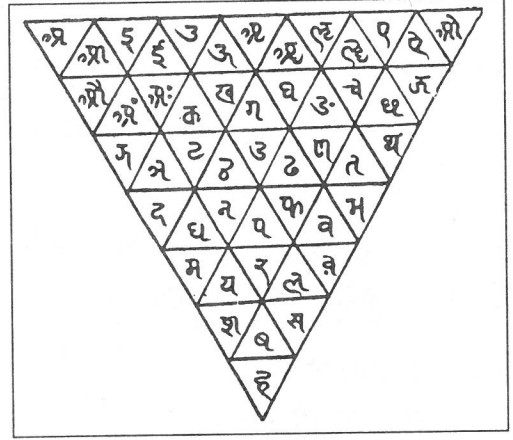
पश्चाद्भोपासनेनेष्टा देवता प्रीतिदानतः ।
पुरश्चरति भक्तस्य तत्पुरश्चरणं प्रिये ॥

Vāyavīya-samhita defines *puraścharaṇa* as follows (as quoted by Rāghava-bhaṭṭa in his gloss over *Śāradā-tilaka*):

साधनं मूलमन्त्रस्य पुरश्चरणमुच्यते ।
पुरतश्चरणीयत्वात् विनियोगाख्यकर्मणाम् ॥
पुरतो विनियोगस्य चरणाद्वा तथोदितम् ॥

Mantra-śāstra has a rich literature consisting of Kalpas (use of mantras, use of yantras, extraction of mantras and yantras, offering of bali and lights, invocation of deity, worship, *sādhana* etc.), tantras (in a dialogue form, mostly between Śiva and Pārvati, also dealing with mantras, yantras and oshadhīs), *paṭalas* (with reference to the Kāmya

rituals concerning specific deities) and *paddhatis* (*sādhana*-procedures pertaining to deities).



There are also texts which provide details about the ten *samskāras* necessary to vitalize the mantras:

जननं दीपनं पश्चाद्बोधनं ताडनस्तथा ।
अथाभिषेको विमलीकरणाऽप्यायने पुनः ।
जीवनं तर्पणं गुप्तिर्दशैते मन्त्रसंस्क्रियाः ॥

(1) *Janana* or *mantroddhāra* is the birth of the mantra : writing a triangle on *bhojapatra* with

gorochana, kumkuma or chandana: and then constructing 49 triangular cells in it by drawing six horizontal lines on each of the three sides of the original triangle. The mātṛkā-varṇas are written in these cells commencing from the īśānya-corner (the apex of the triangle facing the devotee). Each letter of the mantra is then extracted, and written on a separate bhoja-patra.

(2) *dīpana* : illumining the mantra by reciting it (japa) one thousand times after compacting the mantra (samputa) with the haṁsa-mantra, (when for example Rāma is the deity to be worshipped: रामाय नमः being the mūla-mantra:

हंसो रामाय नमः सोऽहं ॥

(3) *bodhana*: awakening the mantra by reciting it five thousand

times after compacting it with the bīja, hūm:

हूं रामाय नमः हूं ॥

(4) *tāḍana* : beating up the mantra by reciting it one thousand times after compacting with the violent letter 'phat', e.g.

फट् रामाय नमः फट् ॥

(5) *abhisheka* or bathing the mantra. The mūla-mantra is written on the bhūrja-leaf and is sanctified with the mantra रां हं सः ओं (ra being the bīja for Rāma): then the mantra is recited 1000 times, and sprinkled with water from the aśvattha-leaf.

(6) *vimalikaraṇa* or purification. The mantra (rāmāya-namah) is compacted with ॐ त्रों वषट् and recited a thousand times.

ॐ त्रों वषट् रामाय नमः वषट् त्रों ॐ ॥

(7) *jīvana* or vitalizing, by compacting the *mūla-mantra* with स्वधा वषट् :

स्वधा वषट् रामाय नमः वषट् स्वधा ॥

(8) *tarpaṇa* or pacification or providing satisfaction by food offering. The *mūla-mantra* is recited a hundred times, offering milk, clarified butter and water with each recitation.

(9) *gopana* or protection by compacting the *mūla-mantra* with the seed-syllable 'hūm', and reciting the mantra a thousand times:

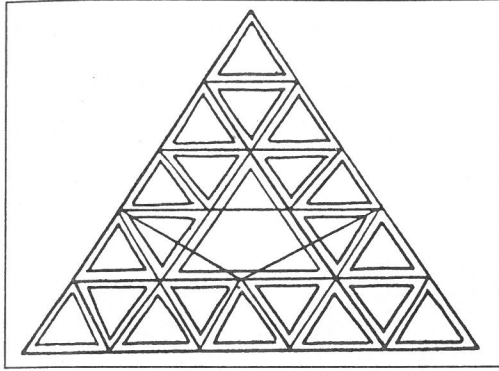
हूं रामाय नमः हूं ॥

(10) *āpyāyana* or providing delight by compacting the *mūla-mantra* with the seed-syllable 'hram',

and reciting the mantra a thousand times:

ह्रूं रामाय नमः ह्रूं ॥

The books dealing with *upāsana* of deities provide details about the *mūla-mantra* for the specific deity, with the name of seer (ṛshi), the metrical form (chhandas) and the name of the deity (devatā), the five-fold *nyāsa* (hṛdaya, śiras, śikhā, kavacha and astra), *digbandha* and so on. There are seven crores of mantras, although many of them are ineffective because of defects like being fragmented (chhinna), obstructed (ṛuddha), made weak (śakti-hīna) or distracted (parāṅgmukha). The ten *saṁskāras* mentioned above are in fact meant to obviate these defects, and restore efficacy for the mantra.



According to *Sammoha-tantra*, Chīnā-tantra has 100 primary and seven subsidiary tantras, *Drāviḍa-tantra* 20 primary tantras and 25 secondary ones, and *Kerala-tantra* has 60 primary tantras and 500 subsidiary ones. *Meru-tantra* speaks of 108 tantras composed by Mahādeva (1,21). *Nityā-shoḍaśikārṇava* (14,22) enumerates 64 Kaula-tantras. *Matāṅga-parameśvarī-tantra* mentions that the tantra works are classified under four heads: vidyā (doctrinal), Kriyā (ritualistic), yoga (spiritual practices

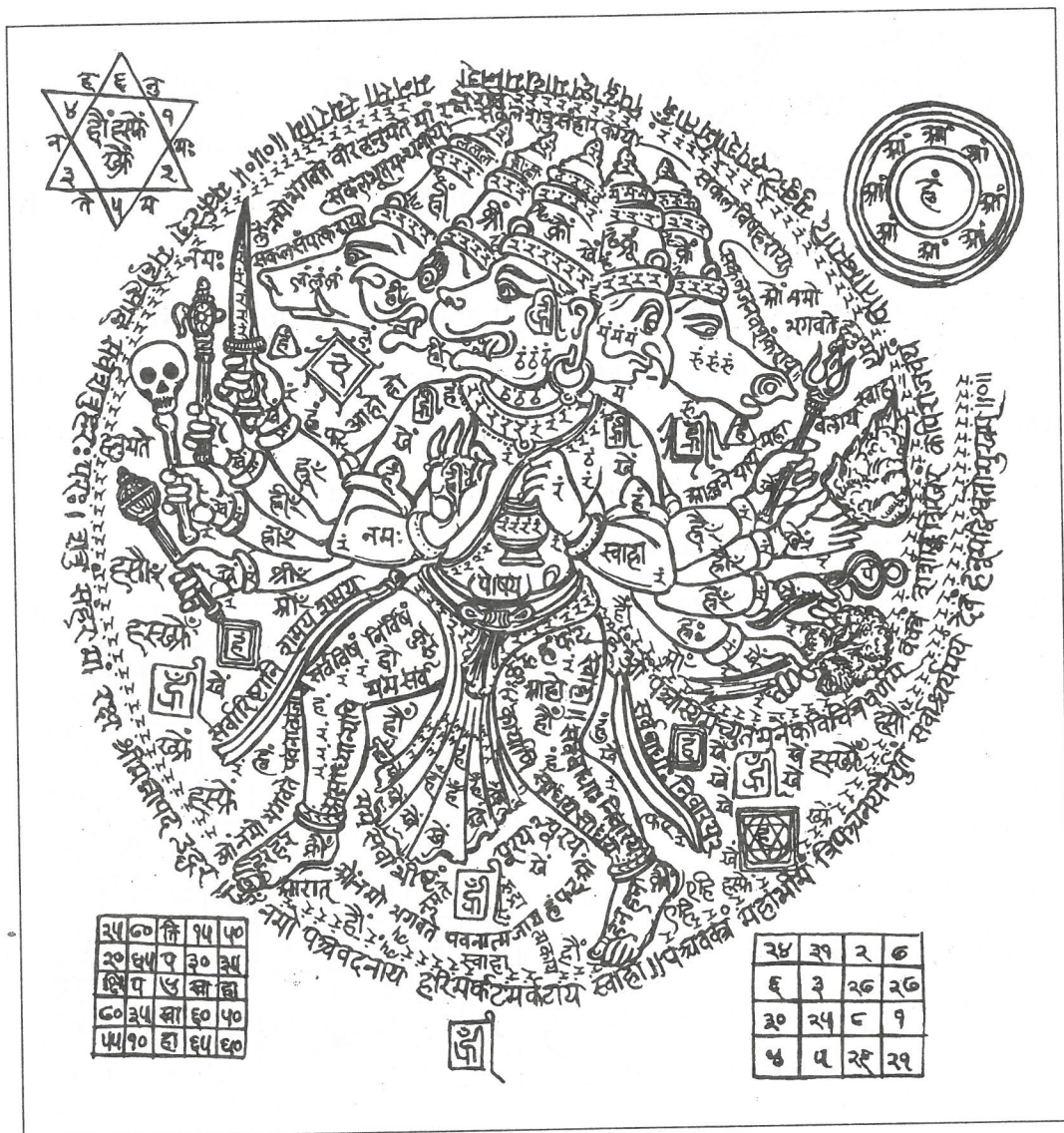
and charyā (accomplishments or siddhi).

The Tantra literature is thus not only vast, but varied. It not only reflects the diversity of outlooks and attitudes, but explains the multiplicity of cults that prevail in our country. It holds the key to understand aright the peculiarly incongruous, but eminently effective pattern, that is called Hinduism.



The tantra is not only ancient or medieval. It continues to this date. Many ideas and cults that were

not in the earlier tantras have now assumed the garb of Tantra. Yāmuna (9th century) tells us that even during



his days there were clever people who were promulgating their own views in the guise of āgama or tantra (*Āgama-prāmānya*):

अद्यत्वेऽपि हि दृश्यन्ते केचिदागमिकच्छलात्।
अनागमिकमेवार्थं व्याचक्षाणा विचक्षणाः ॥

(We must note that Āgama and Tantra are synonymous terms. *Piṅgalā-mata*, for instance, defines 'āgama' as follows: आज्ञावस्तु समन्ताच्च गम्यत इत्यागमो मतः ॥, and 'tantra' as तनुते त्रायते नित्यं तन्त्रमित्त्थं विदुर्बुधाः ॥)



REFERENCES

1. Haraprasad Sastri, Lama Anagarika Govinda and David Snellgrove thought 'saṅdhābhāshā' was corrupt for 'saṅdhyābhāshā' (twilight language). But Vidhusekhara Bhattacharya and Prabodhachandra Bagchi hold that 'sandhā' is the correct form, from the gerund of 'dha', prefixed by 'sam' (*sandhāyā bhāshā*, in the sense of *abhipretya*, *uddīśya*, 'aiming at', 'denoting', 'intending').
2. cf. *Kulārṇava-tantra*: 'mano'nyatra śivonyatra śaktir anyatra māratah; na siddhyati varārohe kalpakotīśatair api'.
3. cf. Guiseppe Tucci, *Theory and Practice of the Mandala* (London, Rider, 1960), Ajit Mookerjee, *Tantra Art* (1968), C.A. Muses, *The Esoteric Teachings of Tibetan Tantra* (Colorado, Indiana Hills, 1961), Herbert Guenther, *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way* (Berkeley, 1969), Ralph Metzner, *Maps of Consciousness* (New York, 1971).
4. *Yogavāsishṭha*: 'jīvasya trīṇi rūpāṇi sthūla-sūkshma-parāṇi cha, sthūlam pāṇi-pādamayam bhogārtham, sūkshmam svasaṁkalpamayākāram..... param ādyantarāhitam satyam chinmātram nirvikalpam'.
5. They are located at the big toe (*pādāṅgushṭha*), heel (*parshṇī*), ankle (*gulpha*), knee (*jānu*), anus (*guda*), 'sacral plexus' (*mūlādhāra*), perineum (*yoni-sthāna*), testes (*mushka*), genital organ (*medhṛa*), groin (*vaṁkshma*), 'prostate plexes' (*svādhishṭhāna*), bulb-nest (*kunda-yonī*),

navel (*nābhi*), 'solar plexus' (*maṇipūra*), thumb (*aṅgushṭha*), elbow (*aratnī*), arm-pit (*kaksha*), heart (*anāhata*), tip of the tongue (*jihvāgra*), back of the throat (*viśuddha*), soft palate (*ghaṇṭikā*), uvular palate (*tālu*), tip of the nose (*nāsāgra*), middle of the eyebrows (*bhrū-madhya*), just above this area (*ājñā*), in between the above two (*lalanā*), near the ājñā (*mind, manas*), about the mideranial region (*soma*), and on top the cranium (*sahasrāra*).

6. The Centers are pictured as lotuses each with a specific number of petals, and on the petals are mentioned various seed-syllables. From *mūlādhāra* to *ājñā*, the number of petals are in order 4,6,10,12,16 and 2 (altogether 50 corresponding to the letters of the alphabet). For details of this psycholinguistic mysticism see *Rudra-yamāla*, paṭala 17, verses 50, and Pūrṇānanda's *Shaṭchakranirūpaṇa*.
7. cf. John Woodroffe: *The Serpent Power* (Madras, 1953) and other works, V.G. Rele, *The Mysterious Kundalini* (Bombay 1927), M.P. Pandit, *Kundalini Yoga* (Madras, 1959), M.R. Datta, *The Secret Serpent Power* (Dacca, 1913), C.Chakrabarty, *Cultural History of Hindus* (Calcutta, 1945), Agehananda Bharati, *The Tantrik Tradition* (1970), Philip Rawson, *The Art of the Tantra*.
8. Bhāskara-rāya's *Saubhāgya-bhāskara*, Comm. on *Lalitā-sahasranāma*, verses 87-91. "sā hi mūlādhārākhyā chakra sārdha-trivalayākāreṇa suptā satī yogibhir utthāpya shaṭchakrāṇi Brahma-Viṣṇvādi-granthīms ca

bhedayantī sahasrāranītā satī tatkarṇikārūpa-chandra-maṇḍalād amṛtam srāvayati”. *Śāradā-tilaka* 25, 65 contains a beautiful description of *kuṇḍalini*’s passage to *Sahasrāra* and return to *Mūlādhāra*.

9. *Devī-bhāgavata*, 11, 1, 47 “prakāśamānām prathame prayāṇe pratiprayāṇepyamṛtāyamānām”.
10. *Yoga-chūdāmaṇi-upaniṣad*: “shaṭṣatāni divārātrau sahasrāṇyeka-vimśatih.; etat saṁkhyānvitam mantram jīvo japati sarvadā”; cf. also “hakāreṇa bahiryāti sakāreṇa viśet punaḥ; haṁsātmikām bhagavatīm jīvo japati sarvadā”; *Haṁsopaniṣad*, ‘so’ham haṁsapadenaiva jīvo japati sarvadā”. The *japa* here is described as ‘ajapājapa’.
11. *Kulārṇava-tantra*, 14,93 “vinā dīkshām na moksah syāt taduktam śiva-śāsane; sa cha syād vināchāryyam ity āchāryyaparamparā”.
12. *Ibid.* 14, 97.
13. “Divyabhāvapradānāch cha kshālanāt kalmashasya cha; dīksheti kathitā sadbhir bhavabandha-vimochanāt” (*Kulārṇava*); cf. also *Prapañchasāra*, 5,2.
14. *Paraśurāma-kalpasūtra*, 1,12 “prākāṭyān nirayah”. cf. also *Śakti-saṅgama-tantra*, 36,24 f. “suguptam kaulikāchāram anugrṇṇanti devatāḥ; vāñchāsiddhim prayachhanti nāśayanti prakāśane”.
15. “na nāma-jāti-vicāro’ sti no’chhiṣṭādivivechanam; chakrād vinihsṛtāḥ sarve svavarṇāśramo’dotāḥ; lokayātrāprasiddhyartham kuryuh karma pṛthak pṛthak” (*Mahānirvaṇa-tantra*, 8, 180-197).

16. *Lakshmīdhara*, on *Saundaryalaharī*, verse 10 “samayāchāro nāma āntara-pūjāratih, kulāchāro nāma bāhyā-pūja-ratir iti rahasyam... samayinām mantrasya puraścharaṇam nāsti, japo nāsti, bahya-homo’pi nāsti, bāhya-pūjā-vīdhayo na santyeva. hṛtkamala eva sarvam yāvad anuśṭheyam”.
17. *Ibid.* “guru-mukha-vedyah samayāchārah”.
18. *Vāmakeśvara-tantra*, 51 “antaryāgātmikā pūjā sarvapūjottamā priye: bahih pūjā vidhātavyā yāvaj jñānam na jāyate”.
19. *Ibid.* “bhāvo hi mānaso dharmo mansaiva sadābhyaset”. cf. “śakti-prādhānyat bhāvānam trayāṇām sādhakasya cha; divya-vīra-paśunām cha bhāvatrāyam udāhṛtam”.
20. “śarīram trividham proktam uttamādhama-madhyamam”. cf. also “pārānande mate trayo mārḡāḥ - dakṣiṇāḥ, vāmāḥ, uttarāḥ; dakṣiṇād uttamam vāmam, vāmād uttaram uttamam, uttarān na kvachit”.
21. The seven-fold conduct is necessitated because human nature is not uniform; *vedāchāra* (Vedic rituals), *vaishṇavāchāra* (Paurāṇik rituals), *dakṣiṇāchāra* (the worship of the Goddess by employing Vedic hymns), *vāmāchāra* (secret worship of the goddess with the five ‘m’s: madya, māmśa, mudrā, matsya and maithuna), *śaivāchāra* (Saivite rituals following Vedic tradition), *siddhāntāchāra* (ecstatic rites in burning grounds) and *kaulāchāra* (unfettered and wisdom-dominated rituals). The last, which

is considered the best, is identified with Yoga (“yoga-mārgam kaula-mārgam ekāchāarakramam prabho: yogī bhūtvā kulam dhyātvā sarva-siddheśvaro bhavet”).

22. *Śaivāgama*: “panthāno bahavah proktāḥ mantra-śāstra-manīshibhiḥ; sva-guror matam āśritya śubham kāryam na chānyathā’.
23. “sarve cha paśavas santi talavad bhūtale nṛṇām”.
24. What follows is an account from *Śāradā-tilaka*, 1,7,8.
25. *Śiva-purāṇa* (*Vāyavīya-saṁhitā*) “śivechchhayā parāśaktiḥ śivatattvakatām gatā; tataḥ prasphurātyādau tailam tilād iva”.
26. cf. *Tantrāloka*, 3, 136-148.
27. cf. S.N. Dasgupta “A General Introduction to Tantras”, *Asutosh Mookerji Silver Jubilee Volume III*, pt. I, 1922.
28. cf. *Sarva-jñānottara-tantra*, gloss: “kuṇḍalinī śabdavāchyaś-tu bhujaṅga-kuṭilākāreṇa nādātmanā sva-kāryeṇa pratipurusham bhedenāvasthito na tu svarūpeṇa pratipurusham avasthitah..”.
29. For details see Gopinath Kaviraj: *Aspects of Indian Thought*, University of Burdwan, 1966, Chapter on “Sakta Philosophy”.
30. *Siddha-siddhānta-saṅgraha*, 3, 40 “akhaṇḍa-paripūrṇātmā viśvarūpo maheśvarah; ghaṭe ghaṭe chitprakāśas tiṣṭhati...”.

31. *Siddha-siddhānta-paddhati* “saiva śaktih..yadā sahajena svātmunmilinyā nirutthānadaśāyām vartate tadā śivah sa eva bhavati”.
32. *Śakti-saṅgama-tantra*, Kālī-khaṇḍa, 3,22: “śrīkālyopesakā ye cha tat kulam parikīrtitam”. *Kula* is variously interpreted as Śakti (kulam śaktir iti proktam), ones own body (kulam śarīram mahā-prayojana-hetutayā jñeyam, yeshām te kulaḥ.” *Yoginī-hṛdaya-dīpikā* 2, 78), and family lineage (sva-sva-vaṁśa paramparāprāpto mārgah.”).
33. *Ibid*, Tārā-khaṇḍa, 36, 25. “suguptam kaulikāchāram anugṛhṇanti devatāh”.
34. Rāmeśvara’s comm. on *Paraśurāma-kalpa-sūtra*, p.153.
35. The *pūrva-kaulas* draw a triangle and worship the point in it, or they worship the Śrīcakra; the *uttara-kaulas* worship the actual vulva of a young maid; others both. Lakshmīdhara in his comm. on *Saundaryalaharī*, verse 41, adds “Much can be written on this; but because they are so outlandish, they are not fit even to be remembered”.
36. ‘antah śāktāh bahih śaivāh sabhāyam vaishṇavā matāh, nānāveśadharā kaulāh vicharanti mahītale’, *Kaulāvalī-nirṇaya*, 10, 85.

84 Indian Siddhas as recounted in the Tibetan tradition.

The names end with Pā, which is short for Pāda,
an honorific suffix.



ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं पद्मे नमः । ॥ १० ॥

1. LUI-PĀ



ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं ॥ ७७३ ॥

2. LĪLA-PĀ



འཇམ་མཁའ་པོ་ལྷ་པོ་། ༡༡༩།

3. VIRŪ-PĀ



འཇམ་མཁའ་པོ་ལྷ་པོ་། ༡༢༠།

4. DOMBHI-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

5. ŚABARĪ-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

6. SARAHA-PĀ



ཕྱི་ལྷ་མོ་ཀླུ་མེད་པུ་ལྷ་མོ། །།

7. KAMKĀLI-PĀ



ཕྱི་ལྷ་མོ་ཀླུ་མེད་པུ་ལྷ་མོ། །།

8. MĪNA-PĀ



9. GORAKH-PĀ



10. CHAURANGĪ-PĀ



ॐ ह्रीं वासुदेवाय नमः ॥ ११ ॥

11. VĪNĀ-PĀ



ॐ ह्रीं वासुदेवाय नमः ॥ १२ ॥

12. ŚĀNTI-PĀ



ॐ ह्रीं तन्ति पाम् । ॥ १२५ ॥

13. TANTI-PĀ



ॐ ह्रीं चामरी पाम् । ॥ १२६ ॥

14. CHAMARĪ-PĀ



ཆེན་པོ་མཁའ་པ་ལྷ་པོ་འཁྱེད་པོ།

15. KHADGA-PĀ



ཆེན་པོ་མཁའ་པ་ལྷ་པོ་འཁྱེད་པོ།

16. NĀGĀRJUNA



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३७ ॥

19. THAGAN-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३८ ॥

20. NĀRO-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ७३० ॥

21. ŚĀLI-PĀ



འཕགས་པའི་པཱེ་དང་། ༡༩༩༩

22. TILO-PĀ



ཡེ་ཤེས་ཅན་པ་མེད་པའི་མཆོད་ཀྱི་ཁྱུ་པ་

23. CHATRA-PĀ



ཡེ་ཤེས་ཅན་པ་མེད་པའི་མཆོད་ཀྱི་ཁྱུ་པ་

24. BHADRA-PĀ



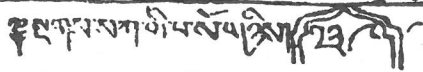
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३२ ॥

25. DOKHANDI-PĀ

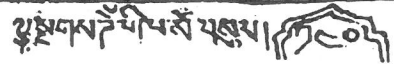


ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १३३ ॥

26. AJOGI-PĀ



A black and white line drawing of a woman with a halo, likely the Virgin Mary, kneeling in prayer. She is holding a small object, possibly a child, in her arms. The background shows a landscape with trees and a small figure in the distance.



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ཆེན་པོ་ལྷ་མོ་འཕགས་པ་ལྷ་མོ་། རྒྱལ་པོ་།

29. KĀṆKANA-PĀ



ཆེན་པོ་ལྷ་མོ་འཕགས་པ་ལྷ་མོ་། རྒྱལ་པོ་།

30. KAMARI-PĀ



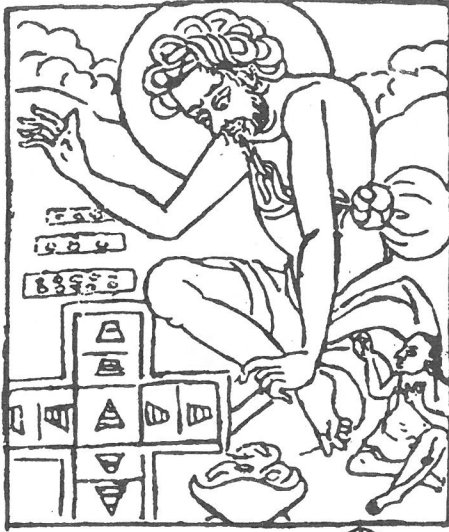
ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ नमः ॥

31. DONGI-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ नमः ॥

32. BHĀDE-PĀ



ཨ། མཁས་རྒྱལ་མཁས། ཀྱལ་པ་

33. TANDHE-PĀ



ཨ། མཁས་རྒྱལ་མཁས། ཀྱལ་པ་

34. KUKKURI-PĀ



འཇམ་གསལ་གྱི་ལྷ་པོ་པཎ་ཏི་པ་ཀུ་སུ་ལི་པ་

35. KUSŪLI-PĀ



འཇམ་གསལ་གྱི་ལྷ་པོ་པཎ་ཏི་པ་ཀུ་སུ་ལི་པ་

36. DHARMA-PĀ



ཨ་མེ་པ་ལྷ་པོ་པ་བཀུམ་ལ།

37. MAHĪ-PĀ



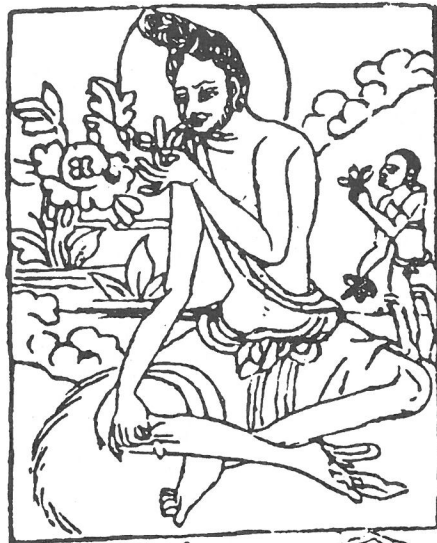
ཨ་མེ་པ་ལྷ་པོ་པ་བཀུམ་ལ།

38. ACHĪNTA-PĀ



འཇམ་མཁའ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་། ཀུན་ཀྱི་ཕྱི་ལོ་།

39. BHALAHA-PĀ



འཇམ་མཁའ་ལྷ་མོ་ལྷ་མོ་། ཀུན་ཀྱི་ཕྱི་ལོ་།

40. NALIN-PĀ



॥ ह्रीं क्लीं ॥

43. MEKO-PĀ



॥ ह्रीं क्लीं ॥

44. KUDDALI-PĀ



ལྷ་མཁའ་ལ་མཁའ་མཁའ་།

45. KARMĀRA-PĀ



ལྷ་མཁའ་ལ་མཁའ་མཁའ་།

46. JĀLANDHARA-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय । ॥ ८ ॥

47. RĀHULA-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय । ॥ ८ ॥

48. GHARBARI-PĀ



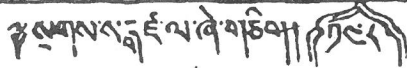
ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं धोकरीपाय ॥

49. DHOKARI-PĀ

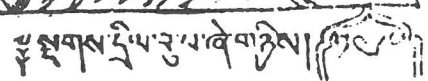


ॐ ह्रीं क्लीं मेदिनीपाय ॥

50. MEDINĪ-PĀ



A black and white line drawing of a seated Buddha figure with a halo, holding a small object in his hands, and a standing figure offering a bowl to him. The Buddha figure is seated in a meditative posture, wearing a patterned dhoti and armlets. He has a serene expression and a large, circular halo behind his head. He holds a small object, possibly a fruit or a small pot, in his hands. To his left, a standing figure, possibly a devotee or a deity, offers a bowl to him. The standing figure is dressed in a long, flowing robe and has a halo. The background is a simple, stylized landscape with a large, circular shape behind the Buddha figure. The entire scene is enclosed in a rectangular border.



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འཇམ་མཁའ་ལོ་གི་པ་ལྷེ་པ་ལྷུ་མ། ཀླུ་པོ་ལྷ།

53. JOGI-PĀ



འཇམ་མཁའ་ལོ་གི་པ་ལྷེ་པ་ལྷུ་མ། ཀླུ་པོ་ལྷ།

54. CHELUKA-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १५३ ॥

55. GUṆDARI-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ १५३ ॥

56. LUCHIKA-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

57. NIRGUṆA-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

58. JAYĀNANTA



ལྷ་མྱུག་པ་ཅི་པ་རི་མཁུ་མེ། ཀྱུ་ཅི་པ་

59. CHARPAṬĪ-PĀ



ལྷ་མྱུག་པ་ཅི་པ་རི་མཁུ་མེ། ཀྱུ་ཅི་པ་

60. CHAMPAKA-PĀ



ཕྱི་མཁན་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་། ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་།

61. BHIKHAN-PĀ



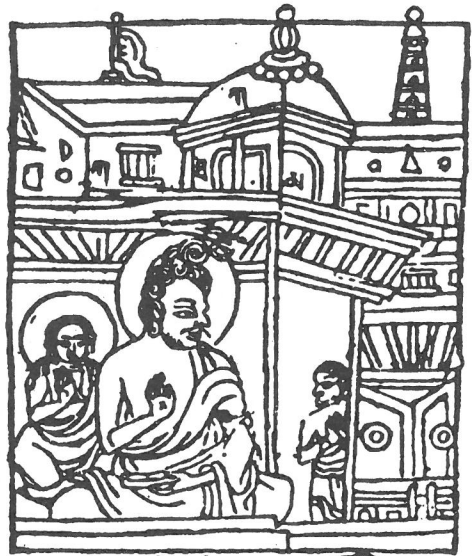
ཕྱི་མཁན་པོ་ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་། ལྟ་བུ་ལྟ་བུ་།

62. BHALI-PĀ



ॐ ह्रीं कृष्णाय नमः ॥ ॐ ह्रीं

63. KUMVARĪ-PĀ



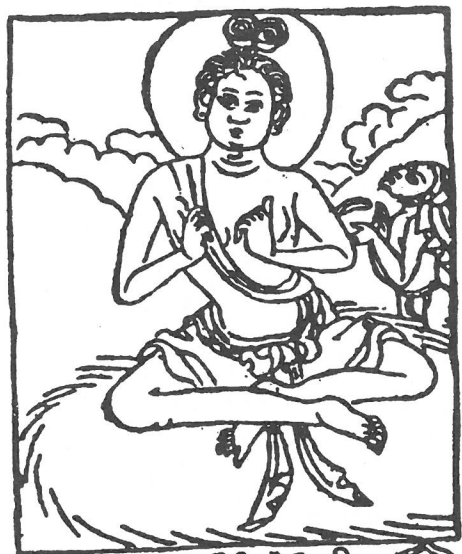
ॐ ह्रीं कृष्णाय नमः ॥ ॐ ह्रीं

64. JAVARI-PĀ



ཨ་མ་མཁའ་ལྷ་མོ་མཁའ་ལྷ་མོ་

67. KANAKHALĀ



ཨ་མ་མཁའ་ལྷ་མོ་མཁའ་ལྷ་མོ་

68. KALAKALA-PĀ



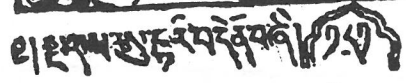
ॐ ह्रीं कान्तली पद्मे नमः ॥ ११९ ॥

69. KANTALI-PĀ



ॐ ह्रीं धाहुली पद्मे नमः ॥ १२० ॥

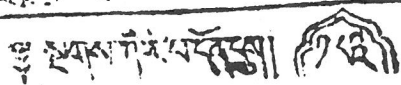
70. DHAHULI-PĀ



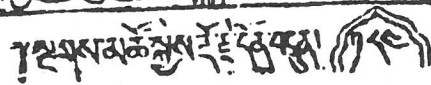
A black and white line drawing of a seated Buddhist figure, likely a Bodhisattva. The figure is depicted with long, flowing hair that cascades down the front and sides. The figure is seated in a meditative posture, with hands resting in the lap. The figure is adorned with a simple garment that drapes over the shoulders and a decorative belt. Behind the figure is a large, stylized halo or mandorla, composed of concentric arcs. The entire figure is enclosed within a rectangular frame. The drawing is executed in a traditional, minimalist style using bold black lines on a white background.

ॐ ह्रीं नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ (१२३)

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A black and white line drawing of a seated Buddhist figure, likely a Bodhisattva, holding a lotus flower. The figure is adorned with jewelry and a crown, and is surrounded by stylized clouds and foliage. A small figure is visible in the background.



YOGA-TANTRA-SAMPRADĀYA



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ७५ ॥

75. SARVA-BHAKSHA-PĀ



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॥ ७६ ॥

76. NĀGA-BODHI-PĀ



ॐ हणसहैयं ॥ १११ ॥

77. DĀRIKA-PĀ



ॐ हणसहैयं ॥ ११२ ॥

78. PUTULI-PĀ



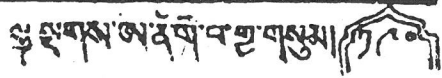
ཕྱུང་ལྷ་མོ་འཇུག་པའི།

79. PANAHA-PĀ

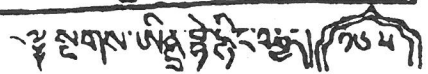


ཕྱུང་ལྷ་མོ་འཇུག་པའི།

80. KOKILA-PĀ



A black and white line drawing of a Buddhist scene. The central figure is a seated Buddha or Bodhisattva, wearing an ornate crown with a central jewel and floral decorations. They have a serene expression and are adorned with large circular earrings and a necklace. Their hands are in a mudra (gesture). Behind them, two other figures are seated, looking towards the central figure. To the right, a standing figure is partially visible. The background features stylized clouds or foliage. The entire scene is enclosed within a rectangular border.



YOGA-TANTRA-SAMPRADĀYA



ཨ་མུ་ཏཱ་ལཱ་ཤཱ་པཱ་ལྟོ་པཱ་། རྒྱལ་པོ་པཱ་།

83. SAMUDA-PĀ



ཨ་མུ་ཏཱ་ལཱ་ཤཱ་པཱ་ལྟོ་པཱ་། རྒྱལ་པོ་པཱ་།

84. BHALI-PĀ

(Courtesy: Yogāṅka, Kalyāṇ, Gita Press, Gorakhpur)

CHAPTER TWO

INDIAN YOGA-TANTRA IN TIBET

THE INDIAN BACKGROUND

India and Tibet have been in continuous cultural contact since very ancient times. Tibet has looked upon India as its sacred land, the land of its religion; and India has looked upon 'Bhoṭa' (the Indian name for Tibet) as its religious frontier. But the formal Indianization of Tibetan religion began around 700 A.D. Of the Indian yogis who then made a deep impact upon the Tibetan imagination, the foremost was Padmasambhava, whom Tibetans to this day revere as the 'precious guru'. With him entered into Tibet not only Indian magic and metaphysics,

but also Indian methods of meditation.

Tibetan tantra and meditation are essentially Indian in their orientation as well as background. But some of the aspects have disappeared from the Indian context. The reason for this strange occurrence is to be sought in the total destruction of the medieval Indian Universities (like Nālandā, Vikramaśilā and Jāgaddala) in Magadha during the Muslim invasion in the thirteenth century. These centres of learning were the scenes of intensive literary, and Tantra-Yoga activities of some of the











Vimala-mitra Mahā-panḍita

eminent Siddhas (like Śānti-pa, Nāro-pā, Atiśa-Dīpaṃkara and Maitrī-pa), who had reconciled the traditional Yoga with the Yoga of Mahāyāna innovation. Vajrayāna emerged as a result of this confluence, and was a continuation of Indian tradition in Tibet.

The Indian Siddhas, owing to the religious persecution in Magadha, fled to the security, if also isolation, of the Himalayan foothills. Tibet welcomed them warmly and eagerly accepted their spiritual leadership. This was because hundreds of Tibetan scholars were already acquainted with this variety of Tantra-yoga in the Magadhan universities of Nalanda, Vikramaśīlā and Jāgaddalā. Siddhas were also authors of Tantrik treatises in

Sanskrit, and mystic poets of great renown. Their works had already been translated into Tibetan had and become popular. Indian Paṇḍitas and the Siddhas created a new interest in Tibet, and they in a sense continued the yoga-tantra tradition in Tibet, when it was destined to disappear in India, for a time at least, due to the persecution by Muslim invaders. There was a break in the continuity in this tradition in India during the unsettled period after the seventh century A.D. But, fortunately, the reconstruction of this phase is to an extent possible with the aid of the religious history of Tibet. Although possible, it is by no means an easy task, because of ramifications and altered emphasis on certain aspects in that country. An initial look would suggest that the

Tantra-Yoga tradition in Tibet as almost an indigenous one, because of the vast differences in details and forms from its Indian model. But a closer look would convince one that it is essentially Indian and that it was assimilated into the traditional context. While the basic manuals and guide-books, as well as the theoretical presuppositions and arguments are no doubt Indian, there has been a remarkable development in this field in Tibet, owing to the genius of the Tibetan masters. Saved from the uncertain political wrangles that were then so peculiar to India, they could concentrate on the practical aspects of the Indian tradition in the quiet seclusion of their monasteries. A land of silence and loneliness, Tibet perhaps was peculiarly set to develop a mystical

and meditational religion. Many of the saints in that country were remarkable for their perseverance in practice, for their extraordinary introspective bent of mind, and for their striking originality in expounding meditational methods. A rich literature concerning Tantra-Yoga has therefore grown steadily in Tibet; and luckily a valuable bulk of it has been preserved, despite historical vicissitudes.

There have been both elaborate and brief commentaries in Tibetan on all the the major texts of Indian origin. What are more valuable, however, are the 'oral precepts' and 'personal notes' in the zealous possession of many lama-masters. They are naturally looked upon as precious and confidential; they are

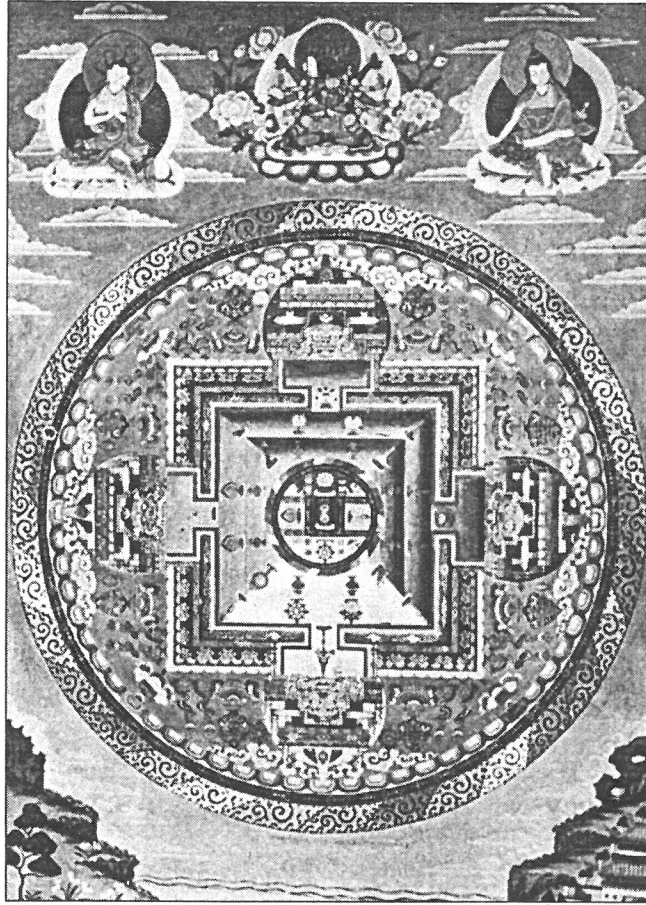
communicated to the practitioner only after initiation and successful completion of preliminary practice. Some of the oral precepts have been committed to writing, and some personal notes have indeed been made public. Much of such material, however, is in manuscripts, and in the personal possession of lamas.

THE TIBETAN OUTLOOK

In the Tibetan way of thinking, living beings are classified under three broad divisions. Each division is described as a meeting place (*hDu*) of kindred spirits, viz., beings with similar faculties of perception and action. But it is also a combination of particular aspects of life. The distinguishing feature in the divisions is the presence or absence or

‘conscious con-ception’ (*hDu-Shes*, in Sanskrit *saṁ-jñā*), the capacity to think and reason, to be aware of oneself and the surrounding. The world is a concatenation of these divisions and aspects; it is indeed a ‘con-faction’ (*hDu-Byid*, in Sanskrit *saṁs-kāra*).

The first division of living beings is characterized by the obvious presence of the thinking faculty, of the capacity to reason (*Shes*). Human beings are included in this group. The second is distinguished by the absence of this faculty, and it includes higher animals that operate, not on reason but on the basis of instincts and impulses. The third division comprises of the lower animals that do not appear to have even instincts or impulses. The



Kāla-chakra

Tibetan nomenclature for the last division, “without either the presence or absence of thinking” (*hDu-Shesmed-Min*), suggests the inapplicability of the criterion of reason for this group. The first division is rational and moral, the second arational and amoral; and for the third group the ideas of reason or morality do not apply.

Among the human beings who constitute the first division, there are again three groups, described in Tibetan as the three ‘ways’ (*CHen-pai lam*). First, there are the ‘natural’ persons. Although they can reason, they hardly ever bother to exercise that faculty beyond the common problems of daily life. They follow their natural inclinations, and seek

to satisfy their bodily urges and appetites; they are worldlings, with no higher aspirations. Their spiritual orientations are minimal, if not totally absent.

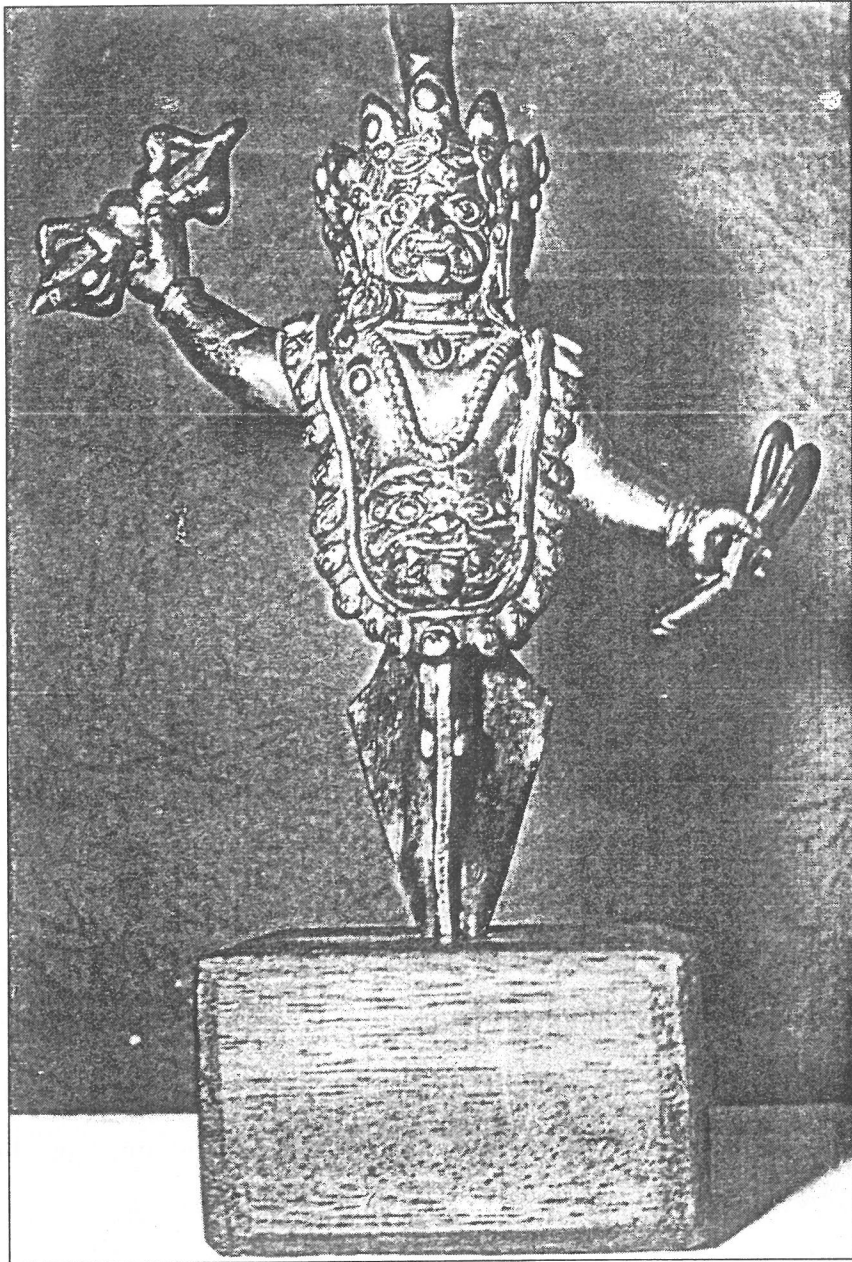
The second group consists of more advanced folk, who are not only aware of higher values in life, but strive towards them to a limited extent. They are religious, but they are also involved deeply with the world. Their concern is to strike the most advantageous bargain between this world and the values beyond.

The third group is composed of more evolved human beings, who can reasonably be described as spiritual. They are devoted to the religious goal, to the entire exclusion of worldly involvement.

There is an interesting parallel in Buddhist philosophical thought. The context of course is different, but the division is similar. It is the notion of 'three-fold fields' (*KHams-gSum*), or what may be called levels of reality. The 'field of Desire' (*kāma-dhātu*, Tib. *aDod-pai Khams*) is composed of the external physical world as well as the heavenly realms which can be obtained by desires. This is the normal world, and the first group of 'natural' folk abides in this sphere. Above this is the 'field of Form' (*rūpa-loka*, Tib. *gZugs-kyi Khams*), composed principally of mental formations (thoughts and images) and private reconstructions of the external world. This is the world of values and meanings, relations and judgments. It is here

that the second group of advanced folk functions. Higher than this level is the 'field of non-form' (*arūpa-loka*, Tib. *gZugs-med-pahi KHams*). This sphere is nearer to reality, inasmuch as it is free both from objective presentations and subjective representations. The phenomenal aspect of reality has here almost been suspended. The third of the above groups of human beings, composed of saints, can perceive this sphere and abide in it.

It is to be noted, however, that no text, Indian or Tibetan, contains any suggestion of the correspondence between the three groups of human beings and the three fields of functioning. It is only in the oral tradition that the correspondence is indicated.



Phur-bu (Ritual dagger)

The religion in Tibet, being Tāntrik in essential orientation, naturally idealizes the status of the saint, and attaches great value to meditational practices. But there is a ready recognition that the first group of human beings is the most numerous, and considerably vast. The religion prescribed for them is mainly a pattern of virtuous living, pious transaction, prayer and worship. Faith in mind (*Dad-pa*), recitation of texts or 'religion' in speech (*CHos-hDon*), and in body prostrations (*PHyag*), and circumambulations (*bsKor-ba*), together with offerings (*mCHod-pa*); these constitute the essential functional religion for the Tibetan laity. Meditational practice is not obligatory for them. Even among the ordained monks, its employment may be said to be minimal.

But those who come together in the third group are the more earnest among the laity as well as among monastic settlements. Meditation occupies in their life a favoured position. They are well on the 'way' (*Lam*), in the direction of the goal. For them, the 'road is open' (*Lam-Tar*); there are no obstructions either from the field of Desire or from that of Form. It is necessary for such a wayfarer to choose, accept, and follow 'the guide on the road' (*Lam-mKHan*), viz., a teacher, usually within monastic settlements.

Tibetan canon is relatively vast. It comprises of hundreds of texts which are practical in import, and a much larger number of texts which are purely theoretical in character.

And there are hundreds of manuals which seek to explain the canonical texts of practical import. There are scholars who specialize in this aspect of the canon, and their help is invaluable for hermits who devote themselves exclusively to practice. There are teachers who explain texts, prepare manuals, and instruct practitioners. Of greater importance are the 'secret preceptors' (gSang-sTon), who guide the practitioners on the basis of their own experience, and who can relate them to theoretical formulations in the texts.

Tibetan Buddhism, being Tāntrik in orientation, solved the problem of the dichotomy of theory and practice (rTogs-sPyod), by making theory yield to practice.

There was a clear emphasis on the latter. The serious student, the would-be practitioner, is advised to plan his career in three distinct phases: study (THos), 'hearing', Skt. *śravaṇa*), reflection (*bSam*- 'thinking', 'considering', Skt. *manana*), and contemplation (*sGrub*- 'carrying out', 'performing', or sGom, 'meditation', Skt. *nidhidhyāsana* or *dhyāna*). The usual advice is to study the doctrine first, then master the dimensions and implications thereof, and finally set about to practise it earnestly until the goal is reached. Study is a necessary preparation, and its value is not ignored. bLa-Ma Sangs-Pa counselled rMog-CHog-Pa. who was only 17:

“You should study in youth. If you begin to meditate without having

first studied, the demons may carry you away!”

The import is that meditational exercises without intelligent direction may lead one astray; instead of focussing the aspirant's life purposefully, it drives him to get lost in a hopeless maze. It is important that the experience and judgment of previous masters must be made available for the beginner, both to prompt and warn him. Meditation is designed to bring about a change in the interior of the aspirant's life. The change must be orderly and beneficial.

Urgyan-Pa (born 1230), who was celebrated as a *mahāsiddha* ('eminent adept'), resolved even as a boy:

“I shall study first. And, then, practice. I shall, then, know the difference between the present state of my mind and the state of my mind in meditation.”

Meditation is described as “removal of the wall that separates this life from the next”.

Books are, therefore, considered an important equipment of every lama, even if he intends becoming a hermit. Every monastery zealously guards its library. Books of practical value are carefully secreted, and are not readily made available to the uninitiated. During initiation, it is customary to place such a book on the head of the aspirant, signifying a formal transmission of wisdom contained in it. An advice that is frequently repeated is:

“There is no benefit of a *Kalyāṇa-mitra* (friendly guide on the path) except in books.”

But this importance accorded to books is not unqualified. There is a warning, frequently given, that too much of involvement with books is likely to render one indifferent to meditation. Sharpening the mind may in the process deaden the heart; and preoccupation with acquisition of bookish knowledge may preclude wisdom from dawning. The *Blue Annals* records the words of the eminent master KHu (born 1191 A.D.):

“Images and books are too numerous! We should practise meditation. A single hermit is better than a hundred *Prajñā-pāramitā* texts in a hundred thousand verses (*śata-sāhasrikā*), written in gold!”

There is a pretty story to illustrate the relative value of books and meditation. rNa of sPar-PHu, proud of his learning, went to meet the meditation master hGro-mGon (1110-1170 A.D) at the PHag-Ma-Gru monastery. The master welcomed him, and made an imprint of a splendid lotus-flower in brown sugar, and offered it to the visitor. The visiting scholar turned it over and over in his hands, and admired its beauty. However, he would not eat it, because he could not bring himself to cut that charming piece into bits. Thereupon, the master took the piece from the visitor's hands, broke it into two bits, and gave the bits back to him saying “Now, eat”. The scholar ate the pieces and enjoyed their taste. The master explained:



“Your studies are like this imprint of the lotus flower. You could hold the imprint in your hand and admire its form. But you could not enjoy its taste until you broke it up, and put it into your mouth! Scholarship is a mere form; it would be useless, unless it is brought into

your own experience by meditation. The purpose of all this learning is to help meditation. You must focus your attention on that.”

The teaching of hGro-mGon came to be known as “the taste of brown sugar.” rNa took lessons from him in meditation, and soon became an adept (*siddha*). Later, as many as five hundred hermits gathered round him to learn meditation. He was celebrated as “the greatest in wisdom”. Because of the monastery he established at sPHu, he became known as sPar-PHu-Ba. Towards the close of his life he not only wrote manuals on Nāgārjuna’s Six Treatises, but preached extensively. He used to say: “First meditate, and then preach and continue the lineage”.

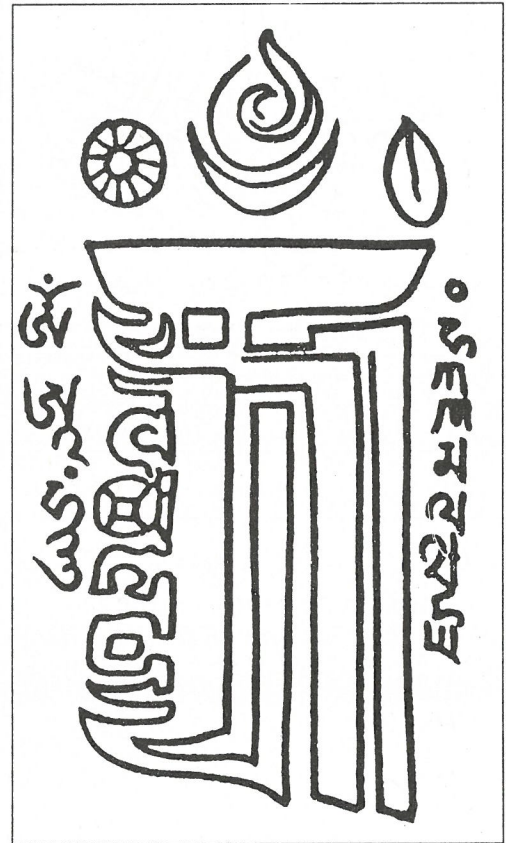
Theory thus would be proper only when practice has accomplished its end. It can never be a substitute for practice. Such was the insistence of the old masters on practice that long years were diligently spent in seclusion before an involvement with theory could begin. Preaching was a necessary duty on the part of a lama, because his compassion towards all beings must be expressed in transmitting the excellent doctrine. This is a familiar Mahāyāna attitude. The vow of the bodhisattva (and of every earnest lama that seeks to reach this status) is to labour for the welfare of all beings. And preaching is the major mode so far as a lama is concerned. But, for preaching to be effective, it is necessary to meditate first. "First meditate, and then preach."

It may, however, so happen that meditation covers the major period of life for a serious student. For instance, sGro, the eminent master, took to meditation when he was forty, and finished it only when he was Seventy-one; and then he preached for four years, before he passed away in 1153 A.D. Preaching was prescribed also in order "to continue the lineage", which was necessary to preserve the saving grace of the doctrine for the benefit of the suffering humanity. When a master was asked, "What is more profitable? To stay in seclusion (and meditate), or to labour for the welfare of beings", he replied: "By entering into seclusion, you will also be labouring for the welfare of beings!"

In order to emphasize the necessity and value of practice, sometimes the study of scriptures was roundly discouraged. hBrom (died 1064 A.D.), the famous successor to the Indian master Atīśa-Dīpaṅkara, counselled sPyan-Na: “It is impossible to read the 84,000 sections of the Doctrine. Therefore, meditate on Śūnyatā only!” There is also the story of a lama who carried a load of books on his back, beating his chest with hand, and lamenting that years of study had disappointed him. The ‘Wandering master’ La-s Tod advised him:

“Such is study! The end of knowledge can never be reached! It is like drinking water from a mirage! Throw away the books, and meditate!”

But it is usual to recommend that study and meditation should go hand in hand. Each should supplement the other. Study in this sense has been described as “completing the corners of practice”.



THE BON BACKGROUND



The religion that prevails in Tibet is usually described as Buddhism, or more specifically as Tāntrik Buddhism. But the Tibetans themselves call their religion merely *CHos* (religion, *dharma*), even as the Hindus call theirs. There is no doubt that Buddhist influence in Tibetan

religion is both unmistakable and predominant, but it would not be correct to brand this religion simply as Buddhism. The Buddhist influence that came to colour this religion so deeply and so significantly was by no means native to the soil; it was neither a natural growth, nor an indigenous development. In fact, Buddhism that entered Tibet had to undergo a total and spectacular transformation before it came to be accepted there, and in the neighbouring Mangolia. We shall see that the seeds of this transformation were sown in India itself.

The religion that prevailed unchallenged in Tibet before the advent of Buddhist influence is known as 'Bon' (pronounced *pean*); this primitive religion persisted in

its appeal and influence even when the sort of Buddhism that we find there became firmly established. There has been a suggestion, not however, confirmed, that 'Bon' ('murmuring spells') and 'Bot' (Tibet, *Bod*, *Bhoṭa*) are words derived from a common source. The name "Tibet" is for a Tibetan "Bod" (pronounced *peu*) with the prefix 'STod (pronounced *teu*), signifying "upper part of the land of snows", comprising of the provinces of U and Taang. *Teu-Peu* (d), which, thus, originally stood for what is known as Central Tibet, was transformed by the Europeans in Darjeeling into *Tibet*. The Sanskrit equivalent of *Bod* is *Bhoṭa*, the name by which Tibet was always known in India.

Whatever the correspondence between *Bod* and *Bon*, *Bon* was not only native to the soil, but natural to the people. It is small wonder that this religion prevailed in one form or another all through Tibetan history. The Buddhist impact was felt only in Central Tibet; the rest of the country, especially the eastern region, continued to be the stronghold of Bon. Buddhist ideas did change the colour of Bon, the character of Tibetans and the course of their history.

But it is not sufficiently recognised that the Buddhist ideas that were introduced into Tibet themselves succumbed to the Bon influence. Bon was never really shaken off, despite repeated and zealous attempts by kings and priests,

and the adverse confrontation between the adherents of the new religion (*CHos-Pa*) and those of the old faith (*Bon-Pa*).

However, Bon had to become *Bon-CHos* in order to survive. Buddhism came to be specified as *Saṅga-rGyas kyi CHos* ("The Buddha's Dharma"), or in an ethnocentric connotation "*Naṅ-pai CHos*" ("The Within-Dharma"), or the religion of the insiders.

It is not easy to obtain an accurate idea of the Bon religion that prevailed in Tibet, before Indian influence made an inroad into its fortress. The survival (- mainly in Poyul and all along the highroad between Nagchu and Jyerkundo, as travellers have recorded -) was

camouflaged, and whatever scriptures they had become 'buried treasures' (*gTer-Ma*), under successive but unsuccessful persecutions.

But one may imagine how this pristine religion must have been. No one seriously disputes that religious beliefs of a country are to an extent conditioned by the overwhelming geographical features. Located in the dizzy Himalayan heights, oppressed by the unpredictable eccentricities of weather, battered almost continuously by relentless storms, Tibet offers to her people little by way of normal security or assured sustenance. Conditions of life are so exacting, and so impossible to contend against, that man there very naturally came to regard the world

as peopled by capricious and hostile spirits. He could lay store, not on the visible and normally manageable factors, but on the unseen forces, controlled only by occult devices, magical barriers and by earnest intention. The early Tibetans, sprinkled rather sparsely over an expansive plateau, had to contend against both real and conjured up fears, all by themselves.

It is understandable that they therefore developed a religion that emphasised the occult. Religion everywhere may be said to have evolved from the same source; but in Tibet, the challenge of an uncertain and apparently malignant environment produced shamanism of an extreme variety, and secured its survival right upto the twentieth century.



The word *Bon*, which is said to be the short form of *GYung-Drung gi-Bon*, means “to mutter magical spells”, “to mumble secret formulae”. Cunningham and Rockhill may be correct in deriving this word from the Indian *punya*, in its extended sense of merit, or power acquired by magical incantation. It may be noted

that *punya* is another name for the mystical diagram *svastika* (gYung-Drung), which was also one of the titles of the 'founder' of Bon. Mystical utterances no doubt constitute an essential aspect of Bon, as also of the later religion. One of the expressions for their wizard-sorcerer was "Ah-Mes" ("Hail, ancient!"), which became in the lingo, *Amnye*. 'Ah' is a mystical ejaculation, well-known in the Indian Tāntrik tradition, it also occurs as the first part of the well-known Aum. The 'ancient' signifies an undying essence, even as our expression *purāṇam* does.

It was no accident that in Bon the mountain-god was also called 'Ah-mes'. The mysterious and mystifying, snow-capped and difficult

mountains, unconquered in their uncanny grandeur, were powerful presences for the Tibetans, which offered no comfort whatsoever, and from which they could not escape. They were sinister, malignant and could be disastrous, unless properly propitiated. The legend of the 'flying mountains', whose wings were clipped by the wizard-sorcerer (like Indra) was not peculiar to India; Bon had it. Mountains may inspire rapture in a poet, but they instil fear in the mind of the unsophisticated; his urgent need was somehow to subdue them, or at least placate them. The shaman-sorcerer was the person who claimed to do this, and his weapons consisted of incantations and spells which were deemed as invincible as the diamond. The mystic mumblings would make him indefatigable, and

potent enough to conquer and subdue the otherwise hostile environment.

The Bon religion is frequently described as a bundle of shamanistic beliefs, fetishism and demonolatry. The Bon priest was a sorcerer and necromancer who sang mysterious litanies. He performed wierd dances, and wildly attacked the unseen demons all around him. The Bon mind perceived spirits all over the place, especially in lakes and mountains, on rocks and in caves, hidden beneath the earth, and hovering in the sky. There were classes of these spirits: the *Jidg* who guarded the cantons; the *TSan* who were mischievous gnomes sauntering on rocks and living in caves, the gloomy and hideous *Sa-bDag* who lived in the underworld, and

vengefully attacked those who dared to dig the earth.

They were all mostly malevolent; and they answer to the description of demons (*hDreh*). But there were also spirits who could be humoured and won over; they would be benevolent and protective; they were designated as 'gods' (*IHa*). There was naturally a continuous confrontation between the two groups; and man had wisely to steer clear of the contending forces. He could save himself by coercing the 'gods', and propitiating the 'demons'. While trekking through a mountain-pass the nomad that he was, he had religiously to erect heaps of pebbles and piously walk round them, thus honouring the local spirit. While camping, he would even offer animals (mostly cocks) in sacrifices.

His gods and demons were of course a legion, but the important ones were 'the white god of the sky', 'the black goddess of the earth', 'the red tiger', and 'the furious dragon'. S.C. Das, the famous Indian pioneer of Tibetan studies, noticed that in the Bon pantheon, the female divinities outnumbered the male. The cult of mother-goddesses was not an unnatural product in the primitively matriarchal society of early Tibet. Some of these persisted in the later *Bon-CHos* also, like dPal - Idan-IHa-Mo (the Tibetan version of our Kālī), aGrol-Ma (*Tārā*), and the mKHaa-aGro-Ma (*ḍākinīs*).

Among their numerous specific divinities, of great interest is the 'blue sky-god' (*gNam*), described as "everlasting sky" (*gNam-Rtag-pa*).

It appears that in imagination of these people the blue sky was the persistent presence, and it was in that sky their heaven, which every one of them aspired to reach, was located. The sky was regarded as the mother, the womb, the source and the final place of rest. Of the many modes of disposal of the dead body in Tibet, the most meritorious was the 'sky-burial', which was a sort of return of the dead one to the sky.

In the Bon ideology, the highest divinity is the Sky-guide, *Gyer-aPungs*, later identified with the naked Yogi-god of the Mahāyāna Buddhists, Samanta-bhadra (*Kun-tu-bZang*). This latter divinity figures prominently in the *rNying-Ma* sect of Tibetan Buddhism, whose association with Bon is unmistakable.



The Magic-dart (*PHur-Bu*), so commonly used in Tibet and accepted by all sects, was deified as *PHur-pai IHa*. The Indian origin of this deity is suggested by the representation of this god with a winged body and its description as *Garuḍa (mKhor-IDing)*.

The Bon folk spoke of a Bon-heaven (*Bon-nyid*), which they adored and aspired to reach after death. But they did not attach importance to virtue or merit, penance or piety, in order to reach heaven. Nor did they strive to secure the grace of the gods in their desire

to be admitted into heaven. In fact, the gods of the heaven (*CHa*) were not to be feared as those of the earth (*Sa-bDag*) who could easily be roused to fury. The simple-minded folk therefore chose their personal or tutelary gods from among the later group. The heaven was reached by a simple device; by 'seizing the rope of the sky' which the shaman would throw across.

Reaching the heaven meant in effect obtaining a wholesome body, and live on happily there ever afterwards. They were preoccupied with heaven all their life, and were eager to find 'a sudden passage' to that happy realm.

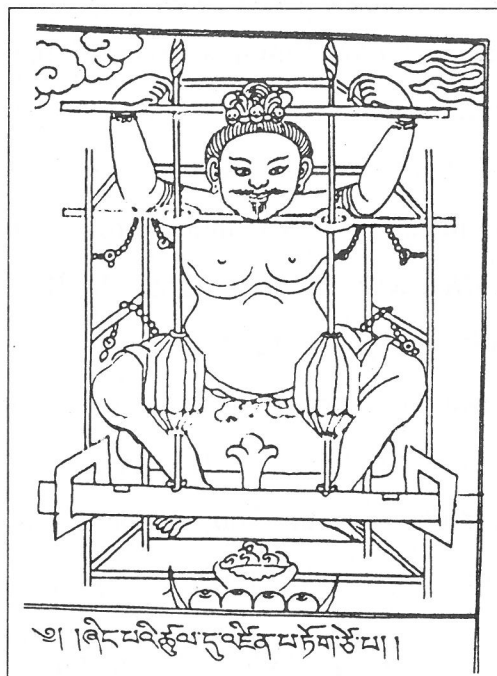
Bon worship was a complicated affair. It involved not merely 'muttering of spells', but rituals,

dances and sacrifices. And, naturally, the worship necessitated the services of priests. The Bon priest was not required to be a celibate: often, however, he was a hermit, wearing his matted hair coiled on his head, and living in solitude in the fastness of jungles, or on top of mountain-peaks. While officiating in a ritual, he wore a long black-coloured mitre, decorated with feathers of a peacock or a cock; he also wore a sort of diadem of human skulls, surmounted by a pair of crossed 'thunderbolts' (*viśva-vajra*). He held in his hand a small drum fashioned out of two human skulls, which was an indispensable and awe-inspiring ritualistic implement. He was a magician, necromancer, shaman and sorcerer rolled into one. He could be 'possessed' by the gods, and thus

manifest their divinity. He could employ effective magic in a variety of ways, to help man against the pranks of goblins, and to secure the attention of benevolent gods. There was also a certain specialization in what the shaman-priests did, or could do. Some were wizards, adept in manifesting magic. For instance, they could weave ropeways between earth and heaven. Others would divine the future, read the signs and make predictions; they also healed the sick, and controlled the elemental fury of weather.

Some others took charge of the dead, and guided the ghosts to safety. There were also shamans, whose function was only to chant the spells and intone the litany. Magic was an absorbing interest in that country,

where normal vocations of farming and hunting were largely ruled out. And priests were naturally all important.



The Bon priests claimed descent from the blue-robed founder, *gShen-Rabs*, the first part of whose name suggested his shamanistic role. He is described as the 'first historical

person, sure of his magic', and he it was that constituted 'the body of Bon'. He was also a ruler, an archetype of the 'shaman-king' - thus predisposing Tibet to theocracy. He is looked upon as one of the emanations of the Sky-guide, *Gyer-Spungs*, who, as noted earlier, is identical with Samanta-bhadra and *gShen-Rabs* is spoken of by the Bon folk as 'STon-Pa' (teacher) and regarded as the same as Śākyamuni. The exploits of this priestly progenitor is the subject matter of Bon songs, one of which says-

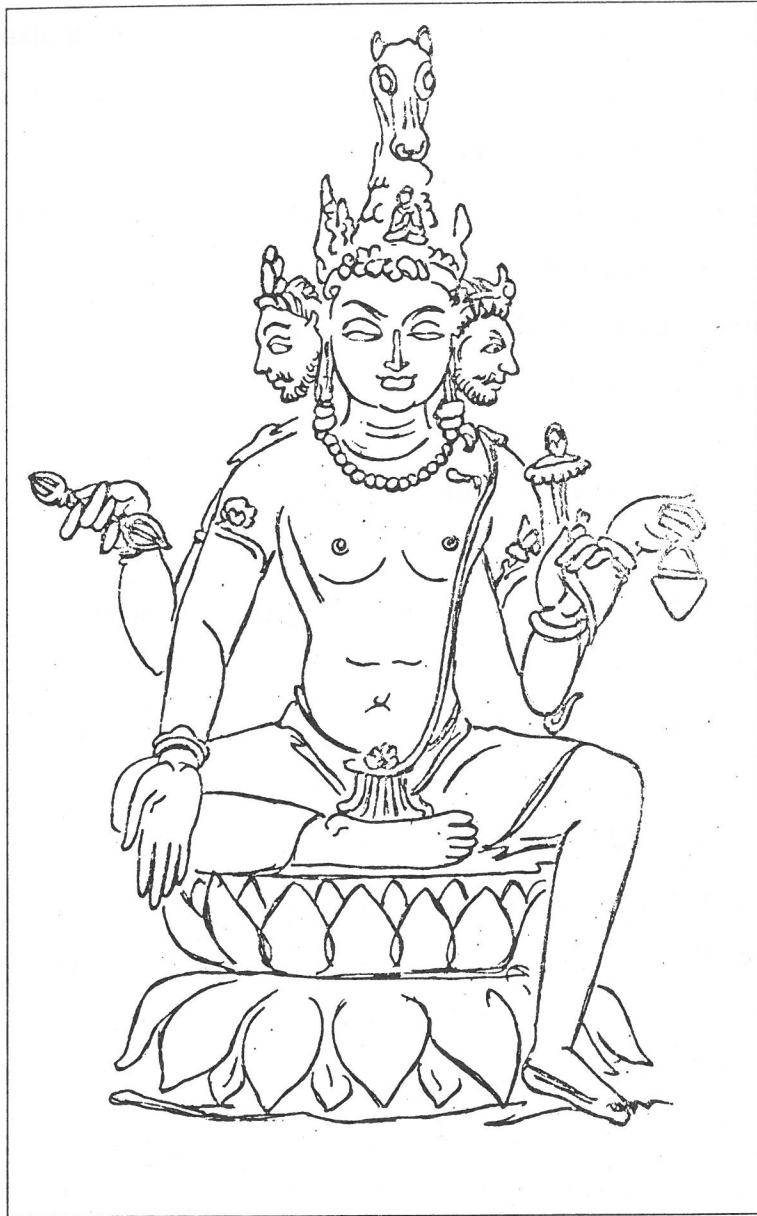
'He pronounced the nine-vehicle doctrine

To open the heavenly gate for those that live

To pull down the gate of destruction for the dead

And to lead life to the *Svastika-path*'.¹

The Bon priests employed the svastika-sign (*gYung-Drung*) as a magic tool of great power; the expression also occurs as a title in the founder's name, *Svastika*, the origin of which is unclear. It is called a Gammodion cross, and is associated with the movement of heavenly bodies around the Great Bear. It is said to represent the solar wheel, and is found used in Sun-worship all over the world. It is also linked with the production of fire from the crossed *araṇi-sticks*, as was done in Indian rituals. We find the *svastika* sign clearly engraved in a seal found in the Indus Valley. It was probably an early prototype of the adamantine weapon (*rDo-rJe*).



HAYAGRĪVA of Vajrayāna
(from sculpture at St. Louis Art Museum)

This *rDo-rJe* (literally “precious stone”, usually translated as “thunderbolt” (“diamond”) is now typically Tibetan. The *Vajra* weapon of the Indian god-king, Indra, may have contributed to the crystallization of the Tibetan symbolism.

More interestingly, its Tāntrik association is revealed by the amalgamation of the horse-headed divinity Hayagrīva (Tib. *rTa-mGrin*, pronounced *Tamdin*), the terrible deity, whose consort is Vajra-Vārāhī (Tib. *rDo-rJe-PHag-Mo*), carrying this magical weapon. The well-known legend that the *rDo-rJe* in this aspect, called ‘*rTa-mGrin-PHur-bu*’, belonging to an Indian Grub-THob mDah-PHar (?) flew from India to the hill in Se-Ra, suggests the Indian origin of this wide-spread Tibetan

religious tool. This Indian *rDo-rJe* was housed in the Se-ra monastery near LHa-Sa, and was its proud possession. All *rDo-rJes* in Tibet are said to be modelled after this Indian prototype.

But the Bon *svastika* is turned right to left; it is called ‘Left-handed’ (*vāmāvarta*), in contradistinction with the normal (Buddhist) *svastika* which is ‘right-handed’ (*dakṣiṇāvarta*). This detail is explained as an instance of the Bon habit of reversal (like their circumambulating left-ward, turning the prayer wheel left-ward, and muttering the magical spell ‘maṇi padme hūm’ backwards as ‘mūh-empad-ni-mo’).

The Bon priests did not encourage priestly organization of

any sort. Although at a later period, some Bon monasteries did spring up (as the one in the north-east Tibet, Zogchen-gompa), monastic institutions were not in the typically Bon spirit. The Bon priests mixed with the lay-folk on an equal footing, and except on ceremonial occasions, they were indistinguishable, either in dress or in manners, from the laity. The Buddhist monastic organization, on the other hand, not only emphasised the difference between the priests or *lamas* and laity, but encouraged the *Lama* prejudice that laymen were actually inferior (*minag*, 'black men').

Sacrifices formed an important part of the Bon ritual; animals and birds were killed in honour of gods and goblins. The offering-formula,

probably taken from Bon and stylized in later Vajrayāna, reflects the Bon spirit: "All spirits, demons, goblins, ghosts, wicked spirits, spirits of insanity and epilepsy, male and female guardian angels, and others, receive this offering', project the convention, and award the attainment of benefits emanating from this convention" (*sarva-yakṣa-rākṣha-bhūta-preta-piśācho-nmādāpasmāra-dāka-dākinyādayah imam balim gṛhṇantu, samayam rakshantu, samayasiddhiḥ prayacchantu*).

And the sacrifices were accompanied with a warning for the folk: "In case you break the convention, you will be cut and thrown up like these animals. Be ye, therefore, united in your thoughts, and be loyal to the gods both of

heaven and of earth, for they can see your thoughts clearly enough!" In the later *CHos*, the offering of *gTor-Ma* (*bali*, literally "torn-up") continued to be an important element. Effigies were made of dough and butter in various shapes (sometimes in animal shapes), placed on the alter, then broken up ceremonially, and burned, or thrown up in air. It is an important requirement for a lama to know how to prepare and offer *gTor-Ma*. The background was undoubtedly in the Bon.

The offering of these sacrifices were accompanied by ritual dances and dramatic representations, which continued even in *CHos*. The special dance sequence known as *aCHam*, where trained and inspired actors

impersonate gods and goblins wearing appropriate masks, and mimic mystery actions are essentially the framework for offering *gTor-Ma*. It is not without some justification that these dances are described by Western scholars as 'devil dances', for the chief purpose of these performances, even when conducted in sophisticated and urbane monasteries, is to exorcise evil spirits and secure blessings. Allegorically represented, bad luck is driven out, and good luck ushered in. Drama is here a part of the ritual. Popular all over the Lamaist Himalayas, *aCham* (or *Maṇi-Rimḍu* as it is styled in Khumbu in Nepal) is essentially a Bon heritage.

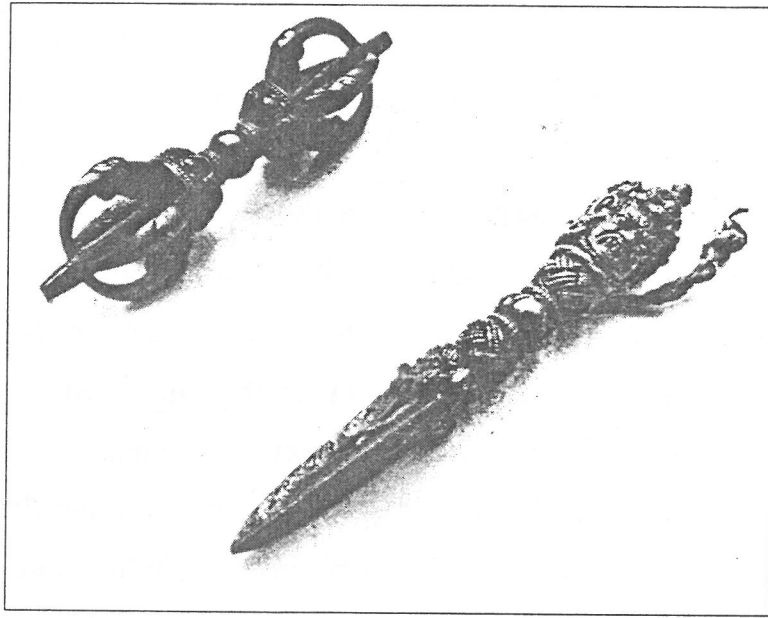
Luther G. Jerstad who has made an elaborate study of Mani-

Rimdu², has pointed out clearly the Bon influence in the present-day Buddhist shows in Nepal. Derived from the Tibetan *aCham*, this dance-drama commences with the 'life-consecration rite', when life-spirit in the form of a consecrated liquid (*tSHe-Chang*), and magical life-giving pills (*tSHe-ril*), are distributed to those present. "The ceremony deals with a detachable life, and the nourishment of this supernatural life (*bLa-TSHe*)'" (p.103). The expression *bLa* stands for 'soul', associated not only with human beings but with some mountains also, a typically Bon belief.

In the Khumbu region, the 19,000 foot high peak Khumbila is supposed to possess a *bLa*, which when destroyed would bring about

the destruction of the entire population all round it. It is to guard against such a calamity that ritual dances are performed by lamas in the monastery precincts. In the Bon background, such rituals and dramas invariably involved animal, and sometimes human, sacrifices; the offering of blood and flesh was not merely symbolic. But now, the offering of *gTor-Ma* has assumed the form of effigy-cones made of dough and butter, but these cones are coloured red to symbolise blood.

Three stages in the growth of this religion have been distinguished by Tibetan scholars. The first stage, described the 'wild' (*rDol-Bon*) emphasised magic-sorcery in order to subdue or appease the fierce and wicked spirits that hovered around



all the time. The second stage, known as 'corrupted' or 'erroneous' (*KHyar-Bon*), was preoccupied with the miraculous and valourous deeds of the wizard-shamans, who came to Tibet from outside (principally from Kashmir). When the Tibetan monarch Gri-Gum-bTsan was murdered, the scared local priests, ignorant of how to handle the violently dispatched spirit, invited

three foreign magicians (from Kashmir, Dusha and Shang-Shang) to help them. One of them could fly in the sky riding a toumbourine, discover mines by propitiating the divine Eagle (*garuḍa*), and cut iron with a feather. The other could divine future events, and tell fortune by using coloured strings. The third was an adept in performing funeral ceremonies for those whose death

was violent. These priests were probably Indian Tāntriks and Siddhas. A Tibetan authority³ indicates the influence of Śaivites and Tīrthikas (heretical ascetics) in this stage of Bon development.

The third stage was termed 'reformed' or 'turned' (*bsGyur-Bon*), in the sense that Buddhist ideas were assimilated (for we must remember that the authority responsible for this classification was a Buddhist). The Bon ideas and practices underwent a thorough wash-down so that they were in conformity with the new tide of religious outlook that was surging, and more or less acceptable to the more powerful group, viz., the Buddhists. The votaries of Bon now sought to become "within-ones" (*Naṅg-Ba*), so that their peaceful

coexistence with the *CHos* folk was assured.

David Snellgrove, in fact, considers Bon as a "special sect of Tibetan Buddhism, albeit a very odd one"⁴. The Bon *sūtra* which A. Sohiefor rendered into German belongs to this phase; it speaks of the five perfections that help cross over transmigration. This stage continued right upto our own days, when it was reliably estimated that at least two thirds of the Tibetan population subscribed openly to Bon, despite the religious and political ascendancy of *CHos* for over six hundred years.

The above classification into three stages, made by an eighteenth century Buddhist historian, presumes



that Bon was an inferior religion, and that it gained its credentials to the extent that it succumbed to Buddhist influence. Unfortunately, we do not have a Bon historian giving his point of view. Nevertheless one can hardly fail to notice that Buddhism became acceptable to the Tibetans only when it retained and adopted Bon ideas and practices to a large extent. This is why Tibetan Buddhism is so obviously and enormously different from Buddhism elsewhere.

THE INDIAN SUPERIMPOSITION

The introduction of Buddhist influence into Tibet is romantically ascribed to two women, one from Nepal and the other from China,

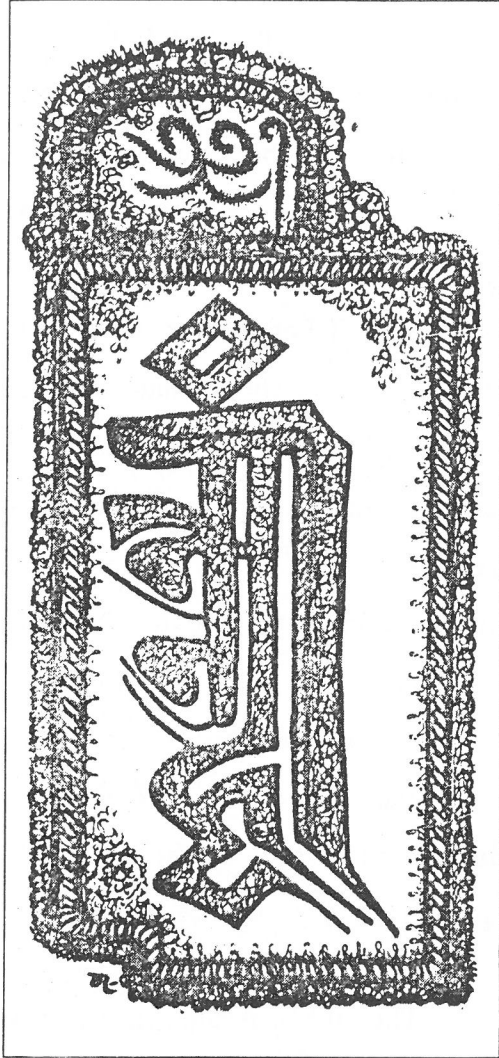


who married the Tibetan monarch Strong-bTSan-sGam-Po (A.D.569-650). The two queens, piously described as incarnations of the goddess Tārā (the monarch himself being regarded as the incarnation of her spouse, Ārya-Avalokiteśvara, the great Mahāyāna god), were zealous Buddhists, and the chivalrous king took an avid interest in the new

religion, and strove hard to spread it in Tibet. However, Buddhism was not an entirely new religion for Tibetans. There was a legend that at least a century earlier, when IHa-THo-THo-Ri ruled the land, the golden casket containing a golden relic-vase (*stūpa*, in Tibetan *mCHod-rTen*), with two Buddhist texts: had mysteriously descended from the sky. But there was no one then in Tibet who could read the texts, or explain what the relic-vase signified, and so the new religion remained neglected.

Of the many things that the monarch, whose wives were both Buddhists and foreigners, did to promote Buddhism in Tibet, the most important was to send the talented Tibetan THom-Mi 'Sambhoṭa'⁵ to India around A.D. 640, in order to

bring back the art of writing. It should be said to the credit of the monarch that he appreciated the value of script for a language and for a people. Along with the *Kuṭila* variety of the Magadhan alphabet (or rather the Khoṭanese modification thereof) the 'wise Tibetan' (Saṃ-Bhoṭa) brought several Mahāyāna texts (like *Kāraṇḍa-vyūha-sūtra* and *Ratnamegha-sūtra*) to Tibet and translated them into Tibetan, writing them down in the new script. Owing to this circumstance, 'religious speech' (*CHos-sKad*) was developed in Tibet as a distinct species of language, different from folk-speech; Sanskrit provided the model and also content for it. Although Tibetan is, like Chinese, a Mongoloid speech and tonal, pictograph never gained ground there.



The mission which led Sambhoṭa to India was really to develop a script and language,

suitable for translating Sanskrit works into Tibetan. It is little wonder, therefore, that the script and the language were modelled after Sanskrit. This is how Tibetan got the phonetic script. In fact, on the Indian border of Tibet, the language used in Tibetan books is styled “LHa-Sa-Sanskrit”. Also, Tibetan books were prepared in Indian style, after the model of palm-leaves; the scroll format of the Chinese did not become popular there.

It is important to note that introduction of Buddhism in Tibet was neither sudden nor violent; it was both gradual and gentle. In fact, several stages can easily be identified. But it is significant that the legends make Buddhism descend from no source other than the blue sky - the

highest of the Bon gods. Historically, however, it was borrowed from India, from India of the sixth and seventh centuries.

Sambhoṭa's own teachers (bDag-Nyid kyi bLa-Ma) were Ācārya Devavit-siṃha (or Devavidyā-siṃha or Siṃha-ghosha) and the Brahmin Lipidatta or Li-byin (?), according to Sha-lu Lotsa-Ba, the commentator of Sambhoṭa's grammar. Although who and where they were cannot be ascertained, Sambhoṭa's visit to Nālandā has been repeatedly mentioned. His visit to South India was mentioned by the celebrated *Bodhimūr*. Nālandā at that time was busy manufacturing Mahāyāna gods, and the god that appealed to Sambhoṭa's imagination was Avalokiteśvara, a bodhisattva

who resided on mount Potalaka somewhere in South India. And Avalokiteśvara became the central divinity of the immense Tibetan pantheon. The legend has it that when the Tibetan king wanted to know what Sambhoṭa had acquired in India, he wrote down a half-verse in the new script, in praise of Avalokiteśvara: "A wholesome and full offering of fresh scent to Avalokita" (in Petech's reconstruction of the Tibetan *śloka*; "The face of Avalokita is completely luminous and the colour auspicious").

The cult of Avalokiteśvara was probably conveyed to Tibet through *Kāraṇḍa-vyūha-sūtra*, which Sambhoṭa not only took to Tibet, but translated into Tibetan. The popular



AVALOKITA

legend that the Buddha entrusted the care of Tibet to the *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara is contained in *Mañjuśrī-pāramitā*, and Tibet came to be associated in the minds of the people with 'the holy land of Avalokitesvara'. It was looked upon as the lotus-maṇḍala with mountains as petals around the central shrine of Avalokita in LHa-Sa.

Avalokiteśvara's incarnation as the Tibetan prince now became an accepted creed, and the early Tibetan chronicles identify Srong-bTsan-sGam-Po with this *bodhisattva*. The king, true to this claim, is said to have founded Buddhism in Tibet, built the temple at Lhasa, and wrote numerous prophetic works.

In Tibet, there is a class of literature known as *gTer-Ma* ('buried



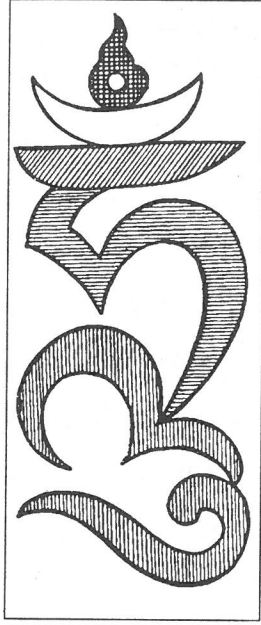
treasure') books, which were reputed to be concealed at the time of their composition due to a variety of reasons, and later recovered at different periods by a long succession

of 'treasure-finders' about whom some details will be mentioned in sequel. Many of such books are ascribed to this king. Ātiśa, who visited Tibet about four hundred years later is believed to have discovered the 'will' of this king, hidden and preserved in (or near) one of the pillars of the LHa-Sa temple.

One of the works ascribed to this king, *Maṇi-bKa-bum*, very popular in Tibet, deals with magical accomplishments (*sāadhanā*), personal instructions, sermons, and 'the story of prince Lokeśvara', viz., Avalokita of Potalaka, whose earthly incarnation the king claimed to be.

If Tibet got her patron-god Avalokiteśvara from India, more specifically from Nālandā and South

India, it is likely that India got her popular cult-goddess Tārā as the spouse of Avalokiteśvara from Tibet; she became an extremely popular goddess in numerous forms, both mild and fierce, and her spell (*dhāraṇi*, 'Om Tāre Tuttāre Ture, Svāhā') became a favourite one for the Sādhakas. There is a large number of ritualistic manuals (*sāadhanās*) devoted to her worship, composed by scholars from Nālandā and Vikramaśīla. Some of them reveal her unmistakable origin in magic and sorcery; and her popularity with Tibetans is both ancient and abiding. The well-known formula which one finds written, inscribed, recited, and repeated everywhere in Tibet, "Om maṇi-padme Hūm" which is curiously regarded as an invocation to Avalokiteśvara is actually a hymn to Tārā.



The Tibetan origin of this divinity is more than probable. References in *Śaktisaṅgama-tantra* (5,92), *Kālī-tantra* (12,7,10), *Devī-bhāgavata* (7,38,13), *Svatantra-tantra* and *Rudra-yamāla* ('Tārā-tantra') provide ample suggestions. Her forms as *Nīla-sarasvatī*, *Kurukullā* (a mountain goddess) and *Eka-jaṭā* are also non-Indian in origin and content. A *sādhana* for Ekajaṭā-Tārā mentions

in the colophon that its author Nāgārjuna recovered it from Tibet ("Ārya-Nāgārjunapādaiah Bhoṭeṣu uddhṛta,"⁷). Nālandā is supposed to have had at this time a temple dedicated to Tārā-bhaṭṭārikā, where lived the paṇḍit, Sthiramati, who later went to Tibet. Sambhoṭa's mission marks the beginning of a long series of cultural contacts between Tibet and India. India's contribution to Tibet is well known. Not so well known, however, is Tibet's contribution to India, in the matter of crystallisation of folk-cults. In the wake of Sambhoṭa's visit, there sprang up several centers of Tārā-worship in India, more particularly in South India. Those that did not disappear (like the Tārā-bhagavatī temple at Banavasi) retained their hold on people's

devotion under different names and myths (like the Kāmakotṭam of Kāñchi). But that is another story.

Sambhoṭa's success with the king was so great that Sambhoṭa himself was declared to be the incarnation of another *bodhisattva*, Mañjuśrī. But we do not know how people took to the new creed, for which the king had taken a great fancy; nor do we know precisely what measures the monarch took to spread it among the people. But he is known to have proclaimed a set of twenty interesting rules⁸, not only for the subjects to follow, but for his own government to adopt:

- (1) seek refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma and Saṅgha;
- (2) practice the Dharma constantly;
- (3) observe filial piety;

- (4) show respect to elders and to the aged;
- (5) help your neighbours and those who are helpless;
- (6) rectify the mind;
- (7) observe and imitate the conduct of those who are gentle, wise and superior;
- (8) do not go to extremes in matters of food and personal conduct;
- (9) harbour no grudge or ill-will against anybody;
- (10) never forget favours done by others;
- (11) never fail to pay debts when due;
- (12) never interfere in the affairs of others, unless they seek your help;

- (13) have faith in the law of cause-and-effect, and be ashamed of evil;
- (14) make yourself active and responsible in important and proper matters;
- (15) do not employ measures which are unofficial and illegal;
- (16) one who kills deserves to be killed;
- (17) one who steals must not only return the article stolen, but pay a fine eight times its value;
- (18) those who are guilty of adultery must be deprived of limbs, and exiled;
- (19) provide help to relatives and friends without harbouring thoughts of personal gain;
- (20) make a solemn vow before a deity, when you are uncertain as to right and wrong.

He was in many ways like our Aśoka. Devoted to Buddhism, he nevertheless was tolerant of Bon; his interest was not so much to spread a religion that attracted his attention as to make his people pious and upright. It is not until the days of his grandson KHri-Srong-IDeu-bTSan (A.D. 705-755) that we hear of Buddhist impact on Tibet in a big way. This king, one of the greatest Tibet has produced, felt committed to the spread of Buddhism (unlike his grandfather), and invited from India the most celebrated Buddhist masters of the age, Śānta-rakshita, Padma-sambhava and Kamala-śīla. From this time onwards, Tibet's political history was almost entirely subordinated to its religious history. Kings became less important than monks and abbots. Tibet became essentially a land of religion.



PADMA-SAMBHAVA

The first famous Indian paṇḍita that arrived in Tibet in response to this king's request was Śānta-rakshita (about A.D.740) a professor from Nālandā, who had written extensively on Mahāyānā Buddhist philosophy and practice. His *Tattva-saṃgraha* is a monumental work on Buddhist logic and metaphysics; his *Tattva-siddhi* was a Tāntrik work. A keen logician, an erudite scholar, an austere saint, he made an exceedingly favourable impression on the Tibetan king and on the elite; he was hailed as 'Āchārya-bodhisattva' and 'Dharma-śānti-ghosha'. But he did not become popular with the common people: he was perhaps too much of a quiet monk to appeal to the miracle-mongering Bon folk. In fact, his visit was resented by the Bon priests. Tibetan accounts relate

that gods and goddesses became indignant and wreaked vengeance not so much on the Indian paṇḍita himself as on the renegade Tibetan king who encouraged him. For lightning struck one of his palaces, and floods carried away another; harvest was grievously damaged; epidemics broke out and raged violently; misery in a hundred forms overtook the kingdom. The calamity was promptly ascribed to the new religion that the king was attempting to establish here. The unwilling king was obliged to send the celebrated Indian teacher back to Nepal.

This probably suggests how the first challenge to the time-honoured Bon religion was met. The multitude of spirits and demons that got annoyed with the Buddhist master

were obviously of the Bon pantheon; and those who brought pressure on the king to send the Buddhist teacher out of Tibet were the Bon priests. Śānta-rakshita's brief acquaintance with Tibet convinced him that what the country needed was a teacher of different type, and he knew a colleague of his at Nālandā who was likely to make a mark on Tibet. Śānta-rakshita suggested to the king that he may invite Padmasambhava from Nālandā; for Padmasambhava was not only a great scholar but an adept in occult lore, besides being a forceful personality. The king sent out a pressing invitation to Padmasambhava, who was a professor of Tantra in the Nālandā University. The magician-scholar arrived in Tibet in A.D.747, and a new chapter in Tibetan history was thus opened.



Padmasambhava succeeded where Śānta-rakshita had failed; and the people, Bon or other, were swept off their feet completely. They watched his advent in wonderment, and were compelled to recognise in

him 'great precious great master' (*Guru-Rim-Po-CHe*)⁹. He soon became the patron-saint of Tibet. Tibetans have not ceased viewing him with awe and admiration for over a thousand years! Besides the many miracles that won him his position there, Padmasambhava (Pad-Ma-hāyung-gvas or Pema-Jungne, as the folk call him) performed the miracle of establishing firmly the Buddhist influence in Tibet. But it was a minor miracle, for the Buddhism that he brought into Tibet was not very different from the religion that Tibetans had always known. It is not that he met with no opposition at all. The same spirits and demons that drove out Śāntarakshita attacked him also. But he appears to have come into the country like a relentless hurricane,

taking people by storm, shaking the earth and renting the sky. Legends tell of his miraculous feats, his strange fights with goblins and fiendesses, his bold combats with hundreds of demons, wielding only his diamond-sceptre (*vajra*).

He appeared to the people in eight different aspects; regal, wrathful, contemplative, militant, discursive, romantic, relaxed, and vengeful. Regarded theoretically as a second Buddha, he actually received in Tibet greater honour than the Buddha himself. He is pictured in that land as a powerful person wearing a tiara-like cap decorated with sun and moon (representing perfect comprehension), a diamond (symbolising invincibility), and peacock feathers (for purity from

sin). He holds in his hands a thunderbolt-sceptre and a skull-cup filled with blood. At times, he bares his terrible fangs, and wears a garland of severed human heads, rides a tiger and sounds a hand double-drum (*damaru*).



The secret of his success in Tibet may be ascribed to the fact

that he was more of a Tāntrik than of a Buddhist. He hailed from Uḍḍiyāna (Urgyar about Ghazni, North Western Frontier of India), and even his father Indrabhūti was a celebrated Tāntrik of the Chakra-saṃvara sect. He belonged to the Yogāchāra school and specialized in ritualistic initiations (*abhisheka*). He is reported to have bestowed on the Tibetan king Tāntrik initiations of Vajrakīla and Hayagrīva. Although a work in Sanskrit (*Samaya-pañchāśika*, preserved only in Tibetan translation) is ascribed to him, his scholarly achievements were by no means spectacular. But for his exploits in Tibet, India would have forgotten him altogether. In fact, he does not figure at all in the history of Indian Buddhism. Considering the fact that his total stay in Tibet (which

he visited twice) was only eighteen months, his celebrity there is astonishing.



Despite his ferocious appearance in paintings and sculpture, and despite the legends of his numerous fights and victories, he appears to have been an austere

diplomat. Although he succeeded in subjugating all the gods and demons of the Bon faith, he did not destroy them. They could not have been destroyed, even by him. He won over the more important of them, and persuaded them to change camps and be the 'guardians of the new religion' (*Chos-SKyong*, SKt. *Dharma-pāla*). That is to say, he cleverly accommodated the Bon pantheon in the new religious system that he was constructing, however odd this sounded; he incorporated all the Bon rituals (like *gTor-Ma* offering and magic dances) into the Buddhist cults that were grafted now into Tibet. He even dispensed with the usual Buddhist insistence on celibacy for the monks, and permitted the 'Buddhist' lamas to marry - even as the Bon priests did.

The religion that Padmasambhava planted in Tibet was by no means the religion that he found practised in India, nor was it the religion he himself probably grew up with. It was largely the religion that was native to the Tibetan soil, with necessary but minimal changes borrowed from Mahāyāna sources. If the Tibetan religion after Padmasambhava was called *Vajrayāna* ('the thunderbolt-path'), it was in a sense the creation of Padmasambhava. The materials and attitudes were all indigeneous, but the ultimate direction which was Indian was grafted on them. Padmasambhava was a genius of synthesis.

But he was not alone in remoulding the Tibetan temperament. When



Padmasambhava achieved a measure of success with the local gods and priests, Śānta-rakshita could be called back from Nepal. With his help, the first Buddhist monastic centre in Tibet was established around A.D. 749 in *bSam-Yas* (Skt. 'achintya-vihāra') on the model of the Odantapura monastic college in India. Śānta-rakshita, who was

invited to preside over this new establishment, lived on in Tibet for thirteen years, until his death in A.D.762. His many treatises have been preserved in the commentarial canon of Tibet.

The flashy wizard Padmasambhava was not the type to settle down anywhere for any sustained work; he left Tibet soon after the establishment of the *bSam-Yas* monastery, and died somewhere on his way back to India. But the demon-king Na-CHung, whom he brought into Tibet to guard over the *bSam-Yas* monastery, remained to become the State cradle for the ruling *dGe-Lugs* sect at the Yams-GragTSan monastery.

It was a curious but fruitful



combination of dissimilar personalities - the coöperation between Padmasambhava and Śāntarakshita in Tibet. If one could argue, thunder, coerce and threaten, the other could instruct, explain, expound and convince. One was meant for the masses, the other for the elite. One emphasised magic, rituals and success; the other insisted

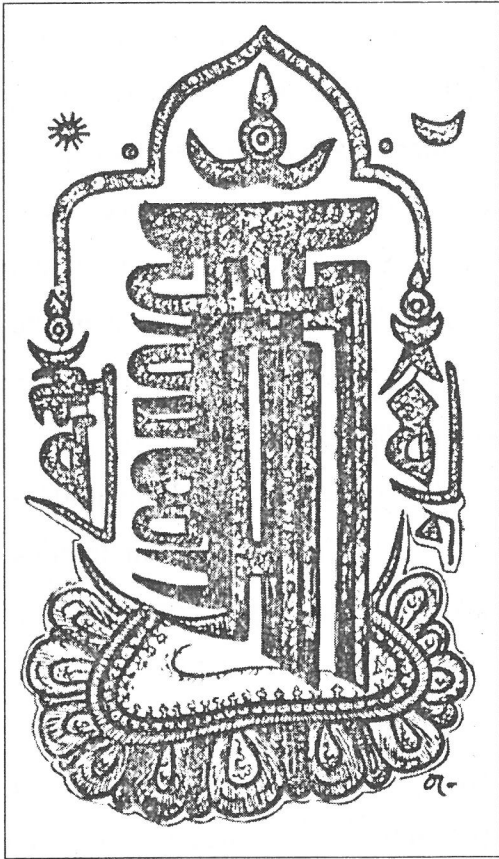
upon virtue, contemplation and wisdom. One stood for powerful action; the other symbolised gentle knowledge. The two together determined the later Tibetan mentality. If Tibetans are gentle souls worshipping fierce divinities, and have accommodated the 'thunderbolt' (*vajra*) with the abiding peace of vacuity (*śūnyatā*) the credit

for this achievement must go to the two enterprising Indian monks, each working in his own way to accomplish the welfare of the people.

Travellers in Tibet have noted what appears as strikingly incongruous in a Buddhist monastery. The general atmosphere of a monastery is calm, austere and serene. The inhabitants are gentle, friendly and holy. The main halls are artistically set up. But the holiest cell in the precincts is dedicated to frighteningly fierce gods and demons; this dark and mysterious chamber contains not only deities of terrible aspect, but ancient weapons of warfare, actually used before being offered to these deities. The entrance to this cell is decorated by dead and decomposing bodies of animals like wild dogs, yak, snakes and bears;



the walls are covered by pictures of demonic spirits bearing crowns of skulls, necklaces of human heads, hands and face, holding skull-cups



overflowing with blood.

These deities are the ones that Padmasambhava converted and appointed as “guardians of the new religion”. They are queer and scary, like Eka-jaṭā who is the one-eyed, one-toothed, one-breasted guardian of spells; or the blood-red Za, who is half-serpent, body filled with a thousand eyes, and a gaping face in the belly; or the black Damchen rDor-Je (‘the thunderbolt found by oath’), riding a lion, holding a hammer and a blacksmith’s bellow, and crowned by a bird. Fosco Mariaini describes this aspect aptly as “the secret and untranslated Tibet”¹⁰. What may appear as strikingly incongruous is really a clever reconciliation; the cooperation between Śānta-rakshita and Padmasambhava is in the background.

Śānta-rakshita inaugurated the Buddhist religion of Tibet by initiating seven Tibetans into the standard and customary monastic order. They were the first Buddhist monks in Tibet, committed to the ten restraints (daśa-śīla) after strictly Indian fashion. But there appears to have been a Chinese group which rejected the need for restraint, and argued that deliberate effort towards enlightenment was neither necessary nor valid. The challenge from this group became pressing soon after Śānta-rakshita's passing away, when his successor Śrī-ghoṣha was presiding over the *bSam-Yas* monastery. At the suggestion of Śrī-ghoṣha, the king invited Śānta-rakshita's best pupil in Nālandā, Kamala-śīla, to Tibet. Author of an excellent *Pañjikā* on his teacher's *Tattva-saṃgraha*, Kamala-śīla (about A.D.720-780) was one of

the most celebrated scholars in India at that time. He, together with other scholars and colleagues like Sthiramati and Buddha-kīrti, was responsible for the spread of genuine Buddhist religious ideas in Tibet, and thus completing the enculturation process started by Śānta-rakshita and Padmasaṃbhava. No one who knows Tibet and who is acquainted with Tibetan culture would agree with F. Greanard's proclamation: "On the whole, Buddhism has but very little improved the manners of the Tibetans. It has added to their superstitions without removing any in return"¹¹.

The grafting of Buddhist ideas on the native religious cults occurred in two stages, the first stage known as 'the initial spread' (*SNga-Dar*), commencing with the efforts of the



TĀRĀ

king Srong-bTSan-sGam-Po till the persecution of Buddhism, which began around A.D.836. The second stage, known as the 'later spread' (*PHyi-Dar*) beginning from the time this persecution ended.

The story of persecution is an involved one. The Tibetan king Ral-Pa-Chan-gTsan was so excitedly devoted to the new religion that he is believed to have grown long hair on the plaits of which the holy monks were invited to sit during their devotions. His devotion was partly due to the fact that the Buddhist divines in the country had become so powerful as to select him for the throne. The monastic involvement in Tibetan political affairs dates from this time. Monastic organization in Tibet, and making monasteries

wealthy and powerful, were contributions from this king.

Participation in administration inevitably resulted in an urge to gain control over it. Unfortunately, however, his zeal cost him his life, because the Bon priests took a serious view of the matter, and put his brother gLang-Dar-Ma on the throne around A.D.836. And the obliging new king began a zealous persecution of Buddhists, which appears to have been a severe one. Indian monks were driven out, and Tibetan monks were either killed or punished; religious practices borrowed from India were destroyed. But the joy of the victorious faction was shortlived, for gLang-Dar-Ma was murdered by a disguised lama (*dPal-gyirDo-rJe*, Śrī-vajra) in a dramatic manner.

Subsequent to this event, religion in Tibet was thrown in utter disarray, and religious leadership completely disappeared. gLang-Dar-Ma's successors for three generations wisely refrained from religious involvements. During this dark period, the indigeneous Bon and the Indian Tantra interacted, and arrived at numerous unplanned and unofficial approximations, thus bringing into being a peculiar religious complex in Tibet.

There is evidence that Indian influence continued even in this dark phase, but it was not specifically Buddhist; It was Tāntrik, more readily acceptable to Bon. This was the time when the Siddhas and their cults entered Tibet, and provided a foundation for the 'later spread'.

gLang-Dar-Ma's descendent Ye-Śes-Od recovered the royal interest in Buddhism, and began not only inviting Indian paṇḍitas to Tibet, but sending Tibetans to India to learn the religion at its source. His biggest achievement, however, was the getting over to Tibet of the eminent Dīpaṅkara-Śrījñāna in A.D. 1042.



DĪPAṆKARA-ATĪŚA

If the Padmasambhava-Śānta-rakṣita team gave Tibetans a taste of Buddhist excellence, it was Dīpaṃkara-Śrījñāna, known in Tibet as Atīśa, 'the great master', and recognised as an incarnation the Buddhist divinity Mañjūśrī, who really and firmly established the Buddhist influence in Tibet¹². A prince from Bengal, this great man became a monk early in life, studied at Odantapura and Nālandā universities, got Tāntrik initiations, went to Suvarṇa-dvīpa (Burma or Malaya), and obtained wisdom-initiation from one Dharma-kīrti (who belonged to the 'broad active tradition' of Maitreya, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu), returned to India to teach at Somapura and Vikramaśīla universities, and achieved great celebrity as a teacher, scholar and

author. He was president of the Vikramaśīla university when the two Tibetan scholars sent by Yes-Śes-Od arrived to invite him to Tibet. Unwilling at first, for he was already 60 years old, he finally consented, and left for Tibet in 1040. After a journey through Nepal, he reached mNa-Ris in Western Tibet in 1042. He lived in Tibet for thirteen years, until his death in 1055, honoured and adored throughout the land. He was already renowned in India; great universities had honoured him, and hundreds of students eagerly flocked round him; his books were studied and his explanations memorised. When he decided to visit Tibet, he learnt Tibetan, and began translating Sanskrit texts into Tibetan.

Tibet went into raptures over him; it called him in hushed

reverence 'the noble lord' (*Jo-Bo-rJe*). But he was more after the mould of Śānta-rakshita than that of Padmasambhava. The three hundred years of interval between the turbulent wizard of Nālandā and the intellectual ascetic from Vikramaśīla had softened the people of Tibet and had made them better prepared to receive the austere teachings of the Buddha. Dīpaṃkara had Tāntrik initiations, and he was well-versed in Tāntrik lore. But he had been little impressed by Tantra as a religious mode of life. Although he wisely refrained from openly condemning the Tibetan Tāntrik prooccupation, he subtly suggested that meditation on vacuity was more important and more productive of the really worthwhile objective, viz., enlightenment (*bodhi*). His works,

especially his 'Light on the Path of Enlightenment' (*Bodhipatha-pradīpa*) which became celebrated all over Tibet, emphasise the value of virtue, the need to keep monastic discipline, and the goal, not of magical attainments, but of enlightenment. He pleaded that *Vinaya* should go with *Tantra*, and *Tantra* with *Vinaya*.

In other words, he recognised the need for reform in the Tibetan religion of those days; and he set out quietly to fulfil this mission. As could be expected, at first he met with resistance. But religious affairs were then in such confusion that the resistance was neither organised nor sustained. As a matter of fact, Dīpaṃkara had little difficulty in building up an austere religion, predominantly Buddhist, and

influenced by contemplative and ritual-oriented Indian sects. And he was lucky in securing an undoubtedly brilliant and exceedingly ascetical Tibetan disciple and successor in Brom-STon-Pa (rGyal-Ba'i-Byung-gNas, in Sanskrit 'Jayakara'). Brom worked closely with Dīpaṃkara for ten years, and after the latter died in 1055, carried on the master's mission for another ten years, till his own death in 1064.

Tibetan religion before Dīpaṃkara's advent was largely Tāntrik and Bon. The survival of this phase came to be known as *rÑing-Ma* ('ancient translation of the Mantras'). Padmasaṃbhava was its patron-saint, and Śānta-rakshita's Buddhist ideas were but a thin veneer. The element of magic was



all too dominant, and monastic discipline was lax. The bSam-Yas monastery, with which both of them were connected, continued to be the stronghold of the *rÑing-Ma* sect, although it came to be headed later by a Sa-Skya abbot. Dīpaṃkara and Brom attempted to accomplish a truer and deeper impact of Buddhism on the Tibetan religion. They

crystallised a tradition for the first time, which came to be known as 'bKah-gDams-pa', based on "six basic texts", viz., *Udānavarga*, Āryaśūra's *Jātaka-māla*, Maitreya's *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*, ancient *Bodhisattva-bhūmi* (revealed to Asaṅga), Śāntideva's *Śikshā-samuchchaya* and *Bodhi-charyāvatāra*. This tradition emphasises the comprehensive character of the Buddha's teaching: the discourses or *Sūtra* (*bKah*), as well as instructions or *upadeśa* (*gDams*). It also enumerated stages in the obtainment of enlightenment.

However, the response to the call for reform was feeble, and Brom's successors did not make a big impact. In the meantime, the Padmasambhava-group with its heavy

Bon-orientation had carved out for itself a tradition, which was strictly Tibetan in its inspiration. Dīpaṃkara's junior contemporary, Mārpa 'the translator' (around 1012), had brought from India certain Tāntrik doctrines, and had established the *bKah-gRyud* tradition ('the line of succession of those who transmit the words of masters'). This was Indian in its inspiration and became celebrated not only in Tibet, but in neighbouring countries, because of Mārpa's disciple Mila-ras-pa, the great Tibetan Yogi and poet.

These two traditions are essentially Tāntrik, and represent a fusion of Indian and Tibetan mysticism. They could be called Buddhist only in a very general sense,

and were largely impervious to the reform movement initiated by Dīpaṃkara and Brom.

The small monastic community which Dīpaṃkara had led, and of which Brom was the chief spokesman, viz., the *bKah-gDams*, continued to voice the need for reform, and to stick as closely as possible to the classical Buddhist discipline. But more than three hundred years had to pass before this call for reform became powerful enough to sweep across the entire country. The man who made this possible was TSong-Kha-Pa (1357-1410), perhaps the most eminent among the religious teachers and organisers in Tibet. A puritan by taste, austere in habits, and uncompromising in his adherence to

monastic discipline, TSong-Kha-Pa ('the man from the Onion country' in the Amdo district on the frontier; his actual name was bLo-bzang-pa, in Sanskrit, Sumati-kīrti) saw the incongruity of the married and wine-bibbling 'Buddhist monks' engaged in frivolous magical abracadabra. They were Buddhist only by profession, and monks only in appearance, and their appeal to Śākyamuni-Buddha was obviously far-fetched. TSong-Kha-Pa had read Dīpaṃkara's manual, 'Light on the path of Enlightenment', and had been deeply impressed by it. He wrote *Lam-Rim-CHen-Bo* (*The Lamp of the Way*) along the same lines, emphasising the value of virtuous living for a Buddhist monk (like celibacy, abstaining from meat and liquor, and practice of



SHADAKSHARA-LOKESVARA

contemplation). He was a prolific writer; and his commentaries on the major scriptural texts, streamlining the need to be close to the true spirit of original Buddhism, are justly famous. Besides being scholarly and saintly, this ascetical monk was also uncommonly energetic. He founded his own monastery at Gah-Dan (in Sanskrit, Tushita, the name of Buddhist paradise), some twenty miles from LHa-Sa, and organized a band of puritanical monks who took seriously all the ten 'restraints' prescribed by the Buddha (especially celibacy and mendicancy), and who were asked largely to ignore the Tāntrik rituals. Originally known as the *Gah-Dan-Pa* ('the Golden ones'), this group in due course came to be known as *dGe-Lugs-Pa* ('the merit system ones', or those who followed

the Virtuous Way), and was in a sense the fulfilment of Dipamkara's *Kah-Dams* tradition.

By a curious circumstance, TSong-KHa-Pa's new group became a dominant force in Tibet not only religiously but even politically. There is no doubt that TSong-KHa-Pa who became a monk at the age of seven was a remarkable person, earnest, energetic, idealistic and ascetic; he was a scholar, saint, leader, reformer and organiser. His contribution was not only in the field of scriptural explanation; he also wrote edifying tracts on initiation, contemplation and yoga. It is not for nothing that Tibetans have always held him in the highest esteem, calling him 'rJe Rim-po-Che' (*Ārya-mahāratna*, 'the precious chief'); the dGe-Lugs-pas

regard him as the second Buddha and as the incarnation of Mañjuśrī; and his tomb in the Gah-dān monastery is for pious Tibetans a place of pilgrimage.

But his eminence by itself is not sufficient to explain the good fortunes of the sect. What really ushered TSong-KHa-pa's group to limelight was the invitation for his visit from the Chinese emperor Yung-lo. He himself could not go, but sent one of his disciples, Byams-Chen-Chos-rJe, whose mission achieved a large measure of success. He was recognised by the Chinese emperor as the head of Buddhist religion, not only in Tibet but in the entire empire. He founded in 1417 the Se-ra monastery, one of the most powerful monastic institutions in the country.



ĀDIBUDDHA-VAJRASATVA

Another disciple of Tsong-Kha-Pa, mKhas-Grub-rJe, who founded the bKra-Śis-Lhung-po monastery, also achieved great celebrity, and was recognised as the incarnation of the Buddha Amitābha. It was believed that, in one of his previous incarnations, he was the great Indian paṇḍita

Abhayākara-gupta who headed the Vikramaśīla University in the region of king Rāmapāla-deva (about A.D.1070). TSong-KHa-pa's nephew dGe'-Dun-Grub (1391-1478) also became a renowned abbot, and made the Gah-Ldan monastery a powerful centre, although his headquarters were in LHa-Sa.

Among the achievements of TSong-KHa-Pa or of his early successors was the establishment of the doctrine of ecclesiastical reincarnation in Tibetan imagination. It was an accepted Buddhist idea that consciousness (*sems*) survived bodily death; the belief in a succession (*santāna*) of births was also an accepted doctrine. The Indian assumption that divine beings take on human forms for the good of the world, combined with the above beliefs, produced in Tibet the peculiar institution of 'incarnations'

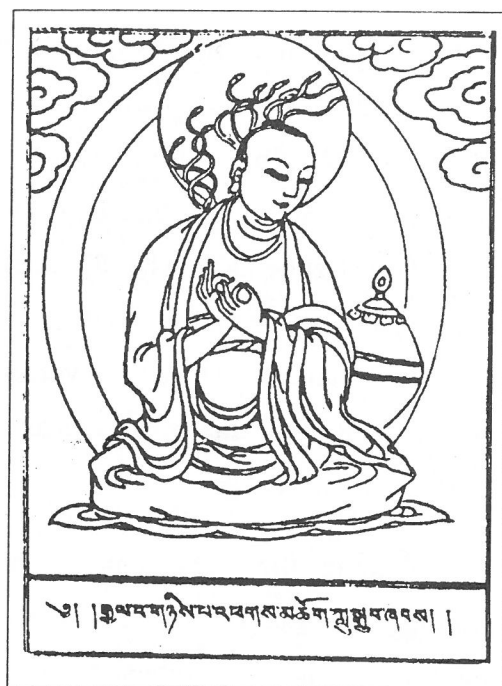


MAÑJUŚRĪ

(*KHrungs-Rabs*) and 'emanation lamas' (*sPrul-sKu* or *trulku*)¹⁴. They have 'dynasties' of abbots (*sKyes-rabs*), who being celibate had to incarnate in their successors in a mysterious manner. And there were heads of monasteries who claimed

they could recollect their previous manifestations, and tell about their future embodiments. The recognition of mKHa-s-Grub-rje (disciple of TSong-KHa-Pa and founder of the bKra-Śis-Lhuṅ-po monastery) as the incarnation of Buddha Amitābha perhaps provided the model. It may be recalled that the old Tibetan king Srong-bTsan-sGam was regarded as an incarnation of *bodhisattva* Avalokiteśvara, and it is likely that this suggested that the abbot who was the temporal ruler, namely the Dalai Lama, must also be an incarnation of the same *bodhisattva*. The idea was later applied to all important monastic institutions, and also to many minor ones in Tibet and Mongolia.

Although the *dGe-Lugs* sect became dominant, especially in



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Central Tibet, numerous other sects also flourished. The *dGe-Lugs*, founded by TSong-Kha-Pa is usually referred to as the 'Yellow-Cap' sect, in contradistinction to the other older sects like the *rÑing-Ma* and *bKah-brGryud*, which are described as 'Red-cap' sects. The habit of monks wearing tall, conical caps during rituals was prevalent in Nālandā, and

became a widespread practice in Tibet after Padmasambhava, Śānta-rakshita and Kamala-śīla. It was natural that sects were distinguished by the colour of the cap, for the robes were uniformly brick-red, and worn in the same style by all sects.

The Bon priests who are otherwise indistinguishable from lay-folk wore black caps, and the *rÑing-Ma-Pa*, who were not very far removed from the Bon background, adopted the Bon cap, but changed its colour to red. To distinguish themselves from the *rÑing-Ma-Pa*, the reformed *dGe-Lugs-Pa* changed the colour of their cap to yellow because yellow robes were characteristic of the austere

Theravāda monks. Actually, however, the chief sects in Tibet have their colour associations, rather mystical in their symbolism. Bon, with its mystery cults and dark rituals, was black; the *rÑing-Ma*, with its heavy Tāntrik involvement, was red, because red is the Tāntrik colour; the *bKah-rGyud* was white, because Milarepa and his direct disciples wore the white cotton robes of Yogis; the Sa-skyā sect with its emphasis on the combination of path (*mārga*) and fruit (*phala*) was multi-coloured; and the *dGe-Lugs* was yellow, symbolising purity and renunciation. Black and red are both cultic colours and are ritualistic in their connotation, while white and yellow symbolise the primacy of wisdom.



MAITREYA

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 14. 'sku' is Tibetan for 'the honoured body', an emanation, while 'lus' is any 'body' subject to the normal laws of transmigration.

CHAPTER THREE

THE YOGA-TANTRA APPROACH

ASCETIC PRACTICES



Although the Buddha advocated the Middle Path, eschewing the extremes of severe asceticism and unbridled enjoyment, unrelenting

self-mortification and unconcerned self-indulgence, and total denial and total acceptance, he nevertheless emphasized the necessity of an austere life, the need for seclusion, and the advantages of a contemplative life. He advocated thirteen ascetic practices (*dhutaṅga*) for purposes of self-purification by shaking off past and present defilements. In all the countries which have accepted Buddhism, monasteries are essentially places for quiet and secluded meditation. Monasticism itself is an ascetic practice. Withdrawal from the world necessarily involves privations and afflictions of pain. Endurance of pain

and indifference to comfort become distinguishing features of a monk. But asceticism in Buddhism was not driven to the point of torture and self-immolation. Food, posture and conduct were brought under discipline. In Tibet, where the approach to Buddhism is Tāntrik, there is an arrangement, both within the monastery and outside it, for considerable stretches of absolute isolation and uninterrupted meditation, involving necessarily considerable curtailment of natural impulses and acquired habits.

There is also an importance attached to austerities and asceticism, sometimes of an extreme kind which appears rather inconsistent with the Master's teaching. The explanation offered is that while these austerities



by themselves are not important, they must be observed because the Great Sage (*muni*, the Buddha) had himself observed them. And because the Buddha practised austerities for six years, it is suggested that the ascetic who follows him must also observe a six-year period of austerities, after which he is free to continue them or give them up. But

Magical rituals and austerities go together. The path to obtain and employ power (what in old Buddhism is called *iddhipāda*) is opposed to the path of ease and pleasure. Fasts, functional sensory deprivations, postural rigidity, refusing to lie down in order to sleep, ceaseless and frenzied circumambulations, intent repetition of the sacred formulae for hours on end, keeping of vigils during nights, the practice of rites in burning or burial grounds, the vow of complete silence, periodical isolation, voluntary poverty and mutilation are

The sect founded by Marpa (1012-1097 A.D.) in Tibet, known as Kagyu (bKah-brGyud), incorporates the essential elements



of the ascetic traditions of India. The ascetics of this sect have a seven-fold vow to keep:

- 1) The ascetic should not visit his home on any pretext.
- 2) He should not in any circumstance cross the threshold of a layman's house.
- 3) He should not come down from the mountain retreat (where he has retired for practice) until the stipulated period is over, even if it means disaster or death.
- 4) He should sit up continuously in the meditational posture (of crossed legs and joined palms) and not "loosen the meditation-belt" for the stipulated period.
- 5) He should not lie down during nights; he should snatch moments of sleep even as he sits.

6) He should wear but a single white sheet of cotton, whatever the vagaries of the weather, even in blizzards and snowfalls.

7) He should remain uninterruptedly silent, without communicating his thoughts or desires even by facial expressions or hand-gestures.

In addition, some ascetics will undertake regularly to visit the haunted places at nights and practise meditation there (*gNam-KHrod*).

Together with such rather severe and especial vows, there will be many minor ones to observe in common with other monks of the Order. These are regarded after the Indian fashion (*kāya*, *manas* and *vachas*), as three-fold 'efforts' (*Bad pa*): of the body (*Lus*), of the mind



(*Sems*), and of speech (*gNag*). 'Bodily efforts' include salutations, prostrations, circumambulations, turning the Maṇi-wheel, and offering of ritual-pieces. Telling the rosary (*mālā*), although a physical act, is regarded as a speech-expression. Like the Indian rosary, the Tibetan rosary consists of 108 (the Sa-sKya

group prefers 111) beads, which are moved in a circular fashion to the accompaniment of a sacred formula (usually *Om Maṇi padme Hūm*) or a seed-syllable, for each bead-movement.

This movement of beads in practice, however, is not always accompanied by verbalization. With the laity, it becomes a mechanical affair, and can be regarded only as 'bodily-effort'. But when it is seriously taken up, the movement of the beads is a substitute for utterance of the formula. When the count is measured upto 10,800 tolls during the course of a day, or in a sitting, it becomes an act of asceticism. Similarly, transcription of sacred texts and inscription of the Maṇi-formula on stone-slabs can be

substitutes for verbal-effort, although the major involvement is the physical act.

Speech-efforts include chanting of selected texts, and preaching of sermons. Recital and exposition of scriptural texts, discussion and debate concerning doctrinal matters, reading and writing of sacred literature, even wood-block printing of the 330 volumes of Canonical texts (which practice, borrowed from the Chinese, has been in vogue in Tibet since the eleventh century) are regarded as 'mouth-religion' (*KHa-dpe* and *CHos-sKad*), notwithstanding the bodily effort involved in them. Reading aloud of scriptures, muttering of the Maṇi-formula, utterance of mystic or magical spells while offerings are

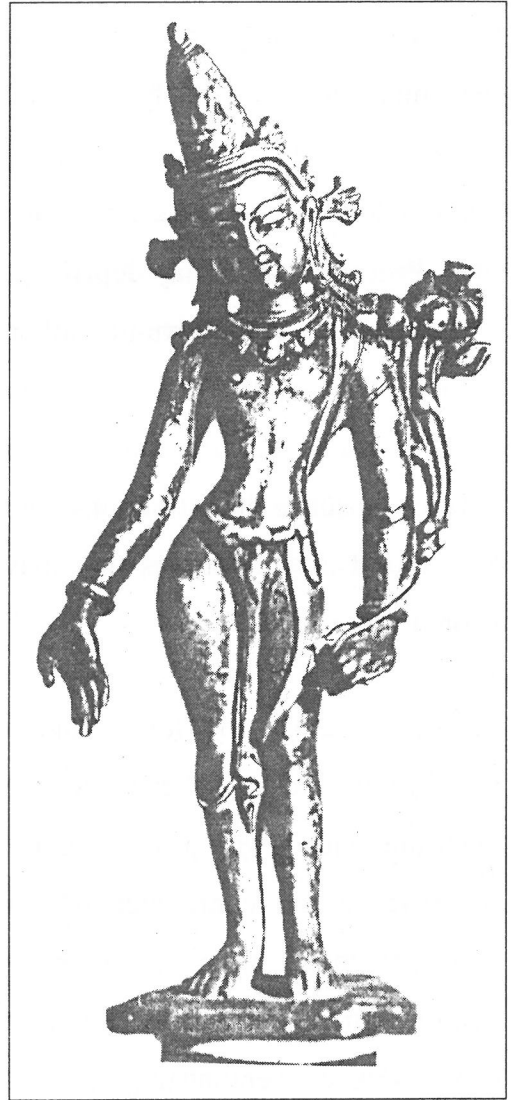
made, preparation of *maṇḍalas* for sacramental purposes, and intoning the sacred formulae while telling the beads on the rosary are illustrations of the verbal expressions of religious activity (*CHos-hDon*).

In the Tibetan way of thinking (as in the Indian), man's existence has three aspects: body, speech and mind. And mind is said to be the ruler, while the other two are servants. Therefore, mental effort is considered supremely important in religion. Mind is distinguished by its capacity to have faith (*Dad-pa*, *Skt. śraddhā*): reliance on the Doctrine, devotion to the 'three perfect ones' (the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha), reverence for the saints and gods, desire for emancipation (*THar-ba*), and the altruistic vow of

the bodhisattva are all so many expressions of faith. Mind (*Sems*) is naturally and normally filled with 'sin' (*sDig-pa*). It is not accidental that the Tibetan expression also means, 'scorpion' (*vr̥schika*) which is known for its sting, and 'crab' (*kaṭaka*) which is well-known for its hold. Evil not only holds the mind under its sway, but produces pain by its sting.

Religion is an attempt to relieve the mind of this 'sin'. And faith is the first effort to clear the mind of its hold as well as sting.

Studying the Doctrine, understanding its tenets and developing an insight into its import are likewise efforts of the mind. Bu-sTon urges that one must study the



AVALOKITA

Doctrine with a sense of urgency; for it is only in the present age that

the Buddha has appeared, and when our minds are favourably disposed towards his Doctrine, we must, without losing time, take advantage of it. Procrastination may deprive us of the present opportunity of a favourable condition of existence. Health, leisure, presence of a teacher, absence of distractions, and the mood are conditions that may soon pass off.

Preparatory for study, and a precondition to it, is faith in the Doctrine, along with reverence for the teacher and confidence in our ability to make progress. Symbolic hand-gestures (*PHyag-rGya*), Mudrā in Sanskrit, conceptualizing thought, processes during certain rites, and mental offerings in ceremonial sequences are also included in the

same category: they set up in the mind a favourable mood for study and practice. A rite is essentially in the nature of a preparation.

All these are relatively minor and routine. Although they do involve withdrawal in various degrees from normal biological and social activities, and effort of varying intensity, they can hardly answer to the description of ascetic practices. The ideal of an ascetic is always prized highly; the Buddha himself is regarded as a 'great ascetic' (*mahā-śramaṇa*). And even normal folk periodically turn into ascetics albeit for a stipulated (and usually brief) stretch of time. A monk who cares to live in large conformity with the ascetic ideals ingrained in Indian and Tibetan Tāntrik tradition merits great

reverence and adoration from his fellow-monks as well as from the pious lay-folk.

The two goals of the Tantrik way of life are supernormal pleasure and extraordinary power. The urge for pleasure both here and hereafter (sukha, ihāmutra) is of course the more popular motivation; but all the practices that somehow involve it are regarded as 'lower' Tantra. The longing for power (power over others, power to accomplish things quicker and better, power to secure wealth, and so on, Skt. siddhi) has resulted in a whole complex of magical practices which are included in the 'middling' Tantra. But the utter unison of pleasure (sukha) and power (siddhi), but altogether divorced from the phenomenal

context (laukika), occur as 'emancipation' or 'freedom' (mukti) the urge for which constitutes the 'higher' Tantra. Whatever the grade of the Tantra, the ascetic involvement is not only indispensable, but considerable. Even to secure pleasure or power, one must undertake strenuous asceticism, denying oneself smaller pleasures in the hope of higher power. Giving up (tyāga) in order to get (labdhi), abandoning in order to obtain, suffering now in order to be later comforted, and welcoming pain as a prelude to happiness are necessarily involved in the Tāntrik approach.

The Tibetan ascetics of olden days usually adopted the six-limbed yoga (*Shaḍaṅga-yoga*. Tib. *sByor-ba Yam-lag Drug*), according to the



AMITĀYU-BUDDHA

method taught by the Indian master Anupama-rakshita. It consists of bodily postures (*āsana*), regulation of breathing (*prāṇāyama*), withdrawal of sense-functions (*pratyāhāra*), fixed attention (*dhāraṇā*), stilling of thoughts (*dhyāna*) and absorption in

a trance (*samādhi*). It was usual to devote three years, three months and three days (adding another half-month to make up for possible lapses) over this yoga, in a forest-retreat or on a solitary mountain.

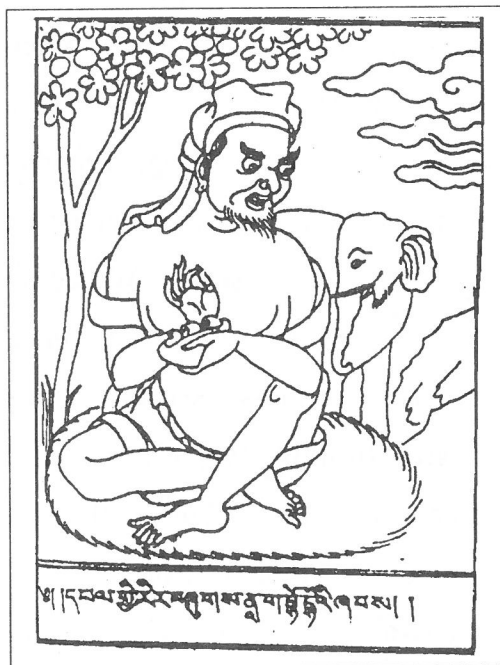
This Indian method is said to have been communicated to Tibet in a long line of teachers beginning with Avalokiteśvara and Anupama-rakshita, the latter being a historical personage. The actual teacher who brought it to Tibet appears to have been Vana-ratna (in Tibetan dPal Nags-Kyi Rin-Che), the last and the most popular of Indian Paṇḍitas to visit Tibet. He was born in 1384 A.D. and hailed from Bengal. He is said to have been initiated into this yoga by Nāgabodhi (a disciple of the celebrated Nāgārjuna) at Dhānya-

kaṭaka monastery in Āndhra-Pradesh. Ideas of Tibetan asceticism can thus be directly traced to the Indian background.

INWARD ORIENTATION

Gregarious mammals are not biologically designed for isolated existence. They are therefore by inclination social. Group life not only offers them security, but contributes to their development and well-being. This tendency has reached its culmination among the *Homo sapiens*, viz, in the human beings, for whom society is an indispensable defense and support. Man is truly a social animal, and his survival is inextricably bound with the processes of social facilitation. He matures and fulfils his impulses only within the

social context. Being a biological imperative and a social necessity, the need for group life is fundamental to man. When he is denied group-involvement by force or by accident, he feels lost and may go even crazy. Solitary confinement can indeed be a disastrous punishment for a majority of human beings.



NĀGABODHI

It would, therefore seem unnatural for an individual to voluntarily immure himself, or isolate himself from all group-coöordinates. But Yoga would insist on such voluntary withdrawal, repeatedly and for brief or long stretches of time. This is meant not only to curtail his natural and outward orientation, but to facilitate the development of the necessary inward attention. When we are caught in the processes of the world, acting and reacting, receiving and responding, we are to that extent alienated from ourselves. We cease to be ourselves and put on a succession of masks, each of which is situationally warranted and determined. We are busy with what in modern jargon is called 'input-processing.' We continually select our sensations, plan our perceptions,

programme our responses, project our feelings, make our judgments, and order our values. All this would happen so automatically and so necessarily that our awareness of our involvement in almost sidetracked and submerged.

Spiritual practice is in a real sense a counter-current (*prati-srota*) to worldly involvement. Therefore, the practitioner is advised to "turn off the input-processing", and periodically seek resort in seclusion. However, it is not seclusion as such that benefits; it is the mental attitude which sustains the seclusion that is important. All religions have a contemplative aspect, and isolation (*ekānta*) is advocated in all religions as a factor that facilitates contemplation. Eastern religions

attach greater value to contemplative seclusion; they hold that solitude is a necessary condition in which meditation can be successfully practised.

Tibet, in particular, developed a special philosophy of seclusion (*vivikta-vāsa*). The physical features of the land, as well as the peculiar characteristics of the people inhabiting there, provide ample opportunity for the earnest devotee to dwell in complete and effective isolation for relatively long stretches of time. It does not, however, mean that Tibetans are by temperament lonely or seclusive. They have as avid and fine a sense of social life as any other people in the world. But those who have committed their lives to religious fulfilment can without

strain or stress pass their time in strictest seclusion; this ability comes to them naturally. They do not feel oppressed if they do not sight another human being, or hear a human voice, for days, months or years.

Important in this context is the Tibetan expression *mTHSams, sīmā* (*in Sanskrit*), which literally means “boundary-line”, “border”, “demarcation”, “frontier”. It is what marks off an area, a kind of partition, within which one must stay, and beyond which one may not stray. The word is employed to indicate the outer limits of one’s property, as well as a line of demarcation drawn in a magical rite to mark off the consecrated area. In the latter sense, the space enclosed within this line is regarded as endowed with magical



TĀRĀ

power; any act done here, and any person staying here, would be extraordinary, consecrated, magically equipped, and mysteriously potent. The same thing when done, or the same person, when staying beyond these limits, would be ordinary, and lack all magical power.

The Tibetan word has also a secondary meaning: “to plan”, “to resolve”, “to settle one’s mind”. In the meditational context, the two meanings are fused. It means resolving to set up a fence or boundary for oneself, to draw a barrier round oneself, and to cut oneself off from the surrounding (*mTHSams gCHod-pa*).

This is achieved by several devices. One of the most frequently

employed procedures is to retire into a distant and desolate hermitage, a solitary or deserted house, abandoned hut, or a cell in a monastery, or to a cave in some mountain fastness, and to vow never to go out of it, nor admit any one within it. The withdrawal is voluntary and deliberate; or it may be at the suggestion of his guru. During this period there is an arrangement, priorly made, to supply some little food and water (never much) to the person who enters into seclusion, through a narrow window or a small opening (called *Bug-Go*), without, however, affording an opportunity to see him or talk to him. If the ascetic is a well-to-do layman, he may arrange with his own family, or with a family in the vicinity of his seclusion by paying for the service.

There are ascetics who vow to what is known as “water and stone fasting” (*śilā-jalopavāsa*). They are said to drink small quantities of water and munch tiny pebbles! There are accounts of saints (like Dharmasvāmi, Zig-Po) who sit down for the practice of mind-purification (*bLo-sByong*, *Skt. mano-śodhana*) for 23 days at a stretch without even bothering to eat food.

The period of seclusion may last several months; sometimes it may extend to a couple of years. The Kālachakra ascetics observe seclusion for three years, three half-months and three days. The underlying belief is that the human constitution normally undergoes a significant change during this period. The Kagyu hermits prefer a seven-

year or twelve-year seclusion. It is more usual for monks or serious laymen to retire every year to seclusion lasting a few weeks. It is also an accepted practice to snatch brief moments of seclusion everyday in the morning, noon, evening, and night.

Some hermits wander into cemeteries, and spend the nights under a lonely tree or an empty cave in the neighbourhood of the village. Seclusions are occasionally observed in the waning moon. Not infrequently, it happened in olden days that meditation covered the major period of life. For instance, sGro (b. 1078 A.D.), the eminent master, took to meditation when he was forty and finished it when seventy-one; he preached for only four years before he died.

While in seclusion, the ascetic must consecrate himself to meditational practice and related study. The purpose of seclusion is to enable the ascetic to apply himself to practice with the same zeal as that of the parents bringing up their only child, or that of a “wool-cleaner washing the wool”. Frequent descriptions of steadfast practice are “without loosening the belt”, “without placing head on pillow for years”, “till his waist became sore” and “till the buttocks wore out”. There is an interesting story concerning the famous ascetic-poet Milarepa.

When his disciple sGam-Po-pa was leaving Milarepa’s hermitage after his study and practice, Milarepa accompanied him as far as a stream

(for that was the customary send-off). He halted there, and told sGam-Po-Pa: “Child, I have a secret. Shall I reveal it to you now?” sGam-Po-pa was eager to know. Milarepa turned and uncovered his own buttocks. sGam-Po-pa was shocked to find his teacher’s buttocks in such a terrible plight. They had completely



MILAREPA

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MILAREPA

worn out and blackened and were altogether devoid of flesh, because of constant sitting in meditation. Milarepa then told his disciple:

“Son, the secret of success in meditation is diligence!”

Another celebrated master Dam-pa, advised his equally celebrated disciple Kun-dGa:

“Live in a cave which can hold one person only, and wear clothes just enough to cover your shame. Your food should not be more than what is sufficient to keep you alive. And practise meditation until you begin to hate it!”

The final remark is a common expression for saying: Practise continually and with a single-minded

devotion. The import is a total and exclusive preoccupation with meditation practice. Seclusion is not merely a physical barrier excluding the ascetic from all normal contact with the surrounding. It is also a psychological barrier keeping away the normal mental processes. It is indeed a “turning off”. Cut off from the outside, it is a voyage into one’s own interior. It is a kind of death so far as the individual’s participation in the world is concerned. He is ‘dead’ for the world, and the world is ‘dead’ for him. But this death actually means a new life.

Prevented from going forward, he starts going backward (pratisrota). Time stands still for him; and space is excluded from his consideration. Habitual sensations

and perceptions, conceptions and feelings, plans and cares are shaken off, and he begins to delve deep into his own psyche. Zang Rin-Po-CHe (born 1123A.D) one of the 'three jewels of Tibet', recounted: "I have given up the world in my mind. The link between me and the world is completely severed. I am absorbed in the heavenly nature of non-origination."



LIGHT WITHIN

We are often troubled by the surrounding; our minds are unable to get into contact with reality, because it is in the nature of the presented world to veil, obscure and distort. There is, therefore, a need to escape from phenomenal involvement, before we can rest our

mind on reality. Not to attend to the world is difficult when the world moves us, and moves around us. Mind is like a "mad dog barking at anything that moves, even at the faintest rustle of leaves". It is necessary to shut the mind up, and free it from distractions if we aspire to make mind discover its own natural modes and links. Seclusion is

thus a technique favoured for self-discovery.

Having secured physical seclusion, it is of paramount importance to obtain psychological freedom also (*mano-mukti*). Although the world in its physical and social aspects is left outside the 'barrier', the world in its mental and emotional aspects can still plague the practitioner. The world as known and remembered, as felt and experienced, continues to be a lump, difficult to swallow. In order to train the mind to settle down, a series of practices are prescribed.

Isolation, for instance, is always well-planned. It is not a mere sinking into oblivion or losing oneself in emptiness. In the Tibetan reckoning,

"the work in the dark" comes only after "work in the open" is finished. The latter (*prakaṭa*) consists of studying the relevant texts, getting explanations from the teacher, and observing the general rules of virtuous conduct. The practitioner, even while immured is not continuously "in the dark". He can have a lamp (for which butter is supplied along with food, periodically) and some books with him. He can break the 'barrier' when he feels like consulting his teacher, although it is usually not approved or encouraged.

"Work in the dark" (*guhya*) is independent of books and teachers, it is essentially an encounter with one's own interior, exploiting one's own inherent and natural resources.

Seclusion is described as “dark”, and the *mTHSams* that the Tibetan yogi enters is indeed physically dark. It is not without a reason that darkness is prescribed as favourable to meditational practice. Seclusion denotes withdrawal from the light of the day, the light which not only illumines the objects and aspects of the phenomenal world, thus facilitating transaction with it, but holds man a helpless captive in phenomenal involvement. The glare can be oppressive.

The Tibetan word for light, viz., *sNang-ba* (*Skt. dīpa*), means “to emit light”, “to show up”, “to shine”. In this sense, it comprehends everything that is visible, all things that the organs of sense can apprehend. It also means “mental

appearance”, “thought”, “idea of the world”. In an extended sense it means “apparition”, “phantom” (*sNang-gyi sPHrul-ba*, *Skt. prekṣhaṇa* or *darśana*). The light outside not only shows up the objects of the world, but creates an intricate net of appearances, conceptions and meanings within the mind. And conversely, the light of the mind not only illumines the world around, but weaves for each one of us a meaningful and binding context. It is the interplay of these lights that makes our existence a weird but enticing maze of mystery and a bundle of manifold suffering.

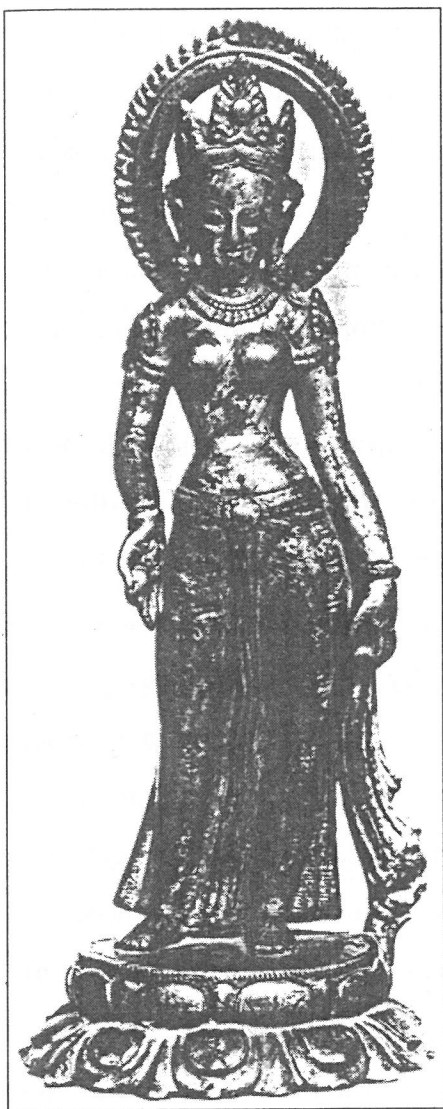
The outer light so constantly and so glaringly holds us in the grips of the external world that we can hardly dare to look within. The light

of the mind is naturally overwhelmed by the light streaming from outside. One who would look within must, therefore, necessarily shut off the outer light. The practitioner would meditate during the day closing his eyes; the outer light thereby is not directly perceived; but their reflections, partly visual and partly mental, would still be there. It is for this reason that darkness is described as helpful to meditation. In a sense, the light outside would restrict the light within; and darkness outside would help the light within to shine brighter and more steadily. And what is important, darkness would emphasize the isolation of the practitioner from the world.

In a well-known and oft-used Mahāyāna text, *Sūraṅgama-sūtra*,

there is an interesting dialogue between the Buddha and his disciple Ānanda. The Buddha ties a knot (granthi) on a piece of cloth, while Ānanda watches, and ties another, and another. Seven knots are thus tied. Ānanda agrees that not all the knots are the same, for they are tied in a specific order. The Buddha tells Ānanda that in order to untie the knots, one must know how the knots are tied. Knowledge of the origin helps the accomplishment of dissolution. And prompted by the Master, Ānanda says that to untie the first knot one must start with the last, and that one must proceed in a reverse order.

The seven knots refer to the seven psychic centres (*chakras*) in the human constitution; and the



tying of knots is the body which is positioned in the world. The first knot is hidden in the deepest layers

of the mind. In order to move in the direction of the first knot, we must follow the reverse order by shutting off the outer light and beginning to 'work in the dark'. Thus, this is an active process of 'opening up' one's awareness to the internal modes which not only structure the external world but determine our involvement in it. It is an effort to posture the mind in itself. It marks a major shift in the mode of consciousness.

PREPARING FOR BODHI-CHITTA

The practitioner must prepare himself adequately before he launches on the contemplative session. He spends four weeks in so doing. The first week he spends reflecting continuously and deeply about the great good fortune that has come to his lot in being born as a

human being. He impresses it on himself that it is a rare opportunity, extremely difficult to obtain in this world of myriad kinds of creatures; and he feels grateful to the happy chance that has made him sound in body, sound in mind, intelligent, and interested in higher values in life. He tells himself that if he lets this opportunity go, he may never get another, and it would be matter for great grief and regret. To have been born a human being along with the path he has been shown, to have secured a good teacher to guide him, and to have an opportunity to practice are thoughts that fill him with earnest zest, without which the practice is not likely to succeed.

The second week is spent on thoughts concerning misfortunes like

disease and infirmity, and concerning death. For one that is born, death is certain; and for one that is living, illness and old age are unavoidable. Accidents may overtake anyone and cut short his life, or render him disabled. It is therefore necessary for one to practice meditation when he is alive and well. The third week is occupied by an intent reflection on the law of *karma*, on the fact that every occurrence presupposes an adequate and appropriate cause, and on the truth that no deed will be without its reward or punishment. The fourth and the last week in the preparatory period is spent on ruminating over the miseries that abound in the world, and the terrors a human heart is filled with, when evil fruits mature and begin to bear fruit. No creature on earth is free

from anxiety, and at the human level the intensity and variety of anxiety are indeed staggering.

The four weeks thus spent are designed to make the aspirant realize the urgency with which the practice has to be undertaken. He should understand that meditation is the only technique by means of which the anxieties and stresses of existence are eliminated. These four preparatory reflections are regarded as “common”, in the sense that they are common to both Mahāyāna and Theravāda.

Then there are the four preliminaries which prepare the individual directly for a meditational session, more especially for visualizations. These four are looked



upon as “uncommon”, in contradistinction to the four “common” ones detailed above, inasmuch as they are unique to Mahāyāna. The first preliminary is a composite of three distinct details: the refuge-going (or resorting to the Buddha, the Doctrine, the Community and the Teacher as

ultimate and sure refuges), the vow-making (or taking the pledges of the compassionate saviour-saint or a bodhisattva), and the development of 'the thought of enlightenment'.

The third detail is not only interesting but significant. All sects and schools of Buddhism pin their faith on 'the thought or resolve concerning enlightenment' (*bodhi-chitta*, Tib. *ByangCHab*). It merely means the mind (*Sems*, *Skt. chitta*) intent on obtaining the Buddha's perfect wisdom (*bodhi*) in order to be of service to humanity. The vow to save all beings in the world (the *bodhi-sattva's* vow) is the central idea in the concept of *bodhi-chitta*.

The vow takes this form (*Advaya-vajra-samgraha*):

उत्पादयामि वरबोधिचित्तम्
निमन्त्रयाम्यहं सर्वसत्त्वान्।
इष्टां चरिष्ये वरबोधिचारिकाम्
बुद्धो भवेयं जगतो हिताय ॥

बोधौ चित्तं करोम्येष स्वपरार्थं प्रसिद्धये ॥



Overcome by compassion for the sorrowing humanity, groaning in the pit of misery, forlorn and

desperate, the practitioner is asked to resolve to help them, and extend his firm arm in that direction so that the hapless folk may be rescued and comforted. Such is the instruction contained in a text, entitled *Abhidharma-dīpa*.

The thought of enlightenment is justified by the resolve to be the 'mother and nurse' for the suffering folk. It implies that of the two essential ingredients of enlightenment, viz., compassion (*karuṇā*) and wisdom (*prajñā*), compassion is more important and urgent. The actualization of this emphasis is to be seen in the image of Avalokita, the patron-Saint of Tibet, who is pictured as the merciful *bodhi-sattva*.

The development of this 'thought of enlightenment' involves the cultivation of some essential virtues. Vasubandhu mentions the following:

- 1) Gather round you friendly helpmates to encourage you and support you in the spiritual career.
- 2) Be devout, and honour the memory of the Buddhas and other Saints.
- 3) Do whatever good you can, and acquire thereby the 'roots of merit' (*kuśala-mūla*).
- 4) Be ever compassionate and considerate.
- 5) Endure with a smile whatever misfortune falls to your lot; do not regret or curse.

- 6) Remain friendly to all living beings, and be ready to help them whenever they are in distress (*maitrī*).
- 7) Be even-minded, tranquil and dispassionate.
- 8) Think well of yourself on the count that you have taken to the great path shown by the Buddha.
- 9) Seek with diligence the right doctrine.
- 10) Aspire to obtain the Buddha-wisdom.

(*Bodhichittotpāda-sūtra-śāstra*)

In Tibet, the 'thought of enlightenment' is further regarded as the 'diamond' (*vajra*), which is the same as 'void' (*śūnyatā*) and in which is contained the essence of all Buddhas. It is hidden in the very core

of individual existence, and its nature is that of 'great bliss' (*mahā-sukha*). It is looked upon as a mystic union, in one's own body, of the two principles of existence, wisdom (*prajñā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*). In this sense, there is a frequent identification of *bodhichitta* with sexual energy (*semen*), which has two forms: as involvement with the phenomenal world (*samvṛti*) and an absolute isolation (*vivṛti*). The latter form is 'great-bliss'.

It occurs when the natural downward flow of *bodhichitta* is arrested either by the six-limbed yoga (*ṣaḍaṅga-yoga*) consisting of withdrawal of the senses (*pratyāhara*), focussing of mind (*dhyāna*), regulation of breathing (*prāṇāyāma*), mindfulness (*anusmṛti*), absorption

(*dhāraṇā*) and trance (*samādhi*); or by the four-fold bodily yoga comprising of gestures (*mudrā*), posture (*āsana*), knots (*bandha*) and restraint of breath (*prāṇāyāma*). The basic idea is that the downward flow leading to the discharge and dissipation of sexual energy is injurious to the constitution inasmuch as it leads to phenomenal involvement. It is necessary not only to check its descent, but prompt its ascent.

Meditation is the technique of securing this inversion of the flow of vital energy. When this energy successfully streams up and reaches the highest centre, viz., the 'lotus on the crown of the head' (*uṣṇīṣha-kamala*), it melts and suffuses the entire organism. It is in this state that one experiences it as 'great bliss'. It

also becomes intensely effulgent (*prabhāsvara*), whereupon the highest wisdom dawns. This is the enlightenment one is looking for.

The development of the *bodhi-chitta* is the favourite theme of numerous manuals. Many Sanskrit-texts have been preserved carefully in their Tibetan translations. The originals unfortunately have been lost, as for instance *Bodhichitta-bhāvanā* by Kamalaśīla, translated by Dharma-pāla, and included in the Tibetan Canon, *Tangyur*; another work with the same title by Mañjuśrīmitra and included in the *rGyud-hGrel* (Tantra gloss) section of the Tibetan Canon, *Bodhichitta-vivaraṇa* by Nāgārjuna, translated by Guṇākara and Rab-SHi-bSes-gNen, and included in the same section; *Bodhichittotpāda-vidhi* by the



same authority, translated by Surendra-bodhi and included in the same canon; *Bodhichitta-vāyucharāṇa-bhāvanopāya* by Tali (?); *Bodhichitta-asampramosha-samādhī*,

Bodhichitta-bindūpadeśa by Karma-Pa, *Bodhichitta-bhāvanopadeśa* by Mañjuśrī-mitra and and *Bodhichittamahāsukhāmnāya* by Atīśa-Dīpaṅkara. These works provide

practical guidance in the matter of arousing the 'thought of enlightenment', making it firmly established, preventing its natural lapse, relating it to one's own chosen deity (*Yi-Dam*), absorption of the deity into the seed-syllable 'a', and the establishment of light in one's own heart; they also describe the nature of *bodhi-chitta* and enumerate the benefits of the practice.

The development of *bodhi-chitta* is followed by a ritual designed to clear away the impediments and defects which may prevent successful practice. Usually this involves the continuous repetition of a *mantra* (given by the teacher) for several thousand times, all the while visualizing the chosen deity and the teacher. The next ritual in sequence is *maṇḍala-offering* to his teacher

and the line of teachers represented by him. Atīśa-Dīpaṅkara is believed to have introduced this ritual into Tibet, and there are several Sanskrit manuals in Tibetan translation which give details of this ritual. Many of these works bear the simple title: *Maṇḍala-vidhi*; and among the authors are Jaya-sena, Kamala-śrī, Nishkalāmka-vajra, and Ratnākara-śānti, all eminent *paṇḍitas* of the Nālandā and Vikramaśīla monastic colleges. Closely associated with this ritual is a visualization known as *guru-yoga* which is a mystic absorption of the teacher into oneself.

Prajñopāya-viniśchaya-siddhi has a prescription for the *bodhi-chitta* consecration (*bodhichittā-bhisheka*) (chap.3), with the preface:

अथातः कथ्यते सम्यक् वज्रसत्त्वपदार्थिनाम् ।
साधकानां हितार्थायाभिषेकं त्रिभवास्पदम् ॥

The text contains details of the ritual, at the end of which the teacher tells the student:

इदं ते समयं वत्स पूर्वबुद्धैरुदाहृतम् ।
पालयस्व सदा भद्र संवरं शृणु साम्प्रतम् ॥
न हि प्राणिवधः कार्यः त्रिरत्नं मा परित्यज ।
आचार्यस्ते न सन्त्याज्यः संवरो दुरतिक्रमः ॥

The permission is provided by the teacher:

आबोधिमण्डपर्यन्तं दिशि चक्रे समन्ततः ।
प्रवर्तयस्व सत्त्वाग्र धर्मचक्रमनुत्तरम् ॥
प्रज्ञोपायस्वरूपात्मा चिन्तामणिरिवोच्यते ।
अखिन्नो विगतासङ्गः सत्त्वार्थं कुरु
साम्प्रतम् ॥

Then the student who has received the consecration promises:

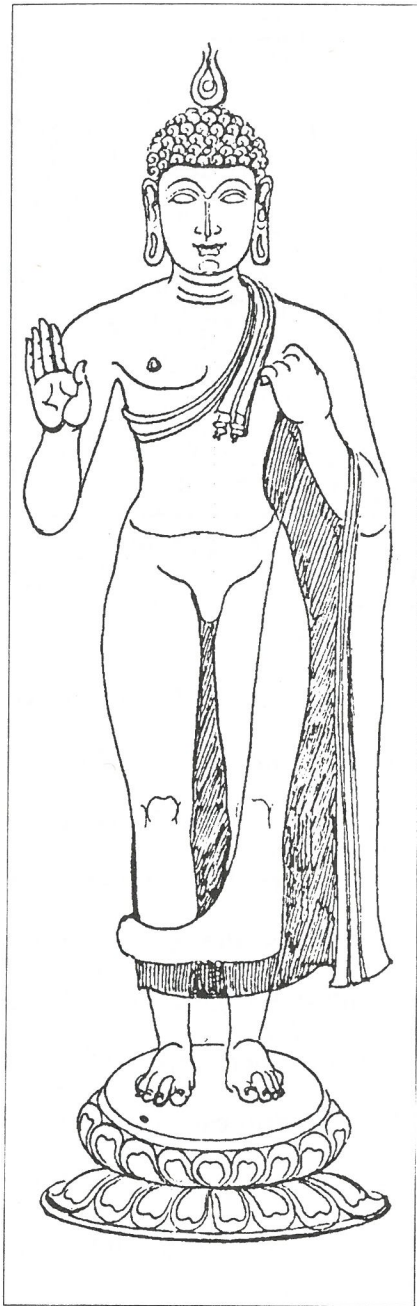
अधुना भव बुद्धाग्रः सुप्रसादो ममान्तिके ।
यथा तेऽनुत्तरां बोधिं प्रसादात्साधयाम्यहम् ॥

The concluding ritual dedicates the merit acquired by the preliminary

sequence of rituals to the welfare of all living beings (*sarva-bhūta-hita*). It is important to note that all these involve visualizations, which are effective techniques of training the mind. Intimately involved in visualizations are the sacred formulae (*mantra*, Tib. *Nagag Sang*), the mystic diagrams (*maṇḍala*, Tib. *dKyil-KHor*) and dispositions of hands and fingers (*mudrā*, Tib. *CHug-ja*).

BODY, BREATH AND MIND

Meditation is an exercise of intense activity; it is described as 'supreme effort'. And the physical foundation for this heightened activity is, paradoxically, the postures of sitting perfectly still. Iconographically, it is the typical Buddha posture. And the posture is



universally accepted as most helpful in all Yoga, Hindu as well as Buddhist (including Zen).

In Tibet, the assumption of this posture is known as the 'seven aspects of Vairochana'. First of the five *dhyāni*-buddhas, Vairochana represents the body, the corporeality, material aggregation. He is also the sun, the "illuminator" (*rNam sNang*). As a divinity, he enables his devotee to realize the true nature of all existence and the illusory nature of all phenomena. The body of the meditator when postured properly will ultimately lead to this realization. In the Tāntrik framework, the body and mind are indistinguishable, and the body is essential for enlightenment. Hence the involvement of Vairochana's name

in this context. The seven members of the posture are described as follows:

- (1) Sit up, crossing the legs, with both knees touching the ground, and both feet opening out like petals of lotus. This is described as 'lotus-posture' (*padmāsana*) in India and as 'adamantine posture' (*vajrāsana*) in Tibet. A wide and firm base is thus provided for the body. It fixes the animal core of the body, and loosens the roots of consciousness around the navel region.
- (2) The hands are brought together, the left palm resting on the right, and held steadily just below the navel with the bends



of the wrists firmly pressing against the thighs. This is the familiar contemplative posture in the Buddha images. The benefit is the equalization of bodily heat. Usually, the hands are held perfectly horizontally, but sometimes they are cupped also. It is a practice with some hermits to bring the thumbs

into contact, either in line with the upper palm or to form a slight circle.

- (3) Sit perfectly erect, keeping the spinal column straight. The Tibetan texts illustrate the erect spinal column "like unto a pile of Chinese brass coins one on top of the other". The explanation is that it should ward off slumping, which would distribute pressure unequally in body, and thus be a source of disturbance to the mind. Erect posture does not mean being stiff in a ramrod fashion; that would be an undue strain, and therefore, a distraction for the mind. Sitting erect in an easy manner relaxes the torso, arms

and head; it regulates the flow of the vital currents in all parts of the body.

- 4) Expand and thrust the chest forward, pushing the shoulders a little backward, but not stiffly. This is to facilitate full and deep breathing, and to enable the air within all the cavities to move out.
- 5) Bend the neck so that the chin touches the top of the chest. This position is likened to the iron-hook, or elephant-goad. In Yoga, it is known as *jālandhara-bandha*. The texts formulate its purpose as facilitating the expulsion of foul air from within the body. Stretching and

bending the neck will quicken the mind's activity. It is to be noted that the usual practice is to keep the head upright, ears in line with the shoulders and the tip of the nose in line with the navel.

- 6) Touch gently the roof of the mouth or back of the upper row of teeth with the tip of the tongue, and hold it there. This will eliminate the rush of thoughts. All thoughts involve speech, and all speech entails movement of the tongue. When the tongue, is held steady but not pressed, thought is considerably curtailed. And the life-force is sucked by the tongue, and is made to go upwards.

- 7) Lower your gaze and settle it at a distance of about three feet (or a little over five feet, 'the distance of yoke') in front of you. But do not focus your attention on any object. The gaze must be relaxed and free. However, it is important that the gaze must not shift; when the eyes wink and wander, thoughts are formed and dissolved, for vision guides the thinking process. Opening the eyes, or closing them altogether, presents difficulties for meditation, and they involve strain. Lowering the gaze will be found to be restful. Tip of the nose is often indicated for settling the gaze; or the sky-line right in front of the practitioner, if the practice is in the open.



By this seven-fold 'method of Vairochana', the body achieves stability and tranquillity at the same time. There are some lamas who hold that this method is in itself sufficient to induce states of meditative absorption. Their stand is similar to that of the Zen teachers who emphasize the advantages of *shikan-taza* ("just sitting") in Zazen. But it is more usual to regard this

method as merely preparatory to the actual meditational sessions such as breathing, visualization, or void-cultivation.

The immediate benefit of this method is to silence the bodily distractions by gathering all bodily parts and vital forces together into a steady posture. "Now", Kun-mKHyen-Pa the master told the initiate, "you should assume a posture like me, and keep your mind free from thoughts (*mi-rTog-pa*)".

A device known as the meditation-belt (or band) is sometimes used to make the posture firm and easy. The prescribed length is said to be "measuring, when twice doubled, about the circumference of one's head". It is secured encircling the body, across the shoulders and



PRĀṆA-KRIYĀ

Having integrated the body, speech is to be tackled before the mind can be conquered. Indian and Tibetan thought do not regard the distinction between the vocalizations which are bodily processes and the ideations which are mental, as absolute. The two processes are indistinguishably involved in speech; and respiration (breathing) is an integrated function of body, speech and mind.

under the knees in the normal meditational posture. This will keep the body steady even when the ascetic enters into a trance-state. The usual expression for diligence in practice is “without loosening the belt”. Keeping the mat continually warm (by sitting on it) is another expression signifying persistence in practice. The value of cushions is also emphasized in Zen.

Tibetan Buddhism being Tāntrik, breathing here assumes an especially important role. Watching the breath and counting the breaths, without however attempting to regulate it in any manner, are techniques adopted both in the Theravāda branch of Buddhism and

in the Zen schools. Even in the Pāli Canon, there are discourses entirely devoted to this manner of stabilizing the mind (*sati-paṭṭhāna*). But in Vajarayāna, the active control of breathing is also advocated, and this forms a necessary part of such practices as the *gTum-Mo*.

The theoretical foundation of the Tibetan techniques of breath-control is borrowed from Indian Tantra. There are notions of the 'life-force' (*THig-Le*, Skt. *prāṇa-śakti*), its 'pathways' (*rTsa*, Skt. *nāḍī*) and its 'movement' (*rLung*, Skt. *prāṇa*). The 'life-force', both in the Indian and Tibetan contexts, is the mysterious essence of one's being. It is the 'seed' of all forms that the being takes. It is spoken of as sex-energy or the 'semen virile' of individual existence, in its practical and procreative aspects. But

in its own essential and inalienable nature, it is 'zero', 'naught' (*śūnya*). It lacks the dimensions of existence (*nāma-rūpa*), and is thus not grasped. It is a mere 'point' (*bindu*), although it gives definition to whatever appears. In the mystical vocalization of phonemes, the dot (*ṛ*) above the letter (like in *aṛ*, *hrīṛ*, *om*, *klīm*, *gaṛ*) represents the involvement of the



‘life-force’. The same principle consists of the restraint of air within the body.

The ‘pathways’ are the three veins that are supposed to branch out from the ‘heart’ (which, is not the physical heart, but the ‘seat of the life-force’): *rKyan-ma* (Skt. *iḍā*) to the left, *Ro-ma* (Skt. *piṅgalā*) to the right, and *dBu-ma* (Skt. *sushumṇā*, also called *dhuti*, Tib. *Srong-rTSa*) in the middle. The vein is here defined as the ‘root of life’; it is the pathway along which the vital current (*prāṇa*) moves. It should, however, not to be mistaken that this is in the nature of a vehicle, or a channel, through which the current courses. It is actually a mode of the life-force itself, the modal aspect of the vital current. The significance

becomes clear when the nerve-paths are in Tantra regarded as so many vowels and consonants which are all modes and modifications of the one primal sound, ‘a’. In fact, the three veins are symbolized by the three-lettered formula OM-ĀH-HŪM.

The movement is likened to the ‘wind’ or breeze (*rLung*, Skt. *Vāyu*) and its association with Mind is a persistent idea in Yoga and Tantra. Tibetan expressions like “Breath is the courser, and Mind is the rider” and “*rLung* (breath) and *Sems* (Mind) are joined into one” make this association clear. Tibetans employ two expressions: *Sems* (Mind, Skt. *chitta*) and *Yid* (mind, Skt. *manas*) without much confusion. The former has sometimes been used as the equivalent of the Sanskrit

sattva (animated being), as in *Sems-CHan* ('animal', having the faculty of consciousness) and *Sems-CHen-Po* ('great being', a person of great worth and vitality). The latter term, however is often used in the sense of thought-processes or, conceptualizations (Skt. *manasikāra*): it is mind in the ordinarily accepted usage, and approximates to the *vṛtti* idea in Yoga. Like Yoga, Tibetan meditation also seeks to suppress the mind (or the mental modes). Meditative absorption is described as *Yid-La-Mi Byed-pa* (a state of no-mind, or non-conceptualization, Skt. *amanasikāra*). It is not, however, the absence of Mind, but the commingling of Mind with the Breath, when the mind-movement is suppressed. This is the Tibetan notion of 'Breath-control' (*rLung-rTSol*).



This is sought to be achieved by withdrawing the breath from the two side-veins (to the left and to the right), and forcing it into the middle vein (*dhuti*). This is making the wind in the body 'pot-shaped' (*Kumbhaka*). The Tibetan practice (*Srog-rTSol*) is very similar to the Indian *prāṇāyāma*. It is described as comprising of four methods:

- (1) 'Breathing in' or inhalation of breath. The air is slowly and noiselessly sucked in through the nostrils from about sixteen fingers' distance.
- (2) 'Filling', or 'pot-making'. The inhaled air is drawn in and forced into the abdominal region, thus swelling it to resemble an earthen pot.
- (3) 'Equalizing' or 'lung-expansion'. When the practitioner finds that he can no longer preserve the 'pot-shape', the breath is broken up into two units, one unit being forced into the left lung and the other into the right. The air within the body is thus equalized, the lungs being suffused with breath.
- (4) 'Shooting the breath'. When it is found impossible to continue the above any longer, the bodily breath is shot out through the nostrils like an arrow. This 'shooting' is done gently first, but later with great force. The 'dead' air is thus completely expelled.

While this method is usually adopted by the practitioner who is intent on magical powers or by those who pursue the 'Short path', it is more common to employ the sequence of inhalation-retention-expulsion of 'dead' breath. It often becomes the initial stage, although the practice is flexible. The practitioner breathes out gently through the nostrils reciting mentally the seed syllable *Om*; visualising at

the same time the form of the letter as white. Then he inhales the air slowly and steadily, reciting *Hūm*, and visualizing it as blue or black in colour. Then, the inhaled air is retained within the body for a while, reciting *Āh*, and visualizing the form of this seed-syllable as red in colour. There is an interesting explanation that the three parts of the practice symbolize the three sects in Tibetan: exhalation which is white is the Kagyu sect (founded by Marpa); inhalation which is blue or black is the indigenous Bon; and retention which is red is the Nyingma (rNina-Ma founded by Padmasambhava).

Called the 'tri-vajrākshara-mantra', the explanation given in *Guhya-samāja-tantra* (paṭala II) is as follows:



वज्रमण्डलमध्यस्थं ओंकारं तु प्रभावयेत् ।
स्वच्छमण्डलमध्यस्थं आःकारं तु प्रभावयेत् ।
धर्ममण्डलमध्यस्थं हूंकारं मन्त्रस्य प्रभावनम् ।
भुंकारमालयं ध्यात्वा त्रिवज्रोत्पत्तिभावना ॥
इत्याह भगवान् गुह्यसमयः ॥

ओंकारं ज्ञानहृदयं कायवज्रसमावहम् ।
आःकारं बोधिनैरात्म्यं वाक्यवज्रसमावहम् ।
हूंकारं कायवाक्चित्तं त्रिवज्राभेद्यमावहम् ॥
इत्याह भगवान् सर्वतथागतकायवाक्
चित्तमन्त्रपुरुषः ॥

But the important aspect of this method is the association of what is

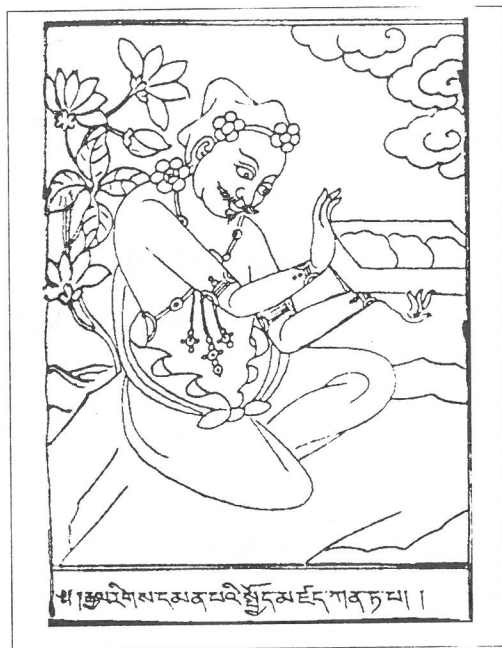
called 'the adamantine recitation' (*rDo-rJe-hi bZlaspa*, Skt. *Vajra-japa*) with the practice which is not so much breath-control as breath-regulation. The recitation of the three-syllabled formula, *Om-Hūm-Āh*, is done inaudibly, while breathing (exhalation, inhalation and retention). The purpose is to render the breathing process even, regular and rhythmic on the one hand, and full of mystical power on the other. Serious practitioners count up to 21,600 breathings at one sitting. The order of the syllables is changed by some practitioners to *Om* (for inhalation), *Āh*, (for retention) and *Hūm* (for exhalation). It is more usual either to count the breaths or to repeat the syllables; seldom are the two done together.

The Tibetan Yoga also prescribes mere watching of the breathing process, without any attempt to regulate, much less to restrain. This is in common with Theravāda Buddhism and Zen. The benefit envisaged here is 'tranquillity' (*SHi-Ba*, Skt. *śamatha*). The normal mind is likened to a burning fire, and 'the going out' of that fire is 'tranquillity'. The Tibetan word *SHi-Ba* means 'to die' or 'to pass out' (*SHi-KHa-Ma* is death, and *SHi-gNas* is a death-like state or condition). It is a sphere where the fire of mind has gone out. It corresponds to the Pāli expression '*sīti-bhūto*' ('cooled'). The practice involves the cultivation of tranquillity by means of 'bare awareness of breathing'. If the mind is wild, thoughts and many, it would be an

advantage to begin the practice by counting each breath:

(1) Watch the breath as it goes out of your nostrils. Do not hurry it; make it slow and long. When the breath has completely gone out, count 'One'. Watch the breath as it enters your nostrils, and when it reaches the pit of your stomach, count 'Two'. When again the breath courses out, count 'Two'. When again the breath courses out, count 'Three', and so on. Continue till 'Ten'; and begin again with 'One'. If you continue beyond 'Ten', you are more likely to attend to the counts than to the breath.

(2) Now, as you watch the outgoing breath, you extend



yourself mentally, as if you are opening out along with the out-breath, and when the out-breath is about to finish, say mentally 'Out' and count 'One'. Watch the in-breath as it starts, extend yourself again mentally, and as it is drawing to a close, say, 'In', and count 'Two'. Continue till 'Ten', and then begin again with 'One'.

The second exercise will start after you have achieved a fair degree of success with the first. When a count is lost, because of some distraction, begin again with 'One'; do not try to resume from the last number. Let not the counting be mechanical. Employ your whole attention and entire energy to the business of counting while watching the breaths. Let not the breath escape your awareness.

While you are watching and counting, do not allow yourself to be split into two parts: "in-breathing I" and the "out-breathing I". And do not vocalize the counting; do it entirely mentally. Try not to disturb the natural rhythm of your breathing.

When calm breathing has been established, when each breath could

readily be watched, and when the counting is done without an error (that is, without getting distracted by stray thoughts), the practitioner is ready for the next phase of meditation, viz., 'insightful understanding' (*Lhag-Thow Skt. vipaśyanā*). An old instruction runs:

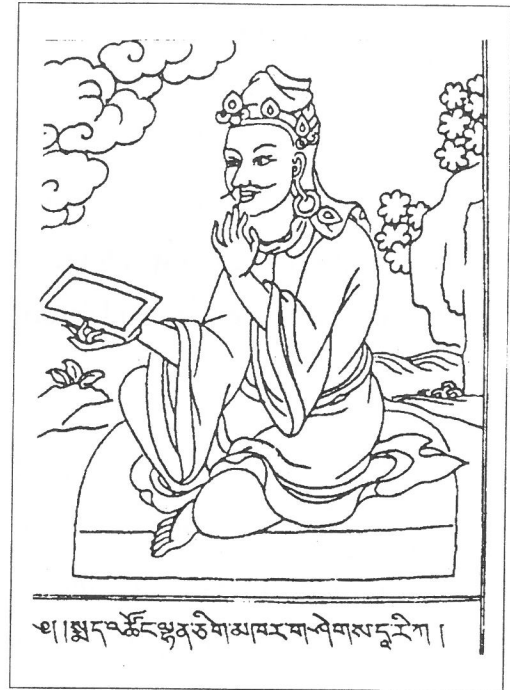
"Link the thought-process with the breathing process; and forcibly control the mind."

The explanation is that thoughts appear and disappear in the period that elapses between an in-breath and an out-breath. Attention must be focussed on this interval, ignoring both the incoming and the outgoing breaths. Watching the movement of breaths should be abandoned, and the mind fixed on the 'natural retention'

of the breath, which is an exceedingly brief span. Counting of the breaths is dispensed with at this state, and after a preliminary exercise of 'following' the breath-movements, one begins to observe the mind's working, without in any way attempting to interfere with it. This is the practice of 'letting go'. Here is what a Tibetan teacher explains:

"Mind is like a lake, a sheet of water, muddy and agitated; waves and ripples constantly cover the surface. You can hardly catch your reflection on such a surface, nor can you see the bottom of the lake.

You can not clear the surface and calm the turmoil by beating the water with a stick, or by stirring it with a rod. The ordinary man is



always attempting to still his mind, and see its bottom in this very manner. The more he tries, the less are the chances of success.

Why not leave the lake alone! Just forget about it, think of something else. Do not try to grapple with the mind; you will only make

it more difficult to handle. Watch your breath instead! When the mind does attract your attention, that is to say, distracts you from your breath-watching, merely register the thought, barely become aware of it, and return immediately to your breath-watching.

You will soon find that mind becomes calm, and you can see through it. Letting the lake alone, you will find that its surface becomes clear, and that the waves and ripples subside! That is what the revered siddha Saraha meant when he said: “When bound, the mind tries to wander in all the ten directions; but when freed, it remains still. I have learnt this lesson from how the camel behaves.” And the venerable sGam-Po-Pa said: “If the mind be left relaxed, it becomes calm; if water be left undisturbed, it becomes clear!”

Meditation in Tibet goes by the name of sGom-pa (Skt. *bhāvanā*), which word originally meant “to imagine”, “to fancy” “to produce or generate something (*sKyed-pa*) in mind”. It came to signify ‘contemplation’ or ‘meditation’, because it was essentially a mental culture, a creation, and a cultivation. The term was employed in the sense of holding one’s attention on a deity (*LHa*), as well as in the sense of contemplating upon the formless (*arūpa*). Among the forms, the ‘non-breathing’ objects like the image or deity, or tiny ball, or a lamp are distinguished from ‘breathing’ objects like in-breaths and out-breaths. The watching and counting of the breaths explained above, are grouped under preliminary practices. Meditation proper deals essentially

with the 'formless'. Three stages are recognised here:



1. 'Viewing' (*ITa-Ba*) (*prekshaṇā*).

The Tibetan word signifies an act of will; it is an attentive, energetic, deliberate looking at, or into, something (*parīkshā*).

The usage of the word in the context of the physician 'looking' at the pulse of a patient (*rTSa-LTa-Ba*) is significant. It is 'feeling' the pulse, an intent examination or a close investigation by one who is not only competent but deeply and practically interested. The other frequent imagery employed to illustrate the significance of 'viewing' is climbing to the mountain-top and looking at the village from that height.

The ability to 'view' in this sense follows a skill in bestowing non-participant and bare attention upon the breaths, acquired in the preliminary practices. 'Viewing' is different from musing, or reflective and discursive thinking. It is a steady

flow of awareness (chitta-śrota), more or less completely denuded of content. While this is essentially a practical and meditational approach, there is also a suggestion (more commonly accepted) that 'viewing' approximates to the study of the scriptures and the development of a viewpoint (*darśana*), as the first stage in systematic meditation. In this sense, it is the obtainment of an effective outlook.

The important outcome of this stage of meditation is the ability to combat normal distractions that emerge from our daily transactions. 'Viewing' is described as antagonistic to the 'rule of the senses'. Mind is freed from its habitual subjection to sense-function; mind is no longer lead by the sense-organs. To borrow

an expression of Deikmann, it is 'deautomatization'.



2. 'Reflecting' (*sGom-Pa*).
(chintana) This may be regarded as meditation proper. It is contemplation, but not employing words and forms. Aśvagoṣa describes this stage



as ‘mirror-like awareness’ (*The Awakening of Faith*, Richard’s Tr.) When the mirror reflects an object, it does not accept, not does it reject; it does not modify, nor does it judge. When the object is removed from its presence, it does not remember, nor does it anticipate. It merely

receives, and does not hold on to it. Whatever object is presented, it is uniformly and accurately reflected. The mirror bothers not if objects come near it or go away from it. Mind in this stage is transformed into a clear mirror (*vimala-ādarśa*), not clinging to the phenomenal



presentations, nor evaluating them in one way or another. The saint Nāro-pā, the disciple of Tilopa and teacher of Marpa, is credited with this advice:

“Do not negate; do not suspend your thought; do not find fault; do not fix your mind on something; and do not judge. Just let it be!”

When a thought holds on to an object, it is the normal life of bondage. When, however, the thought lets go, or lets the object be, it is enlightenment. It is in this sense that meditation is said to be ‘mirror-like’. It is in this sense that the great reformer TSong-KHa-pa described meditation as “the means of helping one to reject all imaginative thoughts (kalpanā), together with their seed

(sa-bīja). It is a matter of uprooting, or burning, such constructive mental processes which fill our minds, so that the mind is not cluttered and overwhelmed. Meditation is also called a “clearing technique” (śodhana).

There are two exercises which have been prescribed in order to accomplish ‘clearing’. The first exercise involves active but non-participating and non-interfering observation of the mind’s working: one is here aware of the thoughts as they arise from apparently nowhere, and as they disappear into oblivion. He watches their uncanny spontaneity, and fleeting transience. But he does not ‘think’ about them, judge them, accept them or reject them. He merely ‘looks at’ them.

The second exercise is more deliberate. It inhibits the random straying of the mind, focussing it on a chosen object. But it is not an object-bound contemplation in the usual sense of the term. There are two phases of it; the first gets involved with the chosen object to the exclusion of other objects and accomplishes a vivid mental image of the object; the second phase methodically eliminates all the details and particulars from the object, and frees the mind from its commitment to forms and matter.

This stage is necessary in order to undo the 'rule of imagination' (kalpanā-krama). Our mind is exceedingly fertile; it can throw up thoughts and feelings in an interminable succession. We are,

therefore, ceaselessly troubled and tormented, disturbed and distracted. To make the mind sterile is difficult, and impossible without persistent and intelligent effort. The meditational 'reflection' is an attempt to recover the essential and own nature of mind which is passive reception. The Tibetan texts give three characteristics of 'reflection' at this stage: it should be clear and distinct (*gSal*), it should be free from deliberate inquiry and reasoning (*MirTog*), and it should be steady (*Mar gYengs*). The Tibetan expression denoting the last characteristic is interesting. *gYengs* means "swift movement to and fro", "distraction", "disturbance". Thus the characteristic mentioned involves not only freedom from distraction, but alertness and sustained attention.

It may be described as 'meditative absorption' (samādhi), or tranquillity of no-thought (chittopaśama).

3. 'Working' (*sTod-Pa*) (kriyā).

This stage consists of exercises and practices in order to perfect the second stage as well as conduct in the world, in the light of the gains of such practice. It is śodhana-kriyā. It is frequently suggested that *sTod-pa* is the opposite of *ITa Ba*, 'viewing'. If the latter is theoretical viewpoint, the former is practical behaviour. Sometimes 'working' is regarded as realization, the result of the two aforesaid stages. In this sense, it becomes 'understanding' or 'insight' (*rTogs-Pa*).



The three stages of meditation are calculated to transform the normal man, who is confused, blind and passionate (prthak-jana) into a saint who is clear-headed, wise and cool (siddha). The first stage, viz 'viewing', is meant to release him from the stronghold of senses so that his confusions (bhrama) cease. The second state, viz. 'reflecting', is

designed to eliminate the rule of imagination which obscures reality (*āvaraṇa*) and projects illusory forms (*vikshepa*). The mind will attain not only stability, but sight of reality. The third state, viz. 'working', is described as undoing the rule of passion. The practitioner is now tranquil and cool.

In accordance with these expected benefits, the meditator is warned against three normal inclinations:

If one lives in luxury, eating plentiful and rich food (*eZa*), viewing is impossible. If one inclines to pomp and splendour (*Byin*), merriment (*rGod*) and wild living (*Yod*), reflecting is impossible. If one desires excessively (*bLang*), or abides (*yod-na*) in the pair (*Dor*) of attachment and aversion, working is impossible.



The celebrated 'six precepts' of the Indian founder of the Kagyu sect in Tibet, Tilo-pa, are significant in this context. The Sanskrit original or the cryptic philosophy of naturalness (*sahaja*) has been lost; but the precepts have been preserved in Tibetan:

- (1) "Do not imagine" (*Mi-mNo*).
Imagination is fancy, thought

which is far removed from the object, a mere mental process (*manana*).

(2) “Do not design” (*Mib-bSam*).

Designing is based on desire and is tied to an objective; it is a plan based on resolve (*samkalpa*).

(3) “Do not analyse” (*Mid-PHyed-CHing*).

Analysis is the discursive activity of the mind, involving reasoning (*mīmāṃsā*).

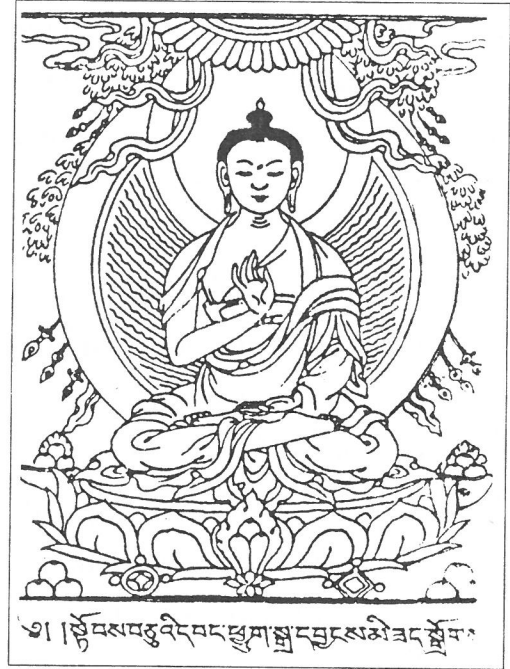
(4) “Do not reflect” (*Mib-sGom*).

Reflection is contemplative consideration, involving sustained attention (*bhāvanā*).

(5) “Do not intend” (*Mi-Sems*).

Intention is energetic and purposeful thinking, involving volition (*chetanā*).

(6) “Abide in natural state” (*Rang-Babs-bZHugs*). Rang means ‘self’, ‘spontaneous’, ‘natural’: *Babs* is ‘form’, ‘appearance’, ‘shape’ or ‘condition’. The two expressions together correspond to the Sanskrit word ‘*sva-bhāva*’ (natural disposition). *bZHugs* is ‘to dwell,’ ‘to reside’.



CHAPTER FOUR

GURU-YOGA



Meditation is essentially practical and personal. It comprises of techniques that are carefully

graded and patterned. They are selected so as to be most effective for the individual practitioner,

considering his equipment, attitudes and aspirations, his strengths and his weaknesses, his background and his constitution. These are not what the individual himself can determine, but usually it is the competent teacher or expert guide that can select and prescribe, after a careful and comprehensive study of the aspirant.

The human intellect that normal life prizes so highly is of little aid here. It can, on the other hand, block and baffle. The practitioner is frequently advised to suspend his reason and judgment during the practice of these techniques. The yawning emptiness must be filled with an unwavering faith (*śraddhā*) in the ability of the teacher to guide him successfully through. In practice, the teacher not only selects and

prescribes the most appropriate techniques for the practitioner, but also periodically evaluates his performance, encourages or admonishes when necessary, corrects and suggests changes when they are indicated.

The practitioner's attitude to his teacher is an important aid in progress and success. Humility before one's teacher has been valued highly in the East. Total and unquestioning acceptance of his system and method is held out as a necessary prerequisite. The student approaches the teacher not in the spirit of giving him a trial, but in order to give himself a change. Arrogance and doubt have often marred the chances of success in many a misguided pupil. Subjugation

of the ego, and its surrender to another person, are extremely hard for an intellectually alert individual; but this is clearly unavoidable in this enterprise. The Indian texts recommend that the spiritual student must be a 'slave' of the teacher, for the teacher holds in his closed fist (*āchārya-mushti*) the power to grant success. It is therefore necessary to seek the "teacher's method" (*PHyag-bZes*) by serving him diligently and happily.

The importance and indispensability of the guru are frequently mentioned in the Sanskrit texts. In *Tattva-vimśikā*, for instance, we read (१४-१५)

चित्तमात्रं भवेद् बोधेर्मतं चित्तमचित्तकः ।
स्वसंवित्तिरचित्तं च वित्तिर्गुरुमपेक्षते ॥
शून्यता सर्ववस्तूनां कस्य नाम न सम्मता ।
सर्वभावस्वभावोऽसौ कष्टा प्रत्यात्मवेद्यतः ॥

Jñāna-siddhi (14,3-4) declares that the guru is the ferryman who only can lead us across the ocean of *samsāra*:

गुरुःकर्णधारो विद्वान् नौका धर्मः प्रकीर्तितः ।
संसारपारगन्तूणां वज्रसत्त्वेन देशितम् ॥
कर्णधारं विना नौका पारं प्राप्तुं क्षमा न हि ।
गुणैः सर्वैः प्रपूर्णाऽपि नागुरुर्भवपारगः ॥

There are three kinds of teaching that are recognised in *Vajrayāna*. The first is called "Thought-transmission" (Thought-lineage, *Gongs-brGyud*): it is direct communication of mind to mind, telepathic. The second is "Sign-transmission" (*br-Dah brGyud*), employing mere signs and gestures, without a single spoken word. These two are naturally rare in occurrence: the first one needs a Buddha to communicate, while the second

would require an adept of a high order (mantra-dhara). The third kind, however, is more usual and more practicable. It is “transmission which is ear-whispered” (Nan-brGyud): it is oral transmission from teachings that are written down and are contained in books: this transmission relates to specific instructions regarding a contemplative procedure, and to certain revelations that are meant for particular pupils and at appropriate moments.

There are also “text-transmissions”. The teacher here merely permits the pupil to read a text, recite some passages from it, or chant a magic formula (*dhāraṇī*) during a ritual. It is not enough if a book is handed over to the pupil; the teacher must first read or recite, and



the pupil has to repeat after him. The entire procedure follows a ritual sequence. Or, the teacher will read a text, translate the passages, and explain some points therein. This is also “textual transmission”, but of a superior order. The third variety of transmission in this context is “instruction” with regard to a ritual

or a meditational practice. In all these three, a teacher is indispensable, but his role in the third is obviously most valuable.

The teacher “dispels the dark clouds of ignorance, shows the way towards freedom, cures us of the poison of five-fold passions, and saves us from the quagmire of worldly involvement.” The numerous benefits the pupil receives from the teacher have often been enumerated. The following are the frequently occurring ideas:

He awakens our faith in the path of Dharma.

He acts as a wise and benevolent friend for one in distress.

He cuts off our greedy thoughts.

He frees us from our unbecoming attachments.

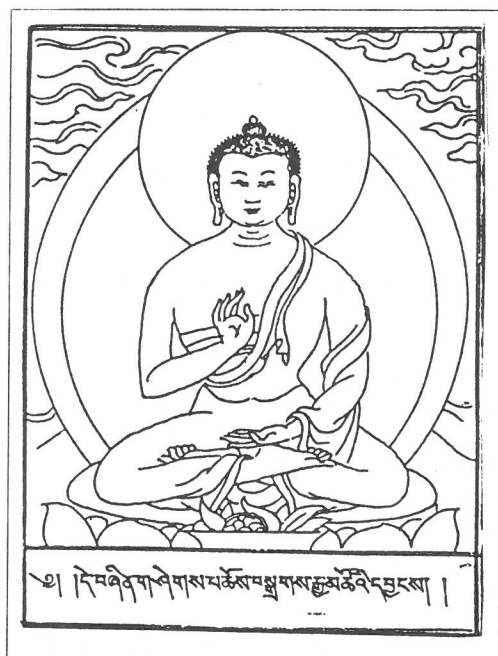
He uproots our bonds and fetters, which weigh on us.

He helps us to achieve one-pointedness of mind.

He deepens our commitment to the path of meditation.

He makes firm the fleeting benefits of meditation.

He makes us incline towards meditation throughout our lives.



He enables us to understand our true nature.

He helps us achieve our goal, and also strive to help others.

The teacher is, for the student, more than a human being. He represents the entire lineage of teachers that have mastered the method and transmitted the wisdom. In Tibet, the Tantrik cult of *guru-yoga* has been preserved and developed. It is a systematic involvement with one's teacher, a gradual cultivation of an attitude that aids progress. The teacher is first looked upon as a human being, as another person related to oneself by periodical instructions. Then, the teacher is viewed as the representative of the entire line of teachers commencing from the

primordial Buddha himself (*guru-paṅkti*). So far as the pupil is concerned, the teacher is the sole representative of the age-old tradition; and his importance consists in linking the pupil directly with the Buddha himself.

The *guru-yoga* culminates in the development of the attitude that the teacher is essentially identical with the pupil's own self. The thought that the teacher is not outside, but inside, helps in tapping one's own resources. And, here, the teacher is identical with the essence of the doctrine. He symbolizes the Doctrine which the student desires not only to explore and understand, but experience. Oftentimes, an ordinary teacher (*upādhyāya*), one who teaches without realizing the truths

himself, is distinguished from the teacher who transmits the truths on the strength of his own realization (*āchārya*). The latter is obviously superior, and he is of greater help to the aspirant. Sometimes, one who seeks to practice esoteric rites would be obliged to have a third teacher, the so-called 'secret preceptor' (*gSang sTon*), who specializes in the hidden precepts.

Notwithstanding the enormous importance attached to the teacher, it is recognized that real help can only come from within. "The best *kalyāṇa-mitra* is your own mind." The Buddhist expression for the guru or guide is an interesting one; *kalyāṇa-mitra* is 'the friend who works for your welfare.' He works with you intimately, and with perfect understanding and sympathy. Here

is a piece of counsel that a Tibetan master (Dam-pa) gave to his pupil who asked him "When in doubt, whom should I ask, when you are gone?":

"The best *kalyāṇa-mitra* is your Mind! The teacher, who is capable of ridding you of your doubts will arise from within your own Mind. Should you be in need of another *kalyāṇa-mitra*, that would be the excellent scripture *Prajñā-pāramitā*. Study the text carefully. The human *kalyāṇa-mitra*, the individual who teaches, is indeed the lowest kind of *kalyāṇa-mitra*, because his help is limited."

(*Blue Annals*, XI,146).

When the mind of the practitioner is ripe, it is belived that the proper teacher arrives, prompted



PRAJÑA-PĀRAMITĀ

by the inexplicable kārmic pressure. The Mind may even materialize the teacher! The effective teacher is not one who merely knows and is still practising, but one who has already “gone there” and experienced directly. Tibetans distinguish between the written or spoken explanations of a text by a mere scholarly teacher (‘Black Instruction’, *Nag-KHrid*), and

the explanations based on one’s own experience (‘White Instruction’, *dMar-KHrid*). The latter are doubtless more valuable.

Many details of the ‘White Instruction’ naturally are not written down, but remain ‘oral precepts’. To obtain them, one should approach a master, receive initiation directly from him, and begin practising forthwith. It is said that the Doctrine that enlightens and liberates is in four major streams :

- (1) elaborate commentaries on the basic texts;
- (2) oral precepts and personal notes;
- (3) initiations and practical guidance; and
- (4) the practice (meditation and worship)



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They are here arranged in the order of increasing importance. The teacher's role consists in making the pupil increasingly competent to pass from one level to the other. Reliance on the teacher, therefore, does not absolve the pupil of the necessity to exert, so as to become ultimately independent of the teacher. The Buddha said: "The enlightened ones

only show the way; the going is your own concern!" ('akkhātāro tathāgatā; tumhe hi kiccam ātappam'). The accepted system is the firm ground on which we set out. The chosen teacher directs our attention and lights up the path. But our resolution, wisdom, and energy must take us across.

INITIATION (DĪKSHĀ)

Before one launches on any serious enterprise, adequate preparation is necessary. One needs not only to be informed about the modes and methods to be pursued and the goals to be reached, but also to be prepared and primed. Priming in spiritual matters takes the form of initiation. An aspect that is common to all religions, it assumes an especial significance in the Tāntrik framework. An intense religious

career is heralded by initiation, which is both a commitment and an equipment. "To make ripe a raw individual, initiation is necessary," said Kun-dGa.

Initiation (*dīkṣhā*, Tib. *dBang-bskur*) in practice is a procedure whereby the power of one is transmitted to the other. The Sanskrit expression is made up of two roots, the former (*dī*) signifying "endowment, gift, equipment" (*dīyate*) and the latter (*kṣha*) indicating "elimination, removal, destruction (*kshīyate*)". The import is that the hindrances in the individual must be removed before he can pursue the path successfully. And, concurrently, a clear insight and a firm trust are to be generated in him. In effect, one who seeks initiation

must cease to be a normal individual with natural inclinations and passions, but be ready to be 'reborn' into a new life of higher values. It is a total transformation that occurs; the coördinates of the initiate become altogether different. He begins a career of intense devotion and extraordinary effort. He becomes 'consecrated' to the path.

Initiations take many forms. And even objects and places can come within its impact. Blessing a vase or a house, a scroll-painting, the image of a deity or of a lama-teacher, a diagram (*maṇḍala*) for contemplation or worship, a rosary, or a piece of paper essentially partake of the nature of transmitting of power. But initiation in the present context is transaction between the

teacher in whom the power resides and the pupil who is ready to share it with him. It is usually a rite (although not necessarily so), involving ritualistic purification of body and mind (*kriyā-dīkṣhā*), awakening of the psychic centres (*chakra-śodha*), and transmission of a formula for incantation, or a method for contemplation. And, as the rite consists in the employment of consecrated water with which the initiate is given a ceremonial bath, or which is merely sprinkled on the head and limbs of the devotee, the rite is also called initiation (*abhiṣheka*).

The initiation not only cleanses the body, speech and mind of the initiate, but places some power at his disposal, thus making him capable

of receiving the higher wisdom that comes either from the guru or from contemplation. In this sense, it authorizes him to obtain advanced instructions, or special teachings in a secret text. At the same time, there is a firm commitment on the part of the initiate (*samaya*, 'pledge', 'oath') with regard to certain observances and abandonments; his behaviour is now strictly stylized, and he enters into a peculiar relationship with his teacher who has endowed on him the initiation. This is described as an intense mental effort which obviates the difference between the doctrine and his own teacher.

The teacher's precepts are useless if they are received and retained only in the manner of pouring water from one vessel into

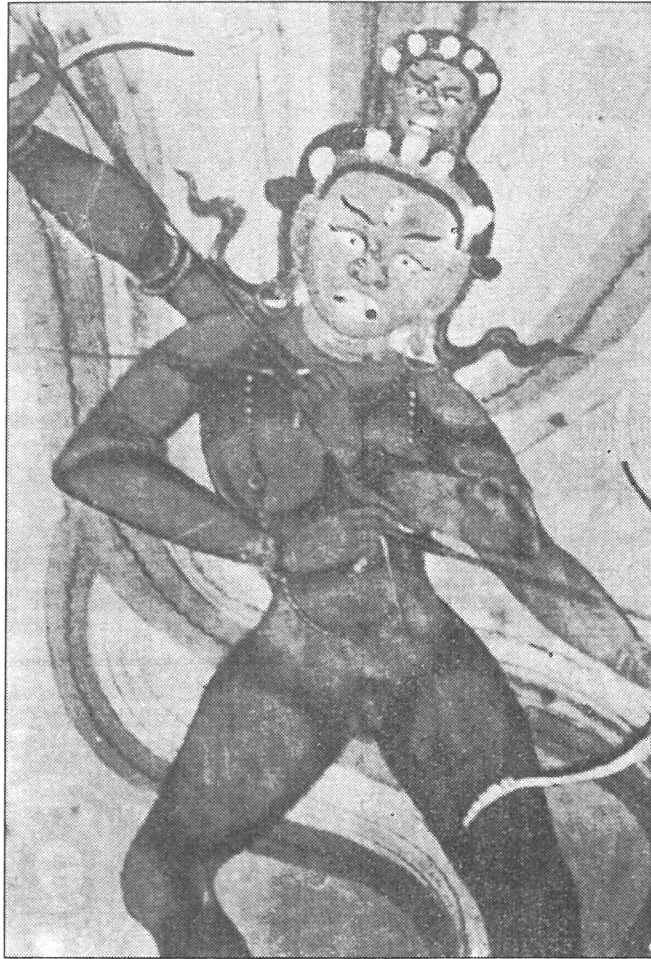
another. And those precepts fail to enter the depths of consciousness because of what is called 'the sealed knot of the mind' (or 'the knots of the heart', *hrdaya-granthi* in the Upanishads). Unless this knot is loosened, hesitation torments the devotee. Initiation is a procedure for the loosening of the mind's knot. Tying a knot as also the loosening of it are magical rites, intended to heal the sick. Mind's sloth and ailments are removed here. There is a saying recorded in the *Blue Annals* :

“Hesitation (saṁśaya, aśraddhā) is the greatest among creations of the devil. One should perform initiation right now, even if necessary provisions are not available.”

It is in this sense that initiation has been explained as the direct contact between the mind and the doctrine.

Tibetan imagination described this as 'contact between the stone and the bone' (*rDo-Rus-PHrag*). “If one wishes to eat the marrow of the bone, he should crush the bone with the stone.” Mind is the bone, and enlightenment is the marrow contained in it; the doctrine is the stone. Applying the stone to the bone is the act of initiation. The bone is hard and does not yield the marrow readily. It needs repeated crushing, and the initiation marks the commencement of this procedure.

In the Tāntrik cults, there is a belief that each doctrine is zealously



guarded by a group of supernatural beings (*dharma-pāla*, Tib *CHos-sKyongs*). There is also a supposition that hidden aspects of the doctrine are communicated to the initiate by

‘sky-traversing fairies’ (*ḍākinī*, Tib. *mKHa-gro-Ma*). There is a belief that Padma-saṃbhava entrusted “hidden texts” to the *ḍākinīs*, who preserve them for hundreds of







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सुन्दरलाल



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(These and other Tibetan Xylograph reproductions in this book are from
Śata-piṭaka, Series Vol. 342, Buddhist Iconography (Lokesh Chandra) Vol. II,
 Aditya Prakashan, New Delhi 1987 - Bhadra-Kalpika-Sutra Pantheon : Selections)

years, before communicating them to the *sādhakas*.

Although externalized in iconographically stylized forms, the fairies are actually spontaneous promptings within the deeper layers of one's own being. They emerge from levels far beyond ordinary awareness, and bring with them insights that are normally not accessible. Because the Tibetan artistic imagination has fixed the forms of these 'fairies', the initiate will conjure them up in the familiar forms. An initiate may attach himself to one or more of them for the purpose of integrating his natural constitution with the new experiences that he will receive during the period of practice. He is "bound in pledge" (*samayi*) to them. His loyalty and

devotion to them will determine the frequency and excellence of the intimations that he will receive from them.

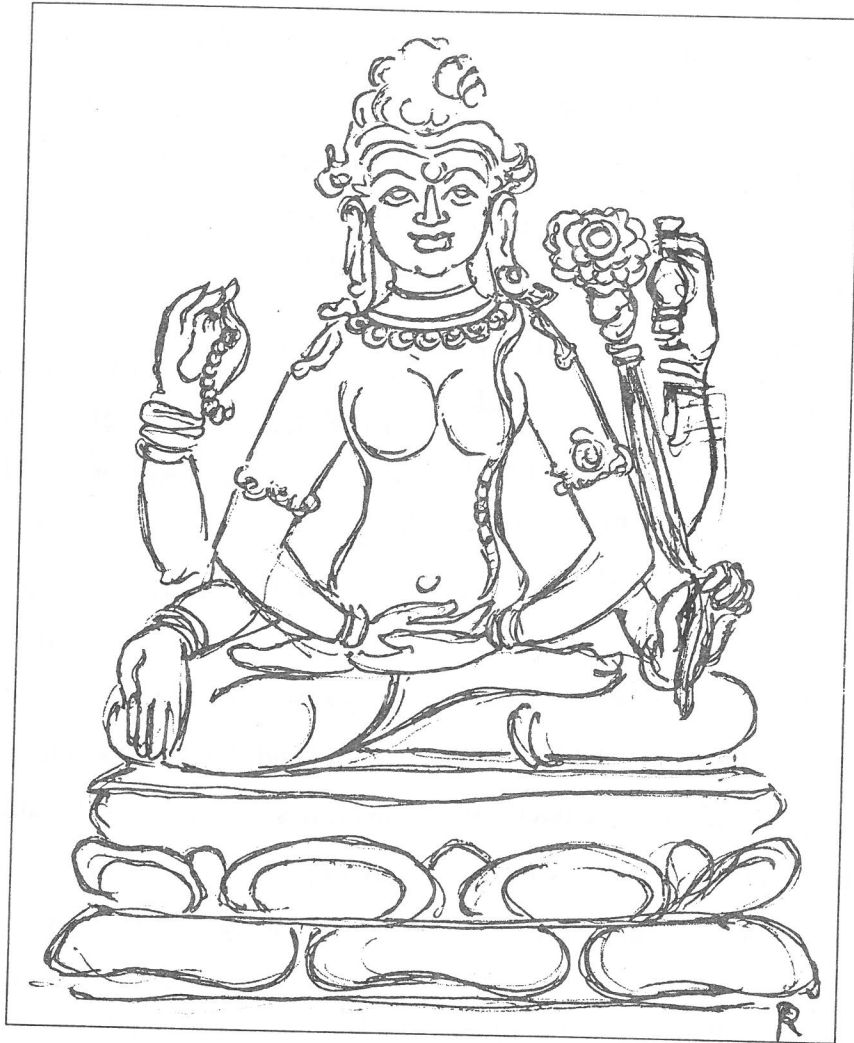
Legends relate how one 'fairy' introduces an ascetic to his own mind, and leads him to perceive the original nature of mind where distractions are altogether absent. Another 'fairy' (*Sukhasiddhi-dākinī*) reminds and reprimands the meditator when his mind wanders: "Keep your mind without object, O Yogin!". Still another (*Jñāna-dākinī*, Tib. *Yes-Śes-PHab-pa*) enters into the meditator, dancing and singing the *mantra*, and fills him with insight. The 'fairy' named *Sukha-karā* brings to the practitioner a state of utter happiness that he had never before experienced, and thereby strengthens

his resolve to continue the practice. Another 'fairy' named *Chintā* dips the ascetic in a vale of worry, and drives him to seek comfort in meditation. *Loka-dākinī* assumes a fierce aspect and strikes the initiate, when he breaks his vow. *Vimala* gently enters into the devotee, and suffuses him with an un-precedented feeling of purity. There are sometimes male counterparts of these 'fairies' also (called *Vīra*, Tib. *dPa-Bo*), doing a similar service. They represent the valorous aspects of practice: perseverance, patience, endurance, courage and adventure.

The 'guardians', on the other hand, represent abstract but insistent commands for the initiate to fulfil all his pledges, discharge all his vows, and keep to the chosen path. These

are in the shape of 'the terrible conscience', which will not brook any lapse or laxity. Their role becomes clear in the following anecdote.

It is said that the great translator, Rin-Chen bZang-Po, obtained initiation when he was eighty-five from the Indian saint Atiśa-Dīpaṃkara and practised uninterrupted meditation for ten years. For this practice, he prepared the legend: "Should within this door, even a single thought of attachment to this world arise in me, may the Guardian of the Doctrine split my head!" Over the middle door, the inscription ran: "Should within this door, even a single thought of attachment to the other world arise in me, may the Guardian of the Doctrine split my head!" Over the



inner door, the inscription ran:
 "Should, within this door, even a
 single thought of self-interest arise
 in me, may the Guardian of the

Doctrine split my head! And, if
 ordinary thought arises in me, may
 the Guardian of the Doctrine split
 my head!"

The practitioner's commitment to the pledge must be unflinching. There are rituals, the sequence of which involves the drinking of consecrated water (with the mystic syllables *Om-Āh Hūm*) and reciting a formula: "In case I break my pledge, may this water be the waters of hell, may it consume me, or toss me in terrible agony! If, on the other hand, I keep my pledge, may this water turn into adamantine nectar, and may it grant me what I seek!"

The Guardian of the Doctrine will not only watch over the fulfilment of the pledges and vows; he will also protect the practitioner from the forces both within himself and outside, that seek to distract and frustrate. The Guardian has thus a terrifying aspect (demanding strict

fulfilment of the pledge and driving away the disintegrating forces) as well as a benevolent one (protecting the devotee from distress and disappointment).

ISHṬA-DAIVA (YI-DAM)

Tibetan religion is peopled with deities, divinities, demons, 'guardians' and 'fairies'. They are not without significance. The wrathful aspect and the benevolent aspect, the postures and weapons, the colour of the body and the ornaments, have all their own spiritual significance and psychological import. In fact, they are externalized representations of elements within man's psychic constitution. They are of particular relevance to those who take to contemplative life. Tibetan

imagination has exquisitely portrayed the contending and commingling forces that make their appearances during sessions of contemplation in seclusion. The aspirant should be warned against them, and should be guided with regard to them; some he should fight, some dismiss, some sought after, and some befriended. The purpose is to successfully complete the task he has undertaken.

We are not here concerned with the magical and sorcerial rites which involve them. Their value alters in such undertakings. But in meditation, they help a better understanding of oneself, and facilitate a firmer hold on the impulses and hindrances that are imbedded in our own nature. They make for integration, and the pursuit is rendered not only uninterrupted but

effective. When the mind settles down comfortably and fixedly in contemplation, these images disappear. The serious Tibetan never mistakes their reality to be external; he is all the while aware that they are creatures of imagination, not his own imperfect imagination but the powerful imagination of the adepts who have spent years grappling with internal forces.

During initiation, the teacher bestows on the pupil a 'chosen deity', chosen in order to facilitate the progress of the pupil along the path, and chosen in consideration of the pupil's strengths and weaknesses. This is called in Tibetan *Yi-Dam*, which has been translated by Snellgrove as a "guarantor." The Tibetan expression refers to the fact



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of being bound to vows, oaths or solemn promises (*Dam*). The term more correctly is *Yi-Dam-LHa* (Skt. *iṣṭa-daiva*), the divinity watching over the vows of the practitioner, or the deity which is committed to his welfare. This is a personal 'god', guide or mentor. And there obtains a secret and secured bond (*Dam*) between this deity and the practitioner has his own *Yi-Dam*, which is either chosen for him, or by himself. He keeps it throughout his life, or until the stipulated period of austerity is completed.

In the early stages of development of the practitioner, the *Yi-Dam* will be treated as external, objective, and independent of the practitioner. It is in this character that it is presented to him. It is

iconographically stylized, and will be a statuette or a drawing. It would be looked upon with great devotion, for it also represents the *guru* and the 'fairy', who guide and aid enlightenment. It is later that the practitioner will realize that the *Yi-Dam* is really within himself, that it has no existence apart from himself, and that it represents a dominant element in his own constitution.

The practitioner is said to have three "hidden treasures" (*mDZod*): the guru, the 'fairy' (*dākinī*), and the chosen deity (*Yi-Dam*). The last one is often believed to incorporate the other two. The guru communicates the truth and bestows initiation. He represents the Doctrine; he is in fact the living embodiment of it. The 'fairy' provides hidden intimations

from deeper layers of one's own being. sTag-Lung-THang-Pa (born 1142 A.D.) explained that 'precepts' are what one gets by one's own meditative experience. The picturesque way of speaking about

the latter is that he gets them from a *ḍākinī*. Relating what one obtains from the teacher with what is got from his own experience during sessions of contemplation, is the function of the *Yi-Dam*.

APPENDIX - I

LAM RIM CHEN MO A TIBETAN CLASSIC ON THE PATH OF ENLIGHTENMENT

I

In the Tibetan hagiology, the name of TSong-KHa-Pa (1357-1419), the author of *Lam-Rim CHen-Mo*, is an honoured one. He is variously described as 'the valuable all-knowing' (*sarvajña*), as the second Buddha, and as an incarnation of the celebrated Bodhi-sattva Mañjuśrī. He is usually referred to as the 'most precious master' (rJe-Rim-Po-Che, *ārya-mahā-ratna*), and as 'the most excellent teacher' rJe-bTsun-Dum-Pa, or *parama-bhaṭṭā-raka-śrī*). He is worshipped to this day as a living presence, next only to the Buddha, in the monasteries

belonging to the dGe-Lugs-pa sect (which he founded). His tomb in the DGah-1Dan monastery (which he established) continues to be a place of pilgrimage for the pious Tibetans.

One of the factors which contributed to the celebrity of TSong-KHa-Pa was the secular and religious power which the sect he founded came to wield in Tibet. His nephew, who was also an abbot of renown, dGe'-Dun-Grub (pronounced Geden-dub, 1391-1478) was honoured by the Chinese emperor with the title of 'precious monarch' (rGyal-po) and was recognised as an incarnation of the great Bodhi-sattva

Avalokiteśvara, the patron divinity of Tibet. His successor in 1650 was given the all-powerful status of Dalai-lama by the Mongolian emperor. Since then, the abbots who succeeded him have been absolute rulers over Tibet in religious and secular affairs.

But this factor is really not as important as the reformation that he brought about in the Buddhist monastic organisation in Tibet. The Mahāyāna Buddhism, which was introduced into Tibet as early as 640 A.D., had fallen on evil days owing to the heavy impact of the occult and the bizarre Bon cults (indigeneous to Tibet). Most of the Buddhist monasteries had become dens of licentious living: and even serious-minded monks spent all their time

and energy in magical abracadabra. The hold of the Tāntrik practices had become strong, and both the monastic fraternity and the laity were more preoccupied with mundane and magical accomplishments than with austerity or enlightenment.

TSong-KHa-Pa set out with a missionary zeal to correct this condition, and to bring back the ideas of austere and ethical living, earnest aspiration for enlightenment, and a deep commitment to the welfare of the suffering folk. The monastery that he established in 1409, DGah-1Dan (Tibetan for the Buddhist paradise, Tushita) contained only monks who were earnest, austere, learned and totally committed to spiritual progress. The appeal of the Tāntrik practices were

minimal for them. And the sect that TSong-KHa-Pa founded, the dGe-Lugs-Pa (pronounced Gelugpa) or 'The Way of the Virtuous Ones', insisted on the strict observance of the Vinaya rules and on the cultivation of the liberating wisdom and compassion, only within the context of uncompromising adherence to monastic discipline as laid down by the Buddha. Thanks to the untiring efforts of TSong-KHa-Pa, "the teaching of Vinaya shone like the Sun in this country of Tibet" (*Blue Annals*, I, 83).

TSong-KHa-Pa (meaning "the man from the Onion Country") was not his real name. He was so called because he hailed from the TSong-KHa area (meaning "the onion-bank") in the Amdo district of

Central Tibet. His monastic name was bLo-bZang Grags-Pa'i dPal (being the Tibetan version of the Sanskrit Sumati-kīrti-śrī). He took the monastic vows at the tender age of seven, and began learning Sanskrit soon after. He was recognised as an authority on the vast Mahāyāna Sanskrit literature by the time he was twenty-two years of age.

The Vinaya aspect of the Buddha's teaching, which he studied under Don-Gurb Rin-CHen of Amdo, made a deep impression on his mind, and so did the five treatises of Maitreya-nātha as received by Asaṅga. *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* impressed him as the best ornament of the liberating wisdom ('prajñā-pāramitā): *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra* gave him an insight into the path and

practice of the bodhi-sattva; *Madhyānta-vibhaṅga* revealed to him the essence of the 'middle path'; *Dharmādharmatā-vibhaṅga* made him understand how *saṃsāra* provided the foundation for *nirvāṇa* and *Mahāyānottara-tantra* opened his vision into the pure nature of consciousness which lies hidden in all living beings ('tathāgata-garbha'). Thus was he provided with an "armour of knowledge". He became convinced that the practice of wisdom (*prajñā*) alone was the path for emancipation, and that Vinaya was the sure foundation for it.

He also studied all the extant tantras, and obtained several initiations. He found *Śrī-guhyasamāja-tantra* to be the chief of all the tantras, and he searched for its essence. He also wrote a Tibetan

commentary on this text. He meditated in solitary hermitages and realised the patron-god of the wisdom and compassion, Mañju-ghosha, who became his unfailing guide for the rest of his life. An erudite scholar who was also saintly in personal life, he began to teach; and he gathered round him a band of devoted students. As recorded in the *Blue Annals*, "he purified the minds of three kinds of human beings, and by a mind filled with disgust towards all phenomenal existence (he and his disciples) transformed the ordination vows into the very essence of the prātimoksha monastic code." (I, 83) "He has been a being with a straight-forward Mind, dwelling on a lofty stage (of spiritual evolution), who had come here for the welfare of living beings." (ibid., II, 1079).

II

Among the Indian texts that he studied under Las-Kyi rDo-rJe, (Karma-Vajra), a great abbot of his days, was one that made a profound and lasting impression on him: *Bodhi-patha-pradīpa* ("Light on the Path of Enlightenment") by Dīpankara-Śrījñāna, more familiarly known as Atīśa (982-1054) A.D.). TSong-KHa-Pa not only tried to put into practice the teachings of this great work and founded a new sect (reformed bKa-gDams-pa) to propagate these teachings, but wrote an enormous treatise to explain, illustrate and defend the message of Atīśa to the Tibetan aspirants. This work became famous as *Lam-Rim CHen-Mo*, or the "Great Book on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment".

The immediate inspiration to write this monumental work was the accidental access that he had to Gro-Lung-Pa's *bsTan-Rim* ("Instructions Concerning the Stages") at Lo-Ro, as he was planning to visit India on a pilgrimage. The author of this work was a disciple of the disciple of the disciple of 'Brom (1005-1064), who was a disciple and colleague of Atīśa himself. This work sought to explain Atīśa's teachings in the light of *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, which TSong-KHa-Pa had studied earlier; and this opened a new line of thought for him. Learning that there were oral traditions concerning Atīśa's Manual to be had in the monasteries of LHo-Brag, he abandoned the idea of going to India, and instead went in search of these oral traditions.

After obtaining oral instructions, TSong-KHa-Pa retired to the solitude of the monastery of Rva-sGrenG (pronounced Rading, established in 1056 A.D. by Atiśa's disciple Brom) for writing *Lam-Rim CHen-Mo*, which he completed in 1402 A.D. He was a prolific writer, and amongst his works are commentaries and glosses on several important Mahāyāna works in Sanskrit, and a compendium of the tantras. But his celebrity justly rests on this *Lam-Rim CHen-Mo*. There are in Tibetan many works called Lam-Rim, explaining stages on the path to enlightenment, according to different traditions. They are generally known as 'path literature', distinguished from works on logic, philosophy and metaphysics. But TSong-KHa-Pa's *Lam-Rim* is not

only the most outstanding among them, but the most popular among Tibetan students and scholars.

III

TSong-KHa-Pa's *Lam-Rim* cannot be understood unless one is acquainted with Atiśa's *Bodhipathapradīpa*, which serves as the core text for the Tibetan treatise. Dīpankara-Śrījñāna (the monastic name of Atiśa), the saintly and scholarly abbot of the Vikramaśīla university in Bengal, was earnestly entreated to visit Tibet to help in the translation of Indian texts bearing on Mahāyāna into Tibetan. He was not only proficient in the Sūtra aspect of the Buddha's teaching, but was well-versed in the Tantra. He had himself received tāntrik initiations and was a famous master in India, celebrated

alike for his erudition and austerity. He arrived in mNa-Ris in Tibet in 1042 A.D. after spending a year in Nepal. He had agreed to spend only three years in this country, but at the expiry of the stipulated period, he chanced to meet hBrom-STon-Pa (1005-1064), a remarkable Tibetan student who was fired with a missionary zeal to restore Buddhist practices (which had become corrupt in Tibet with magical involvements) to their original purity. Atīśa changed his mind and stayed on in Tibet till his death in 1054. hBrom who was his chief disciple worked with him for ten years, and after the master's death, continued his cleansing operations for another ten years.

This combination of the Indian master and the Tibetan pupil gave Buddhism in Tibet a popular appeal. Till then, only kings, noblemen and

chieftains had espoused the cause of Buddhism, mostly for political reasons. But now the mass got interested in this religion. hBrom founded a new sect known as the bKa-gDams-Pa (the School of Oral Precepts) on the basis of the teachings of his master Atīśa. This was the closest among the Tibetan schools to Indian Buddhism. The watchword of this sect was that Tantra (spiritual practices) must be combined with Vinaya (monastic discipline), and Vinaya with Tantra. TSong-KHa-Pa belonged to this sect, before he founded his more austere and rigorous sect, originally known as "the new bKa-gDams-pa" but later identified as the dG-Lugs-Pa ('The Way of the Virtuous ones').

Atīśa, while sojourning in the monastery of Gu-ge wrote *Bodhi-patha-pradīpa* ('The Light on the

Path of Enlightenment') at the request of his good disciple, Byang-CHub-'od, to explain the common basis of Sūtra and Tantra. A small poetical work in Sanskrit consisting of sixty-six verses, and equipped with the author's own commentary known as *Pañjikā*, it explains the idea of emptiness (*śūnya-vāda*) and brings out the value of quiet meditation, as distinguished from wild tāntrik practices. Moral conduct, devotion to the guru, practices of calming (*śamatha*), generation of super-normal faculties and the perfection of the natural equipments of merit and knowledge are explained as constituting a graded series.

The text underlines the need to generate thoughts committed to enlightenment: the *bodhi-chitta*. And this is derived from Asaṅga's teaching

in *Yoga-charyā-bhūmi*. Atīśa gave in this work a balanced approach to the goal of enlightenment, giving due importance to the practice of the *pāramitās* (perfections) as well as to the tāntrik initiations. It was this approach that appealed to TSong-KHa-Pa. The burden of his *Lam-Rim CHen-Mo* was to show that this approach had the sanction of all the masters of Mahāyāna, and that all the great books constituting the Mahāyāna canon commended this integrated approach.

TSong-KHa-Pa's book is in fact a monument of immense erudition. He cites from almost all the Mahāyāna classics; many of them were of course from Tibetan translations, but quite a few were directly from Sanskrit sources. Many

of the Sanskrit works that he cites from are no longer available to us in their original form. His acquaintance with the Mādhyamika, Yogacharyā, Prāsaṅgika and other schools is found to be intimate and extensive. He was versed in the entire range of Mantrayāna. However, his wide scholarship does not interfere with his attention to the essentials. The whole work presents a unitary and methodical character despite frequent references to the views of a large number of earlier masters and a larger number of manuals.

In the concluding stanzas of the work, he gives expression to his own idea of how the work should be: "I tried to draw all the essentials of the meaning, without verbosity,

though not incomplete, so that even a person with slight intelligence could understand it easily, and do this by way of the path of methodical pondering with scripture and principle.'" (Alex Wayman's translation, p. 428). He held that knowledge of the scriptures was indispensable for understanding the principles of bondage and release, of *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa*. But scriptural knowledge must be reinforced by earnest reflection on the ideas got from the texts. Reflection to be effective needs to be methodical. 'Methodical pondering' is thus prescribed as a path. TSong-KHa-Pa has here not only brought together a variety of scriptural views, but has sought to weave a meaningful fabric out of the whole mass.

IV

In the invocatory as well as the concluding verses of the work, TSong-KHa-Pa pays homage to the three masters, to whom he is most indebted and whom he regards as most authoritative in the Mahāyāna tradition: Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga and Dīpaṅkara-Atīśa. We have already acquainted ourselves with the significance of Dīpaṅkara-Atīśa to TSong-KHa-Pa's work. *Lam-Rim*, in fact, opens with an account of the development of *dharma* in Tibet, culminating in the advent of "the great Paṇḍit Dīpaṅkara (i.e., Atīśa), who illumined the snowy range". TSong-KHa-Pa says that, thanks to the work of this great Paṇḍit in Tibet, the "eye which views the good path of the Victor did not close for a long time."

If Dīpaṅkara-Atīśa may be regarded as almost his immediate predecessor in the path-literature, and as having a direct bearing on the Tibetan sect to which TSong-KHa-Pa owed allegiance Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga were more distant. But TSong-KHa-Pa regards them as "head-ornaments of all the learned ones in India, the famed emblems of victory, shining for the living beings", and as comprising "the essentials of all the scriptures of the Victor (the Buddha)" (cf. concluding stanzas). It is a fact that TSong-KHa-Pa relies, not only in *Lam-Rim* but in his other works as well, on the views of Nāgārjuna (and of his sixth century commentator, Chandra-kīrti) and of Maitreya-nātha-Asaṅga.

According to Tibetan tradition (*Blue Annals*, Bu-Ston and

Tārānātha), Nāgārjuna was born in Vidarbha (in Maharashtra), was ordained at Nālandā and was taught by Rāhula-bhadra (whose date is around 119 A.D., as he lived during the reign of Kanishka II). Then he went to Āndhra-pradesh (literally 'Nāga-loka' or "the dragon world") and recovered the Prajñā-pāramitā literature of a hundred-thousand (*śata-sāhasrika*). He travelled all over the country, teaching and writing books, but returned to Āndhra during his last days. His Mādhyamika viewpoint, expounded in his several works in Sanskrit, was systematised by Chandra-kīrti who lived in the sixth century. To his credit is the consistent treatment of the two levels of truth (empirical, *samvṛti*, and transcendental, *paramārtha*), and exposition of 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*)

as the highest philosophical principle. Chandra-kīrti wrote elaborate commentaries on Nāgārjuna's works; but his *Mādhyamakāvatāra* made a great impression on TSong-KHa-Pa.

Nāgārjuna, in fact, may be regarded as the 'father-figure' for Mahāyāna. It may also be mentioned in passing that Nāgārjuna as well as his chief disciple Ārya-deva are associated with South India, for it was in South India that Mahāyāna originated. *Aṣṭa-sāhasrika-prajñā-pāramitā*, one of the earliest Mahāyāna texts (translated into Chinese as early as the second century A.D.), mentions that Mahāyāna (*pāramitā-naya*) arose in South India, then spread to the East, and then to the North. The other early works like *Gaṇḍa-vyūha*,

Laṅkāvatāra-sūtra, and *Ratna-kūṭa-sūtra* are all associated unmistakably with South India. Nāropā's *Sekoddesa-ṭika* locates the origin of *mantra-naya* in Śrī-dhānya-kaṭaka (modern Dharnikota, on the banks of the river Krishnā in Āndhra pradesh). The only available manuscript of *Ārya-Mañjuśrī-mūla-kalpa* was recovered only from South India. There is a Japanese tradition that the Buddha instructed Vajrasattva to deposit the 'mantra-naya' in a pagoda in South India, so that they remain hidden until capable men recover it, and that Nāgārjuna recovered it.

The concepts of the *pāramitās* ("stages of perfection") and the *bodhichitta* ("the will to enlightenment") were crystallised in

South India, principally by Nāgārjuna and his followers. This gave an esoteric turn to the otherwise purely intellectual Buddhism that prevailed in the North. The Siddhas, among whom Nāgārjuna figures prominently, bridged the gap between academic discussions and praxis (*prayoga*).

If Nāgārjuna represents the emergence of the Mādhyamika viewpoint emphasising the praxis, Asaṅga (about 290-350 A.D.) from Purushapura in Gandhāra (presently Peshawar) in North India represents the emergence of the Yogacharyā viewpoint emphasising the idealist outlook (*viññānavāda*). Asaṅga's master Maitreyanātha (author of *Abhisamayālaṅkāra*) is credited with ideas that made Vajrayāna a system

of thought, and not merely a set of practices as it was with the early Siddhas. Asaṅga, who taught for a long time at the Nālandā university before he passed away at Rājagṛha, wrote several works which projected the integrated Mahāyāna approach, combining the *pāramitās* with the 'bodhi-sattva' ideal (taught initially by Ārya-deva, disciple of Nāgārjuna in his works *Chatuh-śataka* and *Śata-śāstra*). Among Asaṅga's works, his commentary on *Sandhi-nirmočana*, and his independent works *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra* and *Yogācāra-bhūmi-śāstra*, became very popular. Asaṅga was also the first to compose invocatory verses comprising *Sādhana* texts, which in due course became indispensable aids in Vajrayāna.

TSong-KHa-Pa, even as a student, was exposed to the Maitreyanātha-Asaṅga literature. He was told by his teacher Don-Grub Rin-CHen that *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* of Maitreyanātha was 'the ornament of the three "mothers" (viz. the large, middle and abridged versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā*), and that it must be studied earnestly, for "if you become learned in it, you will be able to master all the Scripture" (*Blue Annals*, II, 1074). The impression created in the young TSong-KHa-Pa's mind by the study of the five treatises of Asaṅga (hower, attributed to Maitreyanātha) has already been mentioned.

It was thus that Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga represented to TSong-KHa-Pa the entirety of the Mahāyāna

tradition : the *śūnyatā*, the *pāramitās*, the *bodhi-chitta*, and the *bodhi-sattva* ideal. It was a perfect unison of Sūtra and Tantra that the two masters together signified. *Lam-Rim*, which expounds this approach, naturally owes heavily to these two masters. TSong-KHa-Pa declares that the steps to the path of enlightenment have descended from Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, “by the gathering in the thousand rivers of texts and schools, it is the ocean of glorious well-expressed teachings” (colophon to *Lam-Rim*).

V

The short title of TSong-KHa-Pa's treatise, *Lam-Rim Chen-Mo*, literally means great book (CHen-Mo) of the stages (Rim) on the Path (Lam). “The expression ‘Rim’ is

Tibetan for the Sanskrit ‘krama’ : order, succession, series, degrees or stages. And the ‘Path’ refers to the path of Enlightenment (*bodhi-patha*), as spelt out in the title of Atīśa's little book which inspired this large treatise (*Byang-CHub Lam-gyi Rim-Pa*). The full title of TSong--KHa-Pa's work, when translated, reads. “Stages of the Path to Enlightenment” clearly illustrating all the stages which must be taken to heart by the three classes of persons.”

The three classes of persons are (1) the ‘lesser’ ones, who seek their own pleasures at all costs; (2) the ‘midling’ ones, who are averse to material enjoyments and therefore refrain from sinful action, but with the intention of obtaining tranquility for themselves; and (3) the ‘superior’

ones who aspire to work for the right cessation of suffering of others, and do not mind suffering for themselves in the bargain. This division is made by Atīśa at the very beginning of his work, and there is a suggestion that he has adapted this idea from Asaṅga's *Viniśchaya-saṅgrahāṇi*.

TSong-KHa-Pa devotes an entire chapter for each of these classes, preceded by a chapter containing general precepts for all the three classes. According to him, the 'superior' ones are eligible for the teachings concerning the *bodhi-sattva* path.

The title of the book also contains a reference to what these three classes of persons must 'take

to heart' in order finally to attain to enlightenment. The expression 'taking to heart' (Nams su Blang-ba) is taken to refer to the actual practices that must be undertaken by the aspirant.

The word 'Nams' actually means spirit, soul, thought or idea; 'Su' is a terminal suggesting direction; and 'Blang-ba' is "to receive or take". The whole phrase, thus, means 'received in the spirit', 'accepted by the soul' ; viz. 'taken to heart'. The significance is the earnest application of practical procedures in order to accomplish a goal that has already been set. It is different from mere intellectual understanding or academic approval; it involves a definitive will for enlightenment.

Given this will for enlightenment, the three classes of persons differ not so much in the appreciation of the goal as in the practices that enable them to move in the direction of the goal. The thesis that TSong-KHa-Pa puts forward is that a correct understanding of the scriptural texts and a methodical reflection on the principles contained in them are indispensable tools for one who is committed to the goal. In one of the introductory stanzas, he regrets : “In our day, practitioners of Yoga have little learning (lit. ‘hearing’), and those who are learned are ignorant of how to put into practice what they have learnt.” This is what is meant by the Sūtra being devoid of Tantra, and Tantra being divorced from the Sūtra. The two together function like

the two wings of the bird, conjointly helping its flight in the air.

Lam-Rim explains in some detail how bondage is caused when insight or wisdom (Ses-Rab, *prajñā*) is divorced from practical application, or means of spiritual progress (Thabs, *upāya*), or when practical application is divorced from insight. The aspirant is advised to avoid onesidedness. This explanation occurs in the context of the cultivation of the ‘wisdom-gone-beyond’ (*prajñā-pāramitā*), without which there can be no elimination of obscuration of reality or freedom from bondage. While TSong-KHa-Pa insists on the paramount value of knowledge (viz. study of the scriptures and methodical reflection on the principles), he recognises the

necessity of getting initiated into Tāntrik practices so that one obtains the Buddhahood in this very life.

Thus the expression 'taking to heart' (Nams su Blang-ba) means a total reception of the theory-practice complex as it comes from a competent Guru (technically called a *kalyāṇa-mitra*, or spiritual guide, who is regarded as "the root of the path"), with an eagerness to put it into practice. The treatise also explains that what is really 'taken to heart' is guidance in the matter of training, in the form of exorcism or discrimination (Blo-Sbyong). 'Blo' means "to train the mind" ; and 'Sbyong-pa' is "to remove", "to clean," "to wash away", "to exorcise" (in Sanskrit, 'prakṣhālana'). The idea is that the

mind (viz. the stream of individual consciousness), which is originally pure (being of the nature of the void), gets contaminated owing to ignorance, actions and the consequently unfavourable states of phenomenal existence. Spiritual endeavour consists in cleaning this mind, and to restore its purity. This is exorcism. To recognise the innate and essential purity, or void nature of the mind, is discrimination. This does not happen naturally. It presupposes training.

The purpose of *lam-Rim* is to provide the framework for this training for the three classes of persons mentioned above. The 'lesser' person must seek out a competent spiritual guide, and develop an earnest desire to

accomplish the 'favourable states' (Dal-ba) before consequences of negligent or wicked actions, and must take refuge in the three 'jewels' (the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṃgha). In order to intensify the faith he recalls and regrets his prior transgressions of the moral code, rejoices that in this life he has fortunately been led to the good path, pleads for the continued turning of the wheel of Dharma by the Buddhas, and feels anxious to transfer whatever merit he has acquired to the welfare of his fellow-beings.

The 'midling' person must dwell on the evils of the phenomenal existence (*samsāra*) and the causes thereof (viz. the *karma* and its consequences), and develop an

earnest desire to stop the cycle of phenomenal existence. He must then apply himself seriously to liberate himself, by faithfully observing the rules of monastic discipline (*prātimoksha*). He must realize that unless the mind is trained to be tranquil (*śamatha*, calming, a precondition for *samādhi*, or meditative absorption), supernatural faculties like personal achievement, craving for doctrine, moderation in food, morality, mindfulness etc. cannot arise. And unless these are aroused, perfection of merit and wisdom are impossible.

The 'superior' person is characterised by the realization that there are other beings like himself, who are oppressed by phenomenal existence and are eager to get

liberated, and that it is his duty to work for their welfare. He also realises that the best way to save them is to arouse in them the will for enlightenment (*bodhi-chitta*). He therefore prepares himself for this mission by practising the five perfections (*pāramitās*) : generosity (*dāna*), right conduct (*śīla*), forbearance (*kshānti*), striving for spiritual welfare (*vīrya*), and the development of insight by meditation (*dhyāna*), which are collectively called the 'means' (*upāya*).

VI

Lam-Rim is functionally divided into two distinct parts, although the Tibetan text itself does not suggest this division. Alex Wayman who has translated into English the second part (*Calming the Mind and*

Discerning the Real, Columbia University Press, 1978, reprinted by Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi, 1979) claims that this division is justified by the Mongolian translation of this text (*Bodhi Mor*) which is annotated and printed in two parts.

The first part comprises of three chapters giving details of guidance (Blo-sbyong) with respect to the three classes of persons (viz. the 'lesser', the 'midling', and the 'superior'), besides an introductory chapter tracing the development of the Buddhist doctrine in Tibet until Atīśa's days, and giving the reasons for the preparation of this treatise; and another chapter containing general precepts for all the three classes of persons. The chapter on guidance given to the 'superior' person expatiates on the 'perfections'

(*pāramitās*) that must be cultivated. The first four of these (viz. *dāna*, *śīla*, *kshānti* and *vīrya*) are accommodated in this chapter.

The fifth 'perfection' (viz. *dhyāna*) is taken up for detailed treatment in the second part of the book. And this is followed by another chapter on the intuitive wisdom which liberates (*prajñā*). This final chapter presents the Mādhyamika approach to the right understanding of reality. Calming the mind (*Zi-Gnas*, *śamatha*) and the discernment of reality (LHag mTHong, *upāsanā*) are to be practised together, and hence their combined treatment in the second part of the book.

TSong-KHa-Pa gives an excellent illustration. If one wants to look at an icon in darkness, he has

to have a lamp which burns brightly. But this is not enough. The lamp must be free from the influence of breeze. Likewise, to understand the profound reality, one must have discernment (*vipaśyanā*), and must also take care to see that the mind is not swayed by the distractions of sense, but is calm (*śamatha*), for otherwise mind strays and the discernment gets lost. Discernment is calculated to eliminate erroneous ways of looking at the world and also wicked attitudes; and calming is to make the mind 'immobile.' TSong-KHa-Pa quotes from *Chandra-pradīpa-sūtra* (otherwise called *Samādhi-rāja-sūtra*): "By the power of calming (*śamatha-balena*), it becomes immobile (*akāṃpyah bhavati*); by means of discerning (*vipaśyanayā*) it becomes like a rock

(*śailopamo bhavati*)” (op. cit., p. 89). He also cites a passage from the celebrated *Śikshā-samucchaya* (where the passage in turn is cited from (*Dharma-sangīti*): “The vision of reality is possible only for one whose mind is tranquil” (*‘samāhita-mānaso yathābhūta-darśanam bhavati’*).

The book naturally closes with a section on the practice of calming and discernment together, and this is entitled ‘The Method of Pair-yoking’ (Zung-du-hBrel-pa, *yuganaddha*). There is an exhortation that this method must be understood only according to the traditional explanations given in works like *Śrāvaka-bhūmi* and *Prajñā-pāramitopadeśa*. TSong-KHa-Pa has laboured hard to provide the correct

perspective by citing hundreds of passages from authoritative sources.

VII

There is a short note on Vajrayāna at the end of the book. It may be recalled that Vajrayāna (the Diamond Vehicle) is the peculiar brand of Mahāyāna Buddhism that originated in South India and spread to the North, especially in the universities of Nālandā, Vikramaśīla and Odantapurī, before it entered Tibet. It took its roots in Tibet, Mongolia and China. It is characterised by a large involvement in Tāntrik practices, principally incantations (*mantras*) and visualisation of deities (*sāadhanā*). Hence, the alternate name for Vajrayāna is ‘mantra-yāna’. The

ideology of Vajrayāna as it spread in Tibet, tended to ignore not only the Sūtra aspect of the Buddha's teaching, but also the monastic regulations and obligations of morality. This paved the way for degeneration of religion in Tibet and deterioration in the spiritual standards. Atīśa and his disciple hBrom were concerned about this state of affairs, and attempted to remedy it by suggesting a combination of Sūtra and Tantra.

TSong-KHa-Pa followed this lead, and attempted to revive the efforts of Atīśa and hBrom. He pleaded for the complete and unremitting observance of the *prātimoksha* rules by the monastic community, and he emphasized the value of the study of scriptural texts

and methodical reflection on the principles contained in them. But as he was also an adept in Tāntrik practices, he recognized that if one wished to become a Buddha in this very life Tantra was the only way. But Tāntrik practices become effective only on the sure foundation of proper conduct. He quoted *Mañjuśrī-mūla-tantra* to the effect that the Buddha declared that there could be no success in the *mantra-path* by one whose conduct was improper ('duḥsīlaya munīndreṇa mantra-siddhir na choditā').

In this short note, he brings out the significance of proper initiation by a competent master, guarding of all the pledges and vows, purification of the discursive thoughts by the stage of generation (bsKyed-Rim,

utpanna-krama), eligibility to the next stage of completion (rDZogs-Rim, *sampanna-krama*), and the obtainment of the correct knowledge of reality in the Tāntrik practices. He proposes to play down the wild fancies that usually characterize the Sādhana of various divinities, and to eliminate the outlandish and obscurantist involvement in the Tāntrik practices.

The two stages are distinguished by the relevance of the first to the “path” (*mārga*) and of the second to the ‘fruits’ (*phala*). The former is the developmental stage and consists in the purification of body, mind and speech through meditation on *maṇḍala* and employment of *mantra* in accordance with one’s own preceptor’s guidance.

The latter signifies the realization of the void (*śūnyatā*) by yogic practice on the *avadhūtikā* (viz. *sushumṇā*) for the obtainment of pure, blissful and free consciousness. The two stages belong to the class of spiritual practices known as the ‘highest’ (*anuttara* or *ati-yoga*), which represents the balanced employment of body, speech and mind (in contradistinction to *kriyā-tantra*, which represents the body, *charyā-tantra* which represents speech, and *yoga-tantra*, which represents mind). This complex of spiritual practices emphasizes the original nature of consciousness (*chitta*), which is likened to the clear and cloudless sky.

The tantras which crystallized this approach are usually grouped

into “Father-tantras”, dealing with the stage of generation (bsKyed-Rim) and the “Mother-tantras,” dealing with the stage of completion (rDZogs-Rim). The former ‘tantras’ invoke the aid of male divinities (and hence called “Father-tantras”) for the perfection of what is known as the projectional body (*māyā-deha*, rGyu-Lus), while the latter tantras invoke the aid of female divinities (and hence called “Mother-tantras”), for the perfection of clear and bright insight (*prabhāsvara*, od Gsal). There is also a third group of tantras which are described as ‘non-dual’, where the two sets of divinities are together invoked for the integrated benefits of both stages.

This distinction obtains in the ‘New System’ (gSar-Ma), which was

crystallized by Atīśa, and which provided the basis for TSong-KHa-Pa’s reformations. In this system, as distinguished from the ‘Old System’ (rNYing-Ma), which prevailed from the earliest of times till Rin-chen bZang-po (958-1051 A.D.), the emphasis was on the ‘graded path’ (Lam) as illustrated by the great text of Atīśa, viz. *Bodhi-patha-pradīpa*. The idea of the ‘path’ or ‘way’ involved the attitudinal facility as well as the mental ability to see things differently from how the ordinary people see, or how the practitioner himself saw before he entered the stage of generation. It is a matter of cognitive transformation together with a widening of the spiritual horizon. TSong-KHa-pa views this as a noetic experience, involving detachment from wordly

cares, cultivation of an enlightened attitude, and unprejudiced and free outlook.

In the Tibetan lineage of the 'Path'-makers beginning with Atīśa, there are three principal divisions. One of them relies exclusively on the interpretation of the teachings of Atīśa as provided by his direct disciple, hBron-Ston-Pa and as preserved by the famous saint dGom-Po-Pa (1079-1153); and this is represented by the Sa-Skya school of Tibetan Buddhism. The second division (represented by the Ka-Gyus school of Marpa and Milarepa) prefers to rely on the oral traditions as received by Chan-nGa-Pa. The third division, which is known as Kadam Zhung-pa, relies on textual explanations as transmitted by Po-

To-Ba. It is this division which TSong-KHa-Pa's work represents : "by gathering in the thousand rivers of texts and schools, it is the ocean of glorious, well-expressed teachings" (colophon).

VIII

The immediate inspiration for TSong-KHa-Pa to prepare this great treatise appears to have been the work known as *bSTan-Rim* by the celebrated translator (lo-tsa-ba), Blo-1Dan-Ses-Rab (1059-1109), disciple of hBrom-STon-Pa (disciple of Atīśa). TSong-KHa-Pa acknowledges the importance not only of this work, but of a gloss on it by gRo-Lungs-Pa (a disciple of the author of *bSTan-Rim*). While Atīśa's Sanskrit work is no doubt the core-text, the

organization of the “steps” of the Path is principally due to these two authors. TSong-KHa-Pa made the organization more broad-based and inclusive. He not only explained many a concept that was but implicit in the previous “path-writings”, but added illustrations and cited supporting passages from a large number of Sanskrit texts pertaining to Mādhyaṃika and Yogācāra systems.

It was also TSong-KHa-Pa’s contribution that he interpreted the Path largely in terms of “engagement and disengagement (Blang dang dor bya’i dNos Po, acceptance-rejection), which he described as the “very life of the Path”. The human being, whose present existence was an excellent opportunity to work out his destiny,

needs to apply himself to the doctrines and practices leading to welfare (viz. the ‘good’), and at the same time to withdraw from aspects of life which would result in bondage and sorrow (viz. the ‘bad’). He should constantly accept the virtuous way (*upādeya*) and reject the vicious way (*heya*); and this incessant, discriminating and careful pursuit of spiritual life constitutes the ‘Path’. Indeed, TSong-KHa-Pa’s *Lam* appears to have been specially written to dilate on the dimensions and dialectic of this acceptance-rejection praxis, which is a matter of “pair-yoking” (viz “mutually bound”, “without gap”).

Although TSong-KHa-Pa sought to integrate Sūtra and Tantra in the *Lam*, he indicated that the

Tantra is more relevant to the practice of the Path. In fact, he undertook to compile, immediately after the preparation of the *Lam*, a sort of source-book of the four classes of Tantra (Kriyā, Charyā, Yoga, and Anuttara), on *SNags-Rim Chen-Mo*, and also as many as 135 short manuals on Tāntrik subjects collectively called 'Thus-Bu'. He himself prescribes at the end of the *Lam* that one should finally "enter the Tantra, because "this path is a more rare *dharma* than other *dharma*s and speedily fulfills the two collections" (*op. cit.*, p. 475). Elsewhere, he describes the *Lam-Rim* and the *sNags-Rim* as but two stages : the former being "the shared path of the two vehicles" (viz. Vajrayāna and Pāramitānaya), and the latter being 'the unshared path' (cf. his *Rag-nyid kyi rTogs brJod*, or

'Personal Narration', tr. by Alex Wayman, Translation of classical Tibetan, p. 175).

It is interesting to discern the stages of development of TSong-KHa-Pa's own understanding of the Path. His brief text known as *Personal Narration* (mentioned above) allows us an insight into this. He first acquainted himself with the writings of "the six ornaments of India" (viz. Āryadeva, Vasubandhu, Dignāga, Dharmakīrti, Guṇaprabhā and Śākyaprabhā), and the teachings of "th two best" (viz. Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga). He then exerted himself with many efforts in the difficult spots of these texts. He realized that mere studying was not of much help in the practice ; he then delved deep into "all the essentials of Nāgārjuna's textual school that lead in perfect

theory through the path of fine principles to the opening of the Deep''. His doubts thereupon cleared up.

Subsequently he exerted himself in the Vajra-yāna (viz. the *mantra*-path), which far surpasses the vehicle of perfected and altruistic virtues (*pāramitā*). He concluded that Anuttarayoga-tantra was the chief of the Tantra divisions, after becoming conversant with the Kriyā, Charyā, and Yoga-tantra, in that order. He benefited by works such as *Subāhu-paripṛcchā* and *Dhyānottara* (of the Kriyā division), *Mahā-vairochanābhī-sambodhi* (of the Charyā division), *Vajra-śekhara* (of the Yoga division), and *Guhya-samāja-tantra*, *Hevajra-tantra*, *Śrī-chakra-saṁvara-tantra* and *Kāla-chakra-tantra* (of the last division).

It was then that he "prayed and persevered in all the set of reasons so as to get the textual matter to arise (in my mind) as counsel''. He contemplated on Mañju-ghosha, "who dispels the darkness of cognition in the candidates''. Thus he obtained "uncommon certainty in the stages of the Path to Enlightenment, descended in sequence from Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga''. He perfected his cognition of the Path by collating "two fine compositions' (*Bodhisattva-bhūmi* and *Sūtrālaṅkāra*), and studying once again the works of Maitreya-nātha and Dharma-svāmin. He profitted greatly from Śāntideva's *Śikshā-samucchaya*, Buddhaguhya's gloss on *Dhyānottara*, *Mahā-Vairochanābhī-sambodhi* and *Śrī-tattva-saṁgraha*.

He became in due course “a treasury of counsel”; the doorway to discrimination was opened for him; and he “exercised with engagement on the Path”. The ‘auspicious preparation’ (mDun-Legs-Ma) was thus completed.

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APPENDIX II

GLOSSARY OF TIBETAN TERMS

Ah mystic ejaculation.

Amnye corruption of “ Ah Mes”
(Hail, Ancient), a magical call by the
wizard-sorcerer, esp. Bon-Po.

dBang power, potency, might
(spiritual and mystical).

dBang-bsKur power-circle, Skt.
chakra, mystical diagram for
ritualistic performance and for
contemplation.

dBang-bsKur power-communica-
tion or transference, consecration,
initiation (Skt. *dīkshā*, *abhisheka*).

Bar-Do between-state, intermediary
space between heaven and earth,
(Skt. *antariksha*), more usually

condition between death and rebirth,
interval between two existences.

dBen solitary place.

Bod Tibet, Skt. *Bhoṭa*.

Bod-sKad the Tibetan language,
esp. in religious books.

Bon the early religion of Tibet. The
exact derivation of the word is
uncertain, but is etymologically
related to the Skt. *punya* (“virtue”,
“merit”), which is also a name for
the favourite symbol in Bon, *svastika*.
Bon and *Bod* may be equivalent
expressions, the terminals n and d
being interchangeable. *Bon-Po*,
followers of Bon.

Byang-CHub enlightenment,
illumination (Skt. *bodhi*)

Byang-CHub-Sems-Pa Skt.
bodhisattva.

aCHam a dance sequence in a
symbolic ritual, usually wearing
masks.

CHe, CHen great, honoured. (Skt.
mahā).

mChod offering, honour or
sacrifice. (Skt. *pūjā*).

mCHod-rTen offering-base,
receptacle of offerings (Skt. *stūpa*),
a construction to hold oblations. Cf.
gDung-rTen, a vase or building to
contain the relics of a saint. *rTen*
may even be a representation of the
Buddha. It should, however, be
distinguished from *THo-Yor*, a cairn
or "stone-heap".

mCHog perfect, excellent, best.
mDe-mCHog, great bliss (Skt.
mahāsukha).

mCHog-hi Dang-pohi Sangs-rGyas
primordial Buddha (Skt. *Ādibuddha*).

CHos religion, doctrine, law (Skt.
dharma). Usually, however,
Buddhism as in *CHos dang Bon*
("Buddhism and Bon").

Dad-Pa faith with confidence and
devotion.

bDe-mCHog (Skt. *Samvara*).

bDe-sKyid Happiness. Cf. *rDe-Ba*
(Skt. *subha*), bliss of *nirvāṇa*.

mDo discourse (Skt. *sūtra*),
aphorism, rule *mDo-Sde*, a collection
of discourses in *bKaa-Gyur*.

Don-dam pahi Den-Pa the real or transcendental state (Skt. *paramārtha*).

rDo-rJe precious stone, Skt. *vajra*, diamond, symbol of the highest attainment, the supreme state of undifferentiated tranquillity; a ritualistic implement denoting the effective way. *rDo-rJe-sKu*, adamantine body, obtained by mystic methods. *PHyag-na rDo-rJe*, Skt. *Vajrapāṇi*, *rDo-rJe PHag-Mo*, Skt. *Vajra-vārāhī*, *rDo-rJe Tigs-Byed*, Skt. *Vajra-bhairava*, etc. *rDo-rJe-THeg-Pa*, Skt. *Vajrayāna*.

aDre (hDre) demon, gnome, goblin.

gDug-Pa evil, poison, misery (Skt. *duhkha*), opposite of *bDe-Ba*.

hDul-Ba to subdue, conquer, discipline, Skt. *Vinaya*, texts included

in the *bKaa-Gyur* of the Tibetan Canon.

Dus-kyi Kor-Lo the religion and philosophy of *Kālachakra*, the wheel of time.

dGe virtue, merit (Skt. *śubha*), **dGe IDan**, virtuous, meritorious.

dGe-Lugs-Pa merit-way-ones (*Lugs*, fashion, method, way, manner, established custom, school or sect *Lugs-kyi*, relating to manners, ethical, moral). The prevailing sect of Tibetan Buddhism, which was also in temporal power until recently the expression is a later transformation of *Gah-Idan-Pa* (the Galden-ones, after a monastery twenty miles from LH-Sa built by the great reformer TSong-KHa-Pa (1357-1419) and made powerful by his nephew dGe-IDun-Grub).

sGom, (rNGom-pa) to think, reflect, contemplate. *sGom-Pa* is a graduated course of meditation (Skt. *bhāvanā*).

dGon-Pa solitary retreat, jungle hermitage; usually monastery.

sGrol-Ma Skt. Tārā, the delivering goddess. Also *sGrol-Yum*. Cf. *Grol-pa*, emancipation from the misery of existence (Skt. *mukti*).

sGrub-Pa coercing the divinity to yield a boon, more specifically *Lha-sGrub-Pa*. Prayers, incantations, *sGom-Pa*, asceticism and magical rites are involved in effective coercion (*sGrub-THabs*, procedures of coercion). Also accomplishment, fulfilment; carrying out of a difficult task, like extracting silver from silver-ore.

sGu-Lus phantom-form (Skt. *māyā-śarīra*); more correctly, *sGyu*,

illusory, false, imaginary. Sometimes, Skt. *līṅga-śarīra*, subtle body accompanying the spirit in its transmigration.

rGyal-Po (*gyalwa*) kings, chieftains, conquerors; usually, the abbots of the Gah-lDan and bKra-Sis-Lhung-Po who were recognised as such by the Chinese emperor Cheng-Hua (1365-1488); Skt. *jina*.

rGyud thread which is continuous and unbroken (Skt. *tantu*); *rGyud-Pa*, to fasten on the thread or string. Also, tradition, transmission (Cf. *brGyud*, Skt. *paramparā*) as in bKah-rGyud-Pa. Also, text, treatise, manual (Skt. *tantra*).

Hūm mystical syllable of Indian origin; regarded as the seed syllable of Akshobhya; symbolises the condition of the flow of

consciousness (Cf. *gTSo-Sems*, Skt. *chitta-śrota*).

aTam-dPal Skt. *Mañju-śrī*; also *a Tam-mGon*, Skt. *Mañju-nātha*. *rJe* lord, master, nobleman (Skt. *ārya*); usually, high priest or monk.

Jo-Bo-rJe noble lord, reverend master; usually, title of Atīśa-Dīpaṅkara (1042-1055, sojourn in Tibet).

bKah-gDams-Pa sect founded by the translator Mar-Pa (b.1012) on the basis of the Indian teachings of Nāro-Pa, a siddha. Originally, it meant the thread or tradition (*rGyud*) of the words of the Buddha (*bKah*), or the oral tradition; later, it signified the tradition of the “white” (*dKar*), which expression stood for moral goodness as well as the white

garments worn by the ascetics of this sect (after Milarepa).

bKah-hGyur (*Kañjur*, Mongolia) the words of the Buddha (*bKah*) translated (*hGyur*) into Tibetan (*Bod-du*); a collection of 108 volumes, mostly of Indian Canon; Skt. *śruti*.

mKHaa-aGro-Ma Skt. *ḍākinī*, wise women of divine status who assume roles of instructors and guides to devotees; feminine helpmates in *sādhana*; fairies; fiendesses.

mKHan-Po instructor, master (Skt. *upādhyāyā*); expert (Skt. *paṇḍita*).

KHrid-Yig instruction-exhortations, practical guidance.

aKHrul mistake, illusion, delusion (Skt. *bhrama*).

aKor-Lo disc, wheel, circle, roundish, globular (Skt. *chakra*); *Od-Kor*, luminous disc, *Pad-kor*, hand gesture representing the lotus, *Dus-kyi Kor-Lo*, the Wheel of time (Skt. *kālachakra*).

aKrul-Ba to stray, to be mistaken (Skt. *bhramaṇa*); *aKrul-sNang*, illusion, delusion.

Kun-br Tags erroneous supposition.

Kun-rDZob-kyi bDen-Pa Skt. *saṃvṛti-satya*, phenomenal reality, empirical existence, subjective truth; *Kun* (all, altogether), *rDZob* (vain).

BLa-Ma 'supreme-without; the high one, the superior person usually, preceptor-priest (Skt. *guru*). *BLa*, space above or something above, *Ma*, without: Skt. *anuttara*, the

highest or one with none higher (*BLa-na med-Pa*). The mystical method or way which is supreme is *BLa-na med-pai Lam*. The root-teacher (Skt. *mūla-guru*) is *rTashi-BLa-Ma*.

Lam road, way (Skt. *gati*), usually, religious: as in *CHen-pai Lam*, the three-fold way (of ordinary humans, of the advanced ones and of the saints), *Tar-pai Lam*, the path of emancipation (Skt. *vimukti-mārga*). It also signifies stages or steps of advancement along the path, *Lam-Rim*.

Las activity, undertaking, deed, work; usually, religious work as in *Las-bZan* (excellent work).

LHa god, a being superior to the humans (Skt. *deva*); *LHa-Mo*,

goddess; protective spirit; *Yul-LHa*, country-gods that were converted by Padmasambhava into guardians of Buddhism; *Nang-LHa*, within-gods, i.e. spirits within the kitchen, the hearth-divinities. *LHa-KHang*, god-house, temple (Skt. *deva-griha*).

Lo-TSa-Ba translator, usually of Indian works into Tibetan.

Ma-rGyud the great Tantra (Skt. *mahāyoga*).

Maṇi-formula “Om Maṇi padme Hūm” (six-syllabled). *Maṇi-CHos-aKor*, the wheel or cylinder containing the formula, or which is turned or twirled, reciting the formula. *Maṇi-Dong*, wall on the face of which the formula. *Maṇi-Dong*, wall on the face of which the formula is inscribed. An early work,

Maṇi-bKa-Bum, ascribed to Srong-bTsen-sGam-Po (A.D. 569 -650) the Tibetan king, is devoted to the cult of Avalokiteśvara; the *Maṇi*-formula is regarded as an invocation to this deity. However, it is probable that it was actually addressed to the consort of this deity, Tārā (*Maṇipadme* as vocative), like the other formula: *Om Tāre Tuttāre Ture Svāhā*. Later, the formula was interpreted as the essence of the Buddha’s teaching: the jewel of enlightenment (*maṇi*) in the lotus of the heart (*padme* in the locative). Cf. *Dākārṇava*. It is also interpreted as the vow of a *bodhisattva*.

rMi-Lam dream state, unreal but significant.

sMig-rGyu mirage, optical illusion, phantom.

sNad-Pa opinion, attitude, idea, view-point.

rNal tranquility of mind, peace of emancipation, passionlessness, rest. Also *yoga*, or occult practices, as in *rNal-aByor-Pa* (*Naljorpa*), a yogi or occult practitioner of miraculous powers.

gNam sky, space above, heavenly valut. Also *Nam-mKa*.

sNang-Ba illumination, enlightenment, vision (Skt. *darśana*, *āloka*).

sNang-Ba, mental picture.

Nang-pai CHos within-Dharma, the religion of the insiders or those who are within the fold, usually Buddhism. But *Nang* is inward, interior, esoteric: and therefore it is the religion which

emphasizes the inner transformation, the offerings of thoughts and faith as opposed to outward rituals, external observances and offering of material things. *Nang* is to be regarded as opposed to *PHyin* (outside).

No-Bo-nyid-Med-Pa non-entity, (Skt. *niḥsvabhāvatā*), also essential nature. *Med-Pa*, not to be; *No*, personality; *No-Bo-nyid*, entity.

rNying-Ma, old or ancient sect of Buddhism in Tibet that emerged soon after Padmasambhava's arrival. It is described as the ancient tradition of *mantras*.

Pad-Ma lotus (Skt. *padma*).

Pad-Ma-dBang-rGyal the yogic state of supreme power of the lotus, mystical condition in *sādhana*.

dPal splendour, prosperity, abundance (Skt. *śrī*); Cf. *gYang*. **dPal-Po**, illustrious person.

PHra-Men magic, witchcraft, sorcery. Also, **aPHrul**, magic, jugglery.

PHyag-rGya hand-gesture (Skt. *mudrā*), seal especially gestures by the fingers to seal or confirm a ritual act; highly symbolic and subtle procedures to secure the benefits and to eliminate evil in magic and witchcraft. Tāntrik tradition employs a variety of *mudrās* for mystic accomplishment. **PHyag-rGya-CHen-Po**, Skt. *mahāmudrā*.

sPrul-Ba juggling, making phantoms appear, transforming oneself. Usually, the expression signifies emanation, appearance of an essence

in a changed form. Hence **sPrub sKu** (pronounced *tulku*), an emanation body, holy spirit embodying itself in a new material outfit, reincarnated saint.

sPyod-Pa to perform effectively, to practise successfully.

Rabs lineage, family.

Rig-Pa understanding, knowing. Cf.

Ma-Rig-Pa, ignorance (Skt. *avidyā*).

Rig-sNags spell, magical incantation (Skt. *dhāraṇī*).

Rin-Po-CHe very precious master (Skt. *mahā-ratna*), *Rin*, jewel; a title.

RLung wind (Skt. *vāyu*), breath (Skt. *prāṇa*). **RLung-aDZin-Po** holding of the breath (Skt. *kumbhaka* in *prāṇāyāma*) in order to attain to

mystical states, as in the *gTum-Mo* practices. The control of the vital currents within the body is an accepted t̃antrik procedure for obtainment of super-natural powers (*mGyongs-RLung*).

Sa-bDag earth-owner, the spirit inhabiting the earth.

Śambhala the mythical country to the north of India, where the Kālachakra doctrine is said to have been preached by the Buddha to the first king of the place, Suchandra. *dPal-IDan-Yes-Sis* (1738-1780), the third Pañchen Lama, popularized the view that it was situated in the Northern border of India, probably in *Uḍḍiyāna* from where Padma-sambhava hailed. It is the Buddhist version of Utopia.

bSam-Pa thought, contemplation (Skt. *saṃkalpa*). Hence, *bSam-gTan*, meditative absorption (Skt. *saṃādhi*).

gSang-Pa hidden, secret, mysterious, esoteric. Hence, *gSang-pai CHos*, secret doctrine, esoteric religion. Also *gSang-sNags*, secret charms.

Sanga-rGyas-Kyi-CHos. The Buddha's religion (Skt. *Buddha-dharma*).

Ses-Rab great wisdom (Skt. *prajñā*), hence *Ses-Rab-kyi-PHa-Rol-tu PHyin-Pa* (*Prajñā-pāramitā*), doctrine as well as collection of texts in *bKah-aGyur*. *Ses-Rab* is also employed to denote void (*śūnyatā*).

Sems (Sem) mind, thought; to meditate, to reflect; also, being, spirit.

gShen-Rabs the great shaman, founder of the Bon creed.

sLobs practice, exercise, esp. religious, (Skt. *charyā*). Also **sPyod-Pa**, mode of conduct, exercise.

Srid-Pa world, as in *Srid-gSum* (the three worlds), **Srid-pai aKor-Lo**, the wheel of existence; also life or individual being.

lTa attitude, viewpoint; to inquire, examine and reflect; doctrine. Also **lTab**, philosophical system as well as mystical corpus.

rTa-mGrin the horse-necked divinity (Skt. *Haya-grīva*).

bsTan-aGyur commentarial collection of the Tibetan Canon.

rTen base, support, refuge (Skt. *gati*, *āśraya*); **LHa-rTen**, godbase or

image, also temple; **mCHod-rTen**, offering-base, *stūpa*.

gTer-Ma treasure that is concealed (Skt. *nidhi*), usually, hidden texts or buried books. The books ascribed to Padmasambhava and the king Sron-bstan-sGam-Po were hidden away in caves or safely buried during periodical persecution. There is a story that Vairocana, one of the first seven lamas (initiated by Śāntarakṣita), not only translated many Sanskrit works into Tibetan and thus helped spread the new creed, but also hid numerous Bon scriptures and thus stifled Bon influence. These hidden books were later said to be unearthed or discovered. But many of the “treasure-hunters” produced fake texts of dubious antiquity and uncertain authority.

Ting-nye-aDZin-du aFug-Pa profound meditation, perfect absorption (Skt. *samāpatti*). Three stages are distinguished in the attainment of this state: (1) *ITa-Ba*, inquiry and examination; (2) *sGom-Pa*, contemplation, reflection; and (3) *sPyod-Pa*, effective practice. The first stage eliminates sensual dominance, the second mental waywardness, and the third elemental inclinations and passions.

sTong-Pa-nyid vacuity, void (Skt. *śūnyatā*)

gTor-Ma Skt. *bali*, sacrifices or offerings to gods and fiends as part exorcism or appeasement. Cf. *gLud*, a sort of ransom, a gift in anticipation of a benefit; sometime man's own image (*Mi-gLud*) is offered as symbolic of self-sacrifice.

gTum-Mo (gTum-Po) psychic heat consequent on breathing exercises, mainly holding of breath and pushing it along the central artery (which is straight and erect like the second part of the Tibetan letter *a*; hence *a-SHad gTum-Mo*).

THig-Le innermost essence, seed; semen, generative energy; contemplation, mystic state of absorption.

THeg-Pa carriage, vehicle, (Skt. *yāna*), course of religious practice, philosophical discipline. *THeg-Pa dMan-Pa*, Skt. *Hīnayāna*; *THeg-Pa CHen-Po*, Skt. *Mahāyāna*; *rDo-rFe-THeg-Pa*, *Vajrayāna*. *THeg-Pa-gSum*, (three paths, Skt. *triyāna*), viz. *Hīnayāna*, *Mahāyāna* and *Mantrayāna* (SNangs-kyi *THeg-Pa*).

mTHong-bahi-Lam the way of mystic visions, techniques of visualizations (Skt. *dṛshṭi-mārga*).
mTHong-Pa, power of vision.

aTHob-Pa obtainment, possession (of faith), becoming (the Buddha), the fruits. Skt. *pratilābha*, *phala*.

TSan spirits, gnomes, usually the vindictive ghosts that haunt temples and monasteries.

Yab-Yum father-mother (Skt. *yuganaddha*, two-in-one, Cf. Tib. *Zung-aFug*).

Yi-Dam personal or tutelary deity (Skt. *ishṭa-devatā*).

gYung-Drung the *Svastika* sign, sacred to both Bon-Pos and Buddhists in Tibet.

bZang excellent, good (Skt. *bhadra*).

gZungs holding (Skt. *dhāraṇa*); also spell, sacred formula (*dhāraṇī*).

Zung-aFug two-in-one (Skt. *yuganaddha*). *Zung*, two, pair, couple (female and male); *aFug*, unison, fusion, entering into. Representations of male and female divinities in copulation symbolise the mystic union of *prajñā* and *upāya*. In the traditional Tāntrik interpretation of the word *aFug*, the technique of forcing the breath-mind complex (*Sems*) into the central artery (Skt. *sushumṇā*) so that the being is in a state of perfect poise and power is suggested.