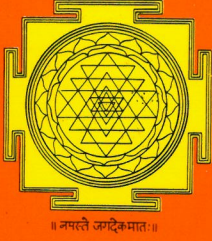


A PROJECT ON BHARATIYA-SAMSKRITI-SARVASVA-KOSHA



Kalpatharu Research Academy Publication

Chief Editor : DAIVAJNA K.N. SOMAYAJI

YOGA-TANTRA-SAMPRADĀYA

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



By

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PREFACE

The Kalpatharu Research Academy, Bangalore, is happy to bring out the second part of Yoga and Tantra in India and Tibet, the first part of which was published a few months ago. This will complete a major undertaking in the project on '**Bharatiya-Sanskriti-Sarvasva-Kosha**'. It is hoped that this volume in two parts will be of great interest to the students and scholars of the Yoga Tantra tradition.

We acknowledge the blessings conferred on the Academy by the Jagadguru of Sri Sringeri Sarada Peetham His Holiness Sri Sri Sri Bharathi Tirtha Mahaswamiji, and we are grateful to Sri V.R. Gowrishankar, the Administrator of the Sri Sringeri Sharda Peetham and Chairman of the Academy for his keen interest and encouragement.

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 Makara Sankranthi
15th January 2000

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

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY

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- * 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 Darśanodaya (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 Acharyas. Many aspects of this tradition were lost in India during 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 translation 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 Jagadguru 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 merit our deep appreciation for excellent quality of the production of this volume.

S.K. RAMACHANDRA RAO

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नमस्ते जगदेक मातः

चतुर्भुजे चन्द्रकलावतंसे
कुचोन्नते कुङ्कुमरागशोणे ।
पुण्ड्रेषुपाशाङ्कुशपुष्पबाण-
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
यमनियमासनप्रणायामप्रत्याहारध्यानाध्यानसमाध्यष्टाङ्गयोगानुष्ठाननिष्ठ
तपश्चक्रवर्त्यनाद्यविच्छिन्न श्रीशङ्कराचार्यगुरुपरम्पराप्राप्त षड्दर्शनस्थापनाचार्य
व्याख्यानसिंहासनाधीश्वर सकलनिगमागमसारहृदय सांख्यत्रयप्रतिपादक वैदिकमार्गप्रवर्तक
सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्रादिराजधानी विद्यानगरमहाराजधानी कर्णाटकसिंहासनप्रतिष्ठापनाचार्य
श्रीमद्राजाधिराजगुरुभूमण्डलाचार्य ऋष्यशृङ्गपुरवराधीश्वर तुङ्गभद्रातीरवासि
श्रीमद्विद्याशङ्करपादपदाराधक श्रीजगद्गुरु श्रीमदभिनवविद्यातीर्थस्वामिगुरुकरकमलसञ्जात

॥ श्री जगद्गुरु शृङ्गेरी श्रीमद्भारतीतीर्थमहास्वामिभिः ॥

अस्मदत्यन्तप्रियशिष्य श्री नरसिंह सोमयाजि विषये नारायणस्मरणपूर्वकं विरचिता
आशिषस्समुल्लसन्तु ।

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

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

शृङ्गगिरिः

ईश्वर भाद्रपदशुद्धदशमी भार्गववासरः

12.9.1997

इति नारायणस्मरणम्

CHAPTER FIVE

THE GREAT TRADITIONS IN TIBET

THE GREAT PATHS

In Tibetan Buddhism are recognised, theoretically, nine paths to enlightenment¹. On closer examination, it may be seen that three of them were directly derived from Indian Buddhism of the pre-Padmasambhava days: the path of the attentive disciple who is bent on acquiring sufficient holiness to become an enlightened saint or *arhat* (*śrāvaka-yāna*); the path of the solitary hermit seeking to become a Buddha, exclusively by his own efforts, but not keen on sharing the fruits of his labour with others (*pratyekabuddha-yāna*); and the path of one who seeks the Buddha-state, but feels committed to the welfare of others (*bodhisattva-yāna*). After the advent of Padmasambhava, the

three paths branched out into nine. Actually, however, it was the third alone that branched out. But the additional six were together styled as 'the path mystical formulae' (*mantra-yāna*) which became identified with 'the adamant or thunderbolt way' (*vajra-yāna*), in Tibetan *Do-rJe-THeg-Pa*). Although called 'paths' (*yanās*), one may recognise them as more properly stages.

The path of rites and rituals (*kāryatantra-yāna*, Tib. *Bya-pai-rGyud*) and the path of virtuous devices (*charyā* - or *upāya-tantra-yāna*, Tib. *Spyod-pai-rGyud*) are regarded as 'lower' (*'og-Ma*) although followed by a vast majority, preliminary although most of them do not pass beyond this stage, and



GURU PADMASAMBHAVA

necessary stages, followed by the path of yogic exercises and experiments (*yoga-tantra-yāna*, Tib. *rNal-Byor-rGud*). The last stage has three phases, each however styled as a 'path'. The first phase consists of the perfection of virtue (the six *pāramitās*, charity, chastity, valour, vigour, peace and wisdom) and prescribes the meticulous observance of all the rules of discipline and cultivation of the four 'immeasurables' (the *brahma-vihāras*, friendliness, compassion, contentment and detachment). This is known as 'the great yogic path' (*mahāyoga-tantra-yāna*).

In the second phase, rules no longer hold or bind, and the practices become mostly mystical. Known as 'the unexcelled path' (*anuttara-yoga-tantra-yāna* or for short *anu-yoga*, Tib. *rNal-Byor-BLa-Na-Med-pai-rGyud*), it is no doubt followed by

few. The Indian Siddhas and their Tibetan counterparts are said to have been adepts in this path which is regarded as 'higher' (*Gon-Ma*). Mystical texts like *Guhya-samāja-tantra* were addressed really to those who aspired to tread this path.

The third phase which is the highest in the spiritual scale, is described as 'the outstripping' or 'the beyond' (*atiyoga-tantra-yāna*). It is significant that Tibetans who preferred to translate the Sanskrit words almost as a rule (being resistant to loan-words²) retained the original *ati-yoga* in its transliterated form (*ati-yoga-hi-THogs-Pa*). The word was as untranslatable as the experience was indescribable.

Despite this usual enumeration (ascribed to the Tibetan historian Tārānātha), it would be incorrect to say that Tibetan religious had at any

time this nine-fold division in actuality. Perhaps nine was a mystical number with Tibetans. Even the pre-Buddhist Bon had a 'nine-vehicle doctrine', pronounced by its founder SKu-gShen³. The classification of Tibetan teaching into three paths, 'the long', 'the not-so long' and 'the short', is perhaps a truer picture. The 'long' path, making very little demands on normal life, is the one generally followed by large sections of Tibetans, following Vinaya rules and looking forward to reaching *nirvāṇa* only after many births. Their goal is undoubtedly *nirvāṇa*; but the more immediate, and therefore the more desirable, goal is reasonably happy and peaceful life.

The 'not-so-long' path is a little more exacting, involving, as it does, austerities and the practice of harder virtues. Those who follow this path study scriptural texts, listen to their

exposition, worship the icons and recite sacred formulae, which are virtue's work with speech (*Ngag*)" (like the one to Avalokiteśvara, *Om maṇi-padme-hūm*, or the one which is called 'vajrajapa', *Om āḥ hūm*). They adore structural embodiments of religion like *mChod-rTen* ('offering-base', the Tibetan version of *Stūpa*), *dGom-pa* (monastery) and *IHa-Khang* ('god-house', temple), going round them and prostrating before them; they turn the Maṇi-wheels⁴, big and small, manual and mechanical, they tell the beads of the rosary and make hand- and finger-gestures. These are regarded as "work with the body" (*Lus*).

And finally, cultivation of moral qualities, practice of six excellent virtues (*pāramitās*), and possession of faith are regarded as "work with mind" (*Sems*). These are classified by Tibetans under virtuos conduct



ĀVALOKITA

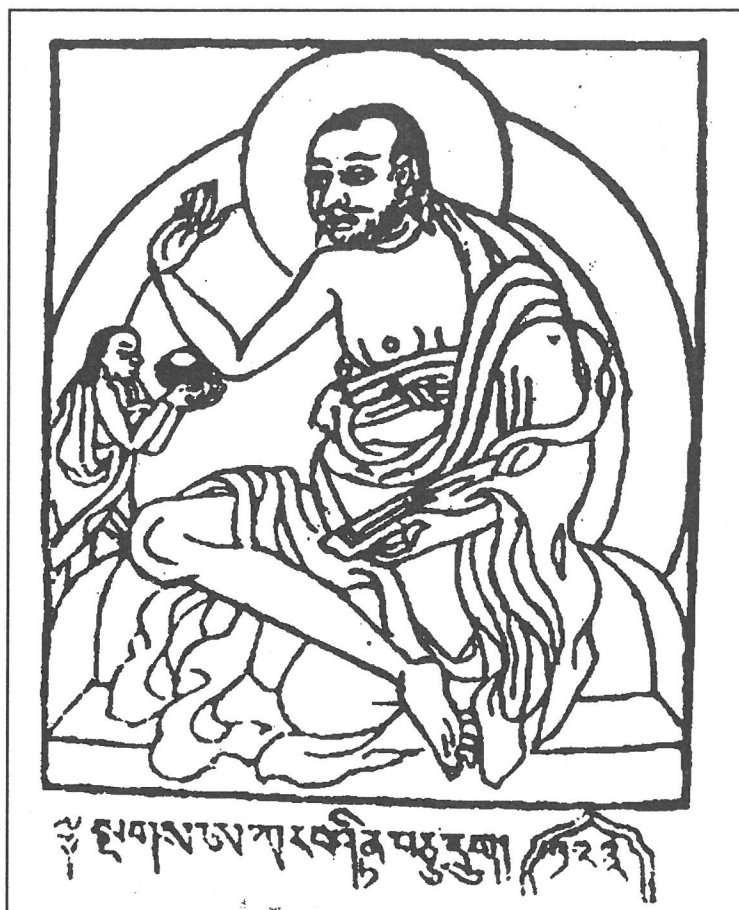
(*dGa-Bai-Las*), and are intended to purify the constitution gradually, and ultimately (but sooner than later) lead to *nirvāṇa*.

THE DEBATE

The ‘short-path’ is mainly Tāntrik, and for the same reason is resorted to by small groups of earnest and hardy devotees, who dare to put forth their utmost effort to reach the highest and within the shortest possible time, within a few years, or

at any rate in this very life. The choice and conflict between ‘the long’ (or ‘gradual’) path and ‘the short’ (or ‘sudden’) path was not peculiar to Tibet.

It figured prominently in China after the passing away of the fifth patriarch, Hung-jan (601-675 A.D.), whose disciples branched off into northern and southern divisions. The former was headed by Shin-Shan, who preached the gradual method of enlightenment. The latter was headed by Hui-neng (637-713 A.D.), who became the sixth, last and the greatest patriarch, and taught the doctrine of “spontaneous realization of mind-essence” which was independent of formalities of religion. It is likely that a follower of this camp went to Tibet and became celebrated during the reign of KHri-Srong-IDe-bTsan (705-755 A.D) or soon after his death. His name is given as Hva-



ŚĀNTI-PA

Sang (or Ho-Shang), which however, is said to be merely Chinese for 'teacher'. His teaching, according to the Tibetan account, was nihilistic. Virtue, according to him, is irrelevant to the rounds of existence; they are like white and dark clouds, both alike riding the blue sky. All action

will necessarily lead us to the state of utter inactivity, in a sleep-like state of quiet, and enlightenment will be spontaneous and instantaneous. Mind is the major factor here, for enlightenment is really mind-essence. Rituals and scriptures can only be fetters; and one who is bent on

enlightenment should get out of this conventional quagmire. Such was the teaching of the Chinese celebrity, as it is represented in Tibetan books. One can see that this teaching had a strong Zen flavour.

The king, however, did not personally favour this doctrine. He favoured the teaching of the Indian teacher, Śāntarakṣita, of the bSam-Yas monastery. But he had now been dead, and his successor Śrīghoṣa was not a match to Hva-Sang. Thus the king had to invite from India, Śāntarakṣita's pupil Kamalaśīla, who was professor at Nālandā, to contend with the Chinese master. Tibet witnessed one of the greatest debates in its history, the one between the positivist Kamalaśīla from India and the nihilist Hva-Sang from China. The date of the debate is given as 792 or 794 A.D.

Kamalaśīla argued that mere sleep-like absence of awareness would not be able to produce a positive result like enlightenment. By stopping all intellectual activities one cannot hope to attain to the 'wisdom of no-self' (*nairātmya-jñāna*). False constructions, wrong ideas, and wild passions need to be eliminated before liberation is obtained. Wisdom has necessarily to be analytical, and enlightenment can only be gradual. Practice of virtue is indispensable in the Buddha's doctrine. In the end, Kamalaśīla won, and the Chinese master left Tibet. Later, Kamalaśīla wrote down his arguments in a short manual in Sanskrit, entitled *Bhāvanā-krama* (ed. By G.Tucci in *Minor Buddhist Texts*⁵).

The great debate left a deep impression on Tibetan imagination. The 'false' teachings of Hva-Sang

were parodied in a comic act, 'Mi-Tshe-ring' in dance-dramas in Tibet and Nepal⁶. Kamalaśīla was responsible to a large extent for the future course of Tibetan philosophy. Nāgārjuna's view-point gained currency, and the Yogāchāra school, which perhaps Hva-Sang represented, suffered a set-back, which however was temporary. Although Hva-Sang was formally defeated, his teaching had already gained ground; and Kamalaśīla had to reckon with this fact. What he subsequently taught was therefore an integrated doctrine, with the theoretical model provided by Nāgārjuna and the Yogāchāra techniques constituting the practical outfit. Kamalaśīla's *Bhāvanā-krama* reveals this synthesis. The 'short-path' not only survived the great debate, but grew to great dimensions after the event. And strangely,

Kamalaśīla himself contributed to this.

The 'short path' is distinguished by its emphasis on the teacher (*bLa-Ma* or 'guru') and on initiation (*dīkshā* or *abhisheka*, Tibetan, *dVang*). The two together constitute an interesting detail. The teacher is looked upon as a possessor of *siddhi* (*gNos-gRub*), capable of transforming the pupil, and determining his destiny.

The word *Lama* actually means 'without superior' (*anuttara* in Sanskrit, *bLa* means 'superior' and *Ma* is 'without'; *Ma* may also mean 'person', in which case *lama* would mean 'a superior one'). There is a suggestion that the Tibetan word is derived from the Sanskrit word 'brahma'. The three familiar Buddhist refuges (*śaraṇa-gamana*) are preceded in Tibet with refuge-

seeking in one's *lama*. While they speak of 'four jewels' in Tibet, instead of the usual three elsewhere, the *lama* is regarded as the synthesis of the other three (the *Buddha*, the *Dharma* and the *Saṅgha*).

In fact, the Tibetans hold: "Before the *lama*, there was no Buddha", for it is only the *lama* that preserves the Buddha ideal for us. In the pre-Buddhist Bon too, there were lamas, but the influence of Buddhism transformed their rôle⁷. He not only imparts secret oral instructions, but communicates 'hidden power'. Among the three basic necessities of this path, the teacher (with his lineage) comes first, and takes precedence even over the patron-divinities and the beneficent *ḍākinīs* and *dharmapālas*.

There is the conception of "root-teachers" (*rTashi-bLa-Ma*,



SPRIN-ŠUGS

Sanskrit *mūla-gurus*), who are most adorable and without whom success is impossible. This devotion to, and dependence on, the teacher is the outstanding feature of all Tāntrik cults. It is known as 'guru-yoga' in th Tibet⁸. Among the benefits from a teacher, who is regarded as an embodiment of all the Buddhas, are listed the following. He will free the mind from ego-involvement: he will dispel the darkness of ignorance,

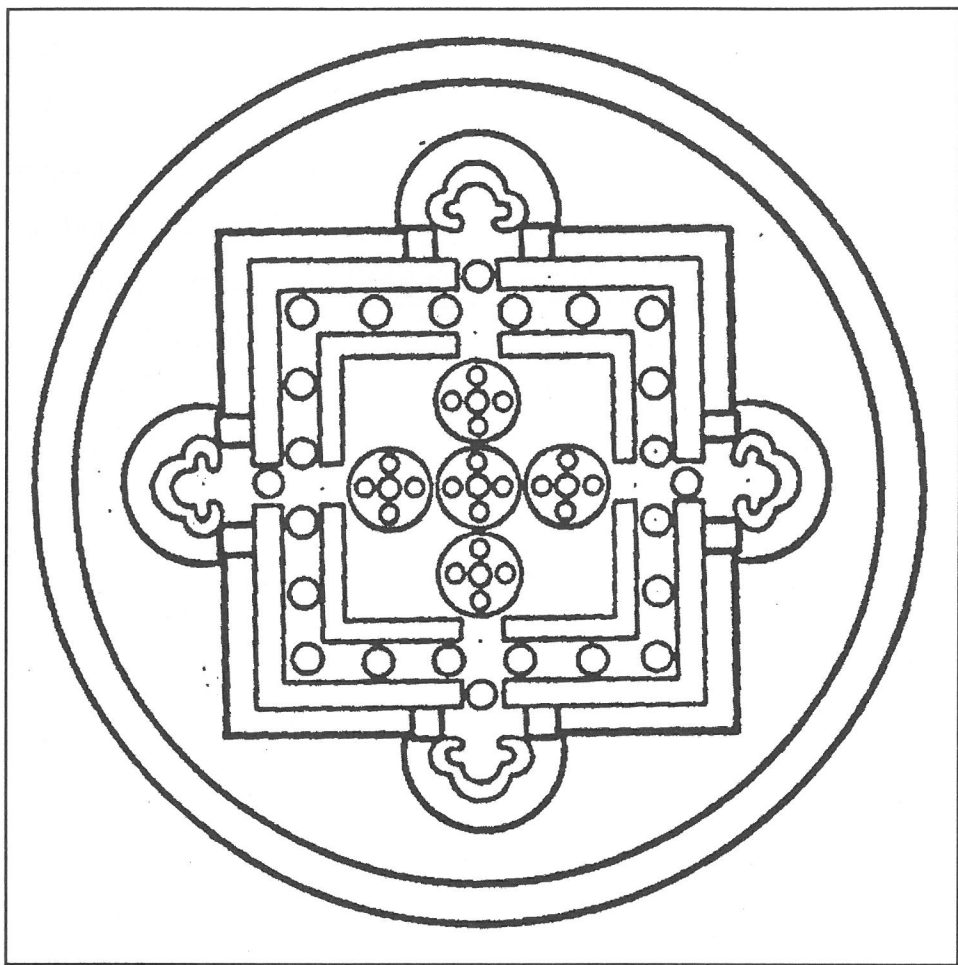
weaken attachment and passions, remove greed and awaken trust in dharma. He will encourage concentration, facilitate self-understanding, support the resolve to practice earnestly, and lead us along the path of freedom to the highest objective, viz., enlightenment. kLong-rDol-bLa-Ma Nag-dbang-bLo-bZang (b. 1719) mentions that slandering one's *guru* is the first of the fourteen 'basic downfalls' for a practitioner.

A teacher need not necessarily be a living person: the previous *gurus* of the lineage are equally important. And the importance attached to beneficent spirits (*ḍākinīs*), who in a mysterious manner initiate devotees into mystic doctrines, must be considered in this context.

Initiation is the process through which the 'power' (*dBang-sKur*) is

communicated from the teacher to the pupil. It denotes not only that a course of practice has been initiated, but that the practitioner has been properly 'empowered' to go along the course. The pupil is drawn into a field (*dBang-aKHor*, 'power-circle', Sanskrit *chakra*), physically represented and symbolically. And being here, he is deemed to have a had a rebirth; his old impediments, limitations, preoccupations, dispositions and relations die, and a new constitution oriented entirely to the *sādhana* on hand is generated.

The value of *maṇḍala* (*dKyil-hKHor*), *mudrā* (*PHyag-rGya*), *yantra* (*CHOs-hByung*) and *mantra* (*aNags*) is in this context stressed. *Maṇḍala* is fundamental to the Tāntrik way of thinking. Described as a 'psychocosmogram', in the words of G. Tucci, it 'delineates a consecrated place and protects it from invasion



MAṆḌALA

by disintergrating forces.... 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"⁹. We have already in considered the role of this device in *sādhana*.

It should, however, be mentioned here that the *maṇḍala*-offering (*mCHod*) - which is different from the *maṇḍala* we are talking about - is better known and more widely practiced in Tibetan religion. This aspect is said to have reached Tibet with Atīśa in 1042 A.D. It was communicated by him to dGon-Pa-Ba, and through him to Kam-Pa, Lung-pa-ba, Chu-Mig-Pa, dPal-LDan-Gros and others in a succession by oral tradition, until gNam-sNam-sKas-Brag compiled

these instructions in a book-form around 1230 A.D.¹⁰

The visual arrangement of the five *dhyāni-buddhas* mentioned in *Guhya-samāja-tantra* was perhaps the inspiration for the elaborate rituals concerning the *maṇḍala*. The identification of the cosmic design with the individual's own being was achieved in ritual, and this is the essence of *maṇḍala*, involved in the rites of initiation as well as in the ritualistic offering oneself to the welfare of others.

The Tibetan *lamas* make it a habit to acquire different initiations not only from their own teachers but from the abbots of various monasteries they visit during their tour of pilgrimage. Often sectarian affiliation is no consideration here, and loyalty to one's own lama is not impaired by this in any manner.

AMOGHASIDDHI



VAJRA-SATTVA



AMITĀBHA



RATNASAMBHAVA



AKSHOBHYA

THE FIVE BUDDHAS

Probably, the initiation in such cases does not involve continuation of the particular practices over any great length of time. It may mean merely the acquisition of a mantra assigned to a divinity, or of a particular method of meditation, or of visualization.

That is how some *lamas* have hundreds - and the *sPrul-sKus* (the reincarnated ones) thousands - of initiations. More interesting, however, is the habit of recording all the initiations one has had in a journal form. Apparently, the multiplicity of initiations does not seem to cause confusion or indecision in a devotee; probably he knows how to integrate all of them into his own primary initiations.

For the more serious entrant into 'the short path', however, initiation is a serious affair, and marks the beginning of a strenuous

career. The teacher would help him to 'look and examine' (*ta-ba*), and then to 'think and meditate' (*mNGom-pa*) and leaves him to 'practice and realise' (*CHyod-pa*)¹¹. The last is the most important commitment, the other two being only preparations for it. 'Practice' is independent even of the teacher and of the doctrine. The devotee while engaged in practice will shut himself up for shorter or longer periods and practise vigorously and uninterruptedly. Isolation, silence and inactivity are found to facilitate perfect stillness of mind and body, and spiritual practice is said directly to lead to realisation. In this sense, 'the short path' is also 'the direct path'; no rituals are involved there, no books and no human assistance. There can be little doubt that it is a steep and hazardous ascent; and it is only the bold and the earnest that can dare and aspire.

The 'short path' in Tibet, as in India, is frequently resorted to by devotees. not entirely committed to emancipation from worldly existence, but to acquisitions which are magical in nature. The familiar 'naljorpas' of the Tibetan travelogues belong to this class. They remind us of some of the classical Indian Nātha-Siddhas who were eccentric and devastating. Although they too are Tāntrik, they fall outside the mainstream of Tāntrik pursuit which aims at perfect emancipation. Sometimes the *siddhis* appear as epiphenomena, but the devotee is advised to ignore them and pass on, for preoccupation with such supernormal powers is likely to prevent further progress.

THE ADVENT OF DĪPAMKARA

Tibetan traditions, as already indicated, may be grouped broadly into two categories: Bon-oriented

and Buddhism-oriented. The former draws heavily upon the native genius, and has responded readily to Tāntrik impact from India. The latter, however, has resisted, more or less successfully, the Tāntrik influence. But it should be remembered that no tradition in Tibet is completely free from either Buddhist or Bon influence: it is only a matter of difference in degree or direction of influence. If the arrival around 747 A.D. of Śāntarakṣita and Padmasambhava marks the first point of departure, the advent of Dīpaṅkara-Śrījñāna (Atiśa) in 1042 A.D. marks the second; and the reformatory movement of the great Tibetan divine, TSong-Kha-Pa (1357-1419), the third and the last.

The tradition, whose source is traced to a period before the impact of Indian influence, was largely or purely Bon. Śāntarakṣita tried to



DIPAMKARA-BUDDHA

wean Tibetans from this, but failed. Padmasambhava, on the other hand, practically confirmed the indigenous Bon way of dealing with oneself and things around, and succeeded. The failure of Śāntarakshita and the success of Padmasambhava were responsible for the emergence of the tradition known as *rÑing-Ma-Pa* ('the old-tradition-ones'). This was styled 'old' in contradistinction with the 'new' tradition that arose from the more definite and specific Buddhist commitments of Dīpaṅkara-Śrījñāna, the *bKah-Dams-Pa* ('the *sūtra-upadeśa*-ones'), which was pruned further and made more emphatically and characteristically Buddhist by TSong-KHa-Pa in the *dGe-Lugs-Pa* ('the merit-system ones') tradition.

The attempts of both Dīpaṅkara and TSong-KHa-Pa were directed to minimise the Tāntrik involvement in CHos. But an examination of the

Tibetan religion as it has survived reveals that their success was but partial. The tradition that arose almost contemporaneously with Dīpaṅkara, *bKah-rGyud*, reinforced the Tāntrik impact and the new traditions could not escape this influence. Thus there are numerous Tāntrik texts (*rGyud*) that are common to the older 'red' traditions (*rÑing-Ma* and *bKah-rGyud*), and later 'yellow' tradition (*dGe-Lugs*).

The old tradition developed in the first Buddhist monastery in Tibet, bSam-Yas. As mentioned earlier, founded in 749 A.D. by Padmasambhava and presided over by the brilliant and academic Śāntarakshita, this monastery had royal patronage, and naturally became powerful. Although Padmasambhava left Tibet soon after the founding of this centre and it was Śāntarakshita that guided its destiny for thirteen

years, the tradition has Padmasambhava as its patron-saint, and looks upon him as a second Buddha. Padmasambhava is no doubt an honoured name for all sects in Tibet, but he is especially adored in this tradition. He is worshipped in his eight forms, some benign and some violent.

Śāntarakṣita, who was devoted to the *Vinaya*, was more interested in monastic organisation. He ordained seven talented Tibetans into the monastic order; they were the first Buddhist monks in Tibet. He got several Indian monks over to Tibet to train the Tibetan monks in both *Sūtra* and *Vinaya*. They formed the nucleus for the translation of Indian texts into Tibetan: the Indian teachers Vimāla-mitra, Buddha-guhyā, Śāntigarbha and Viśuddha-simha and the 'seven selected ones' (viz., the seven Tibetan Monks) did the marvellous

job of translating as many as four thousand Sanskrit works, most of them bearing on Buddhism!

Śāntarakṣita's pupil Kamalaśīla who worked in the bSamYas monastery was a professor of tantra at Nālandā before he came to Tibet; and naturally he introduced Tāntrik cults and sects into the old tradition. Others like Sthira-mati and Buddha-kīrti, also from Nālandā, who came along with Kamalaśīla, added to the Tāntrik note. This orientation appealed to the Tibetans who could not in any case shake off Bon easily.

The Indian Tantra interacted with the Tibetan Bon and the 'old tradition' gained ground. Śāntarakṣita himself had given it a Tāntrik slant by propagating *Jam-dPal-sKu*, one of the eight rNying-Ma Tantras.

The grandson of the king who had invited Padmasambhava, Rai-Pa-CaN-gTSan (817-836 A.D.), was an enthusiastic supporter of this tradition, and one of the meritorious things that he did was to get from India eminent scholars like Surendra-bodhi, Śailendra-bodhi, Bodhi-mitra and Jina-mitra and engage them in the translation of the Buddhist Cannon into Tibetan. The Tibetan monks Jñāna-sena, Jaya-raksha, Ratnendra śilā and Mañjuśrī-varma assisted them.

The king had built a nine-storeyed palace for these translators (*Lo-TSa-ba*) to carry on their work in peace. Not less than half of the existing Tibetan Cannon was accomplished by them! But, as we have already seen, the king's enthusiasm inevitably led to ministerial intrigues, and the king was killed. His brother gLangDar-

Ma (836-842 A.D.) who was made the king began persecuting the Buddhist monks in a fit of grateful vengeance. bSam-Yas monastery was destroyed, and its scholar-monks fled, or were killed. The 'old tradition' thus fell on evil days.

THE BURIED TREASURES

But the teachings did not entirely disappear. The teachers went into hiding, and the scriptural books were buried under rocks or were concealed in caves. When gLang-Dar-Ma was assassinated, the Buddhist religion reared its head again, and the monks returned to work among the people. The books that were buried or concealed began to be recovered. They were known as *gTer-Ma*, "buried or sealed treasures", most of them ascribed either to Padmasambhava, or to the sainted king Srong-bTsan-sGam-

po¹². Among those ascribed to the king were the well-known legendary account of Avalokiteśvara, (*Mani-bKah-Bum*), and the zealously guarded book of secret instructions (*bKah-rGyu-Ma*).

There was a long line of treasure hunters ('takers-out of treasure' *gTer-bsTon*), commencing from Rong-Zom-CHen-Po CHosKyibZan-Po (about 1025.A.D.). But the excavations were intermittent and haphazard, and continued till about 1600 A.D. The books thus recovered were grouped under 'southern treasure' (*CHo-gTer*) and 'northern treasure' (*Byang-gTer*). Those who made much of these recovered treasure-books formed themselves into a distinct sect, *Rong-Lugs*, after the first treasure-hunter, and sought to introduce the old Bon teachings in disguise, although their origin was now ascribed to Padmasambhava.



PADMASAMBHAVA

But there were in Tibet many who doubted the genuineness of these 'treasure-books', and made light of them. The celebrated historian Sum-Pa-mKhan-Po (around 1782 A.D.), for instance, roundly described the 'buried treasures' ascribed to Padmasambhava as "compiled by various foolish persons by adding some terms accepted in the Buddhist texts"¹³. Among those who held this

view were Indian paṇḍitas, and their Tibetan followers who relied on the orally transmitted tradition through a line of teachers belonging to the bSam-Yas monastery and its branches. This group which dated back to pre-gTer days called itself *Zur-Lugs*, after the eminent representative, Zur-Po-CHe (about 950 A.D.), or *bKah-Ma* ("handed down from Indian masters"). There were however, no doctrinal differences between these two groups, and both alike drew their inspiration from Padmasambhava.

Of the nine 'paths' reckoned in Tibet, and mentioned earlier, this tradition considers the last three, viz., the *mahā-yoga*, the *anu-yoga* and the *ati-yoga*, as especially relevant. The votaries of this tradition hold that this is what distinguishes *rÑing-Ma* from other traditions, which claim, however, is hard to

substantiate. As a matter of fact, all traditions in Tibet are agreed on essentials and on the general techniques, and they differ only in emphasis. More often than not, traditions, schools and sects in Tibet differ not on account of doctrinal matter at all, but on the geographical areas in which they tend to develop, and also on account of the persons who lead the monastic communities there. In any case, all the major traditions in Tibet attach great importance to the last three 'paths'. *rÑing-Ma*, however, being the oldest of traditions, may be credited with having provided the model for other traditions in this matter. It would therefore be worthwhile considering at some length the account of the three 'paths' as given by the *rÑing-Ma-Pa*.

The three 'paths' are based on the doctrine propounded by

Padmasambhava. India has not preserved any tradition of Padmasambhava, the author, but Tibet has not only numerous 'hidden treasures' (*gTer-Ma*) ascribed to him, but has some works of his included in the Canon. One of the important treatises, the 'Yoga of knowing the Mind, the seeing of Reality, called Self Liberation'¹⁴ is in his name. the doctrine expounded here is in essence Yogāchāra. One mind (*Sems-ggCHik-Po*) encompasses both phenomenal existence and transcendental reality.

It thus covers two aspects of truth (*bDen-Nyis*), one hiding the other. When however the veil is rent and the two become but one (which they in fact are), enlightenment is at once attained. The One-mind, called differently as *prajñā*, *mahā-mudrā*, *dharma-dhātu*, *ālaya* and *bindu*, is in fact sky-like vacuity (*kha-sama*

sūnyatā), altogether devoid of any limiting factors or supporting conditions. The phenomenal world as well as the psychological world are in the nature of projections of ones own mind, like reflections seen in a mirror.



BHŪ-SPARŚA

The *dharma* is really contained in mind. All doctrine, therefore, relates only to mind, and all meditation is only in the mind. Look therefore within your mind and understand the truth of all existence.

“Unless one sees the Buddha in ones own mind, *nirvāṇa* is obscured”¹⁵. This mind of course is beyond nature, not seen or grasped. But unless it is mastered, realization is impossible. Although sesamum seed is the source of oil, and milk the source of butter, we do not get oil unless the seeds are pressed, nor butter unless the milk is churned. Even so, unless the mind is ‘pressed and churned’ realisation cannot be had. To know the mind is thus to realize reality and obtain liberation. This is the yoga that is spoken of in Padmasambhava’s tract.

Based on this notion of identity between the core of individual being and the ultimate reality of enlightenment (*bodhi*), the Tāntrik doctrine suggests purification of constitution (*deha-śodhana*), as a preliminary step. Cleansing of the arteries through devices like

prāṇayāma, one works with mind, withdrawing it from ordinary pre-occupation and providing it with new directions. The mind, confined, cribbed and caged so long under severely limiting and conditioning factors, now frees itself, expands, and becomes immense, ‘sky-like’.

Mind here becomes no-mind, utterly light and absolutely free, and therefore happy. This is the significance of the expression ‘mahāyoga’ (in Tibetan, *Ma-rGyud*). It is great in the sense that mind is not only trained by meditation and other exercises (*kriyāyoga*, in Tibet *kri-yog*), but it is rendered competent to fulfil the *bodhisattva* vow (*sevā-sādhana*, in Tibetan *bsNyen-bsGrub*)¹⁶.

The procedure followed here to train, control, direct and liberate the mind involves the employment

of the technique of evocation of images (or visualizations). The practice has been stylized by an iconographic specification of the forms and functions of one hundred deities, 58 of them in their benign or serene aspect, and 42 in their malevolent or wrathful aspect. They are all alike projections from ones own mind.

And no Tibetan yogi will mistake these deities for objective entities; their character of being mere 'images' is never lost sight of. Eight methods are recommended based on the images of eight deities described as 'tutelary'. Each of them has not only an iconographic form, but has a symbolic altar; the method of meditation in each case has a specific objective, and seeks to eliminate one of the evil dispositions present in the practitioner¹⁷.

All of them, excepting the horse-headed *Hayagrīva*, are regarded as manifestation of Mañjuśrī, the *bodhisattva* of wisdom. 'Mañjuśrī-kāya' ('the body of Mañjuśrī', the Tibetan *hJam-dPal-sKuhī-LHa*) is meditated upon as a dark yellow triangle, for eliminating haughtiness and arrogance, and for bringing about comprehensive wisdom. 'Hayagrīva' ('the horse-necked one', *Pad-Ma-gSun-gi-LHa*) rests on a dark brown triangle, will eliminate jealousy and produce discerning wisdom. 'Satya-saṃkalpa' ('True Intention', *Yan-Dag-THugs-kyi-LHa*) rests on a dark brown triangle, drives out ignorance, and bestows right intuition into phenomenal nature. 'Sudhā-puṇya' ('Elixir-Merit', *CHe-mCHog-Yon-Tan-Gyi-LHa*) will be dealt with later. 'Vajra-śūla-karma' ('Adamantine Pike Deed', *Phur-ba-PHrin-Las-*



HAYAGRĪVA

LHa) is similar to Hayagrīva in his altar, and he eliminates the same evil disposition, but assures the wisdom of accomplishment, 'Dāmara-preshaka' ('Demon-Sending', *Ma-Mo-rBod-gTong-LHa*) wards off all untoward events and secures protection; his altar is the sea, red with blood. 'Ugra-śāpa' (Violent Curse', *dMod-Pa-dRag-SNags-Uta*), who eliminates all evils, fights all demons and bestows protection, rests on blazing fire in the navel as his altar. And, lastly, 'Loka-pūjya' ('worshipped by the World', *hJig-rTen-mCHod-bsTod-LHa*), who dispels all evils and demons and secures protections, is located in the 'secret cemetery'.

The last three of these deities are more abstract in nature. The main deity among the eight is Sudhā-puṇya or 'Elixir-Merit', who is represented with twenty-one heads

(symbolising twenty-one stages on the path of 'perfection' arranged in seven aspects of the *bodhisattva* path), forty-two arms (symbolising so many benign moods), eight legs (symbolising eight roads to liberation) and two wings (the left symbolising *upāya* and the right *prajñā*). The deity is seen trampling upon eight heavenly kings (representing senses) and eight dragons (symbolising states of mind). The spouse that embraces him is described as the destroyer of three 'enemies' (or 'poisons'), greed (*rāga*), anger (*dvesha*) and ignorance (*moha*). There are manuals in Tibetan describing these deities and elaborating the procedures for their evocation.

ANU-YOGA

The second of the three paths is 'anu-yoga' (*bLa-Med-rGyud*), short for 'anuttara-yoga-tantra-yāna'.

The important detail here is the group of practices which may be described as *haṭha-yoga*, involving bodily energies, vital current and semen. The deities employed in rituals connected with such practices are usually of the 'father-mother' (in Tibetan *Yab-Yum*, 'two-in-one', in Sanskrit, *yuganaddha*) variety. Iconographic representations of a god and a goddess locked in intimate embrace (as, for instance, Heruka and Vārāhī) are numerous in Tibetan pantheon.

The notion that reality has two aspects, complementary to each other, and together constituting a perfect unity, is an old one. Even Aśvaghosha suggested it in his *Śraddhotpāda-śāstra*; Nāgārjuna's *Pañchakrama* elaborates on the 'yuganaddha-method' which seeks to eliminate the normal human dichotomy between phenomenal



YAB-YUM

involvement (*saṃsāra*) and transcendence (*nivṛtti*). Among the siddhas, Ghaṇṭapāda (or *Vajra-ghaṇṭa*, who perhaps initiated the ritualistic representation of diamond and bell, to represent the two principles) and Kṛṣṇācārya (Kāṇhapā, Tib., Nag-Po Skyod-Po) were advocates of this doctrine. The early siddhas spoke of it in terms of 'non-duality' (*advaya*) and 'synthetic unity' (*samarasa*). Later, a mystical veneer was given to it by describing it as the

union of void or wisdom (*śūnyatā* or *prajñā*, Tib. *Ses-Rab*) with its manifestation as compassion or method (*karuṇā* or *upāya*, Tib. *Thabs*)¹⁸. The idea of union is sought to be realised through rituals and associated contemplations.

ATI-YOGA

The third 'path', 'ati-yoga' (Tib. *Ati-Yoga-hi-Thegs-Pa*), does not use either the images used in the first 'path', or the 'energy systems' used in the second. It depends on mind alone as the major instrument. It is known as 'ati' ('beyond'), because it transcends both visualization and use of vital currents; and thus it goes beyond the reach of sensory functions and bodily mechanism. In Tibetan, it is called as "surpassing the uppermost" (*THod-rGyul*)¹⁹, and the manuals describe how in this method the material body (i.e., the



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awareness of it) "vanishes in a rainbow", that is to say as colours occur and disappear in a rainbow. As a way to enlightenment, it is somewhat like Zen.

The correspondence is not accidental. It should be remembered that Vajrabodhi who took the Tāntrik cult to China around 720 A.D. was a junior contemporary of another South Indian saint, Bodhidharma, who also went to China to found the

Ch'an school (which in Japan became Zen). Both were contemporaneous with Padmasāmbhava, and all three subscribed to the Yogāchāra philosophy.

The particular sect which swears by Padmasāmbhava was known in Tibet as the 'doctrine of perfection of meditation or *dhyāna*' (*rDZogs - Pa - CH'en - Pa*). Padmasāmbhava's manual, which we have mentioned above, reads like a Zen text. It turns round the idea of 'one-mind' (*Sems-CHik-Po*), unknown but clear, unrecognised but radiant, clouded but free. Padmasāmbhava suggests; "To know whether small it be so or not, look within thine own mind"²⁰. 'Ati-yoga' is the art of looking into ones mind for the sake of self-illumination.

This third path has a further subdivision. There is first the path

concerning mind itself (*Sems-sDe*).

It makes the mind as pure as possible, freed from all phenomenal defilement. When, as a result of this, fetters fall away, and mind becomes so pure and clear that whatever arises therein is apprehended as objective and radiant, there appears the path that leads to mystical perfection (*kLong-sDe*). The mind here is free and easy; and its function 'effortless'. It can now look into its own innate, inherent and inalienable nature; and this is known as the 'diamond bridge' (*rDo-rJe Zam-pa in Sanskrit, vajra-setu*). The third path, which shows up in the wake of the second, is styled 'deep instruction' (*Man-Nag-gi-sDe*). The yogi here is face to face with the void (*śūnya*); the world and the body together disappear 'like a rainbow', and this is the actual moment of enlightenment. The Tibetan manuals

describe this condition as the 'supreme power of the lotus' (*padma-dBang-rGyal*).

In accordance with the three main 'paths', *mahā-yoga*, *anu-yoga* and *ati-yoga*, the practical discipline emphasises respectively visualizations of deities, physico-mental exercises and intuitional understanding of ones own inner mind. The yoga-student usually spends three years working with his teacher, and learning the techniques of visualization, the formulae for evocation and methods of contemplation. He receives initiations (*dBang*) and special instructions pertaining to the worship of tutelary deities (*Lung* and *KHrid*).

After this, he retires to a solitary cell or cave, cut off altogether from all contact and freed from normal human cares, and spends

another three years to perfect what he had already learnt, test what he had received, and complete what he had commenced, all by himself. He now depends upon his own genius, earnestness, and fortune. Thus the aspirant is said to "stay three years in the open, and another three years in the dark" to attain the perfection of meditation.

Instruction from the teacher forms the foundation for the Yogic career. The *rÑing-Ma* teachers follow a common graded course, traditionally handed down, to provide general instructions, both prior to initiation and after initiation in the early stages. When the pupil is advanced enough to enter into the esoteric path, the 'word of instruction' (*KHrid-Yig*) becomes not only specialized and oral, but specifically relevant to each pupil (according to his character, ability,



ཨིངྩ་པ་ཀའི་

INDRA-PAKINI

inclinations and destiny). The role of the teacher (*bLa-Ma*) becomes particularly significant at this stage. Guidance is also sought from the pupil's personal protective deity (*Yi-Dam*), and instructions are sometimes claimed to be got from supernatural sources such as the 'spirits of wisdom' (*dākinī*, *mKHah-hGro-lMa*).

It can be seen that the *rÑing-Ma* tradition relied heavily on Tāntrik procedures, and worked freely with the indigenous Bon material. The synthesis of these two aspects constituted the stuff of Vajrayāna, although the Mahāyāna doctrine determined its shape.

Another important and interesting tradition in Tibet is *bKah-rGyud* (pronounced *Kargyut*). Its importance and interest is partly due to the personality and work of Tibet's

great and popular saint-poet Mi-La-Ras-Pa (pronounced Milarepa). Although this tradition was formally inaugurated by the Tibetan yogi, Marpa of Lhobrack, it had a definite Indian background; and its roots were explicitly in the Siddha cult. The list of teachers of the Kargyut sect commences with the legendary rDo-rJe-hCHang (*Vajra-dhara*), who revealed the doctrines characteristic of this sect to the Indian siddha Tilo-pā (Taila-pāda), who, in his turn, communicated them to another Śiddha, Nāro-pā (Nāḍa-pāda or Nāropanta), whose disciple was the Tibetan yogi, Mārpa. Mārpa's teachers in India included two other Siddhas, Maitri-pa and Kukkuri-pa. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Kargyut tradition is essentially Tāntrik in orientation.

Leaving out of account the mythical *Vajra-dhara*, Tilo-pā (988-



༣། ལྷན་སྒྲེས་བདེ་བ་མཆོག་བརྟེན་ཏེ་ཡོད། །

TILOPĀ

1069 A.D.) seems to have been the main architect of the Indian original of this tradition, which however, is no longer extant in India. Details of his life are obscure but he is the author of as many as eleven yoga manuals (like *Siddharmopadeśa*,

Guru-sāadhanā, *Achintya-mahāmudrā*, *Antara-bahya-vishanivṛtti-bhāvanākrama* and *Tattvachaturopadeśa-prasanna-dīpa*). Some of his mystical poems (*dohas*) in Apabhraṁśa, along with Sanskrit comments upon them called

Sārāthapañjikā, have been preserved in India²¹. The commentary describes him as 'the lord of the great yogis' (*'mahāyogiśvaras Tillopādah'*).

Among his students were the great Dīpaṅkara-Śrījñāna (Atīśa) and the scholastic Jñānākara. The textual tradition of *Chakrasaṁvara-tantra* traces the lineage of *gurus* from Saraha through Nāgārjuna, Śabari-pā, Lūi-pā, vajra-ghaṇṭa, Kaccha-pā, Jālandhari-pā, Kṛshṇācārya (Kāṇha-pā), Guhya(?), Vijaya-pā, to Tilo-pā. Some of the names in this list also occur in the guru-lineage of the Kālachakra system which however begins with Vajra-ghaṇṭa and through Kūrma-pāda, Kṛshṇācārya (Kāṇha-pā), Bhadra-pāda (Baḍe-pā), and Vajaya-pāda reaches Tilo-pā, Tillika) and Nāro (Nāḍa-pā).

Mahāpaṇḍita Nāro-pā, who carried Tilo-pā's tradition onward,

was a well-known scholar of Vikramaśīla, who succeeded the celebrated Jetāri as the *dvāra-paṇḍita*²². He is believed to have been chaplain to the king of Kashmir before he came to Vikramaśīla. Legends preserved in Tibet describe how he met Tilo-pā in a crematorium, became his disciple and served him for twelve long years with single-minded devotion, despite innumerable troubles on account of Tilo-pā's violent and unpredictable temper.

At length, he was initiated into the *Vajra-vārāhī* cult, in which he attained success in six months. The serene light that then emerged from his heart shone without a break for a month. He became a *yogin* and devoted his whole life to this *sādhana*. His magical attainments were numerous. Walking along the road one day, he saw the corpse of an



YOGINI

elephant lying; he at once entered into it and made it walk into the crematorium. Another day, as he was begging for alms (with skull-cup as his bowl), a robber dropped into the bowl a knife, Nāro-pā stared at it, and the knife thereupon melted like butter, which he quietly ate up, and walked on.

Another eminent scholar of Vikramaśīla, Ratnākara-śānti (also a siddha, Śānta-pā), was engaged one day in worship-rituals and sent offerings for the manes with a pupil. When this pupil arrived at the altar to place the offerings, he beheld a terrible looking *yogin* sitting on the altar. The pupil promptly got frightened, dropped the offerings and ran back to his master. The curious master came out and recognised Nāro-pā, at whose feet he sat and received many initiations. Likewise, three other siddhas Maitri-pā,

Dom̐bi-pā and Kāṇṭa-pā, became his disciples.

Dīpaṅkara-Śrījñana (Atīśa) before the left for Tibet, was blessed by the dying Nāro-pā. It is recorded that Dīpaṅkara carried with him the relic of Nāro-pā to Tibet, and enshrined them there. *Haṭhayoga-pradīpikā* mentions 'Nāradeva' as a *mahā-siddha* (1.5-9), and his name is honoured among the Nātha-siddhas.

He is said to have written as many as twenty-three works, and they are preserved in Tibetan. Among them are cult-manuals like *Kriyāvajra-vārāhī*, and *Jñāna-vajra-vārāhī*. His *Sekoddeśa-ṭīkā* is the only Sanskrit work from his pen that is available in India. Discovered by G.Tucci in Nepal²³, this work deals with the rituals of initiation by sprinkling (*seka*), based upon the

Kāla-chakra doctrine. In fact, this work is in the nature of a commentary (*tīkā*) upon a section of the *Śrī-Kāla-chakra-tantra*. But the most important of his works, so far as the Tibetan scholars are concerned, is *Nāro-pai-CHos-dRug* ('The six laws of Nāro-pā'), now preserved only in the Tibetan, which has been described as a manual for ascetic *yogins*. Although a Kargyut text, it had the honour of being commented upon by the celebrated TSong-KHa-Pa himself, founder of the 'yellow' puritanical Gelugs sect, which normally looks askance at the red Kargyutpa.

Associated with Nāro-pā and developed extensively in Tibet are the six-fold Tāntrik techniques: the generation of psychic heat (*gTum-Mo*); the assumption of phantom-form (*sGyu-Lus*); the benefit of dream state (*rMi-Lam*); the

obtainment of clear light (*od-gSal*); the transference of consciousness (*Po-Wa*); and the command over the intermediary state (*gRon-aJug* or *Bardo*).

Although Nāro-pā, one of the best minds a culture can produce, is forgotten in India, Tibet remembers him reverently as 'Mahāpaṇḍita' (*NāRo Paṇ-CHen*)²⁴. This is due almost exclusively to the fact that the great Tibetan master Mārpa translated all his works into Tibetan, and kept alive the Siddha's tradition.

Mārpa met him in Tirhut or Phul-hari in Magadha, where the latter was living in quiet retreat after a brilliant academic career at the Vikramaśīla University. The studentship of Mārpa continued for sixteen years and seven months. It appears that Nāro-pā had other Tibetan students, like PHam-Thin-



NARO-PA

Pa (who lived with the teacher for seven years) and Ri-Ri-Pa (who learnt from him the method of generation, *utpanna-krama* and the method accomplishment, *sampanna-krama*, of *Chakrasamvara*). But scarcely anything about them is known. They were teachers who favoured the attainment of wisdom by meditative techniques rather than by learned discussions about *śūnyatā* (as the Paṇḍitas did). Nāro-pā's death is placed around 1039 A.D.

Mārpa (Mar-Pa-CHos-Kyi-bLo-Gros, Lo-tSa-ba, 'the Translator' (1012-1096 A.D.) of LHO-Brag in Southern Tibet, studied under hBro-gMi (993-1078 A.D.) This interesting teacher lived in a tent amidst cattle, very much like one of them! He, it was that inspired Mārpa to seek teachings directly from India. Mārpa visited India thrice, and lived here altogether for eighteen years, during which period he studied not only under Nāro-pā, but also under Maitri-pā (b. 1007 A.D.), dPal-Yeses-Shing-Po and Grub-CHen-Shiwa-bZang-Po (the Indian names of these are lost). He records that he listened to 108 Indian masters (of whom Nāro-pā and Maitri-pā were of course the foremost), studied 108 works on Sanskrit grammar and poetics, learnt 108 Tāntrik works (like *Hevajra-tantra*), and assimilated 108 oral traditions (like the *Four-word Precept*).

Although his fame rests as a collector of Indian manuscripts and translator of Sanskrit texts, he was a great *yogin* “having reached single-minded and one-pointed contemplation on the essence of the ultimate and excellent path, thus comprehending the utter void, both subjective and objective.” However, he lived as an ordinary householder, and was quite a whimsical character, quite unpredictable. He gathered a large number of students round him, of whom Mi-La-Ras-Pa (Milarepa) was of course the most celebrated. It is not generally known that this teacher of Tibet’s greatest poet was himself a poet, and that he introduced a new style in Tibetan poetry.

During his second visit to India, he met Dīpaṅkara-Śrī-jñāna (Atiśa) and studied some texts with him. And when the latter went to Tibet, Mārpa was one of those who eagerly

welcomed him. It is recorded that Mārpa was then 31 years old. But Mārpa’s disciples developed a strange ambivalence towards to Dīpaṅkara. They claim that the Green Tārā cult which was transmitted to Mārpa from Nāro-pā had also been transmitted to Dīpaṅkara, and Dīpaṅkara would have taught this Tāntrik tradition but for the counsel of his chief disciple Brom-STon-Pa against it.

Milarepa said: “A demon had entered the heart of Tibet. That is why the venerable Atiśa did not preach Vajrayāna”. It is to be noted that Dīpaṅkara preferred the worship of deities without their female counterparts, that is say, without Tāntrik involvements. His followers called this ‘One-god worship’ (*ekavīra-sāadhanā*); but Milarepa described it rather caustically as “the widower aspect”. While the Kargyut



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folk respect Dīpaṅkara, they regard his teaching as inadequate and half-hearted, illustrative of the well-known “master’s fist” (*āchārya-muṣṭi*).

Among Mārpa’s disciples four were foremost, the so-called “four pillars”: rNo-STon-Chos-sKu, rDo-rJe-mTHur-STon-dBang, Mes-STon-TSHon-Po and Mi-La-Ras-Pa. Mārpa charged the first three to carry on his teaching in the matter of various esoteric doctrines, the four noble truths (sorrow, origination of sorrow, cessation of sorrow, method for bringing about the cessation of sorrow), idealist philosophy of ‘great illusion’ (*mahā-māyā*) and the inner meaning of the rites of the ‘happy thunderbolt’ (*dGyes-rDor*)²⁴. And as for Milarepa, he was entrusted with various meditational methods and was instructed to lead the life of a solitary hermit on mountain-tops, in

caves and jungles. But it so happened that it was Milarepa, and not the three others, that continued Marpa’s tradition through a succession of eminent masters.

Mārpa’s particular doctrinal viewpoint as well as peculiar practical methods of enlightenment were crystallised in what came to be called the *bKah-brGyud* tradition. Its original name appears to have been *dKar-rGyud* (*dKar* meaning white); and the reference was to the habit of wearing white robes. Marpa, who was a householder and not a monk, wore white robes; and his disciple Milarepa, who too was not a monk although a celibate, had only a white cotton sheet wrapped round his body; they had adopted this mode of dress after Indian yogins.

The name Mi-La-Ras-Pa means Mila (his personal name) ‘the cotton-



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clad one' (*Ras-Pa*). His order of an ascetic insisted only cotton (*Ras-rKyang*), and that too white in colour. In contradistinction to the red habit of the *rÑing-Ma-Pa* and the multi-coloured dress of the *Sa-SKya-Pa*, Mārpa's sect was distinguished by white robes. But soon, the expression *dKar* ('white') was substituted by *bKah* ('word', 'utterance', 'command') and *bKah-rGyud* came to signify the 'line or succession of those who transmit the words of the

teachers', or simply 'the oral tradition' (or 'the thread of the word').

The oral tradition that was communicated to Tilo-pā by the mythical *rDo-rJe-hCHung* (*Vajradhara*) appears to have come down in two streams, one through Nāro-pā himself, and the other through his sister, Ni-Gu-Ma, who was also a disciple of Tilo-pā. Nāro-pā, Mārpa, Milarepa were the architects of the first division, while Ni-Gu-Ma and her disciple KHyung-Po rNal-'Byor were responsible for the second. Ni-Gu-Ma is sometime described as a *ḍakīnī* of wisdom, and sometimes as the mystic consort (*yoginī*) of Nāro-pā, although generally she is looked upon as Nāro-pā's sister. It is not certain if she was at all a historical figure, because in the Tibetan accounts she is characterised as having one half of her body 'imponderable like a rainbow'.

She is said to have taught KHyung-Po the art of acquiring a phantom body and the art of projecting multiple appearances in the sky, besides the six-fold doctrine of Tilo-pā. It is said that having perfected this art from Ni-Gu-Ma, KHyung-Po could show himself up in 128 different bodies, withdraw them all into himself again, sit in mid-air and preach to a crowd, and pass through rocks and hills as if they simply did not exist. Whatever Ni-Gu-Ma was, KHyung-Po was a real person, albeit an extraordinary one. Born in 990 A.D. he lived to be 150. Early in life he studied Bon, got initiated in the *rÑing-Ma* methods of *ati-yoga*, obtained proficiency in *Kālachakra-tantra* and went to India seven times, spending no less than fifty years wandering through India, Nepal and Tibet.

He studied under 150 teachers, but six of them left a deep impress

upon him: Vasumati-pañḍita, Vairochana-pañḍita, Bhadra-sajjana, Rāhula-gupta, Maitri-pā and Ni-Gu-Ma. He is reputed to have studied also under Dāna-śīla, who was a disciple of Nāro-pā. The names of other teachers, Yogi-Sva-pa (SWa-Pa-hi rNal-'Byor-Pa), rDo-rJe-gDan-Pa Chen-Po, Lalita-vajra and Āryadeva are also mentioned. Accounts concerning his study under Ni-Gu-Ma vary. One account makes her teach him the 'six doctrines' of Tilo-pā in a normal way, while another makes the teaching a mysterious initiation in an esoteric cult by a *ḍākīnī*.

When he returned to Tibet, he built 108 monasteries and spent in spreading what he called Ni-Gu-Ma's teachings a little over thirty years. Later, Ko-Brag-Pa bSod-Nams-rGyal-mTShan (1182-1261 A.D.) carved out a distinct sect out of these teachings, the 'Sanga-Pa' branch of the *bKah-bRgud*.

More important than this transmission was the one through Nāro-pā, Mārpa and Milarepa. Milarepa's life (1039-1122 A.D.), as recorded by his favourite disciple Ras-CHung rDo-rJe (b-1083), has justly become a world's classic. Most popular book in Tibet, it is a remarkable account of the spiritual unfoldment of a remarkable personality²⁵. *Hundred Thousand Songs* is a monumental collection of inspired utterances, at once poetic and mystical²⁶.

Milarepa shunned publicity, frequented forlorn hills and caves, and lived a life of extreme asceticism. He did not teach any students or groups of them in any organized manner; and so no cult grew up round him. Nevertheless, many earnest souls were attracted to him, and he had a large following. Milarepa was known for his unprecedented



success in the 'yoga of generating heat' (*Tum-Mo*); and as many as 108 students are said to have learnt this art from him. Milarepa was an adept in other yogas as well, and about ten disciples became as well versed in them as he was. They were instrumental in handing down the tradition.

Two of his followers are prominent in the religious history of Tibet: Ras-CHung-Po (1084-1161

A.D.), known as “moon-like”, and Sgam-Po-Pa (1079-1153) A.D), who was “sun-like”. The former was more or less like the master living in seclusion, and did not leave any cult or organization behind him. Milarepa sent him to India twice to get some doctrines. According to him, there were in India, at that time nine doctrines regarding incorporeal (*Lue-Med* ‘body-less’) *ḍākinīs*, five of which had been communicated to him by his teacher Mārpa. Now Ras-Chung-Po was sent to fetch the other four. Ras-Chung-Po went to India, met Tiphu-Pā(?) a direct disciple of Nāro-Pā and Maitri-pā, and obtained these doctrines and transmitted them to Milarepa. Milarepa taught them to Nam-rDsong-STon-Pa, who wrote books concerning them. This fact became the nucleus of an oral tradition, known as ‘the line of Happy Hearers’” (*bDem-Chog-SNan-brGyud*).

The other disciple, sGam-Po-Pa(or Dvags-Po), so called because he built a monastery (*sGam-Po*) at Dvags-PO, was an interesting person. He hailed from a wealthy and influential family, studied medicine, but preferred a contemplative career, when at the age of twenty-five he lost his wife. Stricken with sorrow, he became a monk of the *bKah-gDams* tradition, and practised austerities as taught by Dipaṅkara (Atīśa). When he was 32, he met Milarepa at Brin, and at once ‘lost his heart for him’. And strangely enough, Milarepa immediately took him as a disciple and guided him in matters of doctrine as well as discipline. sGam-Po-Pa then retired to a cave, meditated for six months without a break, and perfected Milarepa’s teachings in his own life.

Although he preferred to live the life of a lone recluse, he built a

monastery at Dvags-Po in 1150 A.D., as desired by Milarepa, and began to teach. Mārpa had brought from India the 'mahāmudrā doctrine which he taught Milarepa, and he communicated it to sGam-Po-Pa. sGam-Po pa, however, had already been initiated into the *bKah-gDams* doctrines, and now Mahāmudrā got fused with them in sGam-Po-Pa. He wrote an excellent manual, *Lam-Rim THar-rGyan* ('Graded Course to Salvation') which syntheizes the two traditions and presents practical methods to enlightenment.

A pretty story brings out the significance of sGam-Po-Pa's work. When as a *bKah-gDams-Pa* monk, he approached Milarepa, the following conversation took place between them.:

Mila - "How long do you sit in meditation?"

sGam-Po-Pa - "Usually for six hours".

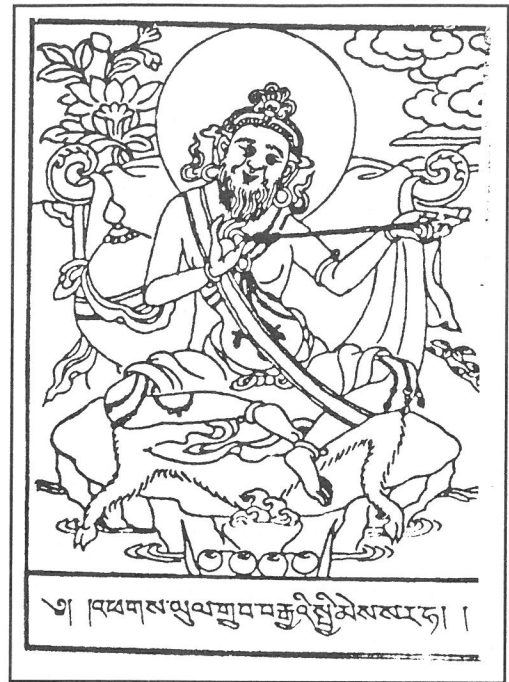
Mila - "What do you experience?"

sGam-Po-Pa - "Nothing at all"

Mila (laughing) - "How can that be? You practice for six hours, and yet there are no signs of progress? Then you must give up this practice, and start right from the beginning another".

sGam-Po-Pa was ready to so, and he set about changing his monastic robes for white cotton as Milarepa was wearing. But Milarepa stopped him: "That is not what I mean! I do not want to make you a copy of myself. You must bring out

your own inner teaching. My teaching is mine, yours must be yours". Thereupon sGam-Po-Pa set up a hermitage three miles removed from Milarepa's cave and began meditating. After six weeks he had visions. The first day the Buddha appeared, the second day a maṇḍala and so on. Each time he reported his visions to Milarepa, who kept on saying "It is nothing! Go back to your practice." After a few more weeks, sGam-Po-Pa had the vivid vision of all the six worlds, and naturally he thought he had hit the mark. He ran to Milarepa to report, but Milarepa was at that time sleeping. The excited meditator woke up the master, and narrated the wonderful vision. Milarepa merely said : "Let me sleep! I am not a scholar like you. But I know that *Prajñā-pāramitā* says that all this is mere illusion. I suggest you go back



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and practice!" sGam-Po-Pa, crestfallen and frustrated, returned to his meditation.

At length, he dreamt one day that he had cut off his own head and that he saw it rolling down the hill. Thereafter there were no more visions, for the root of ego was cut off.

sGam-Po-Pa was indeed a genius of synthesis. For instance, he

is said to have received three different traditions of initiations of White Tārā: Dharma-kīrti's, through Atīśa to geshe Drepa; Vāgīśvara-kīrti's, through Amogha-vajra to Drepa; and Atīśa's through Neljorpa and Nyugrumopa. sGam-Po-Pa not only collected them, but integrated them, and passed this in the Karma-pa line. Being Milarepa's pupil, it was natural for him, to emphasise meditation: "One brief glimpse of enlightenment born out of meditation is surely more valuable than all the knowledge acquired from reading books, listening to discourses, and thinking about them".

But he was careful to caution that "a glimpse of reality may be mistaken for complete realization". And he also warned: "Meditation without adequate preparation through study and reflection on doctrine may lead to the mistake of losing oneself in the darkness of unconsciousness".

His view of what constitutes meditation is clearly brought out in this statement: "To experience but momentarily the state of absorption (*samādhi*), wherein all thought-processes are quiescent is more precious than to experience uninterruptedly the *samādhi* wherein thought-processes are still present". How effective his instruction could be may be gleaned from the recorded fact that one of his disciples, gLing-Pad-Ma-rDo-rJe (1128-1188 A.D.), obtained enlightenment within three days. sGam-Po-Pa advocated the utilization of every event in life, however insignificant, as an aid on the path.

Milarepa's plea that the pupil must not aspire to be a mere copy of the teacher, but develop his own inner teaching, bore rich fruit in sGam-Po-Pa's pupils. Each one of them formulated his own set of

teachings, broadly of course within the *bKah-rGyud* tradition, but individualistic enough to inspire distinct sects. It is to be remembered that the personality of the teacher and his monastery are what distinguish the sects in the main. One of sGam-Po-Pa's disciples Karma-Dus-gSum-mKhyen-Pa of Kham (1110-1193 A.D.), who started the Karma-Pa line of *bKah-rGyud* tradition, became a monk when he was only 16, studied under numerous teachers, got promptly perplexed, but found his problems solved when he met, in his thirty-third year, sGam-Po-Pa at Dvaga-Po. He had also the good fortune to meet Milarepa, practice meditation under his guidance, and learn from him the 'six-fold doctrine' of Nāropā, before he returned to Kham and taught over a thousand pupils. He assimilated into the tradition crystallised by Milarepa and sGam-

Po-Pa the 'hidden revelations' from *rÑing-Ma* sources.

The Karma-pa sect that he thus founded came to great power and popularity not only in Tibet and Mongolia, but also in parts of China, mainly due to the brilliant Karma-Pa-KSHi (which was a Mangolian expression for 'teacher', *SLob-dPon*), also known as Karma II (1204-1283 A.D.), and to Karma Rong-bYang rDo-rJe (Karma III, 1284-1339 A.D.), who originated the 'Red-cap' subsect. The latter's successor was the one who administered monastic ordination to the great TSong-KHa-Pa, the founder of the dGe-Lugs sect. The fifth Karma Master it was that introduced around 1410 the mystic dance as a sacred ritual.

Of the disciples of sGam-Po-Pa, the most earnest and most



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interesting was PHag-Mo-gRub-Pa (1110-1170 A.D.). He studied with every teacher he could find, and assiduously practised rituals and contemplations of all the available traditions, till he met sGam-Po-Pa. He founded the first great bKah-rGyud monastery in Tibet (gDan-Sa-mTHil), which became exceedingly wealthy after his death. But he himself lived in a single-celled little grass-hut, and spent all his time in meditation. He focussed his entire energy and attention on a single statement of his teacher, sGam-Po-Pa: "Leave the mind relaxed, it will attain tranquillity on its own. Leave the water undisturbed, it will become clear on its own".

He did not care to formulate his teaching in a formal manner, nor did he nominate any successor. But eight among his many disciples founded in due course their own

subjects. One of them, Rin-Chen-dPal (1143-1217 A.D.) rendered *bKah-rGyud* heavily rÑing-Ma-Oriented. He even got busy with 'buried treasure' (*gTer-Ma*) and became well-known on this account. His meditational method involved the identification of the devotee's self with the tutelary deity by means of stilling the mind, and purging it of all discriminatory thoughts. He stressed the need for taking a vow to be reborn spiritually in this very life.

But another of PHag-Mo's disciples, bKar-Sis-dPal (1142-1210 A.D.), moved away from *rÑing-Ma* and insisted on strict rule of discipline for the monastic community that he led; he did not allow women to enter his monastery, nor did he go out to the lay-community. He was a severe ascetic, and his model was Milarepa. He even forbade meat from the monastery kitchen.

Still another disciple of PHag-Mo, sTag-Lung THang-Pa (around 1185 A.D.), was likewise exceedingly auster. Besides no-meat and no-wine, he and his disciples did not even walk about in the gardens of the monastery, much less outside; they sat almost continuously in silent meditation.

PHag-Mo's disciples spread far and wide, and made bKah-rGyud ideas popular not only in Tibet but also in Bhutan and Sikkim. gTang-Pa rGya-IRas (around 1161 A.D.) was the disciple of one of PHang-Mo's disciples, gLing-Ras Pad-Ma rDo-rJe (1120-1288 A.D.). He had mastered the esoteric technique of generating heat in the body (*Tum-Mo*) in just seven days, and is credited with having taught this technique to as many as 50,000 students. He it was that systematised the 'eight-fold' *bKah-rGyud* teaching

including the Nāro-Pā's six doctrines, Rin-CHen-dPal's five methods, and the esoteric practices like the *Tum-Mo*.

The 'oral tradition', depending to a large extent upon individual masters, became naturally varied in emphasis. If the Indian precursors like Tilo-pā and Nāro-pā were decidedly mystical and iconoclast, Mārpa was less so. He preferred to base his teaching on 'the word of the Buddha', and believed in the efficacy of initiations. If he represented a formal 'bLa-Ma' (teacher), running a school and administering initiations, Milarepa was an ascetic and a mystic, preferring to lead a hermit's life.

If his emphasis was on quiet contemplation, sGam-Po-Pa attached importance to the direct but active purification of mind. But Karma Dus-gSum recommended breathing exercises in order to still the mental

functions. If sGam-Po-Pa offered a graded course for enlightenment, Phag-Mo suggested a 'sudden' method. However, all these constitute a direct line of apostolic succession.

Notwithstanding such differences in approach, the basic and common framework for the *bKah-rGyud-Pa* is 'the doctrine of the great seal' (*mahā-mudrā*), practically expressed in meditation. The fundamental outlook of the *bKah-rGyud* is best summed up in the words of sGam-Po-Pa: "With a detached mind as frame of reference (*gSHi*), using the body as base (*rTen*), surrounded by teachers and fellow-meditators as reinforcing agents (*rGyen*), employing the teacher's instruction as the main means, one should seek enlightenment through the visualization and dissolution of tutelary deities; and this would help

all sentient beings to be happy and safe"²⁷.

The philosophical position of the *bKah-rGyud-Pa* is derived mainly from *Abhidharma-kośa*, Maitreya's 'Five Books' (*Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra-ṭīkā*, *Dharmādharmatā-vibhaṅga*, *Madhyānta-vibhaṅga*, etc.), and Nāgārjuna's treatises on *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Mādhyamika*. But the practices and rituals depend upon numerous Tantras (translated from Sanskrit into Tibetan) dealing with contemplation as well as visualization of tutelary deities. The major theoretical construct in the Tantras that *bKah-rGyud-Pas* work with is the *mahāmudrā*, which is described as a 'viewpoint' (*ITa*).

However, *mahā-mudrā* is not peculiar to *bKah-rGyud-Pa*. Almost all Tibeztan traditions have incorporated this 'viewpoint'. But

the reliance of bKah-rGyud-Pa upon *mahā-mudrā* is especial and esoteric.

The viewpoint goes back to the earliest of Indian siddhas, Saraha-pāda, among whose writings some (like *Mahāmudropadeśa* and *Mahāmudrāpraśnottara*) deal specifically with this subject. Another siddha, Kāṇha-pāda (*Kṛṣṇācārya*), made this view-point popular; he gave currency to the concept of *yuganaddha* (esoteric union, 'two-in-one', Tib. *Yab-Yum*) in the context of *mahāmudrā*. Later siddhas like Tilo-pā and Nāro-pā and saints like Niru-pā and Vairochana-rakshita built their doctrines principally on this view-point; and this is the heritage that Mārpa inherited and communicated through Milarepa to Rechung.

It should be noted that Atīśa also had come under the influence



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of Naro-pā, and naturally incorporated the *mahā-mudrā* view-point in his own teaching. This survived not only in the Karma-Pā tradition, but also in the reformed dGe-Lugs-Pa. Thus there is a 'combined tradition' in vogue. The first Pañchen-Lama, Paṇ-CHen bLo-bZang-Chos-Kyi-rGyal-mTsan (1570-1662 A.D.) compiled 'the root-text' of this combined tradition and described it as "the main path all the Buddhas have travelled"²⁸.

But the more important text relied upon by the bKah-rGyud-pa is the epitome prepared by the twentyfourth teacher in Mārpa's line, Brug-pa Padma-dKar-Po (born 1527), while he was residing in the Tibetan frontier of Bhutan for the sake of his pupil, the king of Kashmere, Zam-phan Zang-Po (?). This teacher was a great enthusiast of the Tāntrik tradition, and he compiled no less than fifty-eight volumes of Tāntrik texts. Scholar, poet and saint, he achieved great celebrity in Tibet; and when he went to Bhutan to do the work that Dīpaṅkara-Atīśa did in Tibet, he was honoured there as the 'dharma-rāja' ('lord of religion'). The *mahā-mudrā* viewpoint was crystallized and documented by him.

There is some confusion about what *mahā-mudrā* means. *Hevajra-tantra* calls upon the devotees to adopt 'mahā-mudrā', which involves

the employment of ones own bodily energies; and 'mahā-mudrā' is described there as "known only by ones own personal experience" and as the "ultimate good"²⁹. There is little doubt that it originally meant 'the great seal', and signified a method of sealing up (or locking) and strength (physical, psychical and sexual). The well-known yogic manual *Gheraṇḍa-saṁhitā* mentions *mahā-mudrā* as one of twenty-five 'seals' (like *śāmbhavī-mudrā*, *uḍḍiyāna-mudrā*, *nabho-mudrā*, *jālandhara-mudrā*, *maṇḍūka-mudrā* and so on), employed for cleansing the central psychic passage (*sushumnā*). This seal was doubtless related to the techniques of breath-control (*prāṇāyāma*), artery cleansing (*nāḍī-śodha*) and no-thought exercises (*unmanī*).

Saraha-pāda speaks of "the rush of wind breaking down in the

grasp of ones own mind''³⁰. Kāṇha-pāda describes the sealing-up of the door by which wind exits, and the mind lighting up the dense darkness within.³¹ Elsewhere he likens mind and wind (*maṇa-pavaṇa*) to two drums that must be 'beat' while he (*Kāṇha*) weds the untouchable *ḍombī-give*³².

The wedding that he speaks of is of course the mystic marriage that we find frequently described in the songs of Siddhas. But in the prosaic and mischievous imagination of some later writers, the wedding became a physical affair, and *mahāmudrā* came to mean the passionate girl that one takes during the ritual performance of 'secret congress' (*guhya-samāja*).

The corrupt idea and the degenerate practice got into even celebrated texts like *Guhya-samāja-tantra* (15th paṭala, p.99),

Prajñopāya-viniśchayasiddhi (3rd pariccheda, verses 6 to 20), and *Jñāna-Siddhi* (1st pariccheda, verses 78-85). However, the 'girl' referred to by the Siddhas was merely symbolic; the 'no-nature' (*niḥsvabhāva*) was the eternal female principle, 'compassion' (*karuṇā*) was her body, and 'pure bliss' (*mahā-sukha*) of enlightenment her only form. The *sādhaka* had to 'enjoy her' in order to experience this great bliss.

The Siddha Tilo-pā emphasised that this should be taken only in the esoteric sense. One should seek to unite with the 'girl' within ones own being and the 'secret congress' is meditation. It may also be noted in this context that the familiar symbol of sexual union in Tibetan iconography, *Yam-Yum* (Skt. *yuganaddha*), does not mean merely 'male-female'; more specifically it

means ‘father-mother’, and therefore it is actually a reverential expression. The positioning of the five *dhyāni-buddhas* in *Yab-Yum* aspect appears to have been prototype of *mahā-mudrā*.

The *mahā-mudrā* tradition in Tibet is also related to other Indian sources, such as PHya-gNa (whose Indian name has been forgotten, and who is said to have visited Tibet) and Asu (who visited the U region in Central Tibet). Dīpaṃkara-Atīśa, as mentioned earlier, brought this doctrine to Tibet, and stressed its esoteric significance. And his disciple Brom is reputed to have prepared his own version of *mahā-mudrā*. But both of them were rather lukewarm in their appreciation of this doctrine, and did little to spread it among their followers. It was Marpa, who inherited this tradition from Nāropā, that was mainly responsible from



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the popularity of this thought-practice complex in Tibet.

The Tibetan expression for *mahā-mudrā* is PHyag-rGya-CHen-Po (or -Mo in the feminine form). The first part *PHyag*, connotes the sense of ‘holding’ or ‘grasping’ (the Buddhahood in, and beyond, phenomenal involvement); and the second, *rGya*, means ‘to seal’, ‘to impress’ (the phenomenal existence with enlightenment). The two

together render the Sanskrit word *mudrā*, which is interpreted as encounter with one's own being, with reality, with the void nature. The lay folk are altogether ignorant of such encounter³³, which is achieved by visualizations, regulation of breathing to the accompaniment of rDo-rJe recitation (*vajra-japa*) and the establishment of mind in pot-like posture (*kumbhaka*).

Mahā-mudrā is described as the 'fire' that resides in the navel region, but scorches up the whole phenomenal being as it is rushed through the central channel (*sushumnā*). This fire is kindled by making the 'original mind' press the breath into the central channel. The fire will not only burn up the 'dross' of normal living, but produce a light within, which illumines the whole being. In this illumination, the void-

nature (*niḥsvabhāva*) is wholly realized. And at this realization, 'joy' results.

One may recall Nāro-pa-'s derivation of *mudrā* from the stems *muda* (joy) and *rati* (enjoyment). The roots of the individual's entanglement with the world are here burnt up, and the individual's phenomenal existence is 'sealed' with the joy of enlightenment. The stages of 'action-seal' (*karma-mudrā*) which impresses the external reality, and the 'Mind-seal' (*dharma-mudrā*), which impresses the internal reality, are regarded as preparatory to *mahā-mudrā*, which goes beyond these two realities and integrates them. Following *mahā-mudrā*, there occurs the 'vow-seal' (*samaya-mudrā*), which impresses on the continuance of the career for the welfare of all beings³⁴.



In the bKah-rGyud tradition, Dvags-Po (1079-1161 A.D.) otherwise known as sGom-Po-Pa, who inherited the 'great seal' from Milarepa, opened the doctrine and practice also to the uninitiated enthusiasts. Till the days of Milarepa, it was entirely esoteric, and depended wholly on initiations. But now there was an 'exoteric seal', which worked

with the void nature of the mind, and employed devices to detach the mind from external objects, and also to suspend its operation. This seal is very similar to Zen. The 'esoteric seal' on the other hand, follows the yogic method of awakening the vital centers (*chakras*), and is very similar to the Tāntrik practices of the Nātha-Siddha tradition.

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3. *Ibid.*, p.22.
4. In Tibetan *Ma-ṇi-CHos-aKHor* ('Maṇi-religion wheel', or *dharma-chakra*). It is mistake to call it 'prayer-wheel'. There is no 'prayer' involved in it, but a resolve to revolve the wheel of dharma as the Buddha did; and the pious Tibetan vows to undertake the *bodhisattva*-career, and in ritual makes use of hand and finger-gestures, denoting 'the turning of the wheel of dharma'. He is also motivated by the Kālachakra ideal of destroying the cycle of existence (*bhava-chakra*). It is true that the mystic formula "Om Maṇi-padme Hūm" called the Maṇi-formula written down is contained within the cylinder that is revolved. But this again is not a prayer, but a resolve. There is a distinction made between "the mouth Maṇi" (*KHa-Mani*, i.e. recitation of the formula) and "the hand-wheel Maṇi" (*Lag-aKhor-Lo-Mani*), from both of which the pious one is not to be 'separated'; one is not a substitute for the other. The acts of virtue include thinking of Maṇi as a mental *sādhana*, muttering Maṇi as verbalized *sādhana* (*CHos-aDon*) and turning Maṇi as physical *sādhana* (*Lus-Las*). It is surprising that a careful author like Ekvall has written

that “there is nothing to suggest that it came from India”(Ekvall, *op.cit.* p.120). Both the idea and practice of ‘revolving religion wheels’ are still current in Hindu orthodox rituals in India.

5. For this debate see S.C.Das, “*Indian Pandits in Tibet*”, JBTS, Vol. I, 1893, Part I, pp.1-31; and *Tattva-saṅgraha* of Śāntarakṣita with the commentary of Kamalaśīla (Ed. E. Krishnamacharya), GOS 1926, Foreword, pp.xvi-xviii.
6. Luther G.Jerstad: *Mani-Rimdu*, 1969,p.129-135.
7. Also cf. N.C.Sinha, *Tibet: Considerations of Inner Asian History*, 1967,p.40.
8. For details cf. Geshe Rabten, *The Preliminary Practices*, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, Dharmasala, 1974, pp.61-64.
9. Guiseppe Tucci, *Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, London, 1960; c f also John Blofeld, *The Tantrik Mysticism of Tibet*, New York, 1970; Ajit Mookerjee, *Tantra Art*, 1968; and Herbert Guenther, *Treasures on the Tibetan Middle Way*, Berkeley 1969.
10. The Indian manuals on *Maṇḍala*-ritual in Tibetan including Ratnākara-gupta’s *Maṇḍala-vidhi*, Guhya-Jetāri’s *Maṇḍala-vidhi*, Ratnākara-śānti’s *Maṇḍal-gyiv-CHo-Ga* (the Sanskrit title is not available), Jayasena’s *Maṇḍalavidhi-ratana-marakata*, Nishkalaṅka-vajra’s *Maṇḍalavidhi*, and works with the same title by Kambala and Kamalaśrī.

11. cf. Alexandra David-Neel, *With Mystics and Magicians in Tibet*, (Penguin edition, 1936), p.225.
12. For an examination of these books from the 'buried treasure', cf. A.I. Vostrikov. *Tibetan Historical Literature*, 27-57.
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15. *Ibid.*, p.229.
16. *Ibid.*, p.206, cf. footnotes 2 and 3.
17. of Li An-Che, "Rñin-ma-pa; the Early Form of Lamaism" *JRAS*, 1948, pp.142-163.
18. *Yuganaddha-prakāśa*, (N0.13) in *Advaya-Vajra-Saṅgraha*, ed. H.P.Sastri, GOS No.XL "Śūnyatākṛpayor aikyam vidheyam na svakalpatah, śūnyatāyāh prakāśasya prakṛtyā yuganaddhatā". cf. also Herbert Guenther, *Yuganaddha, Tantric View of Life*, (Chowkhamba). 1969.
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29. "Mahāmudrām nish eveta sva-dehopāyasamṣrutam; svasamvedyā hi sā vidyā mahāmudrā parā śubhā".
30. "Pavana-viṭṭutthai ṇismsṇs gase"(P.C.Bagchi, ed., p.5-6).
31. "Jīa pavaṇa-gamaṇa-dūare diḍha tālā vi dijjai; jai tasu ghorāndhāre maṇa divaho kijjai (*Ibid.*, p.128).
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CHAPTER SIX

THE VOID

GUHYA-SAMĀJA AND HEVAJRA

The classification of Tibetan Tāntrik texts into the following four groups is frequently:

1. manuals dealing with ordinary ritualistic activities (*krivā*);
2. those dealing with the conduct of one who intends treading the *bodhisattva*-path or participating in esoteric ritual (*charyā*);
3. those dealing mostly with meditational practices but also involving mystic rituals and conduct (*yoga*); and
4. those dealing exclusively with meditational practices (*dhyānottara* or *anuttara*). The classification is later than the Tantras.



Ideally, however, each Tantra should contain details about the correct attitude the devotee has to develop (*Ita-Va*), meditational methods and rituals one must accomplish (*sGom-Pa*), the conduct one must perfect in order to obtain proficiency in rituals as well as general success in spiritual life (*sPyod-Pa*), and the fruits one should

expect to obtain as a result of such practices (*1Bras-Bu*). The more important of the Tantras (not more than about twenty) are found to conform to this norm. The earliest of the Tantras, *Mañjuśrīmūla-kalpa* (in Tibetan *hJam-dPal-rTSa-rGyud*), for instance, is a huge mass of interesting information about all the four aspects of tantra mentioned above. It is sometimes classified as a *kriyā*-tantra, sometimes as a *charyā*-tantra. It deals not only with ritualistic details (including *mudrās*, *maṇḍalas* and *mantras*), but with the devotee's conduct during consecration, while preparing for the ritual, while the rituals are being performed, and when the ritual is completed. But there appears to have been a wide-spread belief among scholars and aspirants that *kriyā-tantras* were inferior, and therefore very few important Tantras are

explicitly included in this category. According to the Tibetan historian Tārānātha, both *kriyā* and *charyā*-Tantras were transmitted secretly to practitioners but were made public contemporaneously with *Mahāyāna-sūtras*. In other words, they were the first to appear. But yoga and *anuttara*-Tantras were later recovered (mysteriously), or composed severally, by masters like Saraha-pāda, Kāmbala-pāda, Kukkuri-pāda, Kāṇha-pāda and Piṭo-pāda. It is to be noted that many *anuttara*-and *yoga*-tantras are associated with Siddhas, like *Buddha-kalpa-tantra* with Saraha, *Rakta-yamāri-tantra* with Viru-Pā, *Hevajra-tantra* with Saroruha (Saraha?) and Kāmbala, *Mahāmāyā-tantra* with Kukkuri-Pā, *Chakra-saṁvara-tantra* with Kāṇha-Pā, *Vajradāka-tantra* (in Apabrahmṁśa) with Bhāḍe-pā, and *Guhya-garbha-tantra* with Līlā-vajra.

Another early Tantra, *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, is usually classified as an *anuttara-tantra* or as a *yoga-tantra*, because it mainly deals with the ‘meditational Buddhas’, insists on visualizations and esoteric diagrams, and describes ultimate reality as non-dual, void-like and incorruptible like and diamond (*vajra*). It rejects the necessity of both rituals (*kriyā*) and virtuous living (*charyā*) in order to achieve the highest end; it stresses the need for consecration (*abhisheka*) into ‘the adamant path’ (*vajra-mārga*), and suggests intense contemplation (with visualizations) in the ‘cosmogram’ of body-speech-mind (‘*kāya-vāk-chitta-maṇḍala-dhyānam*’). The ‘proximate-means’ (*upa-sādhana*) consists of mentally conjuring up the forms of deities, having settled oneself in void, and by employing ‘thoughts of enlightenment’. It



GUHYA-SAMĀJA

became a basic text of Vajrayāna. Known in Tibetan as *gSang-hDus-rGyud*, it was a ‘sleeping text, (secretly communicated from teacher to pupil) till Asaṅga taught it.

Still another important Tantra, *Mahā-vairocana-abhi-sambodhi*, is a *charyā-tantra*. This was translated into Chinese by a South Indian scholar of Nālandā, Śubhākara-Simha, who died in China in 735 A.D. The Buddha here appears as ‘the great sun’ (*mahā-vairocana*),

surrounded by Samanta-bhadra and other bodhi-sattvas, and Vajrapāṇi and *Vajradharas*, illumining the entire universe. The Tantra calls upon the devotee to become one with the Buddha as 'the great sun' by means of meditations on the the *maṇḍala*; He can obtain the highest end only in his own being, and by bringing into action his thought of enlightenment' (*bodhi-chitta*). Emancipation consists of purifying ones own thoughts, which are in fact pure in their original, essential and ultimate nature. As a *charyā*-tantra, it elaborates on conduct, rituals, symbols and consecration. But there is also an unmistakable emphasis on *yoga*.

This aspect becomes the major feature of another Tantra, *Vajra-śikhara* (alternately, or in another version, called *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṁgraha*). This work was

translated into Chinese by the South Indian Vajrabodhi, who went to China and spread the Tāntrik cult there, before he died in 732 A.D. These two texts, *Maha-vairochana* and *Vajra-śikhara*, reached Tibet probably through the Chinese translations. They are classed here as *yoga-tantras*.

The early phase of the Buddhist Tāntrik cult was thus dominated by the four texts (*Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa*, *Guhya-samāja*, *Mahāvairochana* and *Vajra-śikhara*), all of which incidentally were of South Indian origin¹. The subsequent phase was characterised by the introduction of female partners in secret rituals (*yoginī*, in Tibetan *rNal-hByor-Ma*). One of the siddhas Luī-pāda, is credited with the recovery of a Tāntrik text which dealt with this novel idea, *Yoginī-saṁcharyā*. There is a suggestion even in *Guhya-*



LUI-PĀDA

samāja-tantra concerning the advantage of having a 'pretty and obliging woman'² as a partner in the ritual. Probably, this was meant to be more symbolic than actual. But there did come into being several texts that relied on the actual sexual 'partnership with women'. These texts styled themselves as *Yoginī-anuttara-tantras*. Important among them are *Hevajra-tantra*, *Buddha-kapāla*, *Chakra-saṁvara*, *Vajra-bhairava*, *Kṛshṇa-Yamāri*,

Caturyoginī-saṁpuṭa and *Mahāmāyā*. These texts deal mainly with iconic visualizations, religious imaginations, spiritual projections and symbolic rituals.

The impact of *Hevajra-tantra*³ was both extensive and deep. The importance of the work consists in its being the product of the movement towards integration of Mādhyamaka philosophy with *mantrāyana*. Nāgārjuna's formulation of Void (*śūnyatā*) and the practice of virtues (*pāramitās*) were incorporated into the yogāchāra emphasis on mind as the sole reality in the works of several scholars of Nālandā and Vikramaśīla, principally of Abhayākara-gupta (died 1125) and Ratnākara-śānti (about 1040), both held in very high esteem in Tibet. It may be recalled that this fusion was the background for the emergence of what has been called 'Buddhist' Tantra.

The text of *Havajra* ('He' is the vocative, meaning the union of *prājñā* and *upāya*, and *Vajra*, or 'the diamond', signifies non-duality and void) is based on the *Mādhyamaka* standpoint, but deals mainly with ideas of meditations and visualizations; there are also spells and charms liberally introduced. In form, a dialogue between *Vajra-sattva* (the Buddha of *Vajrayāna* symbolising Self) and *Vajra-garbha* a *bodhisattva* who contains the seeds of diamond-nature within himself), the Tantra pictures the Buddha in the fast and amorous embrace of his 'diamond-woman'. The symbolism is the union of void and compassion, the integration of the male and female principles. This idea is no doubt worked out in the text, but the descriptions of approximations to such union are too vivid and too concrete to be construed as merely symbolic.



CHAKRA-SAMVARA HERUKA

The instruction to the devotee is to exercise his imagination and conjure up visions both in his own heart and in the space outside. He is to imagine himself as the youthful Heruka (the principal divinity, the Male) perched on a corpse (symbolic of phenomenal flux) and embraced by his bride (*yoginī*), *Vajravārahī* (symbolising the means, *upāya*). The clasp represents phenomenal clinging; she is red and passionate (compassionate), throws her arm

around Heruka concealing his heart (the reality); she is nude (utterly free from defilements), and holds the blood-filled skull (voidness). The practitioner is advised to integrate within himself 'compassion' (*kṛpā*, explained in the *Pañjikā* as the attitude that all beings are like oneself) and 'method' (*upāya*, or the technique of obtaining complete enlightenment), thereby eliminating all possibility of producing phenomena, subjective or objective⁴.

Although the various rituals leading to the ultimate realisation of the Void-nature are described at great length and in numerous particulars, it is sought to be made clear that the devotee and the divinity do not in actuality exist, that the practitioner and the practice are in essence one, and that 'the grasper' (*grāhaka*) and 'the grasped' (*grāhya*) are truly indistinguishable. It is

emphasised that all this is merely 'projected' (*saṁsthita*), simply 'thought out' (*kalpita*).

A *maṇḍala* is made use of: a lotus forms the base on which is laid out a triangle (*yoni*, vulva, the female organ), and inside the triangle is placed a corpse (to denote phenomenal existence), on which the practitioner, imagining himself to be Heruka, stands or sits and unites (in imagination) with the *yoginī*. He is the diamond (*vajra*) and she is the lotus (*padma*), and when the former enters into the latter, great joy (*mahāsukha*, also described as the innate, natural bliss, *sahaja-sukha*) results.

The practitioner himself is the embodiment of compassion as means ("kṛpopāyo bhaved yogī"), and his female consort is wisdom that is void (*prājñā-śūnyatā*). The union of

the two is strictly at the level of psychological reality. Despite the treatment of the topic being heavily loaded with sex-terminology, the text claims that the ritual is not for sense-gratification (*bhoga*), but for enlightenment. However, the text concedes that there can be no happiness (physical or spiritual) without the body⁵. It is true, however, that the realisation is not born of the body although located in the body (“dehastho’pi na dehajah”).

The commentators of *Hevajra-tantra* are eager to defend that these instructions are merely metaphorical (being *neyārtha*, ‘to be drawn out’), and that they employ ‘the concealed language’ (*sandhābhāsha*); but they also point out that these rituals are sometimes actually carried out, albeit by ignorant and undeveloped folk.

While this Tantra did contribute to the development of an austere and practical outlook on enlightenment, it cannot be denied that it also encouraged licentious practices in the name of *sāadhanā*, even as *Guḥya-samāja* did. For after all, human happiness is both biological and spiritual; one cannot be understood without the other.

Besides *Hevajra-tantra*, other texts like *Chakrasaṃvara*, *Durgatipariśodhana*, *Abhidhānottara*, *Kālachakra* and *Pañchakrama* and widely studied in Tibet as basic texts; and there are numerous commentaries on them, both translations from Sanskrit and original works in Tibetan. *Chakra-saṃvara*, also belonging to the *Yoginī-anuttara* group of Tantras, is not available in Sanskrit. Its Tibetan translation made a profound impact on the Tāntrik tradition in that country.



KRSHNA-PĀDA

The Tibetan Canon has also preserved in translation the commentaries on it by eminent Indians like Kṛṣṇāchārya (said to be a disciple of the Siddha Kāṇha-pā who recovered the Tantra), Jayabhadrā and Bhadrā-pāda. The Tantra is sometimes referred to as *Mahāsaṃvarodaya*, and sometimes as *Dākinī-jāla*. It may be that there were several recensions, revisions or redactions of the Tantra in Tibet. We have an edition of it by Kazi

Dawa-Samdup along with its translation in English⁶. This Tantra celebrates the Vajrasattva Buddha as *Mahāsukha* (“Great Bliss”, in Tibetan *bDe-mChog*) i.e., Heruka, along with his bride (*vajra-yoginī*) Vajravārāhī.

There is a detailed account of the meditation which leads to the realization that ones own self embodies the united divinities (Heruka and Vajravārāhī), suddenly issuing from the midst of void. In contrast to *Hevajra-tantra*, the treatment here is sober, serene and restrained; there is not the slightest flavour of the occult or outlandish. On the other hand, the deeper involvements of meditation are brought out with considerable psychological insight.

The Tantra commences with a novel suggestion. When one is about



CHAKRA-DHARA

to sleep, he must imagine that his body belongs to the Buddha Vajra-sattva (here Mahāsukha or Heruka), and with that thought gradually slip into the tranquil state of void. As soon as he wakes up, he should again regard himself as the Buddha Vajra-sattva and everything around him as constituting a *maṇḍala*. The title of the Tantra is derived from this detail.

Chakra (in Tibetan *hKHo-rLO*) means the imagined *maṇḍala*, and *saṃvara* (in Tibetan *sDom-Pa*) refers to the collection of deities (hence the alternate expression 'sambhara') arranged on the *maṇḍala*, with Mahāsukha as the central divinity. Thoughts are projected on the *maṇḍala*, focussed there and then both the thoughts and the *maṇḍala* are absorbed into ones own essential and basic awareness. The identification on the part of the

devotee with Heruka is sought to be achieved by intent repetition of the formula *Śrī-Heruka(h)-aḥaṃ* ('I am Heruka') along with the understanding of the true meaning of each syllable thereof.

The various deities located in on the *maṇḍala* are said to constitute the path. And 'the residents' are to be unified gradually with 'the residence'. The body itself is visualized as a diamond-*maṇḍala*, with various deities laid out. Then the inner *maṇḍala* and the outer *maṇḍala* are vividly brought together and deliberately unified. The Tantra curiously quotes Siddha Nāro-pā on the question of absorption of the two *maṇḍalas* into ones own self⁷.

It is likely that the Tibetan version of the Tantra incorporates later supplements and commentaries, as Warder has suggested⁸. The text



VAJRA-PĀṆĪ

goes on to describe the process of concentrating on Vajrasattva by entering into a state of tranquillity, where mind is devoid of all thoughts. Towards the end, two stages of concentration (*samādhi*) are mentioned; the first produced by mental effort, and the second independently of it. “By constant practice in the last, one becomes firmly established therein and gains that knowledge which transcends all worldly knowledge” (p.67).

These Tantras, principally *Hevajra* and *Chakrasaṃvara* crystallised the ritualistic details, hand-gestures, preparation for rituals and concentration, chanting of hymns and utterance of spells, making and offering of *gTor-Ma*, preparation of *maṇḍalas*, and processes of visualization. They also, in an indirect manner, stylised the form and content of instrumental music for ritualistic purposes and the set of dances (like *Vajra-mālā*, ‘rDo-rJe-hPHreng’) in the same context.

They contributed to the definition of Tāntrik tradition in its theoretical as well as practical aspects in Tibet. Most of them undertook the rather difficult task of synthesising the doctrine of Void (of Mādhyamaka origin) and the practice of visualization (of Yogācāra origin). This synthesis in fact is what distinguishes the Tibetan Tāntrik



SIDDHA-NĀGĀRJUNA

tradition. Almost all of hundreds of *sādhana* manuals current in Tibet (a collection of which can be found in *sādhana-mālā*, ed. by B.Bhattacharya, in two volumes, GOS XXVI and SLI 1925-1928) reflect this synthesis.

PAÑCHA-KRAMA

One of the early Tāntrik texts which achieved considerable celebrity and merited a large number of commentaries and annotations was *Pañchakrama*, classed as an 'anuttara-yoga-tantra' and ascribed to the great Nāgārjuna. Whatever the scholarly conjectures concerning the multiplicity of Nāgārjunas, tradition knows only one Nāgārjuna, who was at once the Mādhyamaka philosopher, Tāntrik author, Siddha and alchemist. We have already referred to him. His *Panchakrama*, the Sanskrit original of which is

luckily available to us⁹, deals with void, *śūnyatā* (in Tibetan *sTon-Pa-Nyid*) the main theme also in his *Mādhyamaka-kārikā*. In the latter work, void is described as the 'middle path', because it avoids the extremes of existence and non-existence; and it is characterised by the non-origination of all self-nature of phenomena¹⁰.

Although negatively worded, Void is the ultimate reality, and the *summum bonum* (i.e. *nirvāṇa*) consists in the complete stoppage of all mental constructions concerning existence and non-existence. Reality is both conditioned (*samvṛti*) and absolute (*paramārtha*); they are two levels of the same reality. The former is represented by the world of phenomena, while the latter is beyond it. Conditioning reality to phenomenal framework are eight dimensions: origination and

cessation, persistence and interruption, unity and multiplicity, approach and withdrawal¹¹. These conditioning dimensions prevent the realizations of the ultimate reality. It is when they are pulled down that the ultimate reality shines like the quiet but bright light of the moonlit night. The mind, freed from all conditioning factors, leads us to this 'suchness' (*tathatā*). It can be seen that *Pañchakrama* follows the same line of thought, but in a more practical context.

This Tāntrik treatise of Nāgārjuna is in five sections, the third of which is ascribed to a later author Śākya-mitra (who, according to Tārānātha, was a contemporary of king Devapāla of Bengal (707-753 A.D.)). Of the commentaries on this work, the one by his disciple Nāgabodhi was well-known. A south Indian, this Nāgabodhi is described

in the *Blue annals* as a teacher of Mahā-Yoga-tantra (so called 'father-tantra' *PHa-rGyud*). Tārānātha records that after the death of Nāgārjuna, Nāgabodhi withdrew into a deep cave on Śrīparvata (in Āndhra) and meditated for twelve years without a break before he attained *mahāmudrā-siddhi*. Other Indian commentators include Bhavyakīrti and Rakshitapada.

It is said¹² that *Pañchakrama* is in the nature of an extract from *Guhyasamāja* which Nāgārjuna learnt from his teacher Sarahapāda, the early Siddha. The conception of five *dhyānī*-buddhas, the doctrine of perfecting body-speech-mind complex in order to make their nature adamant, and the employment of spells and diagrams for spiritual ends are no doubt common to both works, but *Pañchakrama* presents a more advanced stage of thought, and works

with Yoga ideas and practices, quite unlike the earlier work.

Pañchakrama ('Five-fold Passage') analyses the Void with respect to cause and result into four grades (more properly stages): Void (*śūnyam*), Over-Void (*ati-sunyam*), Great-Void (*mahā-śūnyam*) and All-Void (*sarva-sunyam*). The first, likened to a woman, is described as 'knowledge' (*prajñā*); and the second, likened to a man, is described as the means (*upāya*). The commingling of the two (which is a typical Vajrayāna conception) produces the third stage where 'self-base' (*svādhishṭhāna*) is obtained. Beyond that is the imponderable, unchanging, non-dual and luminous (*prabhāsvara*) Void.

ŚŪNYATĀ

It is important to note that Void here is a positive principle, a

diamond (so called because it is the uncorrupt and firm essence). Its original and unconditioned expression is regarded as 'Vajra-sattva' a deity whom *Pañchakrama* praises: "Freed from existence and non-existence but potent to assume all forms, this Vajra-satva embodies all loveliness when reflected upon"¹³. Although like space empty, he is the 'own-nature' of all. Pervading, he is pure and quiet; he is known only to the *Yogins*¹⁴. And the view that he is to be known in ones own being, by each one of us (*pratyātmavedya*) is shared by this text. He is removed from us, not actually but in effect, because of our phenomenal involvement. The void-nature is ignored or forgotten, and we create the seemingly solid world out of our own thoughts and clingings. We are thus trapped in the cage of our own making, and fuss about. The aspirant has to shake this off by yogic

practices in gradual measures in order to 'return home', to reach the All-Void, and to enjoy the bliss of utter and unshakable tranquility.

Pañchakrama as a Tāntrik manual describes the major stages on this spiritual journey, from the phenomenal Void to the transcendental Void. The journey (or passage, *krama*) is only metaphorical, for in the ultimate sense there is neither 'coming' nor 'going'. The stages are delineated only for the benefit of aspirants; they should not be construed as divisions or aspects either of Void itself or of Void-realization.

The first stage is described as 'lamp-light' (*āloka*), viz., the light as dependent upon the lamp (*paratantra*). Mind is busy with phenomenal presentations, gathers impressions and organizes them; it

constructs its own images and projects them outward. Transactional knowledge (*prajñā*) characterises this stage. The description that it is the 'lotus' on the lunar disc (*chandra-maṇḍala-paṇkajam*), a point (*bindu*), and the first vowel (a) have involvements of visualization.

The second stage is 'mere manifestation of light' (*alokabhasa*), independent of the lamp-base, like unto the rays of moon-light. It is called 'Over-Void' because the phenomenal presentations cease at this stage to trouble the mind; the mind overcomes them. But the mind does not stop all its activity; it continues to be busy with constructions, imaginations and reflections (*parikalpita*). But they are all merely mental states (*chaitasika*), without an outward involvement of whatever sort.



VIJAYA-PĀDA

If the first stage is *prajñā*, the second is *upāya*; if the first is female, the second is male; if the first is symbolised as lotus (*padma*, which incidentally also means vulva), the second is diamond (*vajra*, which also means penis). The union of the two is represented by the third stage, which is 'great' (*mahā*) on this very account. There is here neither the lamp-based light nor the mere manifestation of light. There is, on the other hand, an intuitive

apprehension of light (*ālokopalabdhi*). It is no longer dependent, nor is it constructed, but it is unconditioned and absolute (*parinishpanna*).

The important detail here is that the mind is 'self-based' (*svadhishtāna-chitta*)¹⁵. Freed from all factors of conditioning both within oneself and outside, mind can now settle down. But there persists some duality between subjectivity and objectivity. The final stage, however, is altogether free from this duality, for it is free from mind. One neither knows anything as existing, nor does one know anything as not existing. And the awareness here is impossible to be expressed anyhow. It is called All-Void, because it has no beginning, and no end; nor is there any subsistence in between. It comprehends all that could be thought of. Although it is the final

stage of achievement for the aspirant, it is not by any means a new condition of Void. It is so all the while, and in fact, the void in the first three stages proceed from the All-Void.

Interesting in *Pañchakarma* is the account of mind's function. For "mind is the means alike of bondage for the fool and of Buddha-hood for the wise". In the first stage of transactional Void, mind manifests its thirty-three modes. They are called defects or defilements (*doshas*), because they pervert or hide the true nature of Void. They include bodily sensations like hunger and thirst, emotions like sorrow, compassion, envy, affection and sympathy (*sam-vedanā*), and also intellectual activities like introspection (*pratyavekshana*) and doubt.

In the second stage, when the objective base has been eliminated,

mind increases its functions. There are forty modes enumerated here; and they are termed 'natural dispositions' (*prakṛtayah*). However, they do not endure for long (*kṣaṇikāh*), for they are deprived of transactional strength. The modes in this category include passion, pride, pleasure, valour, courage, greed, contentment, patience and so on.

In the next stage, there are seven natural defects or defilements (*prakṛti-doshas*), all of which are passive: forgetfulness, confusion, stupor, lethargy and so on. Altogether, there are eighty mental states which screen the All-Void from Void. They persist during day-time and also during night, thus making a total of one hundred and sixty mental states, keeping the transaction (*vyavahāra*) going.

Also of interest is the speculation that the vital currents in

the body (lit. the winds, *vāyu*) also carry along with them the mental functions. So long as the winds move within, thoughts keep on coming because the vital winds necessarily carry them along. In the first stage, the vital winds are mixed up with thoughts; thoughts are passively carried along with main stress.

But in the second stage, thoughts are not passive at all, but dominate the winds. That is to say, the vital currents are not allowed to cloud and confound, determine and dominate the thoughts. Mental processes become independent of bodily functions, freed from biological necessities. Vital winds being constantly moving, the mind that follows them is naturally in a constant state of flux. When, however, the mind is freed from this involvement, it can be on its own. But it is not until the vital currents

are prevented from moving at all that mind can cease its functions altogether, "When the wind does not arise, there is no appearance (of mind); it becomes stable."

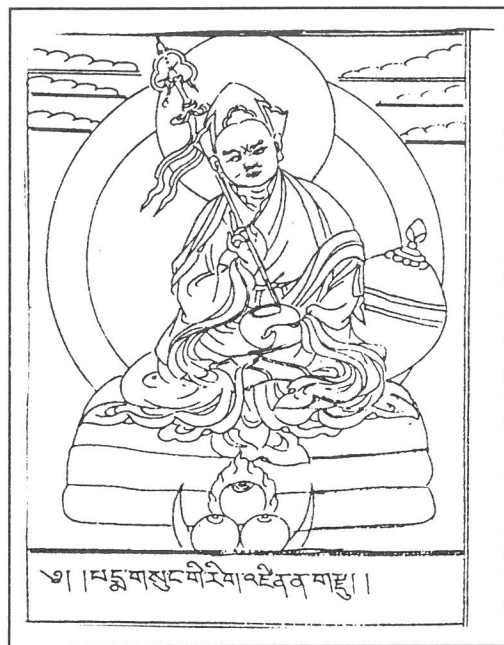
Naturally, therefore, techniques of 'vital-current-control' (*prāṇāyāma*) figure prominently in the Tāntrik practices. *Pañchakrama* suggests an interesting method, which, however, appears to have been an old and tried technique in India. The five *dhyāni*-Buddhas of the *Guhya-samāja* located in the body are supposed to transform themselves into five lustres; and these lustres are then fused into a mass and focussed in the region between the eyebrows (*nāsāgra*, 'the top of the nose', not the 'tip', as frequently mistaken).

"The five vital currents in the body represent the five *dhyāni*-buddhas, and they are also made

into a mass (*piṇḍa-rūpeṇa*) and focussed in the region between the eye-brows. The devotee meditates on the matra given to him by his teacher and thus renders his mind point-like (*chittam-bindu-gatam*, 'mind gone into a point')". This is *prāṇāyāma*, according to the *Guhya-samāja*, as quoted approvingly in *Pañchakrama*. The mass of bodily and mental functions are sought to be focussed on the nose-top in the form of a mustard-seed. "Imagine a mustard-seed on your nose-top, and imagine the entire world as contained within it; imagine that all knowledge rests there", is the counsel to be found in this text¹⁷.

VAJRA-YOGA

The idea of *yuganaddha* (two-in-one, in Tibetan *Zung-hJung*) is employed significantly in *Pañchakrama* (Ch.dI). The



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commingling of the first two stages, the *yuganaddha* of *prajñā* and *upāya*, is preliminary; and the commingling of the third and the fourth, the *yuganaddha* of *svādhishṭhāna* and *prabhāsvara*, is the final. The final state of utter unity is realised only when the twin notions of origination and cessation (*saṃsāra-nirvṛti*) phenomena and its purification (*sankleśa-vyavādena*), are completely eliminated.

One who has attained this state experiences 'great bliss' (*mahāsukha*) and all distinctions vanish for him. He looks upon all alike; day and night are the same for him; dream and waking are not different; pleasure and pain evoke in him the same responses. What is not or what remains does not bother him. He regards heavens as mere waves of the ocean, unstable and quickly passing. Virtue and sin cease to exist for him. Body, speech and mind are both perfected and united; they become diamond-like. *Pañchakrama* calls this *Vajra-yoga*.

VOID-CULTIVATION

The Tāntrik rituals in Tibet have assumed a stereotyped pattern as regards the preliminaries, owing to the impact of the texts mentioned above. The shorter texts included in *Sādhnamālā* collection bear this out

clearly. It is usual for the rituals to commence with a confession of sin (*pāpadeśanā*), made in the imagined presence of all the teachers, *bodhisattvas* and buddhas. The stylised formula is; "whatever sins have been committed, and caused to be committed, and approved, and are being committing, in body, speech or mind by me in this life or in any other, passing through as I am beginningless and interminable transmigration, all that I confess (*pratideśayāmi*) before this assembly of revered gurus, buddhas and bodhisattvas"¹⁸.

This is followed by an approval of meritorious deeds (*puṇyānumodana*) done by all the completely enlightened buddhas, solitary buddhas, lay buddhas, their spiritual children, bodhisattvas, *ḍākinis*, gurus and other beings residing in all the three worlds¹⁹.

Then the devotee seeks refuge in the 'three jewels' (*ratna-traya-śaraṇa*): the Buddha, the Dharma and the Saṅgha. In the Tibetan practice, however, the three are prefaced by a formal refuge sought in the guru, and at the end, one seeks refuge in ones own personal deity (*Yi-Dam*). Following this, the pleading (*yāchanā*) that the reverend ones may bestow the unsurpassed religious instruction (*anuttara-dharma-deśana*) follows.

All the above is done in the visualized presence of, and as witnessed by, the august and vast assembly of the holy ones as mentioned above. With the transference of merit, the preliminaries are concluded, and the vision of the assembly is dismissed with the formula "Om Āh Mūh". The assembly either dissolves in the clear sky from which it emerged and in which it was projected, or dissolves into the devotee's own

body. Now he is all alone, both physically and psychologically; he has a sense of utter isolation but well fortified, and the real work of meditation now starts.

In Tibet, it is usual for the monks of some sects like the *bKah-rGyud* to shut themselves up for shorter or longer periods (sometimes years) in what are called *TSams* ('barriers', the acts of retiring behind a barrier that must not be crossed). Cells are walled up, and the hermit inside the dark and quiet interior may have no contact whatever with fellow-human beings (although food is supplied regularly through a small inlet). He is completely silent and secluded. This is considered the best condition for the practice of void-visualisation.

Preparatory to this hard practice, it is necessary to purge the

ego of violent and inimical dispositions²⁰ by cultivating the 'four immeasurables' (*apramāṇāni*, boundless states of mind, also called 'divine states' (*brahma-vihāras*). The classical list includes friendliness (*maitrī*, Tib. *gGah-va*), compassion (*karuṇā*, Tib. *dNying-rJe* or *TSHad-Med-bZHi*), cheerful contentment (*muditā*, Tib. *Byams-Pag*) and equanimity-indifference (*upekshā*, Tib. *bTang-SNyoms*). This list has come down from the earliest strata of Buddhist lore.

Friendliness is defined as intense love for all beings in the world; the love one would have for an only son who is of excellent conduct should be shown also for all creatures; and it is even suggested that this love should be multiplied a thousand-fold. It is a loving desire to secure the welfare and happiness of all beings²¹.

Compassion is the urge to save all beings from the three kinds of suffering (physical, mental and spiritual), the longing to lift people above both sorrow and causes of sorrow, and the resolve to eliminate the sufferings of others and to strive towards that end²².

Contentment is other born out of appreciative satisfaction at the wholesome conduct of others around, at their prosperity, and at their enjoyment of life. It also includes sympathetic joy that there are means available to work out the welfare of others, and satisfaction that one is enthusiastic about leading all beings to Buddhahood. It is described in some texts as the zealous wish that all beings be happy²³.

And finally, indifference is indulgently ignoring defects or lapses in others, courageously ignoring the

obstacles on the way to secure the happiness of others, and careful withdrawal from all wrong involvements. It entails treating all alike, looking upon all beings with equanimity, being utterly indifferent to gain and loss, praise and blame, happiness and misery. It also means being indifferent to worldly transactions characterised by eight-fold dispositions (gain-loss, fame-ignominy, praise-blame, happiness-misery) and being utterly disinterested in everything unconnected with ones spiritual progress²⁴.

With this, the devotee is prepared to concentrate on the main part of the *sādhana*, viz. void-cultivation. There are in it four well-defined stages:

1. generation of enlightenment-thought (*bodhi-chitta-utpādana*);

2. reflection on, or contemplation of, the void nature of things (*śūnyatā-chintana*); visualizations (*dṛṣṭi-marga*, Tib. *mTHong-Va-hi-Lam*); and
3. withdrawal into void (*samhāra-karma*).

Sects differ in their emphasis on one or the other of the four stages, although every *sādhana* involves all four. The more conservative of the sects place absolute emphasis on the first stage, and rely on Śāntideva's great manual *Bodhicharyāvatāra* ('Descent into the path to enlightenment')²⁵. *TSong-KHa-Pa* described *bodhichitta* as the threshold to the house of Mahāyāna, and quoted with approval Atīśa's query "What is the use of all the Tāntrik initiations without *bodhichitta* being awakened?"

Bodhi-chitta originally meant merely the thought of enlightenment

or the mind directed towards enlightenment. We have already mentioned how at the hands of the Siddhas it acquired a technical complexion, and how in *Guhya-samāja-tantra* has achieved unprecedented importance. It became a typical Mahāyāna concept, emphasising the vow of helping humanity by ones own enlightenment. It is said to be rooted in the four 'immeasurables' described above.

Śāntideva's distinction between the thought of the vow or aspiration (*bodhi-praṇidhi-chitta*) and the resolve to march towards enlightenment or entrance into it (*bodhi-prasthāna-chitta*). When once *bodhi-chitta* has been aroused, it is of practical significance. The dGe-Lugs-pa regard *bodhichitta*-arousal as all important inasmuch as it eliminates all obstacles, physical and mental, and it helps 'collect merit'

(*tSogs-Lam*) and 'develop insight' (*mTHong-Lam*).

In its essence, it is cherishing others before oneself; but it is an urge to develop merit in oneself and develop his own insight in order to help others. This is the theme of the great work "A Lamp on the Path to Enlightenment" (Tib. *Lam-Rin-CHen-Mo*) of the reformer TSong-KHa-Pa²⁶.

Without this initial equipment, the other two 'holy' things in every Tāntrik ritual, viz., the void-contemplation and merit-dedication (which marks the final phase of the ritual), would be ineffective. *Bodhi-chitta* is described as productive of 'physical merit'²⁶ which provides the basis for, and balances the mental merit to be acquired by void-contemplation. In the analysis of TSong-KHa-Pa, *bothichitta*-arousal is

‘intentional thought’ while void-contemplation is ‘actual thought’ of enlightenment: the two are like two wings that lift the devotee to the heights of enlightenment.

Contemplation of void is, of course, the heart of the *sĀdhanā*. Void is the emptiness of characteristics both of the percipient subject and the perceived object: non-dual and undifferentiated awareness²⁸. It is free from the stains of subjectivity and objectivity, like unto the clear sky of summer noon²⁹. It is said to comprehend in itself the essence of the nature of all things³⁰. It is devoid of own-nature (*nih-svabhāva*), and altogether unsupported (*nirālamba*), but projected or created (*nirmita*).

One of the methods of void-contemplation is to intently reflect that “all things are supported by

mind”³¹. *Heruka-sādhanā* explains: “Everything is sky-like, and the sky is devoid of characteristics. All things are like magical presentations, whatever one sees, or touches, or experiences in this world”. With such thoughts one must abandon the one and many, and regard his own body and every object around him as entirely empty; and then his entire mind or consciousness should be attenuated to the subtle form of the letter ‘ॐ’, exceedingly small, unagitated by waves, of thought, - which is no doubt an imagination but a helpful one (*bhrāntimadapyupakāryā*)”. The help spoken of here is with regard to visualizations that constitute the next stage of the practice.

Another ritual manual, Ratnākara-gupta’s *Dvibhuja-Sambaropadeśa*, prescribes “Even as the breath goes to the mirror and

spreads all over (its surface) and disappears, the *yogin* must enter into the myriad of beings again and again”.

There are two formulae that are employed invariably in void-contemplation. One is “I am of the nature of the adamantine wisdom of void” (*śūnyatā-jñāna-vajra-svabhāvātmako’ham*), and the other is “All things and events are pure by nature; I am pure by nature” (*svabhāva-śuddha-sarva-dharmāh, svabhāva-śuddho’ham*). These two formulae are actually meant to reinforce (*dṛḍhikaraṇārtham*) the void-contemplation; they are employed as props for contemplation.

The explanation offered by TSong-KHa-Pa takes into account the ego-context of the first formulae (*ātmakah*, ‘the self’, and *aham*, ‘I’).

It is no doubt an egoity (*ahamkāra*) that is generated as many *sādhana*s explicitly mention; but the egoity here is characterised by the wisdom of void (“mind of one taste with the void, althogether empty, without identifiable marks and devoid of desires and urges”, TSong-KHa-Pa). The purpose of the practice is to rid the ‘self’ of all content, make it pure (which it essentially is) and attune the mind to the idea of void. The void and attunement together constitute the adamantine wisdom. It signifies, according to TSong-KHa-Pa, indissolubility of emptiness of the objective world and the wisdom of the subjective world. It is described as diamond (*vajra*) because it is stable, unaltered by adversity, capable of overcoming all adverse conditions, and free from cause or effect³².

The application of these two void-formulae to the *bodhichitta*,

already aroused and made alert, results in effective meditation where the void is not only realised, but cultivated. Meditation now becomes 'productive' or 'creative' (*bSKyed-Rims*). Visualization of deities involved here is not only the major element of Tibetan Tāntrik *sādhana*, but its peculiar feature.

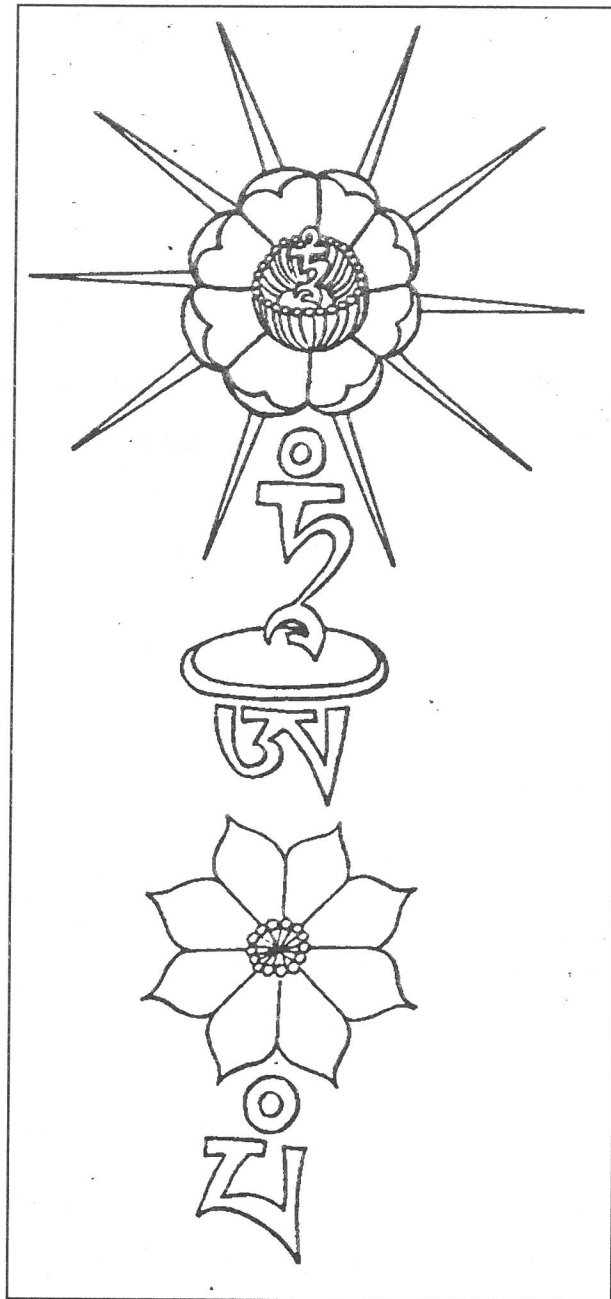
VISUALIZATIONS

The Tibetan yogins spend long stretches of time trying to perfect their faculty of visualizations. Most of them spend several (three to seven) years over this, with single-minded devotion, and doing little besides this practice. They acquire initiations into the worship of various deities from several masters, and accomplish the visualization of each deity in the specific and stylized manner.

Perhaps we should remind ourselves here that initiations

(*dīkshā*, *seka* or *abhisheka*, Tib. *dVang*) are important in the Tāntrik tradition for a variety of reasons. The student receives a deity for worship, a formula for repetition, a ritual for practice, guidance for visualization, and more significantly, the power that the master chooses to part with. It is more correct to speak of this process as 'empowerment', as some writers like John Blofeld³³ have done. The transmission of power facilitates success in visualizing the deity.

Nāro-pā speaks of initiation or empowerment in terms of "sprinkling the cool waters of mystic instruction (*seka*) to remove the heat (*Tsa-gDung*) of moral impurities." The purpose of these empowerments is either the attainment of various magical powers (*siddhis*), for which purpose there are seven 'inferior' empowerments, or the perfect



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attainment, viz., the release from transmigratory necessity (*the siddhi*), for which there are four 'higher' empowerments. The former were of course widely resorted to, in Tibet as in India and China of yore. The earnest, however, resorted to the latter.

The major involvement in empowerments of this variety (*dVang-sKur*) is not rituals, but symbols (*brDa*) which lead the one initiated into higher realms of consciousness. Symbols take the form of simple geometrical patterns (*yantra*, Tib. *CHos-hByung*), involved designs with areas and assemblies elaborately layed out (*maṇḍala*, Tib. *dKyil-hKHor*), seed-syllables (Tib. *rDo-rJehi-TSHig*), deities of personal choice (*ishṭa-daiva*, Tib. *Yi-Dam-lHa*, or simply *Yi-Dam*), beneficent fairies or mysterious esoteric instructors (*ḍākinī*, Tib. *mKHaa a*

Gro-lMa) ('the sky-going lady'), or divinities, serene, heroic or furious.

It is important to note that Tibetans do not mistake these divinities, deities or designs to be objective realities. They are fully aware that they are only voluntary emanations from the devotee's mind and that they are symbols (*mTSHon-Byed*). The divinities with objective reality are different; the heavenly gods (*lHa*), the earth-spirits (*Nyen*) and divinities of the nether-regions like the *nāga* (*kLu*); there are also ghosts (*Jung-Po*) and 'red' sprites (*TSen*). Although it is true that some of them (especially the ones 'bound with oath' by Padmasambhava, the so-called 'guardians of religion', *dharma-pāla*) have contributed to the form and temperament of the 'mind-emanations' mentioned above, the symbolic character thereof is never lost sight of.

It is estimated that Tibetan empowerment involves no less than sixty-two 'gods', twenty-five 'heroes' (*vīra*), and thirty-seven 'fairies' (*ḍākinīs*). Their iconographic peculiarities as well as functional significance have been crystallized only in meditations (*sGom*) of masters. There are, likewise, innumerable *maṇḍalas* that are realized in meditation.

The four 'higher' empowerments mentioned above, are (1) 'vase-empowerment' (*kalaśābhisheka*), in which the teacher not only authorizes the disciple to evoke visualizations, but explains the details thereof ; (2) 'mystery-empowerment' (*guhyābhisheka*), in which the disciple becomes aware that 'the original mind' (the field of experience) is actually void; (3) 'wisdom-empowerment'

(*prajñābhisheka*), where the disciple experiences void as great bliss; and finally (4) 'diamond-empowerment' (*vajrābhisheka*) in which the true essence of 'the original mind' is clearly, absolutely and firmly realized.

Each of these empowerments is a necessary stage in the onward march towards enlightenment. The first cleanses the disciple's physical constitution (*sku*) of all the various defects and obstructions (mostly from kārmic sources), so that his deeds (*mdZad*) become correct. The second confers on him the power necessary to advance. It cleanses his speech faculty or faculty of expression, vocal and other (*gSung*). Here the mantras (*bKaa*, 'words') become effective. The third makes the disciple eligible to receive the higher wisdom in its theoretical as well as practical aspects. It cleanses

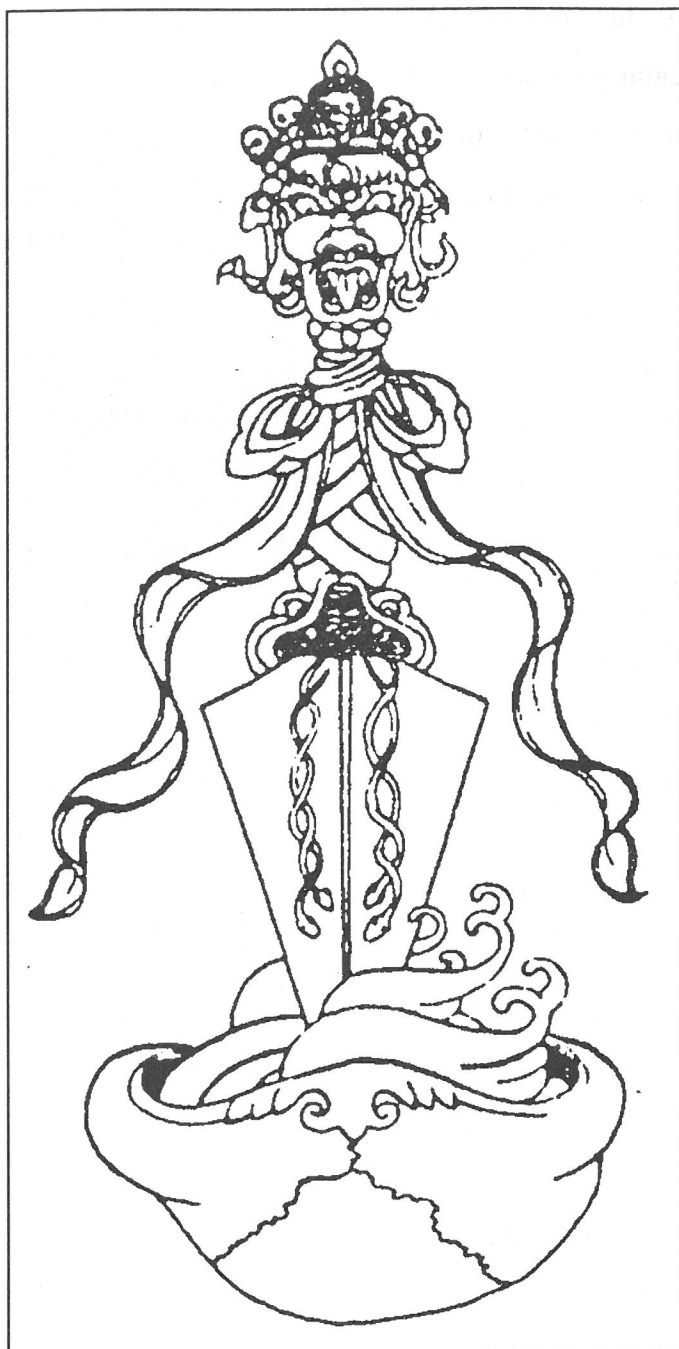
his mind (*THugs*) so that his thoughts (*dGongs-Pa*) can pierce into the very essence of phenomena. The fourth empowers the disciple to relate himself adequately and properly with his personal or tutelary deity or with the *maṇḍala*-deities. It is in this stage that his visualizations become effective.

In the empowerments, and also in the practices following them, one uses 'diamond-words' (*rDo-rJe-hi-TSHig*), 'sacred syllables' (*dhāraṇī*, Tib. *gZungs*), 'sacred formulae' (*mantra*, Tib. *sNags*), 'diagrams' (*yantra*, Tib. *CHoshByung*), 'gestures' (*mudrā*, Tib. *PHyag-rGya*) and *maṇḍalas* (*dKyil-hKHor*). All these are aids to visualization, and the meditative absorption (*Ting-Nge-hDZin*) here is described as 'artificial' (*sPros-Beas*). But when the visualizations are withdrawn into the void, the absorption its 'natural'

(*sPros-Med*); and all the aids are dispensed with.

Of great psychological interest is the process of visualisation. Abiding in the cultivated Void, the devotee compresses his entire awareness into a seed-syllable, and this mind-essence (*Thig-le* 'innermost essence', 'seed', 'semen') becomes capable of manifesting the forms of deities and designs. "From the wisdom of void emerges the seed (*bījam*), and from the seed emanates the icon (*bimbam*)"³⁴. Visualization is a highly creative process where 'vision' no doubt plays an important role, although the process is entirely subjective and psychological.

However, it is not to be mistaken for aberrations like hallucinations or delusions. Tibetan texts clearly distinguish between



PHUR-BU

‘optical illusion’ like mirage (*sMig-rGyu*) and ‘mental pictures’ (*sNang-ba*). The former are passive presentations while the latter are active creations. Visualizations belong to the later category, with the subject being clearly aware of the artificiality (*sPros-Beas*) involved in it. The reality of the visualized deities or designs is confined to meditational sessions, and it does not intrude into the world of transactional reality. This is why the Tibetan yogin is required to completely isolate himself for long stretches of time without break, until the visualizations fulfil their function (viz., enabling him to realize that the things of the world are in essence empty, merely mental projections).

When he finally emerges from his seclusion, after perhaps years, he can no more be a victim to the phenomenal attractions and



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repulsions. He knows in a very effective manner that all that appears is only in mind, that the wide world outside is in fact a projection of the mind within, and that the ‘original’ mind is of the nature of void. One may recall that this is the main thesis of Yogāchāra, on which Vajrayana is raised.

One of the frequent subjects for the devotee’s visualizations is the tutelary, or personal deity (*Yi-Dam*),

like Tārā. But the devotee behaves towards it as though it were real, as though it were a part of the external world, and as though it were a continuous presence. And there are ritualistic prescriptions for its worship, and the devotee goes through all the details with faith (*Dad-Pa*). And the *Yi-Dam* is regarded as a live being, protecting the devotee from all manner of harm and bestowing on him not only success in *sādhana* (*sGrub-THabs*), but prosperity and security in daily life. It is even represented in an icon, and honoured as the most important item of the 'triad' (scriptural texts, *mDo* wrapped in yellow cloth, representing *speech*, and the image of *stūpa* or *mCHod-rTen* representing mind, flanking on left and right respectively the *Yi-Dam*, representing *body*, placed in the centre of the worship table).

Notwithstanding this involvement, as was said earlier, the devotee does not for a moment forget that the *Yi-Dam* is after all an emanation of his own mind, a mere play of his consciousness. The adept is aware that he has externalised and reified an internal entity³⁵, although the novice is likely to regard it as an internalization of the externally real.

But the important detail in the worship of the *Yi-Dam* is the act of identification of the devotee with the *Yi-Dam*. The sequence of visualizations starts with conjuring up several deities to attend on the *Yi-Dam*, sometimes a vast assembly on them. Then all these deities are dissolved in the *Yi-Dam*, and finally the *Yi-Dam* is withdrawn into one's heart, and there it merges with void. The withdrawal of *Yi-Dam* into oneself is accompanied by a formula of identification, as for instance "I



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am Tārā”, or “I am Avalokiteśvara”. The *Kāraṇḍa-vyūha* prescribes in this context: “The devotee should then evoke the egoity (*ahamkāra*)”³⁶.

The purpose is to regenerate oneself as the deity and thereby become the repository of great power, and also realise ones essential purity. The normal ego with its limitations is ‘cut off’ (according to TSong-KHa-Pa) and the vivid image of the deity is substituted for it. In another explanation (of bKah-rGyud lineage), the normal ego is expanded to embrace the universal ego of the deity. But the significant point is that unless one leaves behind, or turns away from, ones ordinary, everyday ego he may not make a headway in the cultivation of void. The vivid visualization of the deity and its identification with the devotee are meant to secure this objective.

After a formal identification, the devotee concentrates not only on the visual form of the deity but on “making firm *its* ego”. During this process, the initial feeling of artificiality will gradually lead to a certain naturalness about the identification of the deity with ones own ego, and about the isolation and employment of ones ego.

The techniques suggested include separating the ‘outer’ form of the deity from its ‘ego’, and substituting the deity’s ego with ones own ego. The ability to abstract the ego from the visualized deity will enable the practitioner to abstract the ego from his own body-mind complex. Concentration upon the abstracted ego is calculated to generate void-realization. The mind monitored in that direction will at a certain point get lost altogether. Visualizations then cease, the deity

disappears and the ego lapses: it is void inside and outside.

The other visualization frequently employed in Tibetan Tantrik rituals involves the *maṇḍalas*. Taken directly from Indian sources, the word itself has been retained in Tibetan in transliterated form. But there are two categories of *mandala* in actual employment. One, the *maṇḍala* that is offered; and the other, employed for identification of ego and extension of consciousness. The latter, however, has another Tibetan word for it, *dKyil-hKhor*, which is explained as 'the circle of residences and residents'. The celebrated *maṇḍalas* are usually of this latter type.

The *maṇḍala*, known as Vajra-*maṇḍala*', is an excellent illustration. It represents the five *dhyāni*-buddhas, each attended by the *bodhisattvas*,

positioned in the four directions with one of the *dhyāni*-buddhas, Vajrasattva, in the centre, all enclosed in squarish fortresses with gates on four sides. The whole is enclosed by a circle representing the universe. This type of *maṇḍala* is either drawn on the consecrated earth or altar, or painted on a scroll, with elaborate but stylised designs. The use of such *maṇḍalas* is essentially ritualistic, and the visualizations they evoke are not altogether dependent on the devotee's imagination or ability.

The assemblies of buddhas, *bodhisattvas*, gurus, *dākinis* and other beings that the devotee visualizes for witnessing his refuge-seeking, confession of sins, approbation of virtue, and assumption of *bodhisattva* vows, are also sometimes painted, although they are more often freely visualized.

The *maṇḍala* for offering belongs to a different category. Its special significance is in Guru-Yoga. The old Indian idea that the disciple should dedicate to the master all that he possesses, even his body and mind, is the basis for this practice. The devotee here visualizes the entirety of the world with mount Meru in the middle and the eight continents around it with all the best things of the world as constituting a *maṇḍala*, and then offers it to the master with the formula: “Master, I offer this *maṇḍala* unto you! (“guru, idam maṇḍalakam niryātayāmi”).

The preliminaries involve prostrations to the guru and his lineage as many as 100,000 times. The body itself is visualized as a *maṇḍala*: a mansion where all the deities are invoked and installed. In front, at the back, to the right and to the left are the four sides of the

maṇḍala. The mouth, the nose, the anus and the penis are the gates, five sense-organs are the walls; arms and legs the pillars. The nose-tip, heart, navel and the penis the entrance doors. Eyes are the mirrors, nose is the flower garland, tongue represents the bells, stomach symbolizes the sacred vase, mind is the lotus in the centre, and so on. The number of deities thus visualized in this body-mansion are thirty-two. Usually, a



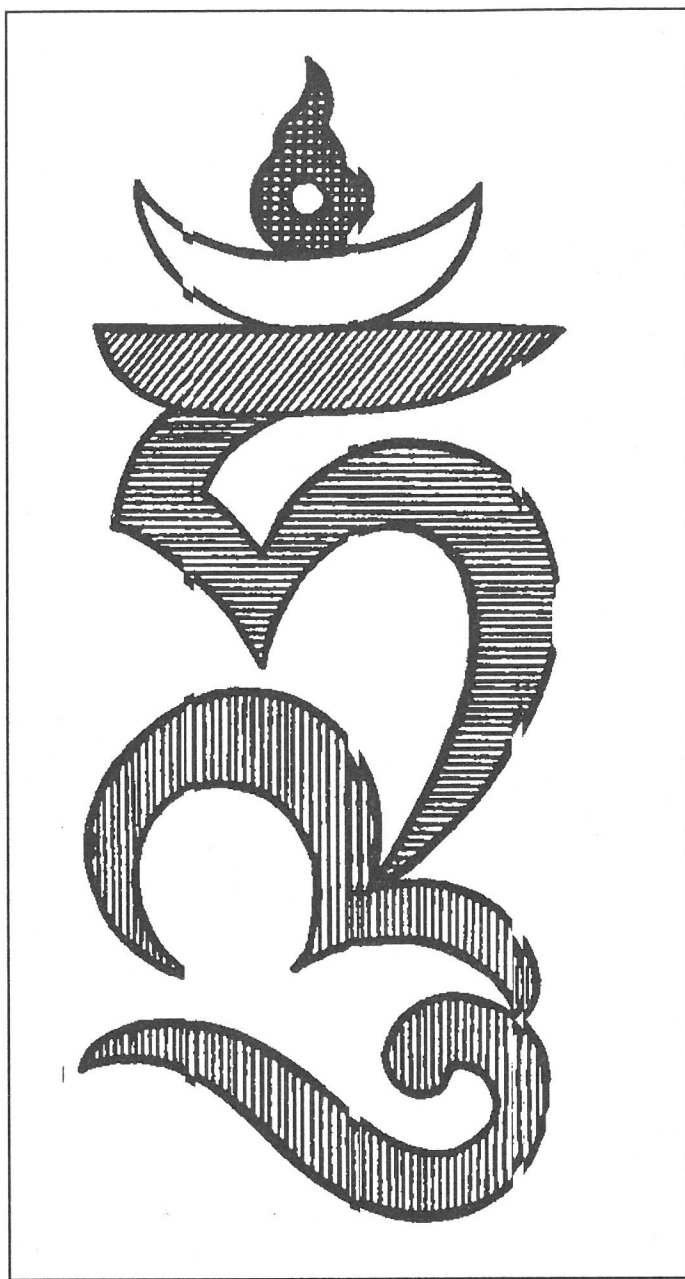
PADMA-SAMBHAVA

text enumerating all the parts of the body and the deities is read and the visualizations occur simultaneously. However, considerable practice is a necessary precondition. It is said that oftentimes a year's daily practice would be necessary before prompt visualizations can occur.

As an aid to the visualization of the *maṇḍala* for offering, and also as a symbolical representation of it, the hand-posture (*mudrā*) is employed. The two hands are brought together, palms upward, interlocked by means of thumbs and little-fingers; the ring-fingers are joined back to back and held up erect (to represent the mount Sumeru) and the rest of the fingers are joined to form four mounds (representing the four major continents around Sumeru). The offering in such a case is known as the 'adamantine ground' (*vajra-*

bhūmi), which is ritualistically protected against inimical and malevolent forces by the pronouncement 'Hūm'. The adamantine character of the ground itself is a product of visualization (to the accompaniment of the formula 'Om Vajrabhūmi Āh Hūm').

Visualizations by the *maṇḍala* is described as composed of five aspects, rather stages. The first is the visualization of *vacuity* (*śūnyatā*) in ones own heart with the aid of the formula "Om Śūnyatā-Vajrasvabhāvātmako'ham" "(I am of the nature of the diamond of emptiness)". Out of the womb of the visualized emptiness, or from the visualized seed-letter ॐ, emerges a *white moon*, representing the ego floating on the clouds of the mind. The moon shines brilliantly, and the light radiating from it absorbs the phenomenal world. This is said to



HŪM

represent the 'dharma-dhātu' which is the basis of all phenomena which are essentially mental.

Above the moon emerges the seed-syllable (*Om, Hrīm, Pam, Tām* etc.), which again shines brilliantly, and the light spreads from it all round. The texts prescribe that in this light one must examine ones own constitution and eliminate attachment and aversion. When this is done, the five aggregates (*skandhas*) assume the form of the five *dhyāni*-buddhas and after a while they dissolve into the seed-syllable. The seed-syllable transforms itself into an *emblem*, like the five-pronged *vajra* marked in the middle the formula, "Ohm āh hūm, Vajra-svabhāvātmako'ham", "I am of the adamant nature".

And, finally, this *emblem* will transform itself into the well-formed

shape (or body) of the deity meditated upon. This is known as 'the visualization of the perfected body'. Iconographic stylization plays an important role in this stage.

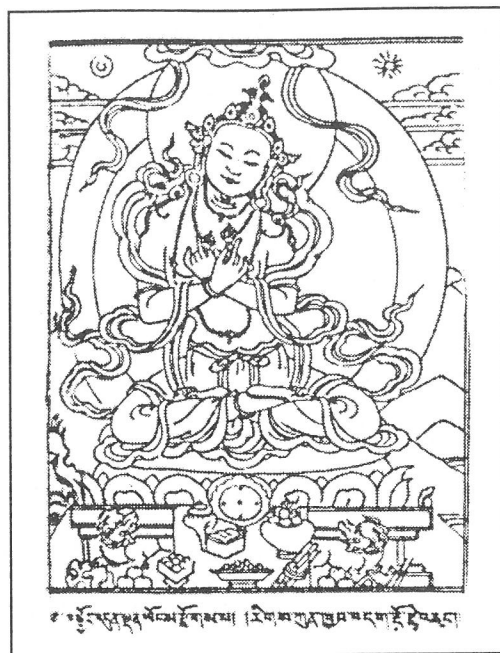
The deity thus visualized is worshipped elaborately (but mentally), and it is identified with the devotee himself. Then the visualized deity is formally dismissed. The perfected body dissolves into the emblem, the emblem into the seed-syllable, the seed-syllable into the moon, and the moon into vacuity. The perfected body of the deity which is the culminating point of visualization is 'neither real nor yet unreal, but a clear image like the one present in a mirror'³⁷.

But the important detail is that the devotee identifies himself with deity, meditates in this state of identity, and looks upon the world

with the eyes of the deity. In one of the *sādhana*s³⁸, the devotee becomes the *bodhisattva* Mañjuśrī, looks upon the world with wisdom and compassion, and renews his vow to liberate all beings.

The visualization sequence may also involve the transformation of the seed-syllable (e.g., *Pam*, which has emerged out of void) into a white lotus, from which another seed syllable (i.e., *āh*) arises, and transforms itself into a white moon-disc. The seed-syllable of the deity is (e.g. *tām* in the case of *Tārā*) contemplated upon this moon disc. This seed syllable gradually gets lost in the middle of a blue lotus (*kumuda*, which opens up at night), visualized, and exceedingly luminous. Ritual worship is conducted at this stage.

The light is then focussed again in the middle of this blue lotus, and



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the seed-syllable of the deity arises again. This bigger, and more brilliant, image of the seed-syllable transforms itself, all at once, into the full-fledged image of the deity, iconographically complete and visually vivid. The heart of the deity would contain the seed-syllable in the centre of the white moon-disc, enclosed in a lotus. The image of the deity disappears into a lotus enclosing the *mantra* of the deity patterned around the seed-syllable. In due course, the *mantra*

and the lotus disappear into the seed-syllable, which itself gradually fades away in the void.

The practice of visualization is a highly intriguing development of Tibetan Tantra. It helps not only to intuitively and convincingly apprehend that the phenomenal world is merely a projection of ones own mind, but to actively reorganize ones inner constitution so as to speedily achieve freedom in this very life, which in fact is the goal of the Short Path.

A NOTE ON VISUALIZATION EXERCISES

It appears rather paradoxical that Tibetan meditation which seeks to realize void prescribes visualization as an expedient device. However, it is not without a reason that this prescription has been made.



NĀGĀRJUNA

And it rests on a perfect understanding of the mind's modes and manners. In a work ascribed to the great Padmasambhava we read:

“Mind is uncreated and radiant.

It rests on no objective support and its nature is vacuous like the sky. And it is free like clouds in the sky. The world of external appearances is nowhere save in the mind; and the appearances, like clouds, will fade

away into their sources. Mind is transparent, without quality. To know whether this be so or not, look within your own mind. The dharma being nowhere save in the mind, there is no other place of meditation than the mind.”

Visualization is a technique that is peculiar to Vajrayāna, and its practice is perfected in Tibet. It is derived from the Mahāyāna Buddhist conception of ‘three aspects’ (*trikāya*, Tib. *sKu-gSum*) of the ‘one Essence of Mind’; its own essential vacuous nature likened to the calm and still expanse of the ocean (*dharma-kāya*, Tib. *CHoskyi sKu*), the ‘bright’ aspect that is compared to the mist, clouds and rainbow over the ocean (*sambhoga-kāya*, Tib. *Longs-sPyod-rZogs-sKu*), and the ‘flowing out’ aspect, likened to the clouds being colourful because of the rainbow and their descending as rain

(*nirmāṇa-kāya*, Tib. *sPrul-pahi sKy*).

This is an elaborate doctrine on which a large literature exists both in India and in Tibet. It should be sufficient here to point out that visualization belongs to the third of these aspects.

The ‘flowing out’ aspect has been described as generative and creative. But the essential nature of Mind is vacuous (*sTongpa-Nyida*) and, therefore, formless. What is it, then, that flows out? A mere appearance, altogether illusory (*sPrul-ba*), but an ‘emanation’ nevertheless. This is occasioned by the ‘bright’ aspect of the Mind. Basic to the technique of visualization is the theory of light or visibility (*sNang-ba*). The phenomenal world of appearance is called the ‘illuminated or visible whirl of events’ (*sNang-Srid*). It is, however, not real, in the ultimate, or absolute, sense; it is a

mere transformation of the One Formless Mind. Its only characteristic is that it comes to view; it comes to be seen; it shines before us.

There is an interesting Tibetan theory, probably an echo of some Indian doctrine now difficult to identify, about the three phases in the manifestation of this visibility (called in Tib. *sNang-Ba gSum*); it relates the phenomenal emanation with psychic processes.

The first stage (*hCHad-Pa*) indicates a cutting asunder, a drifting away, a split into subject and object. It is the onset or emergence of the developmental processes. It is a 'shining forth' (*sNang-Ba*). It is symbolized as red in colour, because in the Indian analysis of the *guṇās* 'rajas' (activity) is red.

The second stage (*mCHed*) is the diffusion or spread of the initial

glow. But there is here a dependence on the objective side of the split. It is described as 'the vision of darkness'. The glow is here dimmed by the encounter of the objects.

The third stage is the settled 'gloom'. The glow gets very dim here; that is to say, awareness is lost. The subjective side of the split gets submerged in the objective, which alone now becomes visible. The world becomes bright in proportion to the Mind getting dim. In this sense, this stage has been called 'luminous', 'bright' (*hOd. gSal*, Skt. *ābhāsvara*).

In the practice of visualization, Mind's ability to project visions is made use of. This ability is said to rest on three preparations:

1. postural perfection (*āsana*, Tib. *Lus-sb Yong-Drug*),
2. skill in the restraint of breath, *kumbhaka* Tib. *Srog-rTsol*) and



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3. capacity to direct and sustain thought (*dhāraṇā*).

In particular, breathing exercises and the practice of visualization go hand in hand. Exhalations are employed as vehicles for the visions to go out of the individual, and inhalations for withdrawing these visions into oneself. And as a preparatory requirement, time is spent in fixing the moving thought:

“Assume the seven postures of Vairochana. Do not let the mind turn back and pick up the past; let it not gallop into the future either. Nor should it freely give shape to the present. Fix your gaze at the empty space in the sky.

Your mind will begin to throw up forms: there

will be thoughts and feelings, doubts and decisions. You will also ‘see’ things out there, but they are from your own mind. They will dance about, tumble, hurry and chase each other. They gather and scatter. They change and agitate.

Bring this moving mirage to a stillness by watching and restraining the breaths and fixing your gaze. The vision will now settle down; the diversity of forms diminishes and their activity is lessened. Gradually they all merge into a single tiny spot (*THig-Le*). Some people will see it as dark; for others, it will be a small ball of light. But this spot will not rest at a

place; it will shift its position.

Fix the spot now. Make it remain motionless; do not allow it to change its colour or size. This can be achieved by breath-restraint, gaze-fixture and thought-elimination. You will find that the spot will disappear in the surrounding darkness, and reappear. It will eventually come into yourself, and re-emerge from yourself, and go out."

Visualization exercises are all based on this general method. And the technique of 'evocation' is taught during initiation and it is accompanied by an effective ritual. Usually a deity with a well-known and stylized form is selected, and the practitioner is taught to direct his

devoted attention to this deity, externalize clearly its conventional form in a dot, and after the image is visually fixed, he is encouraged to regard himself as that image; his mind flows out and assumes that deity's form.

In this identification, the ego of the practitioner is transformed (or rather transmuted) into the core of that deity. The deity is now not merely imagined; it is not just a vision or a phantom. It is as real as the practitioner himself. In fact, the two together constitute one reality.

Later, by another careful effort, he takes the deity out of himself, disentangles it from his ego, and projects it again into the space outside him. He then contracts the deity's form, and accommodates it within the dot he started with. The deity dissolves in the dot, and the



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dot returns to the practitioner's mind, and there gets lost in the void.

The mind is thus taught to project deliberate forms, and withdraw them as deliberately. From a pregnant but amorphous dot (which is the mind's essence), an elaborate and complex deity is made to emerge. And the entire thing is made to dissolve into the inside of the practitioner, and emerge out at will. Sometimes, during visualization, out

of the body of one deity, several other deities are made to emerge and arrange themselves round the original deity in a stylized design (*maṇḍala*); and later they are all again absorbed into the dot. The entire vision, in all its colour and complexity is an emanation from one's own mind and the whole thing sinks into his mind again.

The involvement of breathing in visualization, which has already been mentioned, is an interesting detail. When the dot of light has been formed in the mind, as the practitioner breathes out, he visualizes the rays of light from this dot go out into the empty space in front of him, previously selected. When he breathes in, the rays of light are visualized to re-enter the practitioner's body.

In a variant practice, the rays of light are transformed into the



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mystic syllable Hūm, which is pictured as blue in colour, like the sky. The form of the deity emerges from this syllable, because each syllable is looked upon as the embodiment of a deity. The deity is seen to grow out of the syllable, the syllable itself remaining in the heart of the deity that has thus emerged. Or while breathing out, the numerous rays of light that dart out are changed into so many Hūm, which seem to fill the world. The Hūms are transformed into as many deities,

which are withdrawn into the practitioner's mind when he breathes in.

Visualization of an *Yi-Dam* is accomplished with the help of an appropriate 'seed-syllable' (*bīja-mantra*). Every deity has its own 'seed-syllable', a collection of several syllables known as the 'heart-syllables' (*hṛdaya-mantra*), and a formula (*mantra*) containing the name of the deity and certain ejaculations like *Hūm*, *Hrīh*, and *Om*.

The practitioner learns to visualize the 'seed-syllable', the outline of which would be "fine like the filament of the lotus stalk". He achieves the visual representation of this seed-syllable alone in spotless void, filled with glowing light.

From the centre of the light a lotus will emerge supporting the letter "as a king on his throne". Then the

letter will gradually be transformed into the likeness of the *Yi-Dam* (whose form will be familiar to the practitioner, because of its stylistic and iconic representation). Within the heart of the *Yi-Dam* will glow the seed-syllable, would revolve around the seed-syllable, shedding light all round. A steady stream of light will rush into the practitioner's body.

In the subsequent phase, the form of the *Yi-Dam* diminishes, and entering into his body through the crown of his head, settles down in his heart. He then feels his own form diminishing gradually, until it is of the same size as the *Yi-Dam*'s. The two bodies will merge in a perfect unison, and in the unified heart the 'seed-syllable', and the 'heart-syllables' will be withdrawn into the 'seed-syllable', and the 'seed-syllable' dissolves in the dot. When

the dot also disappears, the practitioner will be in a state of trance.

The visions, however, are never mistaken for reality. They are regarded as if they were reflections on a clean and bright mirror, or "like moon's reflected form in water". And when they are withdrawn, they vanish "as a rainbow vanishes". But they are not mere hallucinations. They are said to become "substantial enough to touch", and they are life-like, although the practitioner never groups them alongside the rest of life.

It is an experience strictly confined to meditational sessions. The vision in every case is voluntarily and deliberately conjured up, the practitioner being fully aware of its nature, meaning and function. The



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important aspect is that the practitioner expects to learn to regard the so-called reality of the world as essentially a vision, far from mistaking his vision for reality.

The practice is likely to bring home to him experientially that the phenomenal world with all its objects, joys and sorrows, is nothing more than a transformation of the One Mind, whose essence is vacuity (*sTong-Pa*).

This is brought home by CHos-dByins-Pa (b.1324 A.D.) when he recounted: “Through (meditation) on the inseparable nature of void and Mind, which represents the Absolute (*CHos-Nyid*), which pervades the entire world and the living beings, like colour covering the edge of a book, I have opened my eyes on the cause and effect of the phenomenal existence and Nirvāṇa. I have eliminated the doubts, and I have reached the depth. I have reached the depth. I have dug the foundation and removed the floor.”

While visualization is taking place, it is necessary that the practitioner should remain perfectly calm, detached, and waterful. The texts warn that should any aspect of the vision ‘please’ him or ‘bother’ him, the vision will fade away. He will suppress not only his feelings, but value judgements. He is advised

to be a non-participant observer. Chanting of the texts or recitation of appropriate formulae during the process helps minimize his emotional involvement in the evocation.

The categories of thinking can also be distractions; they are described as 'subtle', in contradistinction to the distractions from the outside world which are 'coarse'. The texts insist that sloth, drowsiness, and a casual attitude are inimical to success in the practice. If there is sloth, details of the vision will fade away; in drowsiness, the vision's clarity will disappear; when the attitude is casual, the vision slips away.

The great reformer TSong-KHa-Pa, who was instrumental in the ascendance of the dGe-Lugs sect, explained in great detail the value of visualization for the practitioner in

regard to ego-modification. According to him, the core of visualization is the practitioner's identification of the deity with himself, the exchange of the 'ego of the deity' for his own ego:

In this practice, the ability with which one can cut asunder his own ordinary ego is important. To concentrate one's efforts on clearly fixing the form of the deity is to attend to the deity's body. But attention must be paid to the deity's ego also; it must be firm and vivid. Its ego must then be exchanged for the ascetic's normal ego. This is not possible unless he is able to give up his normal ego, to abandon the clinging to his own ego.

It is clear from the above account that visualization is a dynamic process involving readjustment of egos, one the



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ordinarily weak ego of the practitioner, and the other an extraordinarily powerful ego of the Deity. Among the objectives of visualization are included the substitution of the normal ego with the Deity's ego. Important here is the willingness to forsake one's own ego, however weak and ordinary. And it is a difficult procedure, for one has lived with it for so long, and one had come to regard it as his precious possession, in fact, his all:

it is regarded as his substance, sustenance and support. The fear of its loss would result in a breakdown of normal personality. It is only the intense and earnest desire for enlightenment that can generate this willingness. The preliminaries mentioned earlier are designed to strengthen this willingness.

The abandonment of the normal ego has to be achieved in stages and must be accomplished with great care and skill. The aid of a competent and understanding teacher here is invaluable. The aspirant must 'take refuge', take the vows of a *bodhisattva*, 'arouse the intention of enlightenment', and 'offer 100,00 maṇḍāla offerings to the line of teachers'. Without such preparation, he is not only unlikely to achieve his goal, but invite distress and malady; his teacher too would come to grief. In the words of Mila-repa: "Led by

a deep ravine which presages destruction, yoked yaks fall together into the abyss.”

Substituting for the ordinary ego the ego of the deity is an elaborate process and requires training and guidance. The first step is to achieve a vivid image, a clear mental picture, of the deity's form. Manuals of meditation give detailed instructions as to how this is to be accomplished. It is an important step inasmuch as it is the foundation. And it depends upon complete concentration, freed from both distractions and drowsiness. While the vivid image of the deity has been obtained, one must discern the ego of the deity. Concentration upon the form of the deity without attention to the nature of its ego would render the practice useless. When the ego of the deity has been firmly established, one acquires “the ability



BSOD-NAMS RIN-CHEN

to cut off one's ordinary ego". But the manuals say that it is not until one turns“ away from his own normal ego, that he can substitute for it the deity's ego.

The practice at this stage involves intent reflection that the practitioner is in fact the deity. There will no doubt be initially a sense of artificiality and unnaturalness about this identification, but concentrated reflection will eliminate this

hindrance. The whole idea in so constructing an ideation (*abhūta-parikalpa*, as the *Yogāchāra* school of Mahāyāna describes it) is to drive home the void nature of all phenomena, which consists in negating the difference between subjectivity and objectivity. The several formulae that the practitioner is taught to recite frequently centre round this constructive ideation:

Om svabhāva-śuddhā sarva-
dharmāḥ; svabhāva-śuddho' ham

(All things are in their nature
void; I too am void in my nature)

Om śūnyatājñāna vajra-
svabhāvātmako' ham

(I am of the nature of wisdom-
diamond of the void)

The immediate purpose of this practice is to draw into oneself the extraordinary power of the deity, so that the liberating insight may dawn fully and effectively. This insight helps in the total transformation of the ordinary consciousness.

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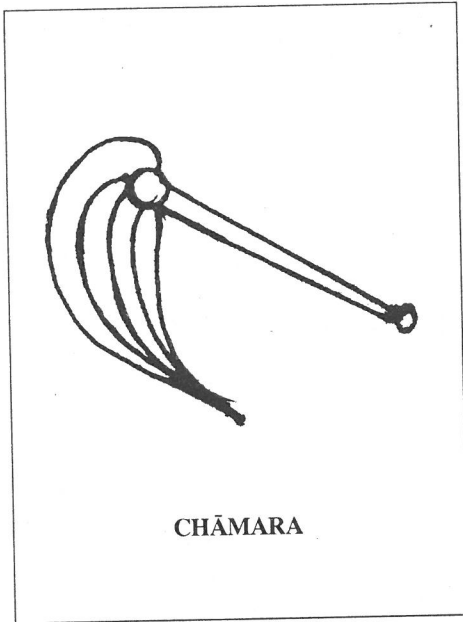
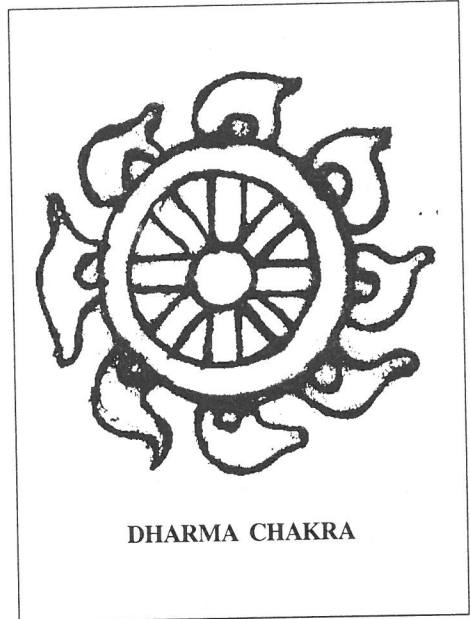
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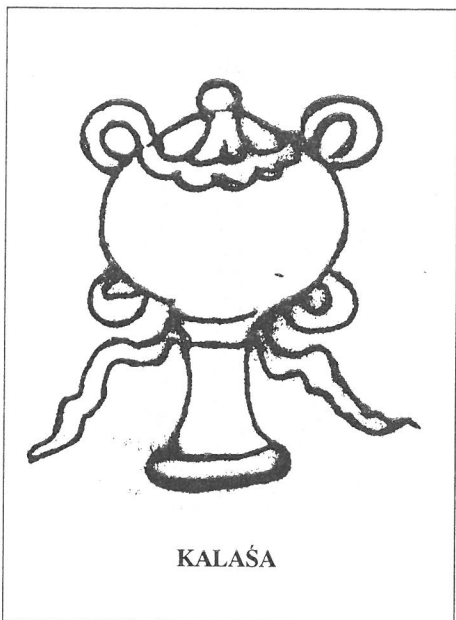
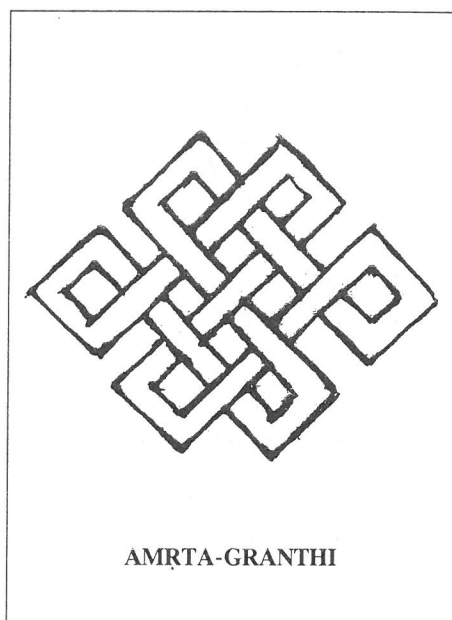
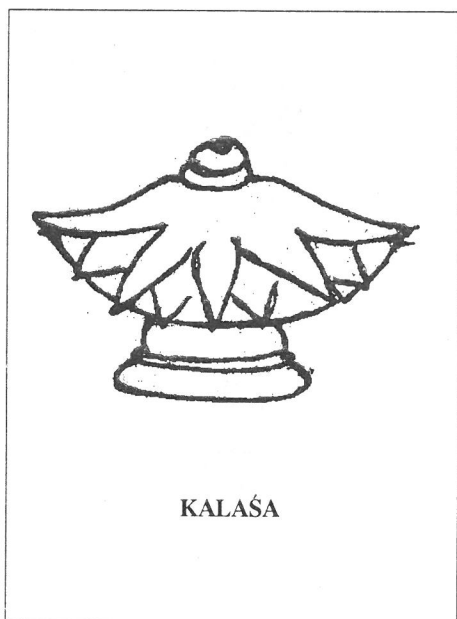
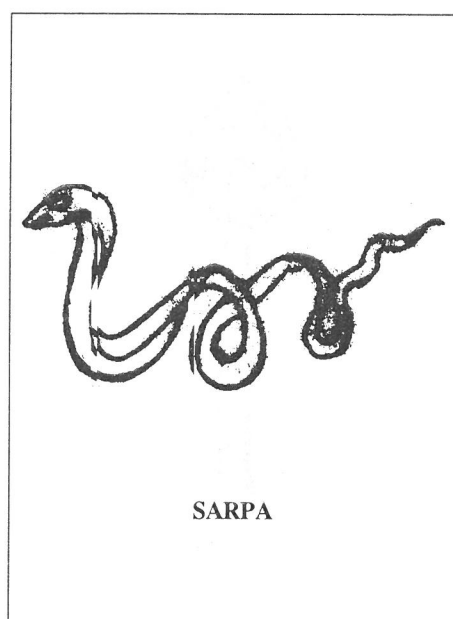
chittam” and ‘upāya’ as “śamyak-sambodhi-prasāadhanah”, and the latter part of the half-verse is explained as follows: “sarva-dharmāṇām anutpāda (.. anutpāda-lakṣhaṇa śūnyatā); katham? ‘hetu-viyogatah’, svataḥ parataḥ ubhayato ‘nubhayato sarvabhāvānām anutpatteh’.

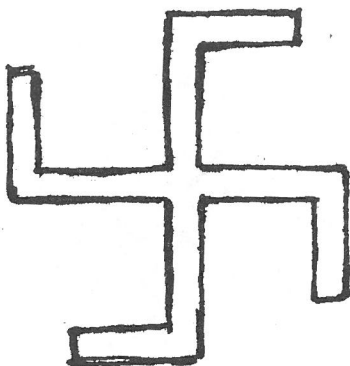
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15. *Pañchakrama-ṭippani* explains “Self-base is to be based on itself; it means that the knowledge comprehending prajñā and upāya is opened up”, cited in S.B.Dasgupta, *op.cit.*
16. “etāh prakṛtayah sūkshmāh ... divārātrau chāpi pravartante vāyuvahana-hetunā”, cf. S.B. Dasputa, *op.cit.* for an excellent account of this idea.
17. “nāsāgre sarshapam chintayet sarshape sachārācarm; bhāvayed jñānapādam ramyam...”, *Ibid.*
18. “yat kiñchid asyām jātāvanyāsu jatishvanādinidhane jātisamsāre saṁsaratā mayā pāpakam karma kāyena vāchā manasā’ pi kṛtam kārītam kriyamāṇam anumoditam tat sarvam bhagayatam guru-buddha-bodhisattvānām puratah pratideśayāmi”.
19. “sambuddha-pratyekabuddha-srāvaka-buddhānām tatsutānām api bodhisattvānām sattvānām trailokyodaravarttinām yadeva kuśalam tat sarvam anumodayāmi”.
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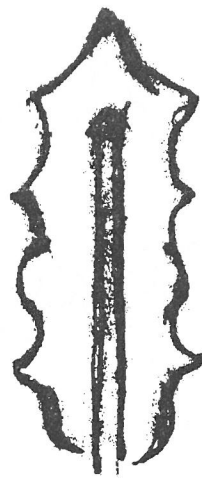
- “para-saukhyasampad-iccha” (*Śrī-Vardhana-pāda*); “satputra-samprīti-sahasra-guṇitam jane” (*Vajrayoginī-bhāṣhitam*; *Vādirāja-Maṇjuśrī-Sādhana*); and ‘hitasukhopasamharākara’ (*Anupama-rakshita*).
22. “triduhkha-dukkhitānām sattvānām samsāra-sāgarād uddharaṇa-kāmatā” (*Muktaka*); “duhkha-hetor dukkhāch cha uddhartukāmatā” (*Vādirāṭ-Sādhana*); “paraduhkha-nāśanakriyā” (anon.).
23. “utdpādita-kuśala-mūla-para-bhogaiśvaryādishu harshachittatā” (*Muktaka*); “vyavasāya-samsiddhyupāya-darśanāt praharshaṇam”; “parasukha-tuṣṭi”; “asadṛṣe buddhatve tadupāya cha sarva eva samsāriṇah sattvā mayā pratishṭhāpayitavyā ity adhyavasāyah; viśvasam yāni kuśalāni teshu tad bhogaiśvaryadishu cha ākṛṣṭa-chittatā” (*Anupama-rakshita*); “modantām sattvā ityākārā” (*Ratnākara-śānti*).
24. “paradoshopekshā”; “kleśapratipaksha-mārgopasamhārākāra” (*Ratnākara-śānti*); “asadvyāsaṅga-parihāṇi” (*Muktaka*); “Samatāyā sattvamātrām etad ityākṛtiḥ” (*Śrī-Vardhana-pāda*); “lābhā-labha-yaśopāyaśa-nindā-stuti-sukha-dukhetyādy-ashṭa
35. cf. John Blofeld, *The Way of Power*, a Practical Guide to the Tāntrik Mysticism of Tibet, Allen and Unwin, 1970, pp.176-182.
36. “Tato’hamkāram kuryāt”.
37. *Śrīmad-Vādirāṭ-sādhana* of Paṇḍita-Chintāmaṇi-datta: “nāsatyam nāpyasatya mukura-talam iva spaṣṭha-bimbāyamānam”.
38. *Vajra-Yoginī-bhāṣhitam Vādirāja-maṇjuśrīsādhanaṁ*.







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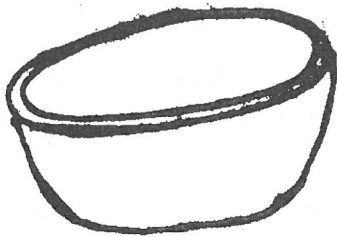
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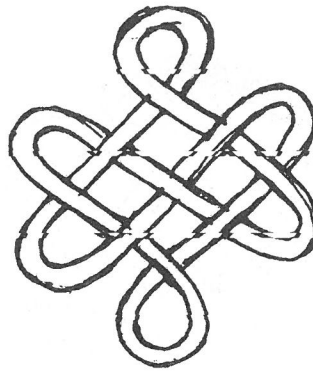
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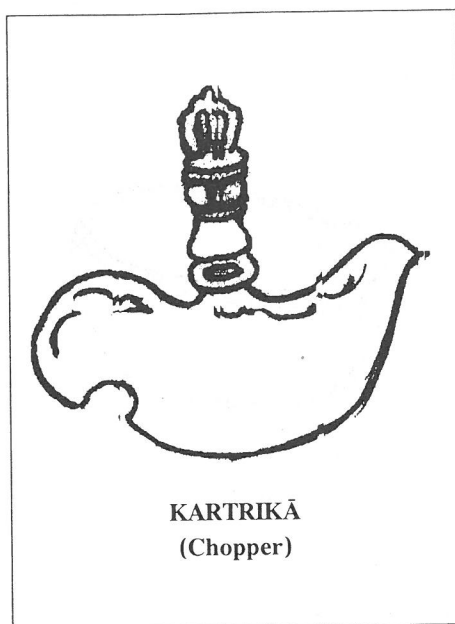
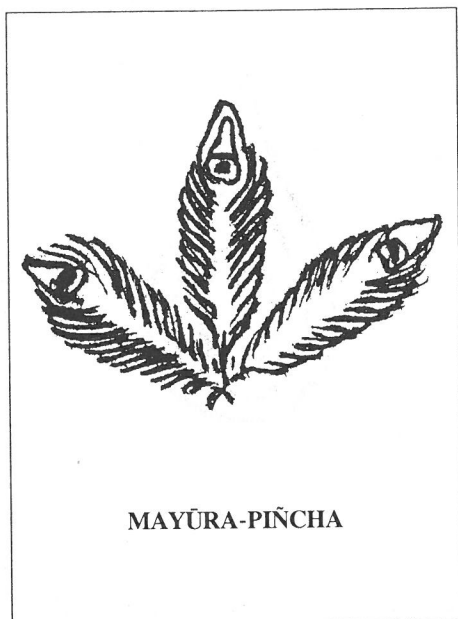
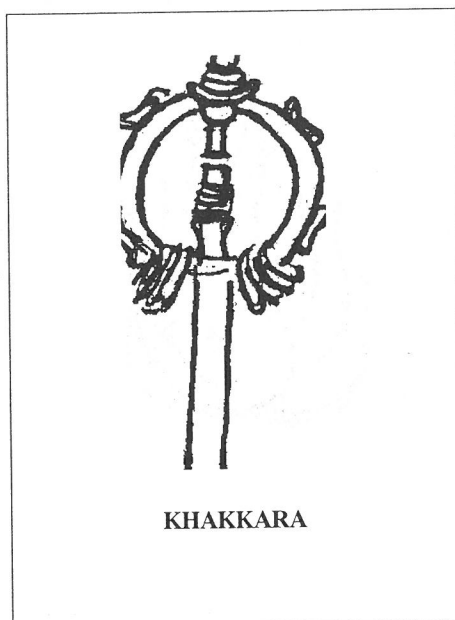
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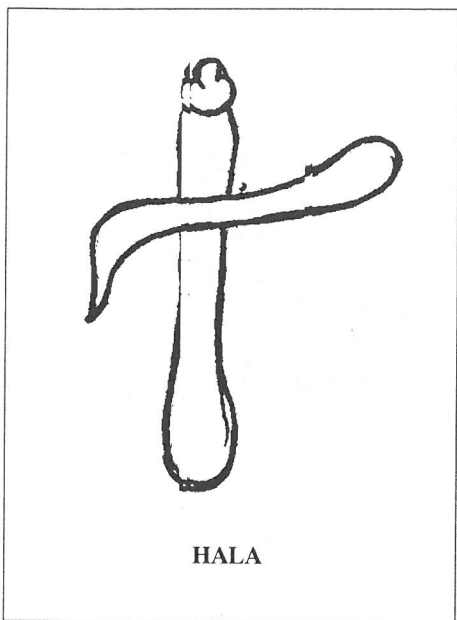
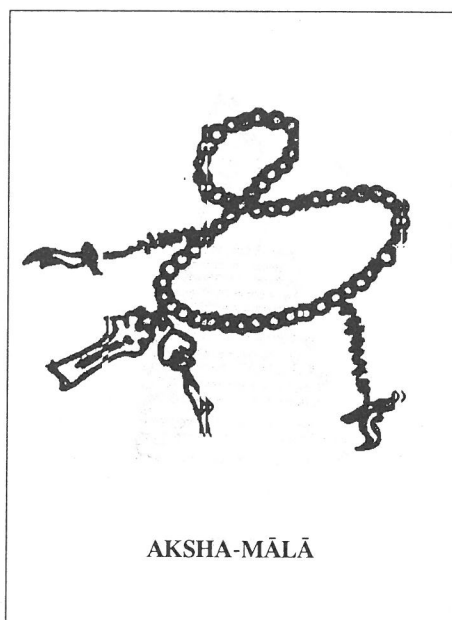
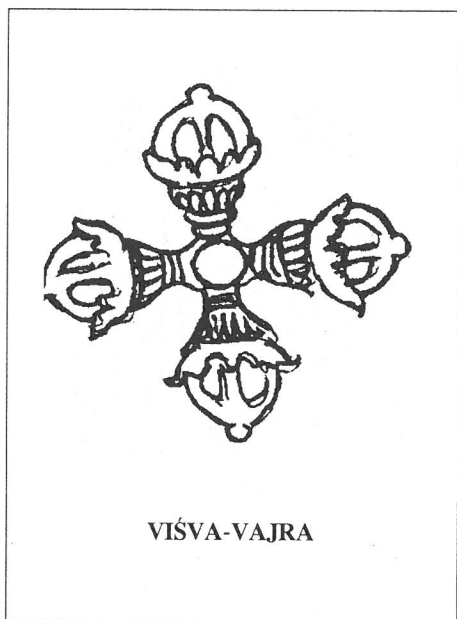
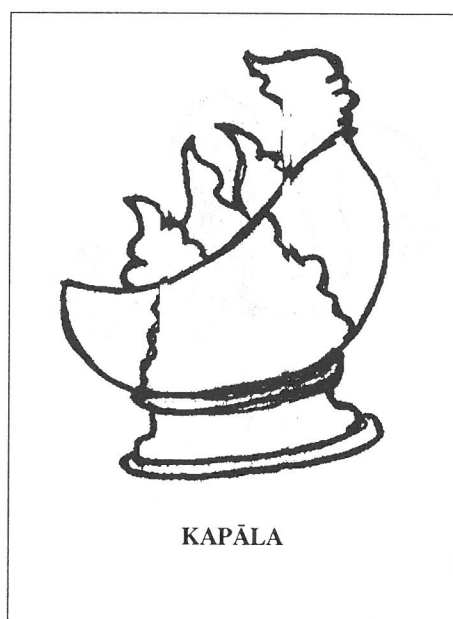


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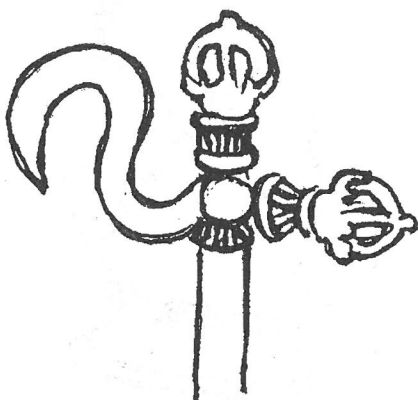




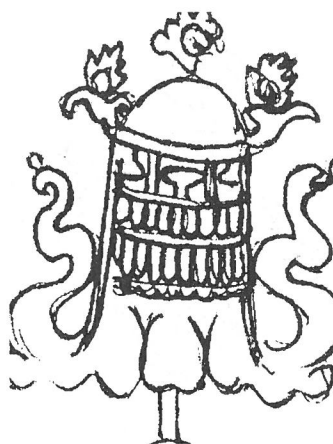
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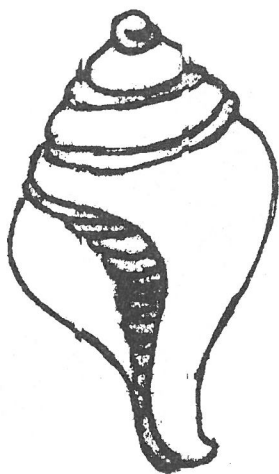
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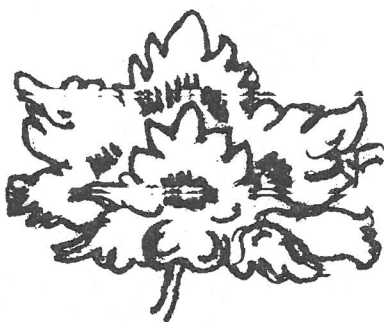
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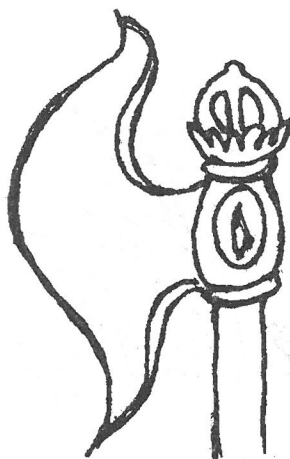
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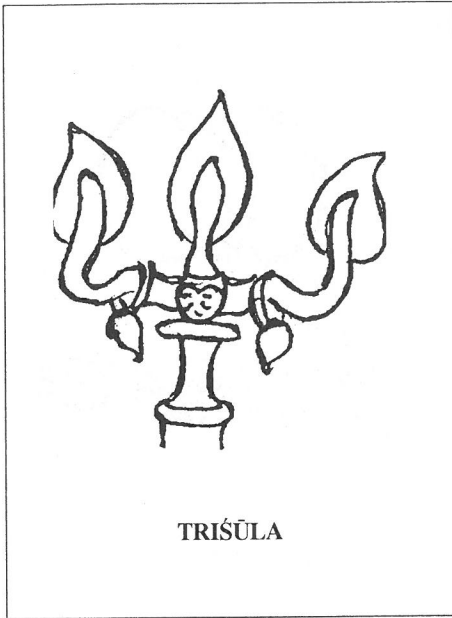
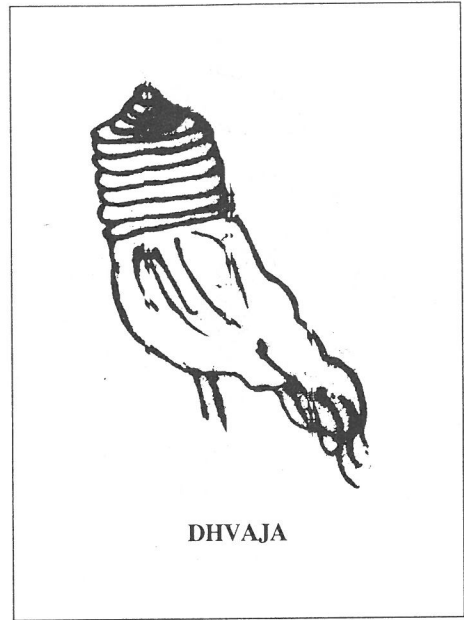
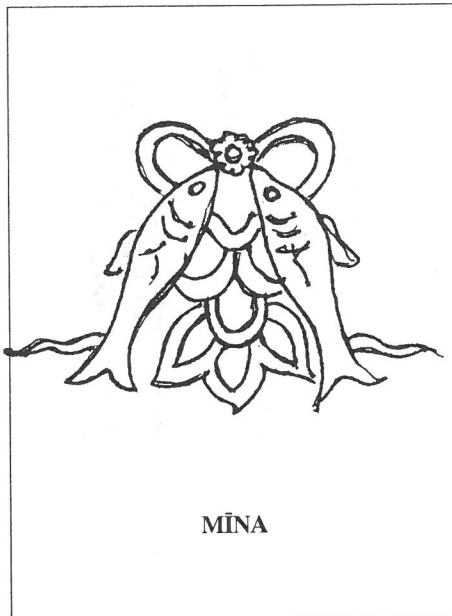
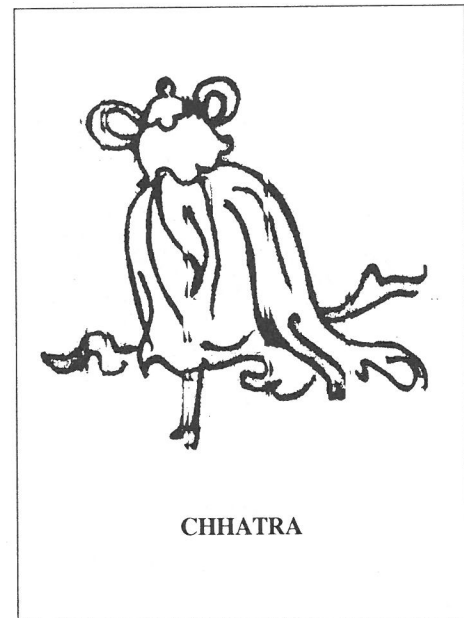
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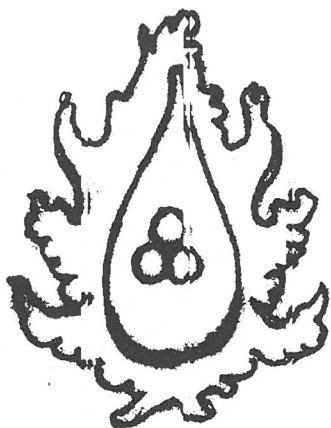


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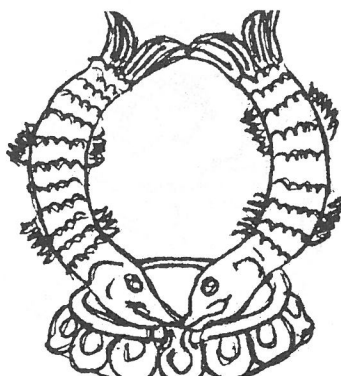


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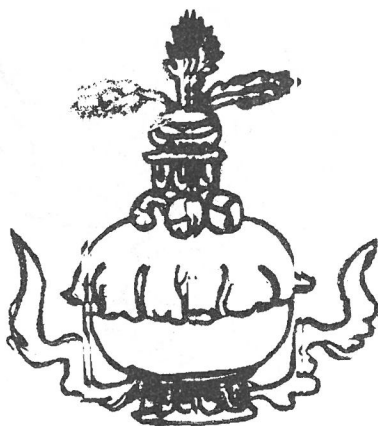
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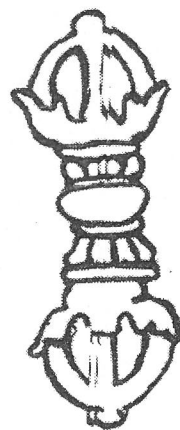
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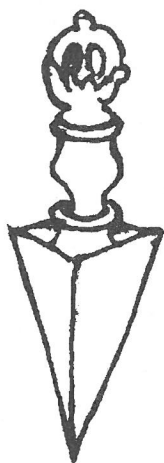
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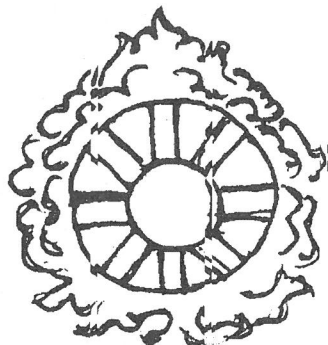
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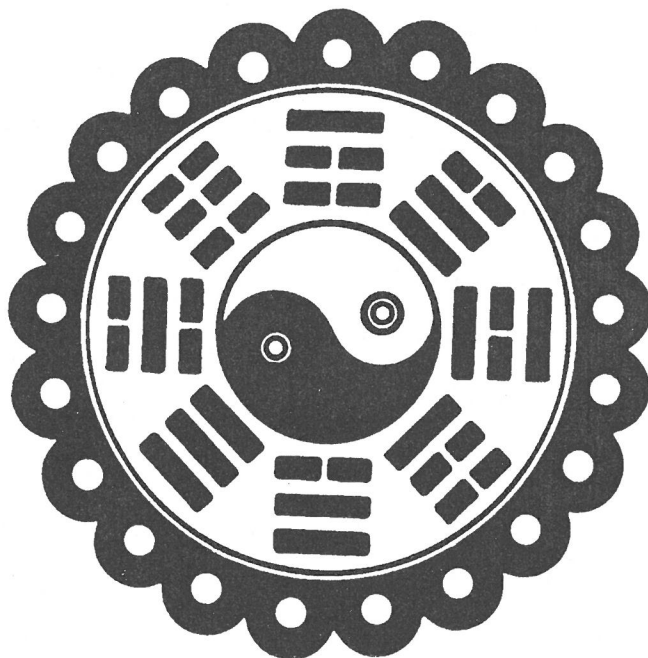
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CHAPTER SEVEN

THE TIBETAN YOGIS OF INDIAN TRADITION

(1) MARPA

The venerable Marpa of LHo-Brag (1012-1097) was an illustrious, if also somewhat eccentric, son of Tibet. His continued celebrity, however, rests on his having been the teacher of the more illustrious poet-saint of Tibet, Milarepa. Marpa visited India several times, studied under many India masters, and founded the well-known Kagyu (bKah-brgyud) tradition of Nāropa. He is celebrated as the 'Translator' (*Lo-TSa-Ba*), for he not only brought into Tibet a large number of Sanskrit Texts on Yoga and Tantra, but translated many of them into Tibetan. He was also a poet.

Marpa (Mar-Pa) hailed from LHo-Brag, ("South Rock"), an area in Southern Tibet bordering on Bhotan. That was his family name. Tibetan religious annals know four or five kinsmen of his, all scholars and teachers, who were also known as Marpas. This Marpa, therefore, is usually referred to as the person from LHo-Brag, or as the Translator. His family name, however, was bLo-Gras. He was born in 1012 A.D. as the second son of his parents. He was a bright child, but grew up to be a troublesome boy. His mischievous pranks were an unending source of anxiety for the entire village. His parents, in consequence, were nearly boycotted in the small village.



MARPA

Marpa's father thought seriously of sending the boy away from the village, but had the wisdom to think of a good teacher to take charge of the boy, who was hardly fifteen. He had heard that a certain teacher, who had visited India, was running a sort of boarding school, not very far from LHO-Brag. The father took the boy there, and made arrangements with the teacher. He returned to his village with a two-fold satisfaction: the boy was away, and the teacher would make a man of him.

The teacher was Brogmi (hBrog-Mi, "The Dweller of the Pasture-land", 993-1078A.D.) He was known in that part of the country as "the precious master" (*bLa-CHen-Po*). He was proficient in Sanskrit, the sacred language of India, having learnt it from the excellent scholar Śāntibhadra, in

Nepal. He had also studied the Indian religious lore for eight years in India, under no less a teacher than the great Ratnākara-Śānti, the celebrated paṇḍita of the Vikramaśilā monastic college in Magadha. He had become an adept in Buddhist Philosophy, and had been initiated into the 'Diamond doctrine' (*Vajra-yāna*) by Prajña-Indrabhūti. Returning to Tibet, he had settled down as a translator. He translated several Sanskrit texts on Tantra into Tibetan; and his translations became popular. He opened a school for teaching Sanskrit and explaining Tāntrik texts in his Myu-gu-Lung monastery (near Sa-Skya in gTSang in Central Tibet). Many brilliant young men of Tibet joined this school.

Brogmi was a clever teacher, stern in the matter of discipline but kind-hearted otherwise. He had, however, a streak of eccentricity. He



GSANG-BA-PA

preferred living in a tent among his cattle. He spent most of his time in the open, day and night. When Marpa was brought to him, he not only perceived that a little devil had come to him, but understood that the boy had a great future. Brogmi attended to Marpa's education with especial care. The boy's unruly nature soon underwent a marked change. He had found his vocation; and, therefore, took to his studies assiduously.

He mastered Sanskrit in a couple of years. Sanskrit was called 'the language of translation'. Its knowledge was indispensable for one who aspired to take up translation of sacred texts as his vocation. While the entire mass of religious texts which were held as sacred and authoritative in Tibet was in Sanskrit, its knowledge was by no means wide spread in that country. A translator's profession was therefore highly prized. It also brought not in considerable wealth. It was natural for Marpa to emulate his master and aspire to become a translator like him. Brogmi had brought from India several Tāntrik texts. Many of them were incomplete, and most of them were unrelated to each other. This left Marpa rather dissatisfied. He resolved, therefore, to visit India to acquire the complete versions of the texts, and to discover the relations

among them with the help of oral traditions current in that country. For it was an accepted practice in the field of Tantra that not all the teachings were to be reduced to writing. The most essential doctrines were only orally communicated by the teacher to the deserving among his students.

After completing his studies with Brogmi, Marpa returned home. But, collecting about fifteen golden *sraṅgs* (*sraṅg* is a Tibetan weight, about an ounce), he at once set out on a journey to India. He spent three years in Nepal, to get used to the tropical climate of India. But he did not waste his time during this period. He studied several Tāntrik texts under Nepalese monks. One of his teachers here, Benda-pa, accompanied him to India and took him to the illustrious paṇḍita, Nāropā (Nāḍa-pāda), in Magadha.



NĀROPA

Nāropā was the most eminent of Tāntrikas in India in those days. Scholar, writer, teacher, mystic, recluse, he was indeed a phenomenon. He was a professor of Tantra at a Vikramaśīlā and Nālandā monastic colleges; he was also famed as a *yogi* and a *siddha*. He had learnt the 'great seal doctrine' (*Mahāmudrā*) from an equally eminent master of that esoteric doctrine in the country. And he was adored by hundreds of students who eagerly gathered round

him to listen to his expositions of Tāntrik texts, and more importantly to obtain initiations from him. There were also many Tibetans who studied under him.

When Marpa arrived in Magadha, Nāropā had been living in retirement in his native village, phulahari, on the outskirts of Nālandā. He was engaged in some secret spiritual practice, and was therefore in seclusion. But he came out for Marpa's sake. Impressed by the young Tibetan's zeal and brilliance, he readily accepted him as a resident student, and taught him the *Hevajra Tantra* with many hidden precepts. He also gave Marpa as many as seven initiations into Tāntrik rites, before resuming his seclusion.

When Nāropā retired once again to his contemplative seclusion, Marpa proceeded to Tulakshetra in



KUKKURI-PĀ

the Western region in search of other *siddhas*. He met one, a famous siddha, Jñāna-garbha (Kukkuri-Pa by name), and studied *Guhyasamāja-Tāntra* with him. He was greatly impressed by the symbolism employed in this Tantra. He was told that only Nāropā had them. Marpa therefore returned to Nālandā, and waited patiently for Nāropā to come out of his retreat. While he waited, he prayed fervently that Nāropā

should accept him as his disciple in 'the inner circle'. Marpa composed numerous poems in Tibetan and in Sanskrit, eulogizing the greatness of Nāropā.

When Nāropā came out after a few weeks, he taught Marpa the *Guhyasamāja-Tantra* with the aid of an extremely abstruse but indispensable commentary called *Pradīpodyatana*, and gave him all the 'hidden precepts' connected with this Tantra.

When Marpa found that his funds had begun to dwindle, he returned to Tibet. But his heart was set on coming back to India before long, for learning some more texts from Nāropā. When, therefore, he arrived in Tibet, he hit upon an ingenious plan to acquire sufficient quantity of gold to enable him to return to India.



KUKKURI-PĀ

He set himself up as a magician in the northern part of Tibet, and specialized in conducting 'child-protecting' rites for wealthy families, charging ten golden *sraṅgs* for each rite. He soon became very popular, and rich folk clamoured to get his services. Marpa's fortune was quickly made. As luck would have it, one of his clients struck on a gold mine at a place called Nam-ra. Marpa now had bagfuls of gold. He could without

a care set out on his second journey to India.

He went directly to Nālandā to resume his studies with Nāropā. But Nāropā had just left his village, and had gone away to an unknown forest-retreat for some Tāntrik practice! Marpa was naturally disappointed, but he was unwilling to return to Tibet without meeting his great teacher. Marpa wandered about the forest in the eastern region in search of Nāropā. During the course of his search many were the mystics and saints that he met. An eager student that Marpa always was, he enriched his store of hidden precepts. One of the hermits whom he met told that Nāropā was in a forest in South India. Marpa immediately set out for the South. After a diligent combing of numerous jungle-retreats he located at last the great teacher on a mountain top.

Finding Nāropā, Marpa fell at his feet and offered him as gift all the gold that he had brought with him. Nāropā, however, threw away the gold in undisguised disgust. He kicked a rock with his foot, and the entire rock turned into glittering gold. He turned to Marpa and said: "Son, the whole earth here is gold!" With these words he abruptly disappeared behind the ramparts of the forest leaving the Tibetan utterly bewildered. That was the last that Marpa saw of his teacher.

Although Marpa was sorry that he could obtain no more instructions from the master, he was glad that he could at least see him. He was filled with feelings of gratitude for his good fortune. He spent the whole day worshipping the spot where Nāropā stood, and singing hymns that acknowledged the great blessing that Nāropā had showered upon him.



NĀDA-PĀDA

He poured out numerous songs of fervent adoration. And since then, poetry came to him with effortless facility. And he dedicated his poetic muse to the praise of his *guru*.

Marpa was at that time 42 years of age. He resolved to spend the rest of his life teaching the doctrines that he had learnt from Nāropā. He returned to Tibet, settled down at his village in LHo-Brag and opened a school for teaching the Indian Tantras. He married and set up as a householder-teacher. Although he did not receive monastic ordination, he was widely known and respected as a *lama*. He continued to be a yogi.

He specialized in teaching *Guhyasamāja-tantra* as expounded in Jinadatta's *Pañjikā*, in Sthagana's *Vivaraṇa* and in Jñānapāda's *Nibandha (Kusumañjalī)*. But this

exposition, which was rather metaphysical, lacked meditative orientation. Marpa, therefore, supplemented the exposition with Nāropā's analysis which was "hidden". Marpa formulated a five-fold scheme of meditation based on the traditional exposition and Nāropā's analysis of *Guhyasamāja-tantra*:

- (1) Solitude of body (*Lus-dBen*),
- (2) Solitude of speech (*Nag-dBen*),
- (3) Solitude of mind (*Sems-dBen*),
- (4) illumination (*od-gSal*, Skt. *ābhāsvara*), and
- (5) merging of body and mind (*Zung-Jug*, Skt. *Yuganaddha*).

The last stage was meant to be the immediate precursor to complete enlightenment. Marpa also taught *Hevajra-Tantra*.

His school became popular, and Marpa became a celebrity all over Tibet. His expositions of Indian texts and initiations into esoteric practices attracted a large number of brilliant students. Although himself a famous lama now, his eagerness to acquire more knowledge and gather further initiations never abated. When, for instance, he heard from an acquaintance that a great *siddha*, Maitrīpā was teaching hidden texts pertaining to 'The great Seal' (*mahāmudrā*) doctrine in the Eastern region of India, he at once got ready to leave for India.

Marpa met Maitri-pā in Bengal and obtained from him the hidden teachings and initiations. This gave him a sense of fulfilment. He acknowledged: "By the grace of my venerable master, my mind has now been set at rest, and my mind has at last been freed from doubts. I

have realized the essential nature as non-origination and I have an insight into the relative nature of mind." His mind became clear like a quiet lake in clear moonlight; his heart became cool like snow on mount Kailāsa.

This was his third and last visit to India. In all, he had spent about eighteen years here. But he was a tireless pilgrim. After he returned to Tibet, he made two more visits to Nepal in order to collect texts and meet mystics. Just as he was about to return home after his second visit, political trouble broke out in Nepal, and Tibetans in Nepal were harassed by the local chiefs. Marpa decided to turn his detention to his advantage, and entered into a contemplative retreat in a cell.

While so engaged in perfecting the meditative techniques he had so assiduously acquired in India, he



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SIDDHA MAITRI-PĀDA

dreamt one night that he was carried by a fairy to Śrīparvata in South India, where the wellknown Indian *siddha*, Saraha-pāda, gave him initiations into many secret rites, thus integrating *Guhyasamāja-Tantra* and *Hevajra-Tantra*. When he woke up, his mind had been brilliantly illumined and his heart was utterly tranquil. He now understood that the two basic texts had 'the same flavour'; and he developed a perfect insight into 'the unalterable one-flavour' of all phenomena.

When the political clouds in Nepal cleared, Marpa returned to Tibet, and resumed his teaching in a place called Gro-bo-Lung. He established a sort of monastery (although he was not a monk himself) in Lower Lung. Hundreds of students gathered round him; they lived with him and learnt from him. His wife, an affectionate and efficient lady,



KĀLA-CHAKRA

ran the house for him and his students. She was not only a mother to the students, but was herself a teacher. She not only helped in the initiations that Marpa bestowed on the students, she herself bestowed minor initiations on those students who wanted them.

Marpa was as eccentric as he was celebrated. He was a splendid teacher, but had a terrible temper. He was most exacting with his



SARHA-PĀDA

students: uncompromisingly severe, and unreasonably demanding. He would frequently burst out: "I have obtained this marvellous teaching from Indian masters after untold suffering and sacrifice. Do you want me to throw it away for the sake of miserable money, and before such ease-loving fools?" He would scare away light-hearted students; only those who were really earnest remained with him. His wife was as

sober as he was irascible; she was unfailingly gentle and kind and generous, and amply made up for all the severities the students experienced under the great teacher.

It was widely known that Marpa's ways were beyond comprehension. He was a saint, and spent hours in serene meditation. But he readily quarrelled with almost everyone that he met. His exterior was forbidding; it suggested a greedy and garrulous worldling. He had a sharp tongue, and his wit was taunting. He apparently spent the major part of the day looking after his extensive farm, an occupation altogether unsuited to a contemplative disposition. And he had a fondness, which almost bordered on the abnormal, for building odd houses and pulling them down. This avocation kept him almost uninterruptedly busy.

But this was only a mask. The earnest students that remained with him were rewarded by an uncommon love and generosity from him. He spared no pains to help them in various ways. He would teach them without holding back a single detail. He was, in fact, kind, austere, unworldly, and benevolent. He had perfected the art of sustained contemplation, wherever he was and whatever he was doing. His wife often reassured the students: “The master is unpredictable, even crazy. But have patience; he is only testing you. There is no one who is kinder than him in all Tibet. He would even teach a dog that came to learn from him!”

Once a young man, Nyog (rNog CHos-rDor) approached marpa with a request to be taught a text. He had brought an ordinary horse as a present for the teacher. Marpa looked



TILOPĀ

at the horse, and flared up: “Is this your fee for my teaching you the entire text? Do you know what trouble I have gone through to get this text from India? Go away! It is too small a present! Or, did you want merely to meet me? In that case, it would be too big a present!” Nyog was bewildered at this strange reception. Marpa’s wife who knew that Nyog was earnest made a sign for him to remain. Soon Marpa not

only agreed to teach Nyog the text that he had come to learn, but offered to teach him many other texts that were related to it. He bestowed on him several initiations, and transmitted to him the entire tradition of the Great Seal. This Nyog (1036-1102) became in due course one of 'the four great pillars' of Marpa's. It was he who continued in the main the 'teaching lineage' of Marpa, as Milarepa (another of the 'pillars') did the 'meditation lineage'.

Nyog had set up as a teacher in his own right at a distant town after he left Marpa. He had also become famous and wealthy. It so happened that once, Marpa had built a new house for his son who had come of age. He invited Nyog to come and officiate as a priest in the feast he had arranged.

Nyog arrived at Marpa's village, and had brought with him all the cattle

and sheep that he possessed as presents to his teacher. A lame sheep alone had been left behind, for it could not make the long journey. He sent a student of his to inform Marpa about his coming, expecting the teacher to arrange some sort of a reception for him. But when Marpa was informed, he flew into a rage: "What does he expect? Does he expect a great teacher like me to go and receive him, merely because he has brought a couple of cows and sheep for me. If that is what he expects, let him go back! I will have nothing to do with him."

But Marpa's wife who knew Nyog very well and had a regard for him prepared some chang and went to meet Nyog outside the village. When Nyog arrived in Marpa's presence, he presented all the cattle that he had brought with him, bowed before the teacher and humbly said:

“Master, it is needless to say that all that I possess is yours; my prosperity has been entirely due to your compassion and grace. Still, I have brought all my cattle as a token of my gratitude to you. Only a lame lamb has been left behind, for it could not make this long journey.”

Marpa, however, said “Very well, Nyog, I am very happy you came, and I am glad you have brought this present. But you could have carried that lame lamb on your back and brought it! Please go back, and bring it along!” Poor Nyog had to return all the way to his home-town and bring the lame lamb, carrying it.

Everyone thought the teacher was heartless and crazy. What would he do anyway with a lame lamb? But when Nyog returned, Marpa said “Nyog, you are an ideal disciple! I shall bestow on you a rite that I

acquired after you left me. In fact I invited you mainly for that. That is why I made you return to your home and bring on your home and bring on your back the lamb. I have indeed no use for that animal! But your offering is now complete.”

Besides the ‘four great pillars’, Marpa had four ‘spiritual sons’ and ten ‘large heads’ who spread Marpa’s teaching all over the country. One of his ‘spiritual sons’ was Mes-TSHonpo, who became a monk and presided over the Ba-Do monastery. He wrote extensive Tibetan commentaries on *Hevajra-Tantra*. He had a large retinue of students and many wealthy patrons.

Marpa died in 1097, when he was eighty-six. His relics were enshrined in a beautiful casket made of acacia wood. Marpa had two sons, one of whom (Jo-Rim KHor-



TILO-PĀ



Lo) was given to gambling. Once he pledged this precious casket, and lost it. The winner threw away the contents on the road and carried the casket away. A niece of Marpa's who learnt about this sacrilege, ran to Nyog and informed him. Nyog immediately arranged to get the relics carefully gathered and got them enshrined in a silver tomb. Later, a temple was built over this tomb. People believed that this temple safeguarded the fortunes of the

country for long years. Marpa was regarded as the incarnation of the Vajrayāna divinity, Dombi-Heruka. He is said to have been an adept in the art of 'transference of consciousness' which he learnt from Nāropā. However, he did not transmit this art to any of his disciples. He had transmitted it to one of his sons, who unfortunately predeceased him.

Marpa was among those who welcomed the 'precious lord' Atīśa-Dīpaṃkara, when the latter arrived in Tibet in 1042 to begin his celebrated reform of Tibetan religion. Marpa was at that time a young man of 31, who sympathised with the 'mission' of Atīśa. Marpa too carried out a religious reform in his own way, and became the founder of a sect known as Kagyu (*bKah-brgyud*), which emphasizes meditation in seclusion as the road to enlightenment.

(2) MILAREPA

Tibet knows Milarepa (Mid-La Ras-Pa, 1040-1123 A.D) as 'the venerable lord' (*rJe-BTSun*) and as the 'lord of ascetics' (*rNal-Bvor-gyi dBang-PHYug*, Skt. *Yogeshvara*). There is no saint in Tibet who is more loved and adored by his countrymen than this cotton-clad ascetic. His life-story, especially as recounted by his favourite disciple, Rechung (Ras-CHung rDorJe Grag-Pa), is the best-known among Tibetan classics. Milarepa's songs have a universal appeal; and there are hundreds of them still on the lips of the people in Tibet.

Milarepa's family name was *Mila (Mid-La)*. *Repa (Ras-Pa)* means "cotton-clad". He was so called because of the habit of wrapping his body with a thin cotton sheet even in biting cold. The expression has

reference to the yogic technique of generating 'internal heat' (*gTum-Mo*), in which this ascetic and his followers were adepts. His personal name was THos-Pa-dGa ("a delight to hear"). He was so named because he had a sweet voice, and later in life, when he used to sing his own songs, even animals were said to be held spell-bound.

Mila was born in 1040 A.D. as the son of a rich merchant, belonging to the KHyung-Po ('the Sacred Eagle') clan. When the boy was seven years old his father died, leaving the mother and child in the care of his brother. The property which was considerable was arranged to be managed by this brother until the boy came of age. The brother, however, was a wicked sort. He wanted to marry the widow of his brother, and when she refused, he swore an eternal enmity towards her



MILAREPA

and her son. He began ill-treating them, summarily snatched away their property, and reduced them to a pitiable plight.

The mother courageously bore the hardship, eagerly awaiting her son reaching his fifteenth year. When he did reach it, she wanted the brother of her husband to hand back the property to her son. But the wicked brother disclaimed all knowledge of this arrangement, and refused to part with the property, which he claimed was his own. Because this brother was both wealthy and rough, the villagers were scared of taking the side of the poor widow, although they knew that her claim was just. The widow had no alternative but to continue in penury.

Mila in the meantime had started learning to read and write under the village teacher. One day

there was a feast in a neighbouring village, to which this teacher was invited. The teacher went there with Mila. Mila partook freely of the wine that was being served in the feast. When he returned in the night to his own village he found himself in unusually high spirits. He was singing merrily when he reached home.

His mother who heard him rushed out. She could not make out how he could possibly be in such a gay mood when they were steeped in such deep misery. She took a stick, belaboured him soundly and shouted, "Shame on you! You are a blot on the family! A disgrace indeed to your dead father! How can you possibly sing so merrily when we are what we are? You should be busy learning sorcery to destroy your devil of an uncle and his whole family! Let me tell you. I shall not be happy until you avenge the injustice he has wrought on us!"



NĀDAPĀDA

The rebuke went straight into Mila's heart. He resolved at once to proceed to Yar-KLungs (in dbUs area) where there are reputed sorcerers. His mother gave him the necessary provisions and bade him not to return until he had destroyed his uncle.

Although young, he braved the long and arduous journey and settled down to study the black arts under Nyags, whose powers of magic and

withcraft were feared all over the region. After learning the general practices for a year, Mila appraised the master of the real purpose of his study. The sorcerer thereupon sent him to a colleague of his own, sNubs-CHung of Tsang. Rong, who had specialized in destructive magic.

Mila retired, under instruction from sNubs-CHung, to an underground cell and practised magical rites for a fortnight. He came out only when he saw sure signs of success.

In the meantime, Mila's uncle was celebrating his son's wedding in his own house, and about thirty friends and relatives had gathered to partake in the festivities. The house suddenly caved in and all the people were killed, save his uncle and aunt, who were at that time outside. Mila's mother knew that this was her son's

doing, and she was overjoyed. The villagers however were not pleased with her satanic glee, and they kept away from her.

The widow become vindictive and sent a letter to her son to send a terrible hailstorm so that the villagers may see what her son could do and learn a lesson. Mila obtained from his teacher instruction with regard to compelling hailstorms. Within a month, and just at harvest time, a devastating hailstorm raged in the locality and brought untold suffering to the people.

Mila's mother was satisfied, but Mila himself was sad. He was troubled with the thought that he was only piling up sin upon sin, all because of a foolish woman's vengeful nature. While he was still residing with the teacher of sorcery, a friend and patron of the teacher

suddenly died, leaving the teacher in gloom and dejection.

The sorcerer called Mila aside and said, "Son, we have been assiduously acquiring sins. We have nothing but suffering in store for us! You are young, and it will not profit you to pursue this career. Why don't you take to religious life and help all creatures? If you are willing, I shall support you. It will spell good for me too." Mila was delighted at the suggestion.

When he told the sorcerer that he was willing, in fact eager, the sorcerer sent him to Rong (valley) to study under an acquaintance of his (Breston) the purificatory rites. When Mila achieved a measure of success in this branch of learning, he desired his teacher to instruct him in the art of meditation so that he might realize the ultimate essence of the great doctrine.



MARPA

Breston was not skilled in this, and so he advised Mila to approach the venerable Marpa of LHo-Brag in Southern Tibet. As soon as Mila heard the name of Marpa, his mind fluttered with elation; a strange delight filled his being. He at once left in search of Marpa who he was now sure was his destined master.

Marpa was camping at that time in CHu-Kyer. Mila went there. Strangely, Marpa knew already about

Mila's arrival and had offered special prayers to his tutelary deities to invoke blessings upon Mila. He was eagerly waiting for him, and had in fact gone to the outskirts of the village to receive him, of course concealing his identity and purpose.

But when Mila appeared at his home and bowed before him, he appeared indifferent and spoke harshly. When Mila settled down, he set him lay tasks like ploughing the barren fields, building odd houses (which incidentally was his special craze) on lands that were not his own, and erecting purposeless stone-walls. Marpa was especially severe and exacting where Mila was concerned. He made the young man labour until his body was bruised.

Whenever Mila begged for initiations, Marpa only rebuked him, and refused to do anything of the

sort. He always taunted Mila reminding him of his flirtation with sorcery. In fact, Marpa always referred to Mila as a 'the great sorcerer', much to his discomfiture and dejection.

Mila reached the limit of his endurance. He planned to leave, and when the kindly Damema (Marpa's wife) was informed of his plan, she counselled patience. She pleaded with her husband on Mila's behalf, in vain. Then, she took a bold step. She sent with Mila a letter with Marpa's seal to one of the chief disciples of Marpa, Nyog (rNog), asking him to bestow initiation on Mila. By way of payment therefore she sent him a precious stone, given to Marpa by Nāropā, and therefore especially esteemed by Marpa. All this was unknown to Marpa.

When Nyog heard about Mila's past as a sorcerer, he wanted Mila

to send a hailstorm against the villagers of a neighbouring tract who had stolen his cattle. Reluctant though Mila was to repeat the sinful practice, he did send a hailstorm for the sake of obtaining precepts from Nyog. But he felt extremely unhappy. When Nyog noticed Mila's depression, he reassured him, and bestowed on him the initiation into *upāya-mārga*. Mila entered into seclusion and began meditating.

In the meantime, Marpa sent an invitation to Nyog to come to LHo-Brag, and participate in the consecration ceremony of a nine-storeyed house he had built. Nyog took Mila with him to Marpa's festivity. As soon as Marpa sighted Mila, he feigned annoyance and demanded from Nyog how he gave initiation to Mila (who was Marpa's student). When the bewildered Nyog mentioned about the letter and the

present, Marpa seemed to fly into a rage and rushed upon Damema to belabour her. She, however, ran out in fright. And, immediately, Marpa cooled down, smiled pleasantly, and asked Damema to serve chang liberally to the honoured guests. Marpa then revealed that Mila was in fact his favourite disciple, who had however, to cleanse himself of his sins before he became worthy of initiations. He explained that all the suffering which Mila had to undergo was only calculated towards this end. The odd houses that he made Mila build with such effort and distress were actually *maṇḍalas* which purified him progressively. Nyog and Damema heaved sighs of relief.

Marpa now took Mila under his care, and gave him hidden precepts and initiations. He sent him to a cave in rTa-NagPHug ('Black Horse Cavern') for meditation. Mila put forth

extraordinary effort and obtained an insight into the ultimate and undifferentiated essence of all phenomena. He then returned to Marpa and began studying the texts of the 'great seal' (*mahāmudrā*). He lived with the teacher, following him like a shadow, for six years and eight months. When he left Marpa to return home, Mila was forty-four.

Mila arrived at his village, only to find that his mother had in the meantime died. The villagers were scared of him, and would not talk to him or go near him. He was for them a dangerous sorcerer, a hated magician who had brought upon the village untold suffering. Mila went to his house, which had fallen into ruins, and discovered the remains of his mother in a heap of bones in one corner. People were too frightened of her son, and too annoyed with her to attend to the old woman in her

last days, or even to give her a proper funeral when she died. Mila spent the night in his home, resting his head on the remains of his mother, and meditating intensely in order to bring peace and fortune to the departed spirit of his mother.

His mother had still owned a small patch of farm land, after the property was snatched away by her wicked brother-in-law. But no one dared to cultivate it, or go near it, for fear of Mila's magical powers. His uncle too had died. The wily aunt, however, met Mila and volunteered to cultivate the farm if Mila made it over to her, and in return provide Mila with some provisions so that he engaged himself in meditations without a worry. Mila agreed, although he knew it was greed to grab that patch of land that had prompted his aunt. He made over the patch of land to her.

Mila moved to the outskirts of the village and settled down at the foot of a mountain. He spent six months meditating, and mastered the art of generating 'internal heat' (*gTum-Mo*). Even in the severest winter, he went covering himself with nothing more than a thin cotton sheet. He came thus to be called 'Mila the Cotton-clad' (Mid-La-Ras-Pa).

The aunt, however, was eager to get rid of him, and began troubling him in various ways. He, therefore, moved on southward. He selected a spot there in strict seclusion for practising *prāṇāyāma* and other meditative techniques. During this period, he subsisted only on the green nettles that grew abundantly and wildly in that area. The result was that his body took on a greenish hue. Although his body was emaciated by asceticism, his face



TAILIKA-PĀDA

was radiant with peace and fervour. At the end of the period, he obtained the realization that made him a second Buddha.

After perfecting himself in this manner, he decided to come down to human settlements in order to help fellow-creatures. For this was the vow that every *bodhisattva* kept. He proceeded towards mount Everest, preaching to the nomads and pilgrims on the way. A large

number of devotees gathered round him, and heard his religious discourses. Many studied spiritual texts under him. Although he soon became a well-known teacher all over Tibet, and therefore wealth was within his easy reach, he remained an uncompromising ascetic. He spurned gifts, rejected comfort, and lived like a destitute mendicant. He had turned his back on the world for ever.

He wandered about alone in difficult valleys and on mountain heights, and spent most of his time meditating. He loved nature, and the Himalayan scenery inspired him to many a song. He had not formally taken the monastic order, nor did he establish a school as his teacher Marpa had done. But whenever earnest folk approached him for instructions, explanations, or initiations, he readily gave them. If

people come to him, he would preach to them, and sing religious songs he had himself composed. He had a fine voice, and when he sang, the message travelled far. His songs have been preserved in a collection called “A hundred Thousand” (*gLu-Bum*). They reveal not only his spiritual eminence, but deep appreciation of nature.

He died in 1123 A.D., when he was eighty-four. Being an extraordinarily interesting personality, numerous brilliant disciples were attracted to him.

Famous among them were Rechung (Ras-CHung-Pa, 1083-116) who was reputed to be ‘moon-like’, and Gampopa (sGam-po-Pa) who was ‘Sun-like’. The former, who met Mila when he was only eleven, was stricken with leprosy and had to live in utter seclusion. But he luckily



MILAREPA

met three Indians who took him to India and got his ailment cured at the hands of a Tantric expert, Bālacandra. On his way back, he lived for some years in Nepal as a disciple of the Yogi Atula-dāsa. Returning to Tibet, he became a student of Mila and adopted the life pattern of his master.

He lived like a wandering ascetic, dwelling in empty houses and meditating all the while. He had attended on Mila diligently, and had

obtained from him an especial yogic insight (*rTogs-pa*). He visited India twice at Mila's instance, and brought to Tibet four teachings to complete the "nine classes of doctrines" from 'formless *dākinīs*'. He received many hidden precepts and initiations from Tipūpa (a disciple of Nāropā) during his visits to India and Nepal.

His oral 'Samvara' instructions continued in a distinct lineage, within the general framework of bKa-brGyud sect (founded by Mila's master Marpa). Rechung composed an elaborate biography of Mila, which has justly become famous, *Jetsun Kahbum*. He was seventy-eight when he died in Central Tibet (*dBus*) and many celebrities of the region were among his disciples.

(3) GAMPOPA

Among the disciples of Milarepa, Gampopa (sGam-Po-Pa,

1079-1153 A.D.) is described as the foremost. He was popularly called "the sun-like" disciple of Mila, because he revealed the hidden precepts of Mila, and illuminated Tibet with Mila's light. His personal name was Nyi-ba (sNi-ba), but was better known as "The venerable one of the Dvag-Po hermitage" (*Dvag-Po LHa-rJe*), also sGam-Po-Pa after his monastic settlement. He bore the title "without an equal" (*mNam-med*). He was believed to have been an incarnation of the celebrated emperor, Srong-TSan-sGam-Po (who died in 650 A.D.)

He was born in 1079 as the second son of his parents in LHarje of Dvagpo in Eastern Tibet. As a young man, he studied medicine and became not only rich, but famous as a physician. He married early in life, but in his twenty-five year his wife died. He had loved her very dearly



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MILAREPA

and he became so dejected that he gave up lay life and became a monk. His monastic name was "the Jewel of Merit" (*bSod -naṃs Rin-CHen*, Skt *Puṇya-ratna*). He studied Buddhist texts under Kadampa hermits, (bKahgDam-Pa, a sect founded by Atīśa-Dīpaṃkara and his disciple Brom). But the sorrow of bereavement still dogged him. He left his home-town and travelled northward. He received initiation into contemplative absorption from Byang-Chub Sams-dPa, who was celebrated as a *bodhisattva*. He shut himself in a cell for thirteen days, and without getting up from his mat, practised meditation. He attained the first stage of meditative trance. His Sorrow was to a considerable extent assuaged. He returned home.

As he was nearing his village, it so happened that three beggars were walking a little ahead of him.

He could listen to their conversation. One of them said. "How I wish I had plenty of barleyflour and green vegetables!" Another broke in: "If it is a matter of wish, why don't you wish to be a king?" The third protested, "why a king? What good is he? You should rather wish to be a Milarepa, who has no need to eat, or clothe himself, who is always singing merrily although possessing nothing at all, and who can fly across mountains!"

As soon as Gampopa heard the name of Milarepa, a strange tremor of happiness ran through his limbs. His heart became peaceful as never before. He was eager to know more about this Milarepa. He offered some provisions to the beggars and asked them who this Milarepa was. They told him he was a yogī, who was given to wandering in mountainous tracts and valleys. They also told



SGAM-PO-PA

him that they had found him on the hill-top of Brin Nyenam.

Gampopa immediately turned, and set out to Brin. It was a long and a difficult journey. But his faith was so great, and his eagerness to meet Milarepa so intense, that he covered the distance soon. But just outside Brin, he took seriously ill, and had to rest for a while. He fervently prayed that his body may be spared at least until he had a look at Milarepa. He at once felt better, and as soon as he was able to walk, he entered Brin. When he stepped into the confines of Brin, a monk accosted him and said: "Are you Gampopa? Welcome to you! You are indeed lucky. Master Milarepa has been waiting for you!"

When Gampopa heard these words, his heart was naturally elated; he even felt proud. He accompanied



RAS-CHUNG RDO-RJE

the monk, and went to where Milarepa was residing. But Mila did not come out to greet him, nor did he meet him for a fortnight. Gampopa waited in vain, and waited eagerly. At length, he realized that his pride it was that came in the way of meeting the Great One. At once he regretted it, and felt humble. Immediately, Mila sent for him.

Gampopa bowed before him and placed at his feet a piece of gold

and a packet of tea as gifts. But Mila laughed, and said: "Gold and I do not agree. We have never agreed even since I was born! And, what use is this packet of tea to me, for I have not utensils at all to make tea! Please take back both of them. I am content with your greeting."

Then Mila inquired of Gampopa what his name was. When Gampopa mentioned his monastic name, "Jewel of Merit", Mila closed his eyes, and repeated, "Merit, merit, Merit," and broke into a song which ended with this refrain; "Come out of the confines of Merit, for you are a jewel among men!" He then told Gampopa "That is my welcome to you!"

Gampopa then begged Mila to bestow on him an initiation. Thereupon the following conversation took place between them:

Mila: "Did you have any initiation earlier?"

Gampopa: "Yes."

Mila: "How long do you sit for meditation?"

Gampopa: "Usually for six hours."

Mila: "What do you experience?"

Gampopa: "Nothing at all!"

Mila: (laughing) "How can that be? you practise each day for six hours, and yet there are no signs of progress! Well that is a sign that you should give up this practice, and try another!"

Gampopa: "Master, I am willing to try your method."

Mila: "Then you must start right from the beginning!"

At this, Gampopa began to take off the Kadampa monastic robe which he was wearing (for he was still a monk of this sect), and sought to be given a white cotton sheet (like the one Mila was wearing). Mila laughed, and stopped him; “No, no. That is not what I mean! You need not change your clothes. I do not want you to be a replica of myself. You must in fact bring out your own teaching. My initiation is mine. Your teaching must be yours!”

Mila then bestowed on Gampopa hidden precepts and initiation, then and there. This was an unusual proceeding, for Mila was given to delay much in the matter of initiations and hidden precepts. Gampopa thus became Mila’s spiritual son. Mila at that time was an old man of seventy-one, while Gampopa was thirty-two years of age. Mila asked Gampopa to enter



into seclusion immediately, and gave him instructions regarding *vajra-vārāhī*-cycle. Gampopa arranged with a householder for the supply of food during his seclusion in exchange for some pieces of gold, built for himself a hut at the foot of a mountain three miles from Brin, and retired into it.

After six years of retreat, Gampopa began to have mystic visions. He saw the luminous form of the Buddha and the clear representation of a *maṇḍala*. And

several other signs also occurred to him in succession. Each time a sign appeared, Gampopa imagined that he had attained the highest degree of meditative trance, and ran to Mila to get confirmation. Mila, however, kept on discouraging him. Every time Gampopa came, Mila would say, "That is nothing! Go back to your practice!"

After a few more weeks, Gampopa had a vivid vision of the six worlds. He was now sure that there was no mistake about the highest attainment. He ran to Mila in Brin, but Mila was asleep at that time. Gampopa was all excited, and was in no mood to wait until the master got up on his own. Gampopa woke him up, and excitedly reported to him the details of the vision he had. Mila merely said; "Let me sleep! I am not a scholar like you. But I know that *Prajñāpāramitā* says

that all this is mere illusion. I suggest you go back to your hut, and continue the practice!"

Gampopa was disheartened; his face fell, and his courage began to fail him. Mila noticed it, and reassured him: "Son, all these are signs (*rTogs*) that some psychic centers in the body are drawing the vital current (*rLung*, Skt. *prāṇa*) to themselves. They are no doubt signs that you are advancing. But you should not stop at them. They are not benefits in themselves. You must, in fact, ignore them, and persevere! A mere glimpse of reality must not be mistaken for complete realization."

Gampopa took courage at these words and went back to his hut. He resumed the meditation with greater vigour; the signs no longer tempted him, nor did they scare him. In due

course, he was able to sustain himself for an entire day with a single breath; he could feel the air entering his body and going out through the tips of his fingers.

Sometime later, Gampopa had vision of the sun being eclipsed by the demon Rāhu. At the very moment, Mila walked into his hut and bestowed on him the final initiation into the highest degree of “inner heat” (gTumMo). He left the hut, saying “Worthy son, you have done well! You will soon become a great hero! Continue the practice.” Gampopa persevered and, as the master had predicted, soon obtained the advanced stage of trance.

Mila now asked him to come out of the hut. He congratulated him, and said: “You have practised enough in my presence. You may now go back to your village. But you



must promise me that you will continue this practice for three more years. The gains must be properly consolidated; otherwise they may slip away! Keep carefully out of mundane matters. Avoid the company of worldlings. Beware of lust, anger and sloth. Dwell in seclusion. Move about in solitary haunts. And persevere in your practice!”

He also gave him many hidden explanations, and accompanying him till the bridge outside Brin, bade him

farewell. As Gampopa bowed before the master and turned to go, Mila said, "Come here after twelve years! You may then teach others, bestow precepts and initiations on those that seek."

Gampopa left Brin and arrived at Nyal. He set up a hermitage there and practised meditation for three years, without leaving his mat, or loosening his belt as the expression goes.

He realized the true nature of mind and the essential nature of all phenomena. He discovered that everything had but one flavour. He now realized that his master, Mila, was not merely a *siddha*, but verily the *dharmakāya*. He followed the instructions of the master and wandered about in solitary places for twelve years, spending most of his time in meditation.

After twelve years, he returned to Brin, as his master had commanded. But he was delayed on the way. By the time he reached Brin, Mila had just passed away. But he had instructed his disciple to preserve a share of his relics for Gampopa. Gampopa received the relics and moved in the direction of Gampo (sGam-Po) or Dvagpo. He knew that his own end was fast approaching, and that he had no more than three years to live.

He would have been happy to spend the rest of his days quietly meditating in mountain retreats. But his Master, Mila, had asked him to teach and bestow precepts and initiations on those that sought them. People indeed were coming to him, and they urged him to set up a monastery at Gampo. Gampopa, however, was not eager to undertake this mission because his life had

almost been completely spent. At the insistence of the people, he underwent a life-prolonging rite (of Tārā)

With life thus renewed, Gampopa settled down to work for the benefit of living beings. He set up a monastery at Gampo and began teaching texts, giving initiations, and instructions for meditations. He preached to the lay folk as well as to the mendicants.

He also composed several manuals and guide-books for contemplation. He naturally attached great importance to meditation. He used to say that "One fleeting glimpse of great wisdom that arises during meditation is more precious than loads of knowledge got from books or by listening to sermons." But he did not ignore the value of books or teachers. He said

"Meditation, without sufficient preparation by hearing the doctrine and reflecting upon it, is likely to land one in darkness; he would not know what to look for, and he would fail to recognize it even when it stands right before him!"

He had a large following. Among his disciples were anchorites, ascetics, monks, and laymen. He himself was austere in his habits, a recluse by preference, and loved solitude. But whenever anyone asked for precepts or explanations he would readily give them. It is recorded that when he lay on his deathbed, two monks came to discuss with him on a metaphysical issue. He did not want to be disturbed. Then they asked for initiation into the Great-Seal (*mahāmudrā*). Gampopa at once asked his attendant to admit them!

He died in 1153 A.D. at the age of seventy-five. When his body

was cremated, it was found that his heart had not been consumed by fire. A golden cairn was set up to house this wonderful relic.

(4) PHAGMO

Among Gampopa's disciples, the most celebrated was PHagMo-Grub-Pa (1110-1170 A.D), who was principally responsible for the spread of the agyu sect in Tibet. Before he met Gampopa he had studied with every teacher he could find, and had practised all the rites and contemplations that were available to him. He had initiations from thirteen yogis, and had discussions with all scholars well-known in Tibet at that time. But Gampopa was the only teacher who gave him lasting peace.

PHag-Mo-Grub-pa (meaning 'Made perfect by the Sow-goddess



PHAG-MO-GRU

or Vārāhi') was not his real name; he came to be so called because of his monastery with that name. His name was hGron-MGon ('Protector of Beings'). Dissatisfied with all the teachers he had met, and disappointed with all the contemplative techniques that he had tried, he came to Gampopa, who was then eating his lunch. Phagmo bowed before him and described all that he had learnt till then; Gampopa

lifted a ball of parched barley flour, half-eaten, and said: "Surely, this (ball of barley-flour) is much better than all that you have acquired!" Needless to say, Phagmo was downcast with shame and regret.

Gampopa noticed his discomfiture and said, "Well, young man, do not grieve! We will see what we can yet do. But many students are waiting for me for a class immediately after my lunch. Have a stroll on the hill-side outside the village, and come back in the evening." And he patted Phagmo's head as he bowed to withdraw.

Phagmo went to the foot of the hill and began to wander about. He was alone, and he began to turn round in his mind all the doctrines that he had learnt. A couple of hours passed in such intent recollection. He suddenly realized that all that

learning was only the chaff, the outer covering, the husk. And at the same time he obtained a profound insight into the nature of things. He felt as if his mind was suddenly freed and moved about in the sky without obstructions, even as a spear could be swung freely in the open air.

About the time the sun set, he returned to the residence of Gampopa. Gampopa looked at him, and exclaimed: "Well, my man, I could not have taught you better!" He had understood the change that had come over Phagmo. He agreed to give him initiation. Phagmo immediately retired into a cell and meditated for eight months at a stretch. His entire body was suffused with a feeling of well-being that he had never before experienced. When he came out of his cell, a sharp thorn pricked his foot, and blood oozed out. But Phagmo experienced a

pleasant sensation thereby, and his insight was further illumined.

After he left Gampopa, he built his own monastery in sGanSa-MTHil, which became famous as the first great Kagyu monastery in Tibet. But Phagmo himself lived in a small grass hut, engaged almost uninterruptedly in meditation. But whenever he taught, he taught so well, and whenever he preached he preached so effectively that he became popular, and large numbers of students gathered round him.

Although he did not formulate his own teachings and did not establish a sect of his own, his disciples branched out into several subsects. Eight of them became well-known. One of the subsects was founded by Gluigs-Ras Padma-rDo-rJe (1128-1288 A.D), who went to Phagmo and obtained the highest realization within three days.

Phagmo was celebrated for his interesting and effective ways of teaching. There was once a student learning meditation from him : he had made very little progress. Phagmo had an insightful understanding of the nature of the hindrance that prevailed in this student. One day, phagmo asked him to keep with him a sword while meditating. And in front of the meditation hut, he made a net of ropes so that the student would not come out easily. When the student's meditation session was about to end, hagma brought before the student the man who had murdered the student's father. The student was promptly enraged upon seeing him, and rushed out with the drawn sword. Phagmo, who was in hiding, called out! "You are angry! Look into the source of anger!" The student stood back, and within seconds a perfect understanding arose in him. (This

story is also told of the teacher CHan-burGya-Ras and his student SGom-Rings.)

Phagmo had an encounter with the proud scholar, later called sPar-Phu-Ba. When the scholar visited Phagmo in his hut, Phagmo gave him a piece of brown sugar carrying an imprint of a charming lotus flower. The scholar took it in his hand, admired the design, but did not eat it. Phagmo thereupon took it from his hands, broke it into two bits and gave them back to him, saying “Now, sir, eat!” The scholar ate. Phagmo explained: “All your studies are like this beautiful imprint: meditation is like the taste of sugar. There is a difference between information and formation. Information rests in the head! but formation deals with the whole life! The purpose of all learning is to aid meditation, which is the very essence of the Doctrine.” The



PHAM-MTHING-PA

scholar settled down as a pupil with Phagmo.

At first, Phagmo did not give him any directions for meditation. The scholar entered the cell, and began to reflect: “What is this? The teacher did not give me any precepts. He merely told me to meditate!” He sat for a while considering the difference between precepts and meditation. The mind gradually got loosened, and suddenly he obtained

an insight into the nature of things. Later, hagmo explained to him that each practitioner must develop his own precepts. In due course, the scholar became a *siddha*, and he taught as many as five hundred monks. His monastery at sPar-Phu became celebrated as a meditation center.

(5) BRIKHUNG

Another illustrious student of hagmo was HBri-KHung-Pa (b.1143). hBri-Khung ('yak-cavity') was the name of a sect, and he was known only as a member of his sect: his real name has been forgotten. His parents were sorcerers belonging to the older Nyingma group. There was a famine which raged in the area where he was born, and even as a young boy he had to move southward. He got into the company of wandering priests and learnt how



GSANG-BA-PA

to recite some scriptural texts. He also meditated sometimes. He heard of Phagmo, and at once resolved to meet him. With difficulty, he acquired a small quantity of tea and a rather expensive horse, and approached Phagmo with these presents. Phagmo, however, smiled and said! "My dear young man, it is not my custom to accept living beings as presents. Please take back your horse. I will gladly take the tea

that you have brought.” And Phagmo boiled the small quantity of tea and prepared the beverage. About eighty monks of the monastery partook of this!

He listened to many of Phagmo's sermons and developed a theoretical understanding of the nature of things. About two years after his arrival, Phagmo passed away. The young man retired to a cell and meditated. But suddenly he became a victim of leprosy, a dreaded disease, which was incurable. The disciple decided to wander off into the impenetrable valleys and die there so that no one could even see his dead body. He made preparations to go, left his cell, took his leave, and moved out of the village.

But he had grown too weak to proceed further. One evening, he sat

under a tree, took out his tutelary icon of Avalokiteśvara and made prostrations before it. He sat down before it and recollected minutely of the untold misery to which other beings are also subjected. As he thought of the woe of others, he began to shed copious tears; he forgot his own misery. He spent the whole night like this. Towards dawn, he saw a dark dragon (*nāga*) take form from his body and move out. Soon after, he found that his health was restored.

He now returned to the village and entered the monastic order. He was only thirty-five at that time. He strictly followed the Vinaya regulations, and never touched meat or wine. His austere life and high realization brought him a large number of disciples. It is said that at a festival that he arranged, there were as many as 55,525 disciples!



TAI-LO ŚES-RAB-BZANG

He was especially known for the cures that he effected on lepers by his compassion alone. People looked upon him as an incarnation of the great bodhisattva Nāgārjuna

He died at the age of seventy-five in 1218 A.D. Just before he died, one of his disciples asked him: “Master, where are you going from here?” He replied: “I am not going anywhere! I will stay in your minds.”

(5) DAMPA

Dampa (Dam-pa, “the holy one”, “one bound by an oath”) who died in 1117 was celebrated as a ‘dharma-svāmī’ (‘master of religion’). Although widely involved in Tibetan lineages, he was actually an Indian, hailing from the Southern region. His Indian name and identity have been lost, but he has always been known in Tibet as the Indian *āchārya* and *siddha*. The Tibetan chronicles like the *Blue Annals* have preserved some details of his life and career. He is said to have been a disciple of Dharma-kīrti, the eminent Buddhist master.

He is also reputed to have heard discourses from great teachers like Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Āryadeva, Śāntideva and Guṇaprabha. He is also credited with having received an initiation into the ‘the Great Seal’



MAITREYA

(*mahāmudrā*) from Saraha-pāda himself, who was one of the earliest and most celebrated among the siddhas. Dampa practised austerities for several years, and had had visions of many tutelary deities. He is said to have possessed extraordinary magical power.

We do not know what prompted him to go to Tibet, but he visited that country five times. During his fifth visit he went to China, where he lived for twelve years. An account relates that he died in China, but a more reliable account makes Tibet the place of his death. While in Tibet, although he travelled all over the country, his favourite place of residence was Dingri, where he is said to have spent as many as twenty-one years. It was in this place that he met the great Tibetan poet-saint, Milarepa.

He must have been a sort of a genius, with a variety of talents. His work in Tibet became almost legendary. Besides being an excellent and popular teacher, he was well-known as a physician. He cured even physical ailments by what we would now call psychotherapy; he evolved a method of introducing the patient to his own mind. He was honoured by his contemporaries for having eradicated epidemics by the employment of spells (*dhāraṇīs*). He could not read the thoughts of others, but could influence them. His students vouchsafed that a mere look of his would be enough to bring a blessing into their lives. While camping in the Gyal monastery, he is credited with a curious invention: a stove that could be ignited and kept burning without needing to be blown. This stove was named after him, and became popular in Tibet.

Being a fine teacher, he gathered round him an exceedingly large number of students. His disciples have been likened to stars in the sky; too numerous to be counted. And like the stars, most of them were lone lights, shining unto themselves, and did not continue his lineage. He gave instruction and precepts mostly to individuals, and others did not know about them. The one exception was Kun-dGa, about whom we will consider at length shortly.

Dampa had four principal disciples, described as “Yogi gate-keepers” (*sGo-pai rNal 'Byor-Pa-bZi*, “the four who guard the treasure of the door of tranquillity”). To the North was Kunga (Kun-dGa), to the West PHyar-CHung, to the South Vajrakrodha, and to the East Dampa PHyar-CHen.

He believed in teaching each student individually. He examined his student and analysed his personality before imparting to him the instructions, explanations and precepts which were appropriate to the student's need, temperament and capacity. He gave to Kunga the precepts of mind-purification by a gradual development. He considered Vajrakrodha suited for the “the way of blessing”, and therefore asked him to pray this god incessantly. Another disciple (*rGyasGom-Pa*) was asked to look carefully into his own mind, identify every thought and separate the ‘odour’ (*dre*) of the thought from the thought itself. Still another disciple (*CHug*) was made to understand and perfect the symbols, and reflect upon the explanations given by the teachers.

Dampa developed a method of teaching by means of which the



HGOS-LO-TSA

student was methodically guided through five stages. In the first stage, the instruction and precepts were given to the student (*sByin-Pa*, “to bestow”, “to deliver”, “to gift.”), In the second stage, the student was encouraged to think for himself (*sNampa*, “to think”, “to suppose”, “to imagine”). The third stage was to be distinguished by an examination of the meaning of the precepts (*Dan-dPyod*, “to sense or examine”). In the final stage, called ‘sense-gathering’ (*Don-hTHun*) there was an attempt at intergrating the meaning of the precepts with ones own thoughts.

When he admitted a disciple, he administered to him three vows (*rTen-sDom-Pa gSum*, “three supports and bindings”): the vow of perfecting one’s conduct (*prātimokṣha-samvara*), the vow of practising meditation (*tantra-*

samvara), and the vow of working for the welfare of all creatures (*bodhisattva-samvara*). He explained that the three vows were complementary to each other.

He stressed the value of oaths in contemplative life. This is how he came to be known widely as Pha Dam-pa (“Father Oath-bound”). He founded a sect which was predominantly Tāntrik, known as *ZHi-Byed*. He had numerous women disciples also. He transmitted his wisdom and lineage principally to Kunga.

sKam, well-known as the follower of the *Prajñāpāramitā* school, was another disciple of Dampa. sKam one day asked the teacher: “Master, whom should I ask when I am in doubt, when you have gone?”



PRAJÑĀ-PĀRAMITĀ

Dampa answered:

“The best friend-and-guide (*Kalyāṇamitra*) is your own mind. The teacher that can remove your doubts will surely emerge from your own mind! The second aid is the scripture. Read, therefore, *Prajñāpāramitā* diligently. The lowest kind of friend- and-guide is a human being who offers to teach you!”

sKam was a sick person, with tumours in his abdomen. He was introduced by Dampa into his own mind by the practice of meditation; this also cured him of his ailment. Dampa believed that understanding the nature of ailment, and taking the ailment itself as a subject of meditation, will provide the cure for it while at the same time furthering the cause of realization.

(7) KUNGA

Kunga was born in 1062 A.D. as Tsha-Gung, to the east of Ding-

ri the place which has almost become the headquarters of Dampa in Tibet. As a child he used to call himself ‘Kun-dga’ (meaning “all cheer”) and the name stuck to him. It is also said that Dampa called him so the very first time he met him, and so the name stuck to him. Kunga soon lost interest in wordly affairs, and began to withdraw from normal interests. He even gave up the small job that he had, and the family was left in a difficult situation. His wife and son had to beg from others. But Kunga remained unmoved and uncoucerned.

One day, Kunga suddenly decided to leave home. He told his wife that he would go with a party of brigands who were planning to raid the region of sNe-Nam La-Kha. Raids among the nomadic tribes were usual those days, and brigandage was accepted as one of the modes of livelihood for many people. Kunga

left home, but proceeded straight towards gLung-'Khor, where Dampa was at that time camping.

That morning, Dampa got up early, roused the disciples at the monastery and told them to make all preparation to receive an honoured guest. The disciples were puzzled when no one turned up till that afternoon. As they were planning to give up waiting, a dirty man dressed in rags walked in, and some disciples joked about his being the honoured guest. But they were dumb-stricken when the teacher came out rushing, and welcomed him: "What a delight to see you, Kunga!" He took him in, and bade the disciples prepare a high seat for the guest. While the disciples stood staring, unable to comprehend what was indicated. Dampa himself heaped up a pile of ashes placed on top of it four arrows crossed, and beckoned Kunga to sit

on it. As soon as Kunga was seated, there was an instantaneous question that came out of him:

Kunga: "Of what nature is this phenomenal existence?"

Dampa: "It is an insect in the excrement of a dog!"

Kunga: "Can a being in this world attain happiness?"

In answer, Dampa made the sign of a chain with his inter-locked fingers, and said:

"Suffering is like this chain! When the chain is broken, there can be happiness".

As soon as this dialogue ended, Kunga closed his eyes, and began praying mentally for the entrance into the path. He could feel Dampa's blessing enter his whole being. And he was filled with faith.



GAD-PA-KIR-TI

Dampa replied: "Retire to a small cave, and avoid all contact with others. That will be your armour. Eat food that enables you barely to survive, and wear clothes just enough to cover your body. That will be your shield. Practise meditation until you are sick of it! That will be your sword."

Kunga: "How am I to meditate?"

Dampa: "Let your gaze be upward.

That is the posture of *prajña-pāramitā*."

Kunga immediately set off and entered a cave nearby. He practised meditation with zeal and fortitude, and obtained the first trance in which he perfectly understood the nature of phenomenal existence. Dampa came out, Dampa asked him: "In case you are chosen as a prince, will you sit on the throne? If a magic rope is placed in front of you, will

you climb up? If the world is given to you, will you rule it as an emperor?"

Kunga answered: "No, no, and no! I was never successful with the world, and I do not want to succeed in the world! But I am now capable of understanding, if you will teach me!"

Dampa was pleased with the answer and took him to his hut. bestowed on him the hidden precepts. He told Kunga, "Son, did you not set out to raid? You should now raid the King's palace, and you should have keys to open all the doors there! I shall give you hidden precepts which will make you understand the sublime truth. The King's palace is not open to all, and one has to force one's way into it. The great truth is hidden from ordinary folk, and one who would obtain it must put forth great effort!"

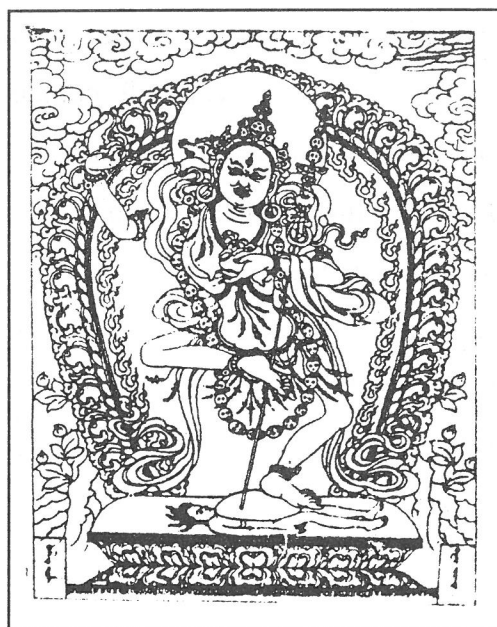
Kunga lived with Dampa like his shadow for eighteen years. When Dampa was about to pass away, the disciples that gathered round him were greatly agitated. Dampa, however, pointed to Kunga, and told the disciples; “When the sun sets, the moon will rise. There is no cause for sorrow!”

Kunga survived him for seven years and passed away in 1124A.D.

(8) TASHAB

Kunga placed his mantle on Pa-TSHab sGom-pa, and thus the mystic teaching of Dampa continued in Tibet. PaTSHab was not only a great scholar, but a writer of distinction.

Pa-TSHab was born in 1077 A.D. in gYung-Po in Lowar Phan-Yul. At the young age of 11, he entered a monastery as a novice,



VAJRA-VĀRĀHI

and when he was 19 he was ordained a monk. He then settled down to a serious study of Buddhist scriptures under eminent teachers. This went on till he was 37, when he reflected: “Enough of studying! I should now start practising!” And he set out in search of a competent master.

He heard that a teacher, sKam-sGom, was proficient in the *Prajñāpāramitā* method of meditation. Pa-TSHab went to the hermitage of sKam and obtained

from him the preliminary entrance into the meditational method. He felt that a light had been placed within his dark interior. When he wanted further initiation, sKam told him "I am not your real teacher. You should go to Ding-ri, and get the precepts from Dampa. The teacher and the student must be related by *karma*, if the teaching is to be effective."

Pa-TSHab collected some gold, turquoise and silk, and went to Ding-ri only to find that Dampa had just passed away, and all that Pa-TSHab was able to see was the funeral pyre of the great Master. He could not bear this misfortune, and at once he swooned away. When he woke up, he found an old woman in rags nursing him. She told him: "Do not grieve! You will surely achieve your purpose. Dampa is dead, but Kunga is an exact replica of his! Take him as your master."

She directed him to the hut where Kunga was residing, and when he bowed before him, Kunga at once inquired of him; "Are you not tired after a long journey?" The words filled Pa-TSHab with faith. He related how he came to Ding-ri in order to obtain precepts from Dampa, and how the old woman had directed him there. He presented gold *songs* to Kunga and requested him for hidden precepts. Kunga said, "This present is fine! But a disciple of the great Indian master does not need gold. However, I shall accept them, because my acceptance will be favourable to you!" He took the gold coins and threw them up in the air. Then he asked Pa-TSHab to get ready for initiation. "Initiation is necessary to ripen a raw individual. Spend the night in a cave, and come to me in the morning."

The following morning Kunga gave him the combined initiation

according to Dampa's method, and asked him to spend a year in seclusion. Pa-TSHab developed an insight into the nature of phenomenal existence. When Kunga was appraised of this, he asked: "You were a scholar before you came to me, I gave you the initiation and you have meditated for a year. Tell me if the insight that you have developed is due to your learning or due to the practice."

Pa-TSHab replied: "Master, I did have a knowledge pertaining to the nature of phenomenal existence before I came here. But it was like touching an object in the dark. But now I could see it in broad light!"

Because he was learned, he was asked by Kunga to write manuals and guides. Pa-TSHab wrote what is called the "Black Guide" (*Nag-KHrid*), and explained the hidden

meaning of numerous texts. He also explained orally his own experiences in relation to them (*dMar-Khrid*). And combining the two, he prepared "Conclusions" (*Phra-Tig*). Then he discussed them with other disciples and yogis, and revised the conclusions.

Pa-TSHab sought Kunga's permission for continuing to reside in Ding-ri with the teacher. But Kunga said: "No, I suggest you go home. Your people are worried about you. You must attend to them. But do not get involved in worldly affairs. Practise meditation for twelve years, and then, you may do what you like!"

Kunga gave him books and also a magic stone for safe journey. He accompanied him till the outskirts of the village and bade him goodbye.



MAÑJUŚRĪ-VIDYĀDHARA

Pa-TSHab returned home in dbUs and practised meditation for 13 years, a year more what his master had suggested. He then commenced working for the happiness of all beings. Many hundreds of students gathered round him to listen to his discourses and obtain initiations from him. But he was strict about admission of students, and although he himself was learned, he emphasized the importance of meditation. His advice to one of his pupils, Ten-me was:

“Meditate for ten years. If you should be inclined to continue for a longer period, by all means do. There will be no harm in it. But if you feel that you cannot continue it any longer, then come out and preach. But preach only the ordinary doctrines. Do not communicate the

hidden techniques of bKa-dzi to any one who is not likely to devote himself entirely to religion and become a master in his own turn. Do not impart the details of mystic rites of rTen-Brel to anyone who is not interested in the welfare of others. And do not introduce any one who is not committed to contemplation into the *rTen'breI-gyi KHang-pa*. Limit your students. Do not accept more than about four or five disciples. You must spend most of your time in meditation, and exert your utmost to obtain enlightenment in this very life. Meditation is the essence of the Doctrine. Teaching and preaching must be done only to secure the welfare of other human beings, not for any other gain. Do not be a ‘merchant of the Doctrine’!

Pa-TSHab passed away in 1158 A.D. in his eighty-second year.

(9) SAMI THE HERMIT

There are many tales about the hermit sMon-Lam-hBar (meaning the 'Bloom of the Wishing Prayer'), who was popularly known as Sa-Mi ('The Meaty Man'). But the tale concerning his enlightenment is most interesting. Born in 1085 A.D., he went to the teacher So-CHung-Ba even as a young man. He served him diligently for several years, and did ungrudgingly all the hard work that was assigned to him. But he did not get any precepts, and he was sorely disappointed. One evening, it occurred to him: "Perhaps this man is a pretender and has no precepts. Othwise, he should have given me. I am probably wasting my time here; I should seek another teacher."

He continued to exercise his mind in this matter, and about midnight, it again occurred to him:

"But this man is not a common man. Sometimes he seems to read my thoughts! It may be that he has some precepts. I wonder why he does not impart them to me!" Towards dawn he thought, "Well, I suppose I should continue to serve him. It is likely he will give me some precepts."

When he got up in the morning and came to his teacher as usual, the teacher told him: "Oh my young man, your thought in the evening was useless and incorrect; your thought at midnight was better and helpful; and the thought at dawn was correct and proper." Sami was perplexed. The teacher continued: "Young man, we are having our lunch today with a householder in the neighbouring village; he has invited me. Let us start as soon as I am ready." Sami bowed, and returned to his room to make preparations. In the meantime, the



TĀRĀ

teacher ate his fill, and sent words to Sami that he was ready.

The two started out, the teacher well-fed and the student hungry. Having reached the village, the teacher pointed to a house and said: "That must be the house. Let us go and knock!" But as soon as they came near the door, he said, "No, I do not think this is his house." He pointed to another house, and said: "That must be the one! Let us go there." Again, he changed his mind when they stood in front of that house and pointed to another house.

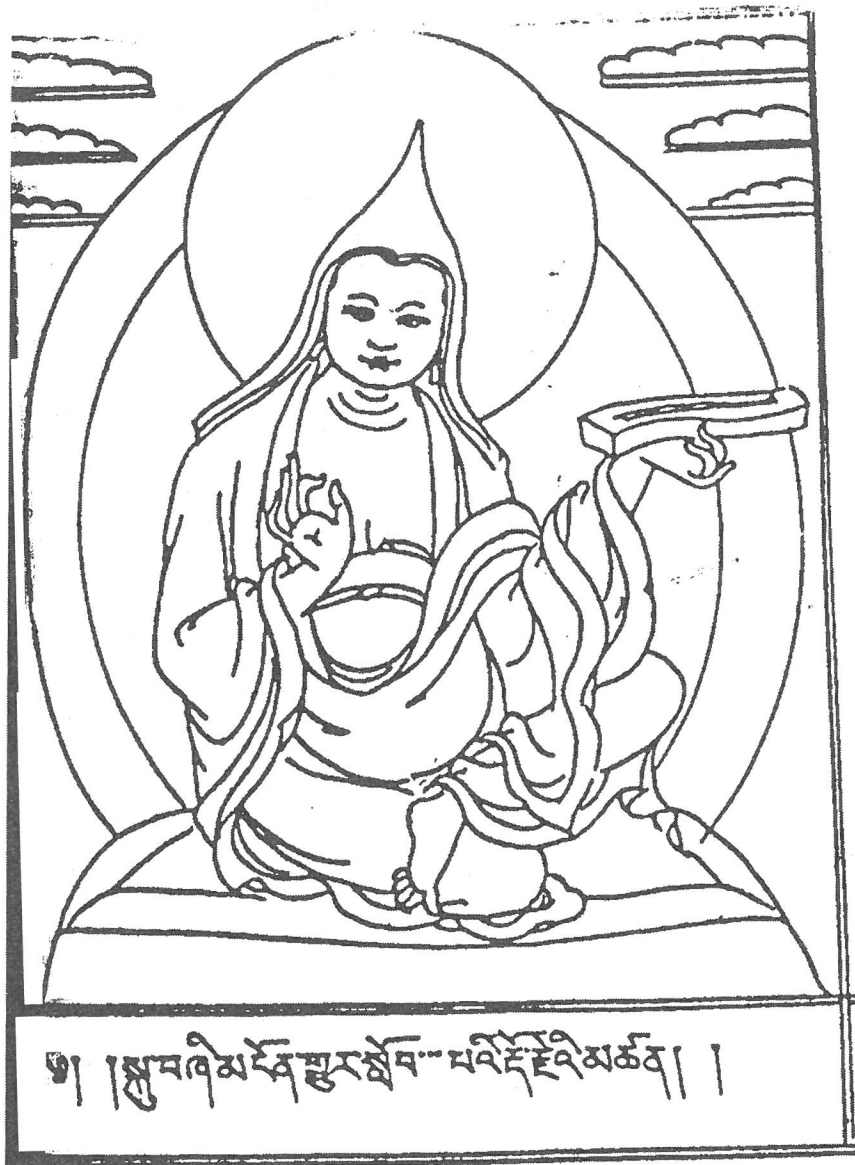
And so on they moved from house to house until evening. The whole day poor Sami was starving. At last, the teacher said "I have forgotten his house. Let us go back!", and returned to his monastery. While they were returning, Sami was very indignant. He thought it was odd that



DVAGSO-PO

the teacher could not have bothered to ascertain the exact location of his host's house. He did not, however, suspect that it was a trick played upon him by the teacher.

A few days later, Sami came back to the monastery after a day's hard work. He found his teacher talking to a stranger. As he approached his teacher's room, the teacher lowered his voice and told the stranger, loudly enough to be



SLOB-PAHI-RDO-RJE

heard by Sami, “Sir, hide your things. This disciple who is coming is not reliable: he may steal them!” Sami was enraged when he heard this: “I have been serving him so loyally all these years, and this is what he thinks of me!” He could not control his anger, and taking up a stick that was lying there, rushed at the teacher.

But the teacher got up and ran out of the room. He went into another room, and bolting the doors from within, shouted at Sami, “Young man, your mind is now filled with anger. Look at the source of that anger!” Sami stood there and did as he was told. A realization suddenly dawned on him that the mind was indeed a void. He knelt down before the closed doors and, bowing again and again, praised his teacher: “My master, pardon my ignorance and impatience! You are wise, clever and compassionate! It is my good fortune that I have come to you!”



PHAM-GCHUNG

Thereupon, the teacher opened the door and came out of the room. He lifted up Sami who had clasped his feet and said: “I knew all along that you deserved the precepts. But your interior was not ready yet. I have often tried to make you angry, but you were not till now sufficiently angry at any time. It is only when the inner constitution is burning and boiling that any lasting benefit can be had. You are now ready for precepts.” The teacher immediately



PHAM-MTHING-PA

made arrangements for bestowing the initiation on Sami; and he

imparted to the happy student a complete set of hidden precepts.

Sami served his teacher for altogether thirty-four years, until the teacher's death in 1128 A.D. And then he built a monastery of his own at bZang-Grong. But his monastery was a mere hut. He spent his time playing with children, tending the sheep and gathering cow-dung. But no one could fail to notice that his interior was perfect. He became a celebrated hermit. He died in 1171 A.D. at the age of 87.



APPENDIX I

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 Golden-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-IDan 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 *aTam-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 (*Kaṅjur*, 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 tāntrik 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.

ITa attitude, viewpoint; to inquire, examine and reflect; doctrine. Also *ITab*, 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 Vairochana, 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. *dṛṣṭi-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.

APPENDIX-II

THE INDIAN BACKGROUND OF TIBETAN RELIGION

(1)

In the conflicting and confusing chronicles concerning Tibet, one detail stands out, namely the Indian origin of Tibetan religion. Not only in the obvious and general sense that the founder of Buddhism, which has greatly influenced religion in Tibet, was an Indian; but the course of that religion in the country was almost exclusively guided by Indian Paṇḍitas. The extent of Indian influence can easily be gleaned from the following detail. The Tibetan Canon in two collections, *bKah-Gyur* and *bsTanh-Gyur*¹, contains over 4,500 texts. Of them, over 4,000 are of Indian origin, mostly translations from Sanskrit works written by Paṇḍitas of Nālandā, Vikramaśīla and Odantapura. And the translators both



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Indian and Tibetan, were also alumni of these Universities. The portions of the two-fold Tibetan Canon considered by the Tibetans as most authoritative comprise of Indian books.

Fifth and sixth centuries after Christ were important in the history

of Indian Buddhism, for it was then that the Tāntrik element entered significantly into the austere teaching of the Founder. It was natural that the Tibetans, long acquainted with Bon, were interested mainly in the Tāntrik traditions of India. It is true that the Tibetan canon includes many Indian works on logic, rhetoric, linguistics, philosophy and grammar. But the Tāntrik interest was obviously great. Nālandā, Vikramaśīla and Odantapura Universities were well-known centres of Tantra. The interest of Tibetan students was so great that each of these Universities had a Tibetan House (for their residence), a department of Tibetan studies (for Indians interested in Tibetan language and culture), and a provision for translation of Buddhist works in Sanskrit into Tibetan conjointly by Indian and Tibetan scholars. Indo-Tibetan contact was not only extensive but deep.

Nālandā, of course, provided the major influence. Founded in 425 A.D., the Nālandā 'mahāvihāra' (monastic university) soon attained unprecedented celebrity in India and in the neighbouring countries. It flourished till 1205 when it was suddenly and totally destroyed by the Muslim army². It was the chief centre of academic Mahāyāna Buddhism, specialising in *sādhana*. Great names like Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga, Śāntarakṣita, Rāhula-bhadra, Kamala-śīla, Padmasambhava and Atīśa, all of whom moulded the Tibetan talent, were associated with this institution. It may be recalled that the Tibetan genius who gave the country its script, THon-Mi Sambhoṭa, was sent by the Tibetan monarch around 640 A.D. to Nālandā for the purpose. Nālandā was very much in the imagination of Tibetans both when it was flourishing and after it was forgotten in India. Tibetan

scholars were streaming in, even when the great Chinese pilgrim Hsuan-tsang was in residence there. And a great monastery that was built in Tibet in 1351 was named Nālandā. This monastic University, as recorded in the *Blue Annals*, was filled with monks of different sects, even as its Indian counterpart was.

It is from Tibetan sources that we learn about the 'Dharmagañja' ('Dharma-Mart') establishment in Nālandā and about the final destruction of the great centre. And a Tibetan was the last soul to bravely stick on at Nālandā, even after its devastating destruction.

An interesting story of the Tibetan scholar, known by his Indian name, Dharmasvāmi, who was in Nālandā around 1230, was recovered by Rāhula Sāṅkrtyāyana from a monastery in Central Tibet. During



his travel in India, this Tibetan monk settled down to study Sanskrit grammar under the 80 year old Indian Buddhist monk, Rāhula-Śrībhadrā, who was one of the very few professors who continued to reside and teach in Nālandā, when it had already been battered by the Muslim invaders. The zeal for learning had prompted several eager students to reside with this old Paṇḍita, who was supported and looked after by

a Brahmin nobleman, Jayadeva of Odantapura. Muslims were again planning to ransack Magadha, and Jayadeva had by then got into trouble, and had been thrown into prison by the Muslim overlords. But he struggled hard and succeeded in communicating the news of the impending Muslim attack to Rāhula-Śrībhadrā so that the old monk could escape in time. When the news reached Nālandā and when the Muslim hordes were in sight, the few scholars who had held on fled and deserted the premises, except the old Rāhula and his Tibetan student Dharmasvāmi. Rāhula urged the student to fly to safety; he himself was too old to run away and did not in fact care what happened to him. But the Tibetan youth refused to leave the teacher alone, and stayed on with him. Soon, however, when the Muslim army arrived on the

scene, the Tibetan scholar carried his old teacher on his back along with a supply of rice, sugar and some books, and walked into hiding in a ruined temple not far from Nālandā. When the invaders ransacked the monastery and left, the Tibetan scholar and the Indian teacher returned to Nālandā to continue their study of grammar;

The importance of Nālandā in the history of Indian Buddhism consists in the inspiration it provided for the development of Mādhyamika, Yogācāra and Sautrāntika schools of Mahāyāna. Among the ruins here are found images of numerous Mahāyāna divinities, and collections of Tāntrik rituals. *Sādhana-mālā* contains texts prepared by Nālandā paṇḍitas like Saraha-pāda, Advaya-vajra, Padmākara-gupta, Anupama. Rakshita, Abhayākara-gupta, Dharmākara-mati, Padmākara-mati,

Harihara, Naṇḍyāvarta, Mukṭaka, Śaśvata-vajra and Maṅgala-sena. It is Nālandā that encouraged the esoteric cult of Vajrayāna. The two sources thereof, namely Mādhyamika philosophy and Yogācāra discipline, were products of Nālandā. The former was the contribution of the great Nāgārjuna who studied under Rāhula-bhadra in Nālandā, while the latter was the work of Asaṅga, who according to the Tibetan historian Tārānatha, taught in Nālandā for twelve years.

The story told in the Tibetan chronicles about the destruction by fire of the vast library complex in Nālandā ('Dharmagaṇja') has an interesting detail. When the nine-storeyed building where Mahāyāna and Tantra works were stored was engulfed by fire, water miraculously gushed out of two books that were preserved in the topmost storey, and

only these two were saved. The two books were *Prajñāpāramitā* and *Guhyasamāja*. It is precisely these two books, especially the latter, that contain the seeds of Vajrayāna. The meaning of the story is that when Nālandā was destroyed, it was only Vajrayāna that remained. And in a curious manner, Tibet continued the Nālandā tradition³.

The other University that made impact on Tibet in a big way was Vikramaśīla, which was founded a little later than Nālandā. Built upon a spacious and gigantic cliff on the banks of Gaṅgā in northern Magadha (- the exact site is uncertain -) this monastic establishment achieved eminence during the reign of King Chaṇaka (955-983 A.D). It 'door-panḍitas' (*dvārapaṇḍitas*, the senior professors whose function was to examine and admit scholars coming from the four directions) were

celebrated all over the country for their scholarship as well as their saintliness.

Ratnākara-śānti (Ācārya-Śānti) who guarded the Eastern gate had studied under the eminent master, Jetāri, who is said to have written a hundred books on the Tantra and whose impact on Tibetan thought was considerable, and had taken to the sādhanā of *mahāmudrā*. He was the author of thirteen works in Sanskrit (the most famous being *Vajrabhairavagaṇa-chakra-nāma*), which were all translated into Tibetan and studied in the monasteries there. The Southern gate was guarded by Vāgīśvara-kīrti of Banaras, a devotee of Tārā and Chakrasamvara; his *Mṛtyuvañchaṇopadeśa* ('the instruction about cheating death' available in Tibetan translation) became a popular text.

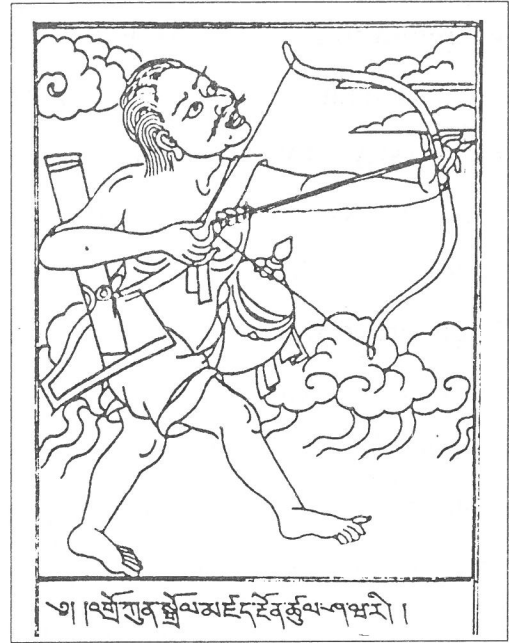
Mahāpaṇḍita Prājñākara-mati, a devotee of Mañjuśrī, was the paṇḍita of the Western gate, who wrote glosses on *Abhisamayālaṅkāra* and *Bodhicharyāvatāra*. And the greatest of them all, Nāḍapāda (Nāropā, known as *mahāpaṇḍita*) guarded the Northern gate. Ratna-vajra, the Brahmin scholar from Kashmir, and Jñānaśrī-mitra were paṇḍitas assigned to the central quarters. Both of them, being adepts in Tantra, translated numerous works into Tibetan and went over to Tibet in their old age.

All these paṇḍitas were authors of valuable Vajrayāna treatises. While their Sanskrit originals have been lost in India, the Tibetan Canon preserved the Tibetan translations of as many as thirteen professors of Vikramaśīla.

The first president of the establishment, Buddhajñāna-pāda,

was mainly responsible for the development of the 'mantra-vajrāchāra' sect. He is known to us because of nine Tāntrik works of his which are preserved in Tibetan. The second president, Jetāri (about 983 A.D.), the third president, 'Siddha-mahāpaṇḍita' Abhayākara-gupta, the fourth, Dīpaṃkara-Śrībhadrā were all eminent masters, whose writings have an honoured place in the Tibetan Canon. Vairochana-rakshita (reputed to be a student of the great Padmasambhava of Nālandā) went to Tibet about 750 A.D. and was treated with great reverence. He was a scholar in Tibetan, and translated many Sanskrit works into Tibetan. He wrote his original works in Sanskrit. His *Mantra-vivṛta-hṛdaya-vṛtti* was composed for a Tibetan king, probably KHri-Sron-IDe-bTSan.

The most important teacher from Vikramaśīla in Tibet was, of



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course, Dīpaṃkara-Śrījñāna (Atīśa, b.982, known in Tibet as Jo-bo-rJe, 'the great lord'). We have already considered his achievement in Tibet. He had studied for a while in Nālandā under teachers like Rāhula-gupta and Śīla-rakshita and had received numerous Tāntrik initiations before he went to Suvarṇad-vipa (Sumatra, Malaya or Burma) to be introduced to the doctrine of 'the arousal of *bodhichitta*' (*bodhichittotpāda*). On

his return to India he was appointed as president of the Vikramaśīla University by the Magadhan monarch, Nāga-pāla. He had studied earlier in Vikramaśīla under Vāgīśvara-kīrti, whose three works on Tārā he translated into Tibetan. As president of Vikramaśīla he also managed the affairs of Odantapura and Somapuri monasteries.

Invited by the Tibetan king, he left for Tibet in 1040 in the company of 20 students reaching mNa-ris in 1042, after spending some months in Nepal. Of the two Tibetan students of his who were mainly instrumental in taking him to Tibet (-he was 60 when he undertook this difficult journey-), Nag-TSHo (Jayaśīla-bhikṣu, a monk) and brTSon-hGrusen-ge (Vīrya-siṃha-upāsaka, a lay devotee), the latter died in Nepāl and the former was a great help to the master's work in Tibet.

Dīpaṃkara-Atīśa lived and taught in Tibet for thirteen years, till his death in 1054. He not only wrote excellent treatises in Sanskrit, but translated as many as seventy-seven Sanskrit works into Tibetan.

Among his Indian students who accompanied him to Tibet, Kshiti-garbha, Vajrapāṇi (b. 1017), Bhūmi-saṃgha, Vīrya-chandra and Varshita-bhandra contributed considerably to the spread of Tantrik wisdom in Tibet. Among his Tibetan disciples, the foremost was, as mentioned earlier, Brom-STon-Pa (1005-1064, 'Jayākara'), who had a great gift for organisation and who was a puritan in religious matters. He helped the master's work of cleansing the Tibetan Buddhism for ten years, and continued this work for ten more years after the master's demise.

After Dīpaṃkara, Śākya-Śrībhadrā (1145-1225) became the president of Vikramaśīla. A Kashmirian paṇḍita, he was a Tāntrik enthusiast and a Tibetan scholar. He wrote on Kālachakra and helped spread the Tārā cult in Tibet. His students, Vibhutichandra and Dānaśīla, were professors of Tantra at Jāgaddala university (in north Bengal, founded about 1077) before they went to Tibet and attained celebrity there. It was owing to them that Jāgaddala became the favourite resort of Tibetan scholars. The two professors not only translated Sanskrit works into Tibetan, but they were so proficient in that language that they wrote independent works in Tibetan, now included in *bsTanh-Gur*.

Another luminary, Mokshākara-gupta, was also associated with Jāgaddala. Odantapura monastery was an earlier



ŚĀNTI-PĀDA
(Ratnākara-Śānti)

institution, founded in 730 A.D. on a hill near Nālandā. It had a typical Tāntrik background. Its origin is traced to the hideous 'corpse-ritual' (*śava-sādhana*) performed by a Tāntrik, Nārada by name. But it seems to have had leanings towards the older, puritanical Hīnayāna.

It was under a professor in Odantapura, Dharmarakshita,

Dīpaṃkara studied for two years. The Mahāsāṅghika whose teacher in Odantapura, Śīlarikshita, gave monastic ordination to Dīpaṃkara at the age of nineteen. This mahāvihāra had become so famous that the first vihāra built in Tibet, the *bSam-Yas* (*Achityavihāra*, built in 749), was modelled after it. Odantapura was destroyed in 1197 by the Muslim invaders led by Ikhtiyar-ud-din Ahmed Khilji.

These universities should not be described as exclusively Buddhist, although most of their renowned masters were Buddhist monks. The curriculum appears to have been comprehensive, including all the 'orthodox' and 'heterodox' schools of thought current at that time. The students were likewise drawn from many religious and ethnic groups. But these institutions were

predominantly and unmistakably Tāntrik in their orientation.

The association of these universities with the Tāntrik adepts known as 'siddhas', was an intriguing but important detail, for they brought to bear the influence from other parts of the country, especially the hilly regions of Swat valley, Orissa and South India. The most creative architects from the Siddha cult, were connected with Nālandā; Tillopā and Nāro-pā, the siddhas who heralded the *mahāmudrā* ('the great seal') doctrine in Tibet through the latter's pupil Mārpa, and Ratnākara-śānti (Śānti-pā) were associated with Vikramaśīla.

(2)

The Siddhas constitute an interesting, if also little known, chapter in the history of Indian



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thought⁴. Tradition recognises a million of them, but enumerates only eighty-four (*chaturaśiti*), many of whom were more or less historical personages, but the historical elements are buried under a mass of legends. The Siddhas are, by definition, those who have attained miraculous powers (*siddhis*) like clairvision, invisibility, movement at will on earth and flight in sky, resuscitation of the dead, drawing

away life, entering another body, omniscience, unfailing utterance, divining buried treasure, and interminable life. The extraordinary powers such as these are reputed to be obtained by some by their very birth (*janma*), by others with the help of medicines (*aushadhi*), by still others by the employment of magical spells (*mantra*), by others again by severe austerities (*tapas*), and lastly by some through contemplative devices (*samādhi*).

Siddhi is usually taken in the sense of rendering the body immutable with the help of occult and alchemic preparations (*rasa*). This involves transmutation of the physical body, revitalising and spiritualising its essence, so that it becomes a veritable diamond (*vajra*), which cuts everything else, itself remaining uncut. This is described as the state of perfect liberation

while one is still alive. The siddha cult thus was closely associated with the 'adamantine path' (*vajrayāna*) that principally developed in the Magadhan universities with an academic and occult slant.

It is not by accident that the celebrated Nāgārjuna was recognised as a siddha, an alchemist, a *mahāmudrā* adept and a Mahāyāna philosopher. The modern scholarly habit of fragmenting any celebrated person of tradition into several discrete personages, removed from each other in space and time, has of course introduced two or three Nāgārjunas, one the Siddha, another the alchemist, and a third one the philosopher. But Tibetan tradition, like the old Indian tradition, recognizes but one Nāgārjuna, who was all three. It can hardly be gainsaid that the siddha cult became popular and respectable as a result of its association with this celebrity.

He hailed from the Southern region of India. According to the Tibetan account, he went from the South to Nālandā (Nālandā), studied under Saraha-pāda, and got initiations from him in the 'Amitāyus' ritual and in the Kālachakra system, attained siddhis of *Mahāmāyūrī* and *Kurukullā*, became an adept in alchemy (*rasāyana*) and made his body 'immutable' (*vajrakāya*), went to Puṇḍravaraḍhana (?) and produced immense quantities of gold, which he gifted away, heard *Tārātantra* from a certain Hayaghoṣa, went to Nāgāloka and recovered *Śatasāhasrikā-Prajñāpāramitā* and several *dhāraṇīs*, composed *Mādhyamaka-Kārikās* and works on alchemy like *Rasaratnākara*. Both his alchemical experiments and spiritual success were said to have been perfected on Śrīparvata (Nāgārjunakoṇḍa in

Andhra Pradesh) also known as 'diamond mount' (*Vajra-parvata*).

That South India contributed considerably to the crystallization of Vajrayāna appears to be based on solid facts⁵. The 'Pāramitā path' which brought in its train the 'Mantra path', which in its turn produced the 'Diamond path', was clearly of South Indian origin. We have clear evidence in the oldest Prajñāpāramitā text, *Aṣṭasāhasrikā*, that the 'Pāramitā-naya' first spread in the South ('dakṣiṇāpathe pracharishyanti'), then spread in the East ('vartnyām', which according to Haribhadra's *Āloka* means 'pūrvadeśe'), and thence it moved northward (Rajendra Lal Mitra edition, p.225). Nāro-pā's *Sekoddeśa-tīkā* (a Magadhan work) mentions that the 'Mantra-naya' originated in Śrīdhānyakaṭaka ('Śrīdhānya-niyata-mantra-naya-deśanāsthāne'), the modern



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Dharmikoṭa on the banks of Kriṣṇā in Āndhra Pradesh.

Dhānya-kaṭaka was in fact what gave its name to the celebrated Dre-Pung ('Rice-Heap') monastery in Tibet, which, like its Indian model, was partial to the Kālachakra doctrine. It is interesting that the highest divinity in Vajrayāna, Avalokiteśvara, is said to reside on the Potalaka mountain (after which

the Dalai Lama's palace in LHa-Sa was known, for Dalai Lama is considered to be an incarnation of Avalokiteśvara. This mountain is located by all authorities, Indian and Tibetan, in South India, although the exact location is disputed. Cunningham suggested Mālakūṭa, a tract between Tanjore and Travancore; Nanda Lal Deo suggested Western Ghats, and some located it in Dhānyakaṭaka or Śrīparvata.

The monk who took the Tāntrik tradition to China in 719 A.D., Amogha-vajra, was from Śrīlanka, and his teacher Vajra-bodhi who accompanied him was a South Indian Brahmin. The teacher had translated several *Tantras* and *Dhāraṇīs* into Chinese before he died in 730 A.D.; and the pupil, who died in 774 A.D., had translated as many as 108 Tantric texts. The Chinese *Mantra-yāna*

(*Ch'en yen tsung*) originated thus. Bodhidharma, who founded the *dhyāna* school (*ch'an* or the Japanese *Zen*) in China around 600 A.D. was a Brahmin from Kañchīpuram (as Dharmapāla who presided over Nālandā around 550 A.D. was); and the closeness of Zen to *mahāmudrā* in Vajrayāna is not accidental⁶. Kāñchīpurām was a well-known Tāntrik center, and the present Kāmakoṭṭam was undoubtedly a Tārā shrine in middle ages.



Nāgārjuna's teacher Saraha (Saroruha or Saroja, also Śrī-hasta) was great Siddha in his own right. Rāhula Saṅkṛtyāyana describes him as 'the first Siddha' (*ādi-siddha*). His work *Mahāmudrā-praśnottara* contains the colophon "mahābrāhmaṇa-Sarahapāda-prabhu". Hailing from the 'the Eastern country' (Orissa?), he studied under Haribhadra of Nālandā (himself a student of the great Śāntarakṣita), a contemporary of the Pāla king Dharmapāla (768-809 A.D.). He appears to have come to Maharashtra and settled down there. He wrote a large number of treatises, ritual manuals, poems, songs and books of instruction. In the Tibetan canon, we have seven of his Sanskrit works and sixteen of his Apabhraṃśa pieces. Some of his *dohas* and *charyāgītis* are extant in India also.

Saraha's teachings were briefly as follows. The highest objective of

human existence is to reach the 'ultimate bliss of *isness*' (*dharma-mahāsukha*). The aspirant will reach this condition when his mind is completely and unshakably peaceful, when he gets lost in bliss as salt in water. And this is a matter of private experience, which it is impossible to express or communicate. The mind, in fact, which is pure is free by its very nature. There is really no sun, moon, wind, or water in it, nor anything at all. But when it is clouded, things of this world appear as projected from the mind, as water reflects objects. The reflection of mind in the phenomenal world is neither real nor unreal; but it is not ultimate. All differences are obviated in the essential nature of mind, which is devoid of form, free from attribution, straight, and perfectly natural (*sahaja*). It can be called the 'nectar of deathlessness' (*amṛta*).

His importance in the Tāntrik tradition is ascribed to his having taught Guhya-samāja-tantra, a basic Vajrayāna text, to his famous pupil Nāgārjuna, and for having compiled another 'Guhya-samāja' work, *Hevajra-tantra* (which, however, is ascribed to Padmavajra). He is reputed to have introduced *Buddhakapāla-tantra* and *Maṇḍala-vidhi*. He is pictured in Tibet as an ascetic holding an arrow in action, suggesting onepointedness and quiet effort. His colleague Kambala-pāda wrote four works on the *Prajñā-pāramitā* cult, and eleven on Tantra in general.

Nāgārjuna's pupil Śabara-pā, another Siddha, who was a hunter (or according to another account a prince of Vikramaśīla) before he became a mystic, introduced the well-known *Kurukullā-sāadhanā*, a ritual concerning the mountain-goddess of the jungle-tribes, clearly



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a trans-Himalayan divinity, who was later identified with Tāra. His disciple Lūi-pa (Samanta-śubha), a South Indian (or a Magadhan Kāyastha, according to another account) identified with the Nātha saint Matsyendra-nātha, spent the main period of his life in Assam and Bengal. He achieved such celebrity that he is usually placed at the head of the traditional lists of *Śiddhas*. *Yoginī-sāhacharya* (or *Yoginī-kula*),

a Tantra prescribing intimate association with female ascetics, is ascribed to him.

He continued Saraha's argument that the highest reality was the ultimate and unshakable bliss (*mahāsukha*). This condition is reached when mind in perfectly stilled, for when mind moves pleasures and pains of the world appear. The stilling of the mind is achieved by the practice of void and by the understanding of the vacuity of phenomena.

A contemporary of his was Kāṇha-pā (Kṛṣṇāchārya), another South Indian who was a disciple of the Siddha Jālandhara (also a Nātha Master, popularly known as Hāḍi-siddha). The Nātha cult with a Śaivite bias and the siddha cult which was more eclectic worked out numerous points of contact, and Kāṇha-pā,

referred to reverently as 'paṇḍitāchārya' and as Kṛṣṇāchārya-pāda, was the product of this synthesis. He is reputed to have written six works on philosophy and seventy-four on Tāntrik subjects; his commentary on *Bodhicharyāvatāra* was well-known. An especial contribution of his was *Samputa-tilaka*.

Kāṇha-pā, Saraha and Lūi-pā, became popular because of the mystic songs (*dohas* and *charyāgītis*) which they composed in Apabhramśa dialect. All the three 'mahāsiddhas' were associated with the *mahāmudrā* doctrine, which developed into a great system in Tibet. Kāṇha-pā (in Tibetan Nag-Po sPyod-Pa), in particular, is remembered in Tibet for his esoteric doctrine of Male-Female union (*Yuganaddha*, in Tib. *Yeb-Yum*), a fundamental tenet of the Tāntrik ideology.

There were other well-known Siddhas like Dārika-pāda (author of *Chakrasaṃvara* texts), Vajra-ghaṇṭa (author of *Sahajasamvara-sādhana*, *Vajravārāhī-sādhana*, *Gaṇachakra-vidhi* and *Abhishekavidhi-ratnamālā*), Kukkuri-pāda (author of *Mahāmāyā* treatises), Piṭo-pāda (author of *Kālachakra* system), Gaṃbhīra-vajra (author of *Vajrāmṛta*), Maitrī-pāda, Taila-pāda (Tilo-pa) and Nāḍa-pāda (Nāro-pā). The last two are especially important in Tibetan history as they were directly involved in the background of *bKah-brGyud* tradition.

Tibetans were greatly attracted by the Indian Siddha cult. It is possible that many siddhas visited Tibetan regions during eighth and ninth centuries A.D. There are in the Tibetan Canon elaborate, though mythical, accounts of the career and character of the eighty-four siddhas

(in Tibet, *Grub-THob*). The Tibetan historians like Bu-STon, Gsa lo-TSABA, Sum-Pa-mKhan-Po and Tārānātha deal with them. There are also Nepalese traditions about them. The great Tibetologist Rāhula Sāṅkrītyāyana has reconstructed the Sanskrit text of *Chaturaśītisiddha-pravṛtti* from the Tibetan *bsTanh-Gyur*.

Eighty-four appears to be a mystical number, and not all the Mahāsiddhas enumerated therein were historical persons. But a number of the siddhas have left behind poems and treatises which have been preserved both in India and in Tibet. It is possible, therefore, to reconstruct the philosophical position of these siddhas. The view that is often held is that they were by conviction Buddhists belonging to the Vajrayāna sect. But this supposition is not borne out by a

critical examination of their writings. Even the legends and semi-historical accounts concerning them do not support this view. It must be noted that all the teachers of the Śaivite Nātha cult (like Matsyendra, Goraksha, Jāleन्द्रa, Gāhini, Charpaṭi, Revaṇa, Chaurāṅgi, Virūpa, Kāneri, Kāṇha-pā and Kanthapa) are included in the list of Śiddhas. Some Kāpālikas also can be recognised in the list (like Anādikāla, Vaṭuka, Mahākāla, Vīranātha, Śrīkaṇṭha, Jālandhara and Kāṇha-pā). There were of course those who were evidently Buddhists (like Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva or Karṇarīpā, Śāntideva or Bhusuku-pā and Ratnākara-śānti or Śānti-pā).

To be a Siddha, therefore, sectarian affiliation was rather irrelevant. In Indian tradition, we generally speak of groups like Nātha-Siddhas, Rasa-Siddhas, Māheśvara-

Siddhas, Śaiva-Siddhas and Bauddha-Siddhas. But doctrinal differences between them are minor. And a Siddha would not mind acquiring initiations in several sects. Yogic practices (especially with *nāḍīs* and *chakras*), esoteric rituals and mystical ideology were the essential details of a siddha's career. He regarded the human body as containing in essence all the forces in the cosmos. Sun and moon were, for him, inside the body. Some Siddhas are described as "wearing them for their ear-rings". All opposites like birth and death, growth and decay, male and female, knowledge and action, activity and passivity were accommodated within the left and right halves of each one of us, and the understanding and realisation of this play of opposites with an insight into their essential and innate union and identity was the main concern of a siddha.

The simple and straight path, which siddhas extol, is the path of 'the central channel', steering clear of the opposites, integrating them in fact, described variously as *sushumnā*, *avadhūti* and *chāṇḍālī*. The apparent opposition makes for phenomenal involvement, while the realization of identity leads to freedom. The siddhas speak of this integrated and transcendental condition as 'empty' (*śūnya*) in the sense of being devoid of all phenomenal content, as 'innate and inalienable nature' (*sahaja-svabhāva* or simply *sahaja*) in the sense of being the essential source and content of all existence and experience, and as 'harmony' (*samarasa*) in the sense of utter identity of opposites.

The extant songs of the siddhas (known as *dohas* and *charyāpadas* or *charyāgītis*) reveal that the śiddhas



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were distinguished by their indifference to formal religion. Some dispense with, and even ridicule, meditation, asceticism and Tāntrik practices, which, they all alike adopted. They pleaded earnestly for simple and natural living (very much like the Chinese Taoists), and rejected the need for ascetic rigour as well as the urge for coarse enjoyment, as they were altogether averse to this kind of living.

This detail was so outstanding in their teaching that the expression, 'the path of naturalness' (*sahajayāna*) was introduced to describe and identify their viewpoint.

But the expression came in course of time to signify a distinct sect or cult, which obviously was an error. The śiddhas were not interested in constituting a sect of their own, nor did they encourage any particular cult (although individual cults did develop around some of them). They lived in different periods of time and in different parts of the country. They lived and practiced their religion in seclusion, or were given to a wandering life so that crystallization of their thought or formation of a cult was impossible. Many of them were ascetics, living in jungles and burial grounds and leading quiet, although contented, and even joyous, lives.

A few of them were pre-occupied with 'magical attainments' (*siddhis*) like alchemy, clairvoyance, physical immutability, rejuvenation and longevity; and they were given to such queer and outlandish practices that they attracted censure and also some undesirable publicity. A majority of the siddhas, however, were normal and serious minded; and many of them were learned and austere. The traditional list includes abbots of monasteries, professors in monastic colleges, and respectable householders celebrated as great teachers. It is unlikely that there was at any time an organisation to preserve, perpetuate or project the intellectual or practical position of the siddhas. The expression 'Sahajayāna' is therefore misleading; there never was any 'yāna' of this description.

But the impact of some of the earlier siddhas, like Saraha-pāda

Nāgārjuna-pāda, Lūi-pāda, Kāṇha-pāda and Śabari-pāda, was felt in the great universities, especially Nālandā, Vikramaśīla and Dhānyakaṭaka. It contributed to the finalisation of some esoteric trends in Mahāyāna Buddhism, in particular the trend which flowered out as Vajrayāna and spread to Tibet.

The basic position of these earlier siddhas was that the universe is essentially a subjective projection of the individual, that the human body constituted the workshop where spiritual experiments are to be carried out, and that ritualistic formalities are irrelevant in this context. This naturally appealed greatly to the academicians. The view was that the ultimate goal of spiritual endeavour is not obtainment of a heaven or possession of miraculous powers, but realization of the innate and natural condition

and undifferentiated unity and harmony.

The prestige enjoyed by Nāgārjuna who was not only a siddha but an alchemist and a creative writer besides being a great teacher, helped spread the characteristic Mādhyamaka doctrine that the ultimate truth is 'empty' (śūnya). We find this idea already well-formed in the songs of his teacher Saraha, the earliest of the siddhas. Nāgārjuna developed this idea into a metaphysical doctrine, which became in due course fundamental to all schools of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

Saraha spoke of the 'death of the mind' and of 'stilling of the winds in the body' as productive of 'great bliss' (*mahāsukha*). One gets bound by the action of the mind, and when mind is silenced, one is doubtless freed. Therefore, the wise

should take care to make the mind no-mind, and that is a return to the innate nature, a pleasant 'home-coming'.

Saraha's outpourings which expressed this idea were clothed in symbolism, for he was a mystic. We do not know if he justified this position logically, psychologically, philosophically and metaphysically. If he did, we have no evidence. It was his disciple Nāgārjuna that undertook this task, and thus provided the basis for Mahāyāna theory and practice. Well-known is his work on Mādhyamaka philosophy. But little-known is his remarkable tract on vacuity (*śūnyatā*) viz., *Pañchakrama*. It deals in the main with what is known as *annuttara-yoga-tantra* in five stages of perfection. It sets out the objective of spiritual life as perfection of body-mind-speech complex so that the

individual nature becomes immutable and adamantine (*vajra-svabhāva*). This work is said to be based on *Guhyasamāja-tantra*, of which Saraha was known to have been a teacher.

Between Saraha and Nāgārjuna, they appear to have given shape to an esoteric doctrine, which probably was current from very ancient times in secret societies (*guhya-samāja*). The Yogāchāra ideology left its indelible stamp on the course that religion took. In Tibet, the doctrine known as *guhya-samāja* (*gSong-bDus-rGyud*) is described as a "sleeping text", i.e. the text which was secretly communicated from teacher to student until Asaṅga (in Tibetan, THoga-Med) made it public. Born in a Brahmin family of the north-western region of India, Asaṅga was a teacher in Nālandā, and expounded what is known now as the Yogāchāra school, which

provided the theoretical framework for Tibetan Vajrayāna.

Asaṅga was instructed by Maitreya (who lived, according to G.Tucci, around A.D.200), the real founder of the Yogāchāra system. The Tibetan account makes this Maitreya the future Buddha in the Tushita heaven from whom Asaṅga miraculously obtained the revelations. And these revelations were in the form of five treatises, known in Tibet as “Maitreya’s Famous Five”: *Mahāyāna-sūtrālaṅkāra*, *Madhyānta-vibhaṅga*, *Dharmādharmatā-vibhaṅga*, *Abhisamyālaṅkāra* and *Mahāyānottara-tantra*. Maitreya was obviously a genius of synthesis, and had a partiality for the practical aspects of the Buddha’s teachings. The merit of Maitreya-nātha was that he attempted to reconcile the various tendencies that prevailed in



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the Buddhism of those days. His *Abhisamaya* (‘transcendental path’) included both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna *charyās*. He, it was that provided the mystical foundation for Buddhism.

Asaṅga carried on this spirit, and wrote not only brilliant commentaries (*ṭīkāś* and *kārikāś*) on his master’s works, but also independent works like *Mahāyāna-*

saṃparigraha and *Yogāchāra-bhūmi*. Maitreya-Asaṅga held a view that was complementary to Nāgārjuna's. If Nāgārjuna emphasised on 'emptiness' (*śūnyatā*) as an extension of the old 'no-soul' (*nairātmya*) doctrine, Maitreya-Asaṅga formulated a more positive view: 'emptiness' is not 'nothing at all', but essential and total reality, which is transcendental and absolute, 'devoid of mental constructions' (*abhūta-parikalpa*).

Emptiness is contained within it, and it is contained within emptiness⁷. It is; but the two (the subjective world caused by 'the veil of the attachment and passion', *kleśāvaraṇa*, and the objective world caused by 'the veil of knowables' *jñeyāvaraṇa*) do not really exist, but are projected. The expression *abhūta-parikalpa* is compounded of two words, 'abhūta' signifying that

the images of things which we construct in our imagination do not in fact exist as a duality of subject and objects, and 'parikalpa' connoting that the objects in the world do not have in reality the forms that we construct for them⁸. Emptiness therefore is not negation of all existence, but denial of subject-object dichotomy.

When a rope is mistaken for a snake in dim light, what is unreal (or empty) is the form of the rope-as-snake, but not the rope itself. The snake here occurs as an event in the mind and not as an objective phenomenon. Asaṅga's definition of *abhūta-parikalpa*⁹ fully anticipates the *vivarta-vāda* of Advaita. And like the 'pure consciousness' of the latter school, *abhūta-parikalpa* was a positive concept; it suggested undifferentiated awareness from which the phenomenal world

proceeds in *samsāra* and into which it is withdrawn in *nirvāṇa*.

It is important to note that Maitreya-Asaṅga emphasised the role of mind (*viññāna*) not only in the projection of the phenomenal world and in the subjective apprehension thereof, but also in the dissolution of all projections that make for our worldly involvement, viz., in *nirvāṇa*. If Nāgārjuna's argument of 'emptiness' is regarded as nihilism, the Yogāchāra view can be described as subjective idealism. *Yogā-chāra* was so named because of its insistence that personal experience in meditation (*yoga*) was the sole means of realising the ultimate truth.

We find here an echo of the Siddha reliance on mind to reach the state of 'no-mind' ("Sovi maṇu tahi amaṇu karijjai", Saraha). Siddhas spoke of refining the mind, purifying



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the mind, sharpening the mind, emptying the mind, making mind sky-like (*kha-sama*), eliminating the duality of subjectivity and objectivity from the mind, making it unitary. The empty aspect of the mind is emphasized in the notion of 'sūnyatā', while the productive or the projective aspect is highlighted in the idea of 'abhūta-parikalpa'. Experientially, the two ideas were in fact one; the difference between them

was only a matter of emphasis.

And it is probable that both ideas arose out of the Siddha thought-system. The Vajrayāna that developed in Tibet considers itself the continuation of Yogāchāra; but all Tibetan traditions alike hold Nāgārjuna in the highest esteem and accept the Mādhyamaka viewpoint. The *sāadhanā* in Vajrayāna 'cultivation of void' (*śūnyatā-bhāvanā*) and the 'visualizations' of the *maṇḍalas* and the forms of the deities are characteristic features of this *sāadhanā*. It may be recalled that in Nālandā, both *Mādhyamaka* and *Yogāchāra* viewpoints were subjected to Tāntrik influence under the impact of the Siddha movement. It was thus that Vajrayāna emerged. During the reign of king Mahīpāla of Bengal, the president of the University, paṇḍita Abhayākara-gupta (who also headed the

Mahābodhi-vihāra in Buddhagayā) wrote many esoteric tracts on this subject, nine of which are included in the Tibetan canon. His disciple Vikṛti-deva continued this work, and communicated it to Tibet.

(3)

Asaṅga's name is not included in the usual lists of the Siddhas; but his works betray mysticism of the Siddha variety. And, being interested



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in the yogic practices, he naturally works with numerous Tāntrik ideas. There is in fact a *sāadhanā* devoted to Prajñāpāramitā ascribed to Asaṅga¹⁰. In this background, the ascription of *Guhya-samāja-tantra* to him is not surprising, although it is somewhat improbable.

There is a persistent tradition in Tibet that the esoteric teaching of Vajrayāna continued in secret from the days of Asaṅga (second or third century A.D.) till the days of Dharmakīrti (A.D.600-650). The Chinese pilgrim I-tsing also refers to this tradition. There is a belief that Asaṅga is the originator of Vajrayāna; and *Guhyasamāja-tantra* happens to be the earliest available full-fledged source-book of Vajrayana. It should, however, be remembered that the book is also ascribed to Saraha and to Siddha-Nāgārjuna in the Tibetan *Blue-Annals*.

'Guhya-samāja' appears rather to be a class of works belonging to the *Saṅgīti* group, meant for samaveta-gāna ('group-singing'). We are not certain if the work we now have¹¹ is the same as the one known as *Tathāgtata-guhyaka*, or the one mentioned in *Nikāya-saṃgraha* as *Samāja-tantra*, or the one mentioned as *Śrīsamāja* by Padmavajra in his *Guhyasiddhi*, or the one which was probably known as *Tathāgatāchintya-guhyā-nirdeśa* (as can be inferred from the Chinese translation of it about A.D.1000) quoted in Śāntideva's *Śikshā-samuchchaya*.

This remarkable work, which is described in the colophon as 'the great king of secret Tāntrik texts' ('mahāguhyatantrarāja'), and as the 'beyond the beyond in the tantra' ('tantrāṇām uttarottaram') is a work which specifically and elaborately

deals with the 'Vajra-path'. The expression 'tantra' is here defined as 'a well-knit system' (*prabandham*) consisting of the ground (*ādhāra*), technique (*upāya*) and inalienable nature (*prakṛti*). Among the commentators of this work are included Nāgārjuna (*Guhyasamāja-maṇḍalopāyikā*), Līlā-vajra (*Nidāna-gurūpadeśa-bhāṣya*), Śāntideva (*Guhyasamāja-mahayoga-tantra-bali-vidhi-nāma*), Ratnākara-śānti or Śānti-pā (*Kusumāñjalī*), and Dīpaṃkara-Śrījñāna (or Atīsa, *Guhyasamāja-lokeśvara-sādhana-nāma*).

The translation of the title as 'Secret congress' or as 'Secret Society' can be misleading. There is an explanation in the work itself. "The three-fold entity, body, speech and mind, is known as *secret* (*guhya*); and *assembly* (*samāja*) means gathering together; it is a collective

expression for all the Enlightened Ones"¹². The work commences with the question "what is *bodhi-chitta*?", posed by an assembly of *bodhisattvas* and *tathāgatas* to the Blessed one (*Bhagavān*); and the burden of the answer is that the 'adamantine integration' of body, speech and mind holds the key to the highest attainment.

The importance of the work consists in the first enumeration of five Buddhas, known as *dhyāni-buddhas*, presiding over, or representing, the five constituent-aggregates of the individual, the form (*rūpa*) consciousness (*viññāna*), sensation-feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saṃjñā*) and conception-organisation (*saṃskāra*), viz., Vairocana, Akshobhya, Ratnasambhava (called in the text Rathaketu), Amitābha and Amoghasiddhi.

This idea is basic to Vajrayāna. The five Buddhas are arranged in a design (*maṇḍala*) with Akṣobhya in the centre and the other four in East, South, West and North, respectively. They are also associated with colours (white, blue, yellow, red and green), with the five elements (ether, air, fire, water and earth)¹³, with consorts (*Vajradhātviśvarī* or *Tārā*, *Lochanā*, *Māmakī*, *Pāṇḍarā* and *Ārya-tārā*), with *bodhisattvas* (Samantabhadra, Vajrapāṇi, Rathnapāṇi, Padmapāṇi and Viśvapāṇi), with 'families' (moha, dvesha, chintāmaṇi, rāga and samaya), and with the five 'human Buddhas' (Krakuchunda, Kanakamuni, Kāśyapa, Gautama and Maitreya). In the *maṇḍala*, it is usual to represent Akshobhya as the presiding deity, and the other four in his very form but smaller in size.

The assumption is that consciousness (*viññāna*), over which

Akshobhya presides is the essence of the other four aggregates, which are merely modes and modifications thereof. Further, Akshobhya is characterised by a miniature Vajrasattva (Diamond-essence, viz., basic vacuity which is the ultimate reality) on top. The symbolism is that consciousness (*viññāna*) is but one of the five aggregates and is not ultimate: the ultimate principle is devoid of subject-object distinction, which normally consciousness involves.

The five Buddhas are represented in their cosmic aspect by the five elements. They are also represented in the individual body, Vairochana in the head, Akshobhya in the heart, Ratnasambhava in the navel, Amitābha in mouth, and Amoghasiddhi in the feet. Heart is the centre for primary or basic

consciousness, undifferentiated, initial and of the nature of a stream (*chitta-srota*, Tibetan *gTSoSems*). This condition of consciousness is also symbolised by the mystic syllable *Hūm*, Akshobhya's seed-syllable. Akshobhya's source-deity, viz., Vajrasattva was looked upon as Hevajra (or Heruka), with a mystic consort Vajra-vārāhi (or Prajñāparamitā).

However, these details are the products of later times. The *Guhyasamāja* merely provided the main and bare coordinates. The text also underlines the importance and value of 'bodhichitta'. The 'Lord' gets into a state of mystic absorption (*samādhi*) and describes bodhichitta in a verse, which unfortunately is enigmatical and obscure. As explained (?) by Nāro-pā in his *Sekoddeśa-tīkā*, the verse would mean: "If you view existence from



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the position of emptiness (*abhāva*) there would then be no thought-construction (*bhāvanā*) whatever. Thus existence would not be existence, and thought-constructions would not arise at all".

Whatever the exact import of the verse, it is significant that *bodhichitta* is sought to be formulated in such an involved thought-complex.

Later in the text, *bodhichitta* (- which originally meant simply 'thought of enlightenment' or 'mind bent on enlightenment' -) is extolled as the ultimate truth and there are four verses with the refrain "I bow to thee, *bodhichitta*!" (*bodhichitta, namo'stu te*) (in the second chapter). It is described as "the essence and source of knowledge of all the Enlightened Ones" (*sarvabuddhānām sārabhūtam utpattibhūtam*). It is what leads one to enlightenment, being the very essence and source of it; it is the diamond (*vajra*) or the unity of body-speech-mind. "Without beginning or end, tranquil, all-pervading and free from being and non-being, this *bodhichitta* is Void (*śūnyata*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) undistinguished"¹⁴. Śāntideva prescribes: "Mind must be bent on enlightenment for the sake of freeing all beings from sorrow"¹⁵.

Vajrayāna has taken this prescription seriously, and invariably employs *bodhichitta* in its *sādhana* as a commitment to inspire the mind into enlightenment not only for ones own good but, more importantly, for the good of all beings. In *Trisamayārājasādhana*, for instance, we have a specimen of the formula by which the devotee must commit himself :

"The *Bodhichitta* must be aroused thus:

"I arouse my mind into perfect enlightenment

for the sake of all embodied beings attaining to

enlightenment. I walk the suspicious path which

secures the good of all beings"¹⁶.

Another frequently employed formula is :

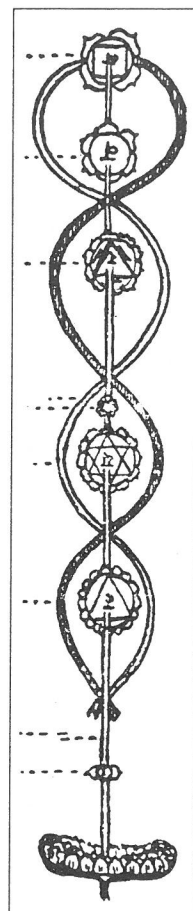
“I arouse the supreme and best
bodhichitta, I invite

all the beings, and I walk the
excellent path of

enlightenment; may I become a
Buddha for the sake

of world’s welfare”¹⁷.

The expression ‘*bodhichitta*’ occurs also in the *dohas* of siddhas. For instance, Kāṇhā-pā speaks of his *bodhichitta* (*bohichia* in Apabhraṃśa) as soiled, and as then washed bright by *chittavajra* (the diamond-mind). He also speaks of it as the ultimate state of five elements, suggesting that it is the essence of the five *dhyāni-buddhas*. Perhaps the distinction between two states of conditions of *bodhichitta* is suggested even in the *dohas*: one ordinary and agitated and therefore involved in phenomena, and the other perfectly still and blissful, altogether



transcendental. This distinction became functional and meaningful in the context of *Vajrayāna-sādhana* concerning the arousal and arrest of *bodhichitta*.

The assumption is that the *bodhichitta* lies hidden and passive in everyone of us, very much like the

kuṇḍalinī of our classical Tantra, in the lowest of the centres. The Vajrayāna speaks of four such centres (*chakras*): the lowest, called *Nirmāṇa-chakra* (or *maṇipūra*), is situated near the navel and is pictured as a lotus consisting of sixty-four petals, blue in colour and represented by the seed-letter *aṁ*. It symbolises the earth element. *Bodhichitta* lies here, concealed and restive. The purpose of *sāadhanā* is to activate it to make it 'move upwards' (*ut-pāda*).

But as soon as it is aroused, it tends to flow downward; the yogi must check this fall by plugging the vent known as 'jewel-bottom' ('*maṇimūla-nirodham kartavyam*'). When *bodhichitta* is thus arrested, it moves upwards along the spinal column which is linked to the "Sumeru mountain"¹⁸).

It then reaches the next center, known as *dharma-chakra*, located in

the heart and pictured as a 'double-lotus' (one facing upwards and the other downwards, *viśva-padma*) with thirty-two petals¹⁹. It symbolises the water element. The center higher than that is the *sambhoga-chakra*, situated in the throat (in some accounts, between the eyebrows or on the forehead), and pictured as a lotus of sixteen petals, red in colour. It stands for the fire element. In the Tibetan rites of *tum-mo*, they attend to these two centers (*dharma* in the heart and *sambhoga* on the forehead) and produce an internal fire, which consumes not only the world of subjectivity and objectivity but transcends time; incidentally it warms up the body and enables the individual in the cold regions to survive in almost a naked condition.

The fourth and the highest center is known as the 'lotus on top of head' (*ushṇīsha-kamala*, in

Tibetan, *Dab-STon*). It consists of four petals, representing the four noble truths taught by the Buddha. When *bodhichitta* reaches this center, great bliss is experienced and therefore this center is called 'mahāsukhachakra'. It is as if the *bodhichitta* has gone home, utterly relaxed. *Bodhichitta* as it is bound to the lowest center (*saṁvṛta*) and restive is responsible for the phenomenal involvement, while the same *bodhichitta* in its restful and blissful state in the highest center (*vivṛta*) is responsible for emancipation.

The integration of the opposites, which is a characteristic Tāntrik approach, renders important the distinction between these two states. The former state is active involvement (*pravṛtti*), while the latter is quiet withdrawal (*nivṛtti*). The former is the foundation of the

womb of phenomenal existence (*garbha-dhātu* or *tathāgata-garbha*), while the latter is immutable, mere 'suchness' (*vajra-dhātu* or *tathatā*). The integration of the two is visualised in a design (*maṇḍala*), or is represented as a flame (male) arising from a lotus or vase (female), or is imagined as the copulation of two deities (*yuganaddha* or *Yub-Yum*).

While *Guhyasamāja-tantra* does not elaborate the above conceptions, there is no doubt that it provided ample suggestions, which were later worked out by texts like *Havaṃjra-tantra*, *Śrīsaṁpuṭikā*, *Heruka-tantra*, *Marmakalikā-tantra* and *Sekoddeśa-ṭīkā*. It should be pointed out that, as is the case with the classical Tantras, the Vajrayāna Tantras differ in their accounts of esoteric structures (like the *chakra*) and processes (like *bodhichittopāda*).

Subsequent to *Guhyasamāja*, the Vajrayāna position was crystallised by Padma-vajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. It emphasised that it was only by achieving all opposites one can obtain emancipation in this very life, and advocated the *mahāmudrā* method for this purpose. Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāya-vini-ścya-siddhi* (about A.D. 730), a work in twenty chapters, dealt with the union of wisdom (*prajñā*) and compassion (*kṛpā*), likening it to the mixing of water and milk.

Indra-bhūti's *Jñāna-siddhi*, provides copious explanations for the ideas contained in *Guhyasamāja*. Advaya-vajra wrote on the same subject several short tracts like *Sekanirṇaya*, *Chaturmudrā*, *Pañchākāra* and *Yuganaddha-prakāśa*, *Guhyasamāja* presupposes scriptural texts like *Kāraṇḍa-vyūha* (which perhaps originated the

Avalokiteśvara cult, and gave the famous mantra 'Om maṇi-padme Hūm' along with spells, and which was translated into Chinese between A.D. 557-581 by Yaśogupta), *Suvarṇaprabhāsa-sūtra* (translated into Chinese first by Dharmakshema between A.D. 317-322, then by Paramārtha in the sixth century, and again by I-ting in the seventh), and *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* (translated into Chinese in the tenth century and into Tibetan in the next).

The last mentioned work composed in archaic Sanskrit style²⁰ calls itself a 'mahāyāna-vaipulya-sūtra', glorifies Mañjuśrī, introduces Tārā, and formulates *mantras* as method. Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana rightly regards this as a south Indian work. It mentions Śrīparvata and the Dhānyakaṭaka monastery as centers of *mantrayāna*. The text was recovered from Maṇalikkara-maṭṭam

near Padmanābhapuram in Kerala. It may be recalled that the Tibetan *Blue Annals* (*Tab-THer-SNgon-Po*) held that Nāgārjuna introduced *Guhyasamāja*. And *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* is considered to be immediately antecedent to *Guhyasamāja*. Therefore it appears to have finalised the *mantrayāna* ('the path of mantras') phase, which in due course brought about the *Vajra-yāna* (the adamant path), of which the *Guhyasamāja* was an early advocate.

(4)

It is usual, although it is incorrect, to distinguish between Mantra-yāna, Vajra-yāna, Sahaja-yāna and Kālachakra-yāna as so many schools in the so-called Tāntrik Buddhism. They were not really distinct schools, but only phases of development of different aspects of

the cult, and Vajra-yāna seems to be a collective and comprehensive nomenclature. The siddhas, whose philosophy is generally identified as 'sahaja-yāna, were also responsible for the ideas that were crystallised in *Guhyasamāja*. And the impact of *Mañjuśrī-mūlakalpa* contributed to the importance attached to *mantras* within this framework.

Kālachakra-yāna, however, stands on a different footing, partly because its origin was not entirely in India, and partly because it encouraged iconographic representations of abstract concepts. Waddell regards it as an extreme phase of Tāntrik Buddhism which developed in North India and Nepal during the tenth century. Appalled at the host of ferocious and blood-thirsty 'demoniacal Buddhas' in the Kālachakra system, he dismissed it as "coarse" and "unworthy of being

considered as a philosophy!”²¹ This judgement is based on a profound misunderstanding. Kālachakra was a fundamental concept accepted by most of the sects, including the austere and reformed *dGe-Lugs*; and it had an elaborate philosophical structure.

The Kālachakra system is ascribed to Pi-to, one of the eighty-four siddhas, and among the preceptors of this system are counted Vajraghaṇṭa-pāda, Vijaya-pāda, Kūrma-pāda, Kāṇha-pā, Bhaḍe-pā, Tilo-pā and Nāro-pā, all siddhas. Nāro-pā’s famous work *Sekoddeśa-tīkā* is a commentary on the ‘Sekoddeśa’ section of the *Śrī-Kālachakra-tantra*, the only extant scriptural text of this system, the manuscript of which has been preserved in the Cambridge University. Among its commentators were, besides Nāro-pā, Mañjuśrī-



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kīrti, Dārika-pa and Abhayākara-gupta (all between A.D. 1040 and 1200). In this work, Kālachakra is hailed as a deity, as the very *bodhichitta*, the undistinguished union of ‘emptiness’ and ‘compassion’, and as the embodiment of knowledge (*jñānakāya*)²². Like Guhyasamāja, Kālachakra was also visualised as a divinity; the blue god with four faces, three eyes, three necks, six-

shoulders, and twelve hands on each side, dancing in the *ālīḍha* pose on the bodies of *Anaṅga* (the god of love) and *Rudra* (the god of destruction, Śiva). He is also represented in the *Yuganaddha* or *Yub-Yum* form, embracing *Prajñā*. There seems to have been a teacher called *Kālachakra-pāda*, who is sometimes identified with the siddha *Pi-to-pā* and sometimes described as *Nāro-pā*'s son (as in *Blue Annals*). *Tilo-pā* is supposed to have defeated the *Nālandā* *Paṇḍita* *Nāro-pā* in an argument, and *Nāro-pā* is said to have learnt from him the *Kālachakra* doctrine. One of *Nāro-pā*'s students, *Somanātha* *Paṇḍita*, is reputed to have been one of the well-known exponents of this doctrine. The *Kālachakra* cult spread in Nepal, Tibet and Mongolia. It may be, as *Csoma* thinks, that the cult emerged in India around 965 A.D. before it

reached the Himalayan countries.

Besides the *Śrī-Kālachakra-tantra* mentioned above, the cult holds in high regard *Laghu-Kālachakra-tantra*, and a fine commentary on it known as *Vimala-prabhā* (*Laghu-Kālachakra-tantra-rāja-ṭīkā*), translated into Tibetan in 1027 A.D. There is another work ascribed to *Abhayākara-gupta* viz., *Kālachakrāvatāra*, which is also considered authoritative. The celebrated reformer *TSong-KHa-Pa* learnt the *Kālachakra* doctrine from an astronomer, *PHyogs-las-rNam-Gyal* (1306-1386); one of *TSong-KHa-pa*'s disciples, *mKHas-Grub* (1385-1438) wrote a work on *Kālachakra*, and so did the first *Dalai Lama*, nephew of *TSong-KHa-Pa*.

The third *Paṇchen-Lama*, *dPal-iDan-Yes-Sis* (1738-1780) did much

to popularise the *Kālachakra* cult and he wrote a book describing the route to the Śambhala country where the *Kālachakra* doctrine is said to have originated. This Śambhala, if indeed it was a place on earth, is generally located in the Pamir region, somewhere in the present Russian Turkestan. But the third Pañchen-lama's book specifically relates it to India.

Śambhala may have been a country just outside Indian border, and it may well have been on the banks of the river Jaxartes or Tarim in East Turkestan (as Alexander Csoma thought). The legendary account concerning it describes it as an area surrounded by snowcapped mountains, with a great city in the centre; and in the centre of the city was, wonderful palace, *Kalāpa* by name, overlooking a charming garden, *Malaya*; and the garden

contained the consecrated ground *Kālachakra-maṇḍala*. This was said to be the place of origin of the doctrine.

Suchandra, the first of the kings of Śambhala, obtained the 'yoga of *Kālachakra*' from the Buddha himself, as it was the sole means of salvation for people in this degenerate Kali age. It is with this piece of information that *Śrī-Kālachakra-tantra* begins. The Tibetan historian Bu-STon, who wrote his *CHos-hByung (History of Religion)* in 1322, mentions that according to the *Kālachakra* calculation 2198 years had elapsed since the Buddha taught the 'source-text' (*mūla-tantra*) of *Kālachakra*, and that the Buddha taught it a year before his passing away²³. There is also a tradition that the *Kālachakra* doctrine was enunciated in the *Abhinirvāṇa-sūtra* on the basis of

the Buddha's instruction in Dhānyakāṭaka.

As mentioned above, TSong-Kha-Pa heard the Kālachakra doctrine from an astronomer. It is likely therefore that the system had its origin in some astronomical speculation that was current in India and was introduced into Tibet, as Laufer suggests²⁴. The 'wheel of time' (*Kālachakra*) is in fact closely related to the sexagenary system derived from the combination of five elements (wood, fire, earth, iron and water) and twelve animals (monkey, hen, dog, pig, mouse, bull, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, horse and sheep). This system seems to have entered Tibet in the year 1027 A.D., the very year the commentary on *Laghu-Kālachakra-tantra* (*Vimalaprabhā*) appeared in Tibetan²⁵, although it became an accepted mode of reckoning only around 1241 A.D.



VAJRA GARBHA

Whatever the genesis, Kālachakra (in Tibetan, *Dus-Kyi-Ko'r-lo*) became an important philosophical system and religious discipline in Tibet. The expression 'kālacakra' means 'the cycle of time'. Haraprasad Sastri took the expression to mean simply the method of getting out of the cycle of death. The first part of the word, 'kāla', signifies the state of absorption, decease, cessation; in its

extended meaning, it stands for 'vacuity' (*śūnyatā*), the ultimate and immutable knowledge. And the second part, 'chakra' signifies the round of existence or the cycle of world-process; in its extended meaning it stands for the method (*upāya*), or the state of compassion (*karuṇā*). The former is the essence while the latter is its manifestation.

The two together comprehend all knowledge and all knowability. The three worlds appear and disappear therein, manifest themselves in all their variety and merge themselves ultimately. Nāro-pā takes Kāla to mean phenomenal existence, and *chakra* vacuity. *Kālachakra* is the embodiment of compassion and vacuity, one and eternal. When in a state of union, they destroy all ignorance and infatuation and produce the highest bliss²⁶. Nāro-pā also derives the

meaning of the expression from each of the letters: 'ka' denotes that causality has ceased, 'la' cosmic reabsorption, 'cha' mind that is mobile and restless, and 'kra' the method or process of worldly involvement²⁷. The first two comprise the transcendental state (*dharma-dhātu*), while the last two denote the emergence of objectivity with senses and elements. The former is termed 'adamantine knowledge' (*vajra-jñāna*), and the latter 'the great cosmogram of adamantine element' (*vajradhātu-mahāmaṇḍala*). Thus, *kālachakra* is interpreted as another expression for *bodhichitta*.

What is important in the Kālachakra doctrine is its insistence that the entire universe with all its objects and events are located really in ones own body; and time with its divisions (hour, day, night, month, year etc.) is accommodated within

the vital currents (*prāṇa*) that flow in the arteries of the body. The obvious point that is generally missed, even in the scriptural texts and their commentaries, is that *kāla* means just 'time', and *chakra* is space (or field, *maṇḍala*); and thus *Kālachakra* means the whole of physical and dynamic universe that moves in a cycle.

The expression is tantamount to *bhava-chakra*. But *Kālachakra* sought to work out the correspondence between the flow of the vital currents in the body, and the flow of time is possible only in the functioning of the vital currents. The *Kālachakra* theorists inferred that if the vital currents, especially the uprising and down-flowing courses (*prāṇāpānagatī*) are checked, one would thereby stop the passage of time also; one would transcend time, and overcome the phenomenal

necessity of growth, change and decay. Yoga, therefore, is to be practised only inside the body (*dehamadhye samastam yogam*).

The proximate goal is to render the body adamantine (*vajra*) i.e., immutable and powerful; and the ultimate goal is great bliss (*mahāsukha*) that arises when all obstructions are eliminated. In other words, the purpose of *Kālachakra* discipline is to rise above *bhavachakra* (cycle of phenomena), visualising the entire universe in ones body, including time in terms of life-movement (*prāṇa-chalana*).

As a religious discipline, *Kālachakra* has adopted 'the six limbed yoga' (*ṣaḍāṅgayoga*) of the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* (ch.18), in particular the method of *prāṇāyāma* (checking and holding up of the vital currents). It is in the context of

prāṇāyāma that the well-known and oft-employed mystic formula in Tibet 'Om Āḥ Hūm' was coined. *Om* stands for inhalation, *Ah* for pot-like holding up and *Hūm* for exhalation. Alternately, the three syllables signify origination, preservation and destruction respectively. Known as *vajra-japa*, it is popular in Tibet not only among *sādhakas* but even among the pious laity.



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As a result of such restraining of the vital-currents, the practitioner obtains a veritable 'rebirth' from the womb of the realized vacuity. The 'rebirth' is characterized by immediate enlightenment which, however, is fleeting. The enlightenment here is described as 'momentary' (*ekakṣaṇābhisaṃbodhi*). For this to deepen and get unshakably established, one must continue the practice.

The next stage is reached when one can, during the flash of enlightenment, understand, thoroughly and intuitively, the working of the senses and the mind. He is no longer an ordinary being bound to the phenomenal world. He is now a 'great one' (*mahāsattva*), in the sense that he has already risen above it.

The third stage destroys all his subtle passions and fetters, make

him realise the nature of vacuity fully, but also orients him towards his duty to the rest of mankind. He is now a *bodhisattva*, and is likened to a completely developed foetus, ready to come out of the womb.

In the fourth and the fifth stages (called *samaya-sattva* and *vajra-yogi*) one tears asunder all veils of passion, is weaned out of the urge to enjoy pleasure of sixteen kinds, and becomes progressively freed from all kinds of fetters that bind him to the world. He now becomes purified and gets firmly established in dharma.

The final stage is known as *kālachakra*, where he becomes utterly blissful (*mahāsukha*) by an absolute union of wisdom and method, of knowledge and knowability. In this stage, he is none other than the primordial Buddha (*ādi-buddha*), the ultimate principle

of utter vacuity from whom the Buddhas and the worlds evolved. The purpose of Kālachakra practice is the union with Kālachakra as the all-embracing Buddha. The stress is on yoga, with nervous system as its basis.

There are in Tibet rituals and initiations connected with Kālachakra which are heavily Tāntrik and which are mainly communicated by oral teachings. It is interesting in this connection to note that one of the siddhas, Dārika-pā, wrote a manual on initiation into Kālachakra ritual (*kālachakratantrasya sekaprakriyā-pravṛtti*). Its Sanskrit original is lost, but the Tibetan translation has been preserved. Even the celebrated Paṇḍita Advaya-vajra (better known as Avadhūti-pā, another siddha) wrote on Kālachakra, which perhaps dealt with the 'six-limbed yoga' that was associated with it. The Tibetan

translation of this work included in *bsTangh-Gyur* gives the title as *Śrī-kālachakropadeśa-shaḍaṅga-yoga-tantra-pañjikā* which suggests that it was in the nature of a commentary on an important work, now lost. In recent times, the famous Tibetan historian Tārānātha (Kun-dGah-SNin-po of the Jo-nyin Sect, born in 1575) was an advocate of *Kālachakra-yāna*²⁸.

(5)

Another interesting treatise dealing with the same subject and held in high esteem is *Ḍākārṇava*, which describes itself as *Mahāyoginī-tantra-rāja*²⁹. Like *Guhyasamāja*, this is also a *sangīti* text (meant for collective recitation) and contains details of *yantras*, *mantras*, *mudrās*, *dhāraṇīs*, and methods of achieving *siddhis*. The distinguishing feature of this 13th century work is the

description of *yoginīs* or female adepts consorting with the yogis in certain types of rituals. The title of the work signifies “the ocean of *Ḍāka*”, and the expression *ḍāka*, meaning *jñāna* (wisdom), is probably derived from a Tibetan source. The text appears as the instruction of Bhagavān-mahāvīra-vīreśvara-Ḍākinī-svāmi. *Ḍākinī* is the female form of *ḍāka*, meaning ‘the lady of Wisdom’; here it represents *Vārāhī-devī*, who seeks instruction from the Lord regarding the welfare of all sentient beings (*sattvānām upakāraḥ*). *Ḍākārṇava* is a Sanskrit work, with poetical pieces in *Apabhraṃśa* thrown in.

The fundamental teaching here is that the union of compassion and wisdom is generative of absolute bliss (*sukha*). There is no *nirvāṇa* outside *saṃsāra*. It is the mind that binds us when it is torn into

multiplicity; and it is the mind that produces the liberating wisdom (*dāka*), when it is unified (*samarasīgatam*). The diamond (*vajra*) should delight in the lotus (*padma*); the mind, awakened, should get lost in the concentration of vacuity (*suna-samshia* in Apabhraṁśa). It speaks of 'the yoga of maṇḍalas' which awakens the mind and dissolves it in 'śūnya-samādhī'. The essence of the Buddha's teaching has been called in this work 'jewel' (*maṇi*); the manifold

emanation of phenomenal existence is spoken of as the 'lotus' (*padma*). The founding of the Buddha's liberating wisdom in the phenomenal world is what is meant by 'jewel in the lotus' (*maṇi padma*); the vow of bodhisattvas.

It is a very valuable text for the crystallization of the Vajrayāna cult. It propounds the thesis that the aspirant (*sādhaka*) and the objective (*sādhya*) are essentially inseparable.

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APPENDIX-III

THE NEED TO MEDITATE

The soles of our feet are naturally soft and sensitive. They could readily be pricked by thorns which are hard and sharp. To avoid being pricked one should either not step on the thorn at all, or step on it wearing a shoe. This is an illustration offered in one of the commentaries on Patañjali's *Yoga-Sūtra*. We are like the soles of the feet, not all of us, but those of us who are sensitive; and the world around us can be like thorns. A speck of dirt makes no impact when it falls on our hands or feet; it is not even noticed. But the same tiny particle when it gets into the eye can be bothersome in the extreme. The pricks of the world go unnoticed, or are ignored when noticed, by a vast majority of humans. They are taken for granted and nothing is sought to

be done with regard to them. But there are some sensitive people who are bothered by these ills. It is this sensitivity that prompts them to higher development.

The stress in life is due to the harassment of the individual by the environment. The environmental impact is impersonal, neutral, cold, and callous. The phenomenal events have a logic of their own, altogether unrelated to our motives and urges. They are not even 'aware' of our existence; they are in fact not designed to be so aware.

But we, on our part, can hardly ignore them. We are so designed that we are unceasingly aware of them while we are awake. And our sense-organs select and limit what

and how much of our environment should come within our awareness. The environment will thus be perceived by the individual, neither in its entirety nor in its objectivity, but as transformed by our motivations and expectations, prejudices and frustrations, evaluations and aspirations. We, therefore, tend to look upon the world as though the world were interested in us, as if it had a concern for us.

But when our need is confronted with the stern but natural indifference of the environment, we call nature unsympathetic and hostile. We begin to perceive 'its' pricks and poundings, which are really our own projections. We imagine that the world is harassing the individual, and that the environment is providing stresses for us to cope with. The stresses are really in ourselves and they are of our own making.

We externalize the sources of our stress and set about changing the environmental factors and patterns to eliminate, or at least minimize the impact of stress. Some experience will teach us, if we are willing enough to be taught, that the world is beyond our control, that the environmental events cannot be ordered about.

The environment has always been found by man to be stress-producing. Science and technology, trade and territorial ownership have contributed liberally to what we call progress; and along with progress, stresses have also mounted. Every year for several decades now, there are new needs to be satisfied, new challenges to be faced, and new problems to be solved. The more civilized and sophisticated man is, the greater is the impact of stress on him. Progress and tension have become unavoidable concomitants in the modern world.

The soles of our feet, in other words, have become sensitive, and the thorns have become sharp. We must either withdraw ourselves from the world, or wear a protective covering. Withdrawal can only be occasional, brief and partial. Total withdrawal is impossible; there is really no way of running away from the world. We are after all a part of the world, and our very being incorporates the world. Even if we can physically isolate ourselves, our minds are filled by the world, and the world's hold on our mind is subtle but strong, delicate yet deep. The only feasible alternative, therefore, is to wear a protective armour to ward off the hard impact.

Sensitive folk feverishly seeking ways and means of keeping the world's pressure at bay as much as possible and for as long as it can last. Endowed by nature with big brains, man has invented several buffers and

shock-absorbers. Religious flights, poetic fancies, alcoholic inebriation, drug ingestion, artificially induced euphoric states and spells of insensitivity have been tried. An attempt to deaden the feeling apparatus by a surfeit of material comforts has been a continuous preoccupation. Man has tried to escape the painful perception of stress by hurling himself headlong into a maddening eddy of complex gadgets. And he has sought to defend his tottering ego by asking impossible questions based on partial cerebrations.

These are all no doubt intended to serve as coverings for the sensitive soles of our feet, designed to avoid the sharp pricks and hard knocks from the world. But they are coverings that sooner or later give way, and fall off. And, what is worse, the coverings themselves may start pricking and pounding.

The early man discovered, and the modern man is rediscovering, that meditation is a covering that does not easily give way, and that does not prick and pound in its own turn. It can not only absorb the shock, but can sustain and support the individual. Its gains are not only protective and preventive; they can be positive and constructive.

Meditation is undoubtedly one of the earliest methods that man has devised for eliminating stress and

integrating the individual. But it has never been popular or persisting. Its appeal in every generation has been confined to the few, the few who are sensitive. It insists on a temporary or permanent withdrawal even from the pleasant aspects of the environment. It consists of voluntary privations, exercises and a rigid regimen. It frequently entails dependence on a competent guide, who is of course hard to find. And, it is difficult to transmit except through personal contact.

APPENDIX IV

BUDDHA'S ANALYSIS OF SUFFERING

THE INDIAN tradition describes the Buddha as an advocate of the analytical method (*vaibhajyavādin*), and this description is amply justified by the discourses preserved in the Pāli canon. His very first discourse, which was delivered in Banaras, is an excellent specimen of his consummate analytical skill. It is remarkable that this short speech, uttered 2,589 years ago, involves the fundamental principles of axiomatics so familiar to the scientific mind in the contemporary world. Shorn of the ethical and metaphysical ideas that were later read into the simple statements, the discourse formulates certain postulates, derived from observation and experience, and seeks to construct a theoretical structure explaining the interrelationship among the postulates.

It is also remarkable that the Buddha did not stop at mere intellectual edification: his interest was essentially practical. He was moved by compassion for the suffering humanity, and was in fact showing a method, a way, for the eradication of suffering. Thus the postulates that he enunciated have an operational aspect; the postulate is not merely a statement of facts, but it indicates a necessary operation. The commentators have compared the Buddha's method to the physician's programme. They emphasize that diagnosis of a disease on the basis of symptoms is invariably attended by a prescription for the removal of symptoms. A postulate is thus both factual and functional.

Further, the Buddha carefully avoids impersonal abstraction in the

postulates. A postulate, to be significant, must carry conviction concerning the possibility of effective application. The Buddha draws on his own personal experience and introduces a demonstrational aspect in the postulates. Had he not himself, by his own effort, experienced the validity of the postulates? He not only understood the truth of the postulates and appreciated the necessity of particular operations with regard to them, but also put to test in his own life those operations and obtained their fulfilment. He could thus speak with absolute authority about the postulates he had formulated.

In the discourse, he enunciates four postulates: (1) Suffering in life is a fact ; (2) it originates under certain conditions; (3) it is eliminated under certain other conditions; and (4) there obtains a method by which

it is eliminated. Basing himself on these postulates, the Buddha set out to teach this method for the benefit of mankind. Illustrating the Buddha's design, the second-century author of *Vimuttimaggā* (Upatissa) writes:-

“Just as a skilful physician first sees the symptoms of a disease, then hears the cause of it, and the seeing the necessity of the cure of the disease, prescribes a suitable medicine; so the four Truths may be known as coming in the same order”.

It is not surprising that the Buddha is described in the ancient texts not as a philosopher, but as a physician: his heart was troubled with the ills that mankind was heir to, and he did not care to theorize about them except in so far as the method of cure required a rational foundation. The importance of the Buddha to mankind is exquisitely

illustrated by a venerable monk of Thailand:-

“... the Lord Buddha is like a physician who removes the arrow of doubt. It is as though we have suffered from a disease. Then we meet an able physician who tells us that he also used to suffer from the same disease, but by the taking of certain medicines he was cured, and further that he has given the same remedy to many others who suffered from this disease, and they also were cured. He then suggests that we take this medicine... so that we may become completely cured. In such a case, should we not obey him?”

(CHAO KHUN UPALI
GUNUPAMACARIYA SIRICANDO:
“Meditation for Calm and Insight,”
The Middle way, 1961, Vol. XXXV,
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Having analyzed the problem of suffering in terms of the four postulates, the Buddha subjected each postulate to a further analysis into its triple aspects- factual (*saccha*), functional (*kiccha*) and demonstrational (*kata*), mentioned above. He considered (in the ancient expression “turned over in his mind,” *parivaṭṭa* from the root *ṽṛt*, “to turn,” “to proceed”) the four postulates in their three aspects thus obtaining twelve propositions (*ākāras*)² (tiparivaṭṭam dvādasākāram)

- I. (1) Suffering in life is a fact.
(2) Suffering in life as a fact must be understood.
(3) Suffering in life as a fact was understood (by me).
- II (4) Suffering originates under certain conditions.
(5) The origination of Suffering must be overcome.
(6) The origination of suffering was overcome (by me).

III (7) Suffering is eliminated under certain other conditions.

(8) The elimination of suffering must be realized.

(9) The elimination of suffering was realized (by me).

IV (10) There obtains a method by which Suffering is eliminated.

(11) The method for the elimination of Suffering must be cultivated.

(12) The method for the elimination of Suffering was cultivated (by me).

It can be seen that each of the four postulates has three aspects, and each aspect, from application to four postulates, has four propositions. In terms of the three aspects, viz., (a) the factual (or the Fact), (b) the functional (or the Task) and (c) the demonstrational (or the Accomplishment), the propositions may be summarized thus:-

I (a) Suffering (*dukkham*).

(b) Suffering to be understood (*pariññeyyam*).

(c) Suffering understood (*pariññātām*).

II (a) Origination of Suffering (*dukkhasamudayam*).

(b) origination of Suffering to be overcome (*pahātabbam*).

(c) Origination of suffering overcome (*pahīnam*).

III (a) Elimination of Suffering (*dukkhanirodham*).

(b) Elimination of Suffering to be realized (*sacchikātabbam*).

(c) Elimination of Suffering realized (*sacchikatam*).

IV (a) The method of Elimination (*dukkhanirodhagāminīpaṭi-padā*).

(b) The method of Elimination to be cultivated (*bhāvitabbam*).

(c) The method of Elimination cultivated (*bhāvitam*).

There is an alternate rearrangement of the propositions suggested by the scholiasts, in terms of the three “revolutions in the Master’s mind” (*parivarta*), the same as the aspects:-

I The First Revolution (The Facts)

- (a) Suffering
- (b) Origination
- (c) Elimination
- (d) The Method of Elimination.

II The Second Revolution (The Tasks) :

- (a) To be understood.
- (b) To be overcome.
- (c) To be realized.
- (d) To be cultivated.

III The third Revolution (The Accomplishments):

- (a) Understood.
- (b) Overcome.
- (c) Realized.
- (d) Cultivated.

The Buddha claimed competence to teach this gospel

because he had understood what was to be understood, overcome what has to be overcome, realized what was to be realized and cultivated what was to be cultivated- and thus was a Buddha. “*Abhiññeyyam abhiññatam, bhāvitabbam ca bhāvitam, pahātabbam pahīnam me, tasmā buddhō’ smi, brāhmaṇa!*”

Suffering, or rather the removal of suffering, forms the *leit-motif* of the Buddha’s gospel; and it is certainly significant that the very first of his utterances was so thoroughly preoccupied with Suffering. He had no doubt been absolutely emancipated from all Suffering when he obtained the Enlightenment in Gaya; but he was made alive to the phenomenon of Suffering in the world, and he expected every one of his disciples to turn out to be, like himself, an “ender of Suffering.” (*dukkhass’anta-karo bhava*).

It was thus but natural that Buddhist thought, at least during its early phases, was concerned primarily with Suffering and its analysis, analysis, as preliminary to its removal. The ancient collection of thirty treatises, known as “The Path to Analysis” (“*Paṭusambhidhāmagga*”), Included in *Suttapiṭaka*, takes up the topic (*paṭiniddesa*) of Suffering for definition, description and analysis, closely following the enumeration in the First Discourse. Each of the four postulates in this account is explained as having four characteristics, thus making sixteen descriptive definitions:-

I. Suffering :

- (a) has the characteristic of being oppersive (*pīḷana*);
- (b) has the characteristic of being generated by a set of conditions (*saṅkhata*):

- (c) has the characteristic of burning up (*santāpa*);
- (d) has the characteristic of incessantly changing (*vīparināma*).

II. Origination of Suffer:

- (a) has the characteristic of organizing the predisposing factors (*āyūhana*);
- (b) has the characteristic of continuous loading (*nidāna*);
- (c) has the characteristic of engendering association with Suffering (*samyoga*);
- (d) has the characteristic of obstructing freedom from Suffering (*palibodha*).

III. Elimination of Suffering :

- (a) has the characteristic of freeing one from Suffering (*nissaraṇa*);

- (b) has the characteristic of freeing one from disturbances (*paviveka*);
- (c) has the characteristic of a condition which no longer dissolves or disintegrates (*amata*);
- (d) has the characteristic of not being generated by a set of conditions (*asamkhata*).

IV. The Method of Eliminating Suffering:

- (a) has the characteristic of tending towards freedom from Suffering (*niyyāna*);
- (b) has the characteristic of bringing about the state of Arahattā (*hetu*);
- (c) has the characteristic of affording insight into the reality (*dassana*);
- (d) has the characteristic of mastering oneself (*ādhipateyya*).

We see from the above table that postulate I and postulate III refer to exactly opposite phenomena; and postulate II and postulate IV refer to exactly opposite processes. Postulates I and II pertain to the actual world of common human beings; whereas postulates III and IV envisage a possibility, an ideal state. Postulate I is necessarily implied in the rationale of every Indian religious system or philosophical discipline; and postulate III is the goal of all religious life in India; at any rate it is the ideal held out by the Upanisads and in the Jaina system. These two postulates in fact belong to the pre-Buddhist tradition, and the Master had already absorbed them during his pre-bodhi days. Postulates II and IV represent the Buddha's original contribution to Indian culture, the former being his philosophical standpoint and the latter his religious system.

It is significant that in this ancient axiomatics happiness (*sukha*) is not mentioned as an opposite of suffering, or as an ideal state for aspiration. In the Buddha's scheme of analysis, happiness is not a reality at all: Suffering is *the* reality, but when it is eliminated we find quiet, wisdom and freedom as positive gains, and not happiness. Postulate III which refers to the precise opposite of Suffering, is said to be equivalent to *Nibbāna*, and its characteristic is described as "Quiet" (*santi*) (cf. Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimaga*, 16,66). The Buddha's ideology recognizes only the elimination of Suffering, and not the generation of happiness here or hereafter.

What now is suffering? It is a phenomenon which is universal in its occurrence (*sabbasattasādharaṇa*), and it is readily identifiable

(*suviññeyya*) by its characteristic of causing discomfort, trouble (*bādhana*). It is felt as "burning heat" (*santāpana*) and it excites the organism to activity (*pavatti*).

The mediaeval scholiast, Buddhaghosa, derives the Indian word for Suffering, *dukkha*, from two concepts: bad (*kucchita*) and vulgar (*tuccha*). The ancient expositions liken Suffering to "burden", to "disease." The First Discourse itself offers illustrations: the process of being born, getting old and worn out, decay and death, illness, association with the undesirable, dissociation from the desired, failure to obtain the aspired object. These are included in the category of "Objective Suffering" (*vatthudukkha*), while the category of "Subjective Suffering" (*sabhāvadukkha*) includes feelings of misery, agitation, moods of depression and so on. In any case, suffering is natural to beings as well

as thoroughly undesirable (cf Upatissa's *Vimuttimaggā*, 6,2).

Origination is defined by the eminent Burmese scholar-monk, Ledi Sayadaw, as "the cause of ever continuing this psychophysical process of experience" (*Chatusuccha-dīpanī*); and it is equated with craving (*taṇhā*) which is recurrent. Craving is the deep-seated organismic urge expressing itself as predisposing tendencies and instincts. Its essential characteristic is "production" (*pabhava*) of conditions and states, which tend to form an unbroken series (*anupaccheda*). It is unitary as "egoity" (*abhimāna*) but assumes a threefold form as attachment-aversion-ignorance. The ancient expositions liken origination to "the taking up of a burden" or to "the cause of a disease."

Elimination of Suffering has the character of "quiet" (*santi*), and is

tantamount to *Nibbāṇa*. The word for elimination (*nirodha*) is explained by Buddhaghosa as "the absence of the flood (*rodha*) of Suffering"; it is cessation (*atthagama*), detachment (*virāga*), freedom from craving (*mutti*), and getting uprooted from the normal world of craving and Suffering (*anālaya*). This state is likened to "putting down the burden" or to "the cure of the disease." But is this merely a happy dream of a desolate soul? Is it unreal like the horns of a hare? It is of course not a reality for the worldlings; but it becomes a reality when one undertakes to shake off the Suffering, understand the Origination, appreciate the Elimination, and apply oneself to the Method. The Method is what leads to an expected end (*niyyāna*); and it is likened to "the technique of putting down the burden" or to "the therapeutics."

APPENDIX V

THE BUDDHA'S FIRST DISCOURSE

INTRODUCTION

The discourse which marked the commencement of the Buddha's career is celebrated not only for its primacy but for its profundity as well. It comprehends the principal findings of the Blessed One as well as the axiomatic framework of his gospel. An ancient authority commends this Sermon as containing the essence of the entire literary output of the Master from the moment of his enlightenment till his passing away: "There is no teaching of the Master outside the scope of this Sermon" Understandably, therefore, the Sermon is repeated, almost in identical form, as many as five times in the Pāli canon: in the *Saṃyutta-Nikāya* of *Sutta-Piṭaka* as an independent tract (*Sutta* 11,

'Saccasaṃyutta'), in the *Vinaya-Piṭaka* as a part of the 'Mahāvagga' section (*khandaka*1), in the *Dīgha-Nikāya* as an annotated appendage to the 'Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna-sutta' (32), in the *Majjhima-Nikāya* ('Sacchakavibhaṅga-sutta' and in the *Aṅguttara-Nikāya* ('Tikanipāta'). There are at least two well-known Sanskrit versions of this Sermon, one in *Mahāvastu* and the other in *Lalitavistara*; and no less than five Tibetan versions have till now been discovered. There is extant a Chinese version of considerable antiquity which agrees in, but only in, the essentials with the Pāli sermon. Apart from this devotion of the scholiasts, the Discourse is held in very high regard by the Buddhist laity: it has

acquired the status of 'parittā' in religious functions.

This Discourse introduces the young Śākyan ascetic to the world as the supremely wise Buddha with a courageous message for the sorrowing mankind. The audience for that Discourse, which was the very first of discourses which he delivered, consisted of a group of five earnest ascetics (*pañchavaggiye bhikkhū*) who were exerting their utmost to attain the Immortal, the way, the Light. the Sermon preserves the name of one of them, Koṇḍañña who was the wisest of them and the first to comprehend the Master's discovery. We know from other sources the names of the other four: Vappa, Mahānāma, Assaji and Bhadda. They were the Buddha's former acquaintances; they were also his close associates during his spiritual struggles in the Uruvelā

Jungles. The fact that the Buddha chose them for his first audience, and went all the way to Banāras (Vārāṇasi) to tell them about his discovery, indicates the high regard in which he held them. It is beyond doubt that they were the main pillars of the Buddha's religion in the early stages; the ancient chronicles narrate the conversion of Sāriputta, the most eminent of the Buddha's disciples, by one of these four, Assaji.

The background story is narrated in the "Ariyapariyesana-sutta" of the *Majjhima-Nikāya*. When Gotama attained the enlightenment (which made him the Buddha) in Gayā in Bihar, he was at first reluctant to reveal his profound findings to the ignorant and indifferent mankind. He had beheld the Light after great toil, and beings beset with love and hate would hardly appreciate it; his findings were subtle

and went counter to the way of the worldlings, who, enveloped in darkness, would reject the revelation³. Owing to the intervention of Brahmā -Sahampati, however, he agreed to announce his gospel for the welfare of the world: persons there are whose sight is not entirely blinded by worldly dirt, and they would perhaps profit by the gospel. Having decided to throw open to them the doors of the Deathless (*amatassa-dvāram*), the Buddha began considering who would be worthy enough to receive his first instructions. The five ascetics with whom he had dwelt years ago in Uruvelā presented themselves to his mind. That is how he wended his way from Gayā to Banāras in search of them.

The five ascetics had been disappointed by the Buddha's return to normal habits after strenuous

exercises of privation. If with utmost effort and austerity one fails to perceive the suprahuman truth, how can comfort and pleasure lead us there? Gotama, in their eyes, had abandoned the road and given up the struggle. When, therefore, the Buddha came to them, they first doubted his superhuman accomplishment (*uttarimanussa-dhamma*); but, being earnest and open-minded, they soon gained their confidence in him. The Buddha now emerged as a revered teacher (*bhagavā*), as a blessed one (*arahā*), as a perfectly enlightened one (*sammāsambuddha*).

The discourse is brief, with short, simple and precise statements. But the brevity presupposes on the part of the hearer (*sāvaka*) considerable technical competence. There are no definitions, nor any explanations. But we must remember

that the Buddha is here addressing a group of eminent minds, who were thoroughly conversant with the then current philosophical and religious terminology, and who were already adepts in the asceticism. The main spokesman in the discourse is the Buddha, except for three prefatory sentences (which are in fact formal and later appendages for the *ipsissima verba* of the Master). The speech is distinguished by its directness: it is in all probability an actual lecture, and it savours not of a stylised write-up. We may reasonably perceive here the very words of the Master as he spoke them, and not a concoction of the monastic editors of a later age. Being the first and the most profound of discourses, the thoughtful audience preserved the very words to posterity; the statements were memorized, repeated, cited, redacted, inquired into, and commented upon.

The discourse is known as “Dhammachakkappavattanasutta” in the Pāli collection, and as ‘Triparivartadharmachakra-sūtra’ in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. Both expressions, however, connote the same idea: Setting into motion (*pavattana*) the wheel (*chakka*) of Dhamma: or alternately, founding (*pavattana*) the kingdom (*chakka*) of Dhamma. The Sanskrit word for emperor is ‘*chakravartin*’ (*chakkavatti* in Pāli), and it implies this idea. The Buddha is sometimes referred to as ‘Dhammarāja’, and his disciple Sāriputta is styled ‘Dhammasenāpati’ (Commander-in-chief of Dhamma). But the notion of the wheel being revolved has gained greater currency, and has frequently been represented in Buddhist sculpture and painting. The title in this sense seems to have been borrowed from the Buddha’s answer to Upaka’s inquiry on his to Banāras,

an episode immediately prior to the delivery of the Discourse: “To set into motion the wheel of Dhamma (*dhammachakkaṃ pavattetum*) I proceed to Banāras etc.” The word ‘Dhamma, in the expression requires explanation and consideration, for the word not only admits of a wide variety of meanings, but it forms the very core of the Discourse. The commentary on *Khuddakapāṭha* refers to the etymological significance of ‘bearing up,’ ‘supporting’; it supports (*dhārento*) the individual and prevents his lapse into lower states. Aśoka in one of the rock-edicts employs the word in the sense of a stand taken, a position assumed (*tishṭhāmato*). *Mahāniddeśa* interprets Dhamma as a view-point, an ideology, a doctrine (*diṭṭhi*), as in the formula: “Well-expounded (*svākkaṃhāto*) by the Master (*bhagavatā*) is the Doctrine (*dhammo*).” In the Discourse itself

the word occurs in the sense of ‘phenomena’ (*dhammesu*) into which the Master developed the insight. Indeed the functional import of the word comprehends all these connotations and something more: this ‘something more’ is the idea of a method, a strategy, a path, a way, a means (*paṭipadā* or *magga*). Thus Dhamma in both these aspects forms the subject-matter of the Discourse.

But the word in this sense does not at all occur in the body of the Buddha’s speech: it is clear that the name of the Discourse was a later ascription, the original designation being only ‘The first Teaching’ (*paṭhama-desanā*). The turning of the wheel of Dhamma is referred to in the thirteenth section of the Discourse: “Thus in the Deer Park in Banaras the incomparable wheel of Dhamma was set into motion by the Blessed One.” This statement of

course is not ascribed to the Buddha: it occurs long after “ Thus spake the Blessed one.” It is however, not easy to determine whether the title of the Discourse was derived from this reference, or the reference was instituted because of the title.

The expression ‘thrice revolved’ (*tiparivaṭṭam*) qualifying the insightful wisdom (*ñāṇadassanam*) figures prominently in the Discourse, although it is not included in the Buddha’s speech; it even forms a part of the title in the Sanskrit and Tibetan versions. The commentaries explain that the Bhddha revolved in his mind his four-fold discovery thrice, in its three aspects; the truth (*saccham*), the task (*kiccam*) and the accomplishment (*katham*).

The Buddha’s enlightenment consisted of the discovery of four phenomenal principles, which have

been described as ‘noble’ (*ariya*): sorrow, origination of sorrow, elimination of sorrow, and the method of elimination. Each of these obtains in the three aspects mentioned above. The truth of sorrow, the task of understanding sorrow, and the accomplishment of this understanding; the truth of the origination of sorrow, the task of cutting-off the origination, and the accomplishment of this cutting-off; the truth of the elimination of sorrow, the task of realising it, and the accomplishment of this realisation; the truth of the method of elimination of sorrow, the task of cultivating the method, and the accomplishment of this cultivation.

These four phenomenal principles discovered by the Buddha constitute the special subject of his teaching (*sāmuikkāmsikadhamma*); their clear formulation is the main

purpose of the discourse. They are designated as the 'noble truths' (*ariyasacchāni*); and the commentaries explain that the nobility of these truths is derived from their being discovered by the Noble One, the Buddha, and from their being recognised by all the noble ones (*ariya*) in the world. The four are arranged in an order. "A skillful physician," says the author of *Vimuttimaggā*, "first sees the symptoms of a disease, then hears the cause of it, and then seeing the necessity of the cure, prescribes a suitable medicine: even so these principles."⁵ The first three are theoretical in import, while the fourth one is essentially practical. And the Discourse naturally expatiates on this truth, which is the method (*nāya*), the road (*magga*), the path (*paṭipadā*) for eliminating sorrow and obtaining emancipation. The idea of path is old: even Yājñavalkya, mentions it

(*panthā*). But the Buddha affirmed that it is in successive steps (*paṭipadā*, 'step by step'): it is a course contributing to progress (*vaḍḍhānaka-paṭipadā*).

The path is closely related to the pilgrim and his progress. The Buddha is a Path-finder and a guide on the path. The constituents of this āryan path as enumerated by the Buddha are eight in number (*aṭṭhaṅgika*): Right views, aspirations, speech, action, vocation, effort, attention and concentration. This enumeration which occurs twice in the short discourse, is of immense importance; it is in fact the Buddha's own system for facilitating the pilgrim's progress towards Insight, Tranquility and Enlightenment. The Buddha chooses to describe this Path of Eight Aspects as the 'middle way' (*majjhimā-paṭipadā*): eschewing the extremes of indulgence and severe

privations as means to achieve spiritual ends. The former is vulgar and the latter wearisome, while both, according to the Buddha, are ignoble (*anariya*) and futile (*anattasamhita*, lit. 'not leading to the Goal'). The Master himself had followed both these extremes, the former as a prince in Kapilavatthu and the latter as an ascetic in Uruvelā, and had experienced in his own life their futility. He obtained the Enlightenment only when he steered clear of these 'ends'.

The Discourse, far from being a string of high-sounding injunctions and expostulations, is a simple narration of how the remarkable Sākyan attained to the incomparable and complete enlightenment

(*anuttaram sammāsambodhim*). The Buddha here speaks about his own discoveries of the four truths, the three aspects of each truth (thus making a twelve-fold structure, *dvādasākāram*), and the Middle path with eight aspects. The Discourse mentions nothing about the Buddhist triad: Buddha, *Dhamma* and *saṅgha*. Nor does it mention the three phenomenal signs: impermanence, insubstantiality and unsatisfactoriness. There is no explicit reference to the doctrine of Dependent Origination, or to the *Sīlas*. In short, the tenets of Buddhism as they became well-known subsequent to the Buddha's days are all absent from the Discourse; and this argues for the pristine purity of the Master's first lecture.

The Sutta

*namo tassa Bhagavato Arahato
Sammāsambuddhassa*

Salutations to him who is the Blessed One, the Most Honoured and the entirely Enlightened.

1. *evam me sutam*

Thus have I heard.

The Speaker here is the Monk Ānanda, the Master's most intimate disciple. The occasion for the recitation was the First Council (*saṅgīti*) which was convoked at Rājagaha soon after the master's demise (See: Note 2)

Ānanda in lay life was the master's cousin, son of Amṛtodand, brother of the Master's father. He was, according to one account, of the same age as the Master, and died at the age of one hundred and twenty years; he became a monk while still

young; and became the master's personal attendant and secretary when both were fifty-six; he continued in this position until the masters' demise at the age of eighty. He was a prominent figure in the Saṅgha after the master's death, and was responsible for the compilation of the *Sutta-piṭaka*. He participated in the First Council and edited the Master's discourses bearing upon the doctrinal aspects.

Ānanda was not present when this Discourse was delivered: his association with the Master began some eight years later. But he had *heard* it from one of the five mendicants to whom it was addressed. He is here recalling the Discourse exactly as he had heard it from those who had borne in their memory the exact words of the speech.

2. *ekam samayaṃ Bhagavā Vārāṇasiyaṃ viharati Isipatane Migadāye.*

At one time the Blessed one was residing in the 'Deer-park' of the sages' retreat in Banaras.

Ānanda continues and mentions the occasion for the Discourse as a prefatory remark. The Master's visit to Banaras was in search of his old associates (See Note, 1). The Deer-park is now known as Sārnāth, on the outskirts of Banāras. There is in the place the remains of a *stūpa* built by the emperor Aśoka to mark the spot of the master's First Discourse: it is known as the Dhāmek (corrupt for Dhammachakka) *stūpa*.

The expression 'Bhagavā' ('the Blessed One') is a reverential form of address. Its meaning is variously given: (a) 'possessor of omniscience'

(*bhaga-yutta*): That is to say, the following qualities: the supernormal powers (*issariya*), transcendental virtues (*dhamma*), noble reputation (*yaśa*), perfect accomplishment (*siri*), satiation of aspirations (*kāma*), and efforts to attain self-mastery (*payatana*); (b) 'destroyer of sin and evil proclivities' (*bhaggakāri*); (c) 'Fortunate' or 'the Blessed One' (*bhāgyavā*); and (d) 'Gone to the end of existence' (*bhavantaga*). The last meaning, however, is far-fetched, and is clearly the result of a misspelling. It was customary in those days to address a great teacher as the Blessed One.

The Sanskrit restoration from the Tibetan spells *Isipatane Magadāye as ṛṣivadane* (or *Rṣipattane*) *Mṛgadāve* (The *Mahāvastu* has '*Mṛgadāye*' also). The Tibetan versions introduce *Buddho* after *bhagavā*.

3. *tatra kho Bhagavā
pañchavaḅgiye bhikkhū
āmantesi.*

*There the Blessed One
beckoned to the group of five
monks.*

The names of the five monks, not given in the Discourse, are found elsewhere in the Canon: Koṇḍañña, Vappa, Mahānāma, assaji and Bhadda. (See Note,1). Koṇḍañña understood the Discourse readily and was designated 'wise'. Assaji was directly responsible for the conversion of the celebrated Sāriputta, and indirectly of Moggallāna. It is hard to identify the other three monks. The Sanskrit versions have *āha* (told) instead of *āmantesi* (beckoned); one text, however, has *āmantrya āha*.

After these three prefatory sentences, added at a later date by

the editors, the Master's actual speech commences.

4. *“dve’me, bhikkhave, antā
pabbajitena na sevitabbā*

*“Monks, these are the two
extremes, not to be attended
by a renunciant.”*

The Master prepares the ground for the formulation of his doctrine of the Middle Course. The 'extremes' are the ends' (*antā*) of the scale of life with innumerable gradations. The expression refers to the styles of life current among human beings, their different approaches to the problems of life, their differing attitudes and orientations. Why are the two 'extremes' so called? Because both of these entail great fervour and great conviction. Normally, people do not take up these extreme styles of life; they would be content to pick

up and adopt some intermediate styles.

But one who has turned his back on normal life and launches on a strictly religious career is tempted to drive himself to an extreme style. That is why the Master specifically warns the renunciant against adoption of any extreme.

There is a suggestion that this Discourse was meant only for the monks, and not for laymen. This idea, however, is not warranted as there is nothing in the Discourse which is averse to laymen: and on the contrary, the Discourse emphasises the value of the middle course in the daily activities of normal life.

Why then is 'by a renunciant' introduced into the sentence? Because the Master was here addressing the monks; they formed

his audience then. He had not as yet decided to take his gospel to every door: he was here trying out an experiment with the selected group of competent persons. But the experiment was successful and the Master's message reached every ear in due course.

This mention of the two 'extremes' and their specifications are entirely absent from two Tibetan versions, which straightaway formulate the four noble truths. The third Tibetan version which mentions the extremes adds: *na nishevityau, no pasevityau*.

5. *katame dve?*

Which are the two?

6 (a) *Yo chā'yam kāmesu
kāmasukhaikānuyogo - hīno,
gammo pothujjaniko, anariyo,
anattasamhito;*

The inclination for seeking sense-pleasures in sense-desires- (this is low, rustic, ordinary, ignoble and ineffective;

This is one extreme. But this is normally followed by worldings, engrossed in mundane concerns. The pursuit of this extreme is characterised as ‘ordinary’ (*pothujjanika*, lit. “of every man”). And ‘ordinary,’ is further characterised by subjection to five hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*): sense-desires (*kāma-chhanda*), ill-will (*vyāpādā*), sloth-torpor (*thīna-middha*), agitation-worry (*uddhacchakukkucca*), and doubt (*vichikicchā*). “Low” refers to the absence of the elevating influence and to the incapacity for progress. ‘Rustic’ indicates the tendency to follow natural inclinations passively without bringing to bear the impact

of culture, cultivation, reflection and deliberation. ‘Ignoble’ refers to the absence of a superior goal in life, to the animal existence led by most people. It is ‘ineffective,’ because the roots making for misery in life are left intact, and the individual continues to be a victim of the whirlwind of *saṃsāra*. The expression *anattasamāhito* (*an-attha, kusala, maṅgala, - samāhito*) has a variant reading in *Lalitavistara*: *nārthopasaṃhito* (*na-artha-upasaṃhita*).

The Sanskrit restoration of the Tibetan text Kañjur reads: *Yo’tra kāmasukānuyoga mānus..o hīnah; pr..thagjnānām anarthsamāhitatvāt*. The import is: “The inclination to sense-pleasures, which is human, is low nevertheless: because ordinarily men lead ineffective, futile lives (not associated with proper goals)”.

Another text has *kāmakūśālānuyogah hīnath grāmyah anāryah pṛthagjanikah..*

- 6 (b) *yo chā yam attakila-mathānuyogo dukkho, anariyo, anatthasamhito.*

The inclination for mortifying oneself - (this is) troublesome, ignoble and ineffective.

This is the other extreme. And the renunciant is at times prone to adopt this style. Perhaps the master has in mind the rigorous austerities that he himself practised in the jungles of Uruvelā and the excessively austere practices of the followers of Niggaṇṭha Nātaputta. This course is 'troublesome' (*dukkha*): the expression in this context conveys the sense of 'needless fatigue', of a style that is unnecessarily wearisome.

The reading in *Lalitavistara* has '*kāyakalamathānuyoga*' instead of '*attakilamathānuyoga*.' The mortification is obviously of the body (*kāya*); the *Pāli* *atta* (oneself) is employed figuratively.

The text in *Mahāvastu* has a few additional expressions qualifying the two 'extremes': *na brahmacharyāye na,...na śrāmaṇyāye, na nirvāṇāye samvartanti*. The extremes are not conducive to holy life (*brahmacharya*, lit. Brahma-faring), to renunciation, to Nibbāna.

The Chinese version speaks of "two kinds of falling on extreme actions (*antacharyāpatana*): (a) to care for worldly enjoyment for personal loving affairs (*ātmakāmasukhābhiniveśa*) and (b) not to be able to advance spiritually (Aiyaswami Sastri; op. Cit. p. 490).

7. *ete, te bhikkhave, Wbho ante anupagamma majjhima paṭipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā - chakkhukaraṇī, ñāṇakaraṇī, upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbāṇāya samvattati*

O monks, these two extremes were not attended to by the Tathāgata and he was enlightened about the middle path - which affords outlook, insight, tranquility, higher wisdom, perfect enlightenment and nibbāṇa.

Eschewing the two extremes, the Master indicates the 'Middle path' - which characterises the philosophical and religious position of the early Buddhists. The description of the Master's doctrine as the 'Middle path' is of great antiquity. We find in one of the

edicts of Aśoka (Sparte R.E.1) the statement:

“*madham paṭipadayema*”, “we fulfil the ‘middle’ (or the ideal of the mean)”. The substantive *majjha* appears older than ‘*majjhima*’. Strictly ‘*paṭipadā*’ means ‘foot-path’, but the expression is employed as equivalent to ‘*magga*’ (‘avenue’, ‘path’, ‘course’).

This ‘path’, which has immense practical import, was discovered by the Master; it was not his invention. The Masters do not make the way, they only show the way. In this context, the expression ‘*Tathāgata*’ acquires some significance: the usual meaning of the word is one who has come (*āgata*) even as (*tathā*) the earlier ones (in the line of the twenty-four Buddhas). The word is alternately split as ‘*tathā*’ and ‘*gata*’, ‘gone even so’ (like the former ones); and is made akin to ‘*sugata*’. Sometimes the sense of ‘*tathatā*

(‘suchness’, ‘truth’) is projected on to the word.

‘*Abhisambuddhā*’ is explained by commentators as ‘enlightened independently’, that is to say, without the help of human teachers, gods or angels. The Master did serve as a student with two teachers; Āḷāra-Kālāma and Uddaka-Rāmaputta, before he repaired to Uruvelā for austerities; but they did not lead him towards the goal. when he obtained perfect enlightenment (*sambodhi*), he was exerting his own intellectual and intuitive abilities in this direction. This is how he could recognise no teacher for himself. But it is interesting to note that in *Mahāvastu* there is a variant reading: ‘*anusambuddhā*’, ‘enlightened following (the path of earlier Buddhas)’. It is true that the master often speaks of the ‘buddhas’, but it is doubtful if there was already a

crystallised gospel of the Buddhas with which he was acquainted.

‘Outlook’ (*chakkhu*) refers to the proper intellectual approach to phenomena in terms of impermanence, impersonality and misery. The word ‘*ñāṇa*’ (‘insight’) is a synonym of ‘*paññā*’, which is the opposite of ‘*avijjā*’ (‘ignorance concerning the real nature of phenomena’); more specifically, insight into the origination and cessation of phenomenal processes is indicated by this word.

‘Tranquillity’ (*upasama*) is the disappearance of the affective phenomenal tangles (*sabbasamkhāra-samatha*). It signifies the stability of mind, unaffected, unwarering and indifferent (*upekkhā*). ‘Higher knowledge’, (*abhiññā*) pertains to super-human faculties such as telepathy, clairvoyance, recall of

former lives, etc. (vide: Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, ch.13). 'Enlightenment' (*sambodhi*) is the sudden awakening of the entire being to reality. The word '*bodhi*' is itself sufficient to convey this meaning; but the prefix '*sam-*' signifies 'exalted', 'complete' or 'perfect'. The Pāli '*nibbāṇa*' is hard to translate; but 'desperation' (suggested by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy) is a near word in English. The *Netti*-commentary furnishes a list of forty-seven synonyms for '*nibbāṇa*'; the general impression conveyed is one of 'extinction of' or 'cooling' the fires of '*saṃsāra*', more specifically the three fires: attachment (*rāga*), aversion (*dosa*) and infatuation (*moha*).

8. *katamā cha sā, bhikkhava, majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā-pe-samvattati?*

Which, O monks, is this middle path about which the Tathāgata was enlightened -(as before) and -nibbāṇa?

9. *ayam eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo, seyyathīdam:*

It is the noble path with eight constituents, to wit:

The path is that which "is sought by those who strive for *nibbāṇa*" (*nibbāṇatthikehi maggīyati*); or alternately that which "moves by destroying the passions" (*kilese mārento gacchati*). The great commentator Buddhaghosa interprets 'path' as "the means of reaching the (the goal) (*adhigamūpāyo*)".⁷ the author of *Vimuttimaggā* employs the composite expression '*magga-paṭipadā*' in the sense of "that by which one reaches emancipation (*vimutti*)"⁸. If *nibbāṇa* is the goal, *magga* is the means thereof.

The expression 'noble' (*ariya*) is the opposite of 'worldly' (*pothujjanika*) which is characterised by being fettered by delusion, skepticism and trust in rules and rituals (as explained in *Puggalapaññatti*). The synonym of 'pothujjaniko,' namely 'anariyo', has already been employed with reference to the pursuit of the two extremes' (*ante*).

This 'path' which leads to nibbāṇa is composed of eight limbs (*aṅga*): and these eight cover all the thirty-seven 'factors of enlightenment' (*bodhi-dhammā*), according to Upatissa.

The eight constituents are enumerated below:

10. (i) *sammā ditṭhi*;

(i) *Right understanding*;

The word '*diṭṭhi*' is also employed in the sense of 'view',

'outlook'. It is expanded in the commentaries as 'the right understanding of the four truths' (*chatusacca-sammādiṭṭhi*): suffering, origination of suffering, cessation of suffering, and the way to the cessation of suffering. The expression includes the understanding of phenomena as impermanent (*anicca*), impersonal (*anatta*) and subject to suffering (*dukkha*); and also the knowledge that all that exists is merely a continuous flux of five groups (*khandas*) of universals: corporeality (*rūpa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), mental formations (*sankhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*).

It is described by some commentators as "the eye of wisdom" (*paññāchakkhu*), whose characteristic is clear vision (*dassana*), and whose function is to

destroy the darkness of ignorance
(*avijjandhakāraviddhamsana*).

10 (ii) *sammā saṁkappa*;

(ii) *Right thoughts*;

“*Saṁkappa*” is etymologically ‘making well’, that is to say, ‘having in mind well-formed thoughts’; in this sense, it is not an error to translate the word as ‘resolutions’, as some scholars have done. But we have adopted here the rendering of Ven. Nārada Mahāthra; because while *saṁkappa* involves deliberation, it is not necessarily accompanied by a volitional drive. U Saw Tun Teik, the translator of the Ven. Ledi Sayadaw’s *Maggaṅgadīpanī*, also renders ‘*saṁkappa*’ as ‘thinking’.

The commentaries give as the characteristic of this constituent, ‘setting up the wholesome thoughts’ (*sammāchittābhiniropana*); its function is said to be ‘cutting off the

bad thoughts’. (*michhāsāṁkappappahāṇa*).

The expression is technically expanded into ‘*tividhakusala-saṁkappa*’, ‘the three-fold wholesome thoughts’. The three are (a) ‘thoughts of renunciation’, (*nekkamma*-) that is to say, ‘freedom from the craving for the five-fold sensual pleasures’; (b) ‘thoughts of non-hatred’ (*abyāpāda*-) that is to say, ‘loving kindness and good-will’ (*mettā*): and (c) ‘thoughts of non-violence’ (*avihimsā*-), that is to say, ‘compassion.’

Its essence is application (*appanā*).

10 (iii) *sammā vācā*;

(iii) *Right speech*;

The essence of this constituent is described as ‘abstinence’ (*viramaṇa*). The abstinence is four-

fold: (a) abstinence from 'falsehood' (*musāvāda-*), which is speaking in such a way that truth appears like untruth and untruth like truth; (b) abstinence from 'slander' or 'back-biting' (*pisuṇāya vāchāya-*), which is speaking so as to create misunderstandings between individuals; (c) abstinence from harsh speech (*pharusāya vāchāya-*), which is offensive and abusive; and (d) abstinence from 'frivolous talk' (*samphappālāpā-*), which is talk not pertaining to the goals in life (*attha*), religious doctrine (*dhamma*), or codes of proper conduct (*vinaya*), but which only seeks entertainment.'

10 (iv) *sammā kammanto*;

Rights actions;

The essence of this constituent also is 'abstinence' (*viramaṇa*), and the abstinence here is three-fold: (a) abstinence from 'killing' (*pāṇātipātā*)

which is explained as "intentional killing by physical action or verbal incitement' and which includes causing abortions, destroying eggs, bugs, etc. (*Maggaṅgadīpanī*); (b) abstinence from 'stealing' (*adinnādānā-*), which is taking with the intention of stealing any animate or inanimate property in the possession of the owner, without the knowledge of the owner, by physical exertion or verbal incitement" (*Maggaṅgadīpanī*); and (c) abstinence from 'unchastity' (*kāmesumicchāchārā*), which is defined as "improper sexual intercourse", but which is made to include getting drunk and gambling.

10 (v) *sammā ājīvo*;

Right livelihood;

This principle is said to have been enunciated by the celebrated leader of the ājivika sect, Makkhali-

gosāla, who was a senior contemporary of the Master.

‘Cleansing’ (*vodāna*) is, according to the commentaries, the essential characteristic of this constituent of the Eight-fold Path. Proper means of earning a living preserve the serenity of the mind and purity of life. In terms of ‘refraining’ (*virati*), it is four-fold refraining from earning wrong livelihood: (a) by evil deeds (*duccharitamicchājīvā-*); (b) by effortless acquisition of wealth by gifts and offerings (*anesana-*) (c) by trickery, deception, etc. (*kuhanādi-*); and (d) by prophesying, palmistry, etc. (*tiracchānavijjā-*).

The commentaries further explain the items included under (a) and (c). Evil deeds pertaining to body are threefold: taking life, taking what is not given and improper sex

behaviour. ‘Taking life’ or killing becomes evil when the being whose life is taken is priorly alive, when the person who takes life knows that it is a living being, when he has the intention to kill, when he indulges in an act calculated to injure or to kill, and when the object of this act is actually dead as a result of his action. ‘Taking what is not given’ (=stealing) becomes evil when what is thus taken belongs to some one else, when the person who takes it knows that it belongs to another, when he has the intention to steal, when he indulges in an act calculated to appropriate the object to himself. ‘Improper sex behaviour’ becomes evil when the other person is either a man or a woman, when there is an intention to indulge in intercourse with that person, when there is a physical act of intercourse, and when there is an enjoyment thereof.

Evil deeds pertaining to speech are fourfold: falsehood, slander, harsh speech, frivolous talk. 'Falsehood' becomes evil when what is uttered is untrue, when there is an intention to deceive another person, when there is an actual effort in this direction, and when the other person understands what is uttered (and is thus deceived). 'Slander' becomes evil when there are persons who are different, when there is an intention to bring about a rift between them, when there is an effort in this direction, and when the person who listens to the slander understands what is uttered. 'Harsh speech' becomes evil when a human being is abused, when there is the emotion of anger, and when there is an actual employment of abusive words. 'Frivolous talk' becomes evil when there is an intention to indulge in talk which one knows results in no

good to anyone, and when there is an actual indulgence in this talk. (*Maggaṅgadīpanī*).

This constituent also includes trading and trafficking in weapons of warfare, living beings, animals for slaughter and food, intoxicants and poison (*Anguttara- Nikāya*, 4th Paṇṇāsaka, Upāsakavagga, Vāṇijjasutta).

10 (vi) *sammā vāyāmo*;

Right exertion:

The word 'vāyāma' indicates effort (*padhāna*), arousal of will (*chanda*) and energy (*virīya*) so as to hold the mind in grip (*chittam paggaṇhāti*). The Commentaries mention four exertions: avoidance (*samvara*), elimination (*pahāna*), cultivation (*bhāvanā*) and preservation (*anurakkhanā*). 'Avoidance' refers to the effort in making it impossible for the

unwholesome states of mind, which are as yet un-aroused, to arise (*anuppannānam pāpakānam akusalānam dhammānam anuppādāya*). 'Elimination' refers to the destruction of the unwholesome states of mind which are already aroused (*uppannānam - pe - pahāṇāya*). 'Cultivation' is the development of wholesome states of mind which are as yet un-aroused (*anuppannānam kusalānam dhammānam uppādāya*). 'Preservation' is the effort involved in making the wholesome states of mind, already aroused stay, multiply, grow and get perfected (*uppannānam - pe - ṭhitiyā vepullāya, bhāvanāya, paripūriyā*).

'Avoidance' as an exertion is essentially restraining the sense functions; while 'elimination' is with regard to lust, avarice and so on. 'Cultivation' is the development of

the thirty-seven 'factors of enlightenment' (*bodhipakkhiya-dhammā*), whereas 'preservation' is the maintenance of spiritual attainments (such as the favourable objects of concentration) so as to attain complete emancipation.

The distinction between 'unwholesome' (*akusala*) states and 'wholesome' (*kusala*) states is drawn thus: the former lead to constant anxiety and moral depravity, while the latter bring about tranquility and make for uplift and spiritual progress.

10 (vii) *sammā sati*;

Right mindfulness;

The Ven. Ledi Sayadaw defines *sati* as "constant mindfulness in good things so as not to forget them" (*Vipassanādiṇī*, English translation by U Ñāṇa). Its characteristic is 'arousal' (*upaṭṭhāna*), and its function is to eliminate the

tendency for unsteadiness in mind, and to settle it stably in a chosen object of meditation. It involves an effort to prevent the object from lapsing into oblivion.

This constituent usually takes the form of meditative practices. The old texts enumerate as many as forty subjects for such meditative practices (*kammaṭṭhānas*); a complete account of these subjects is given in Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*. The commentaries group the subjects under four heads: arousal of mindfulness with regard to bodily processes (*kāyesu*), with regard to feelings and sensations (*vedanāsu*), with regard to mental processes (*chitte*) and with regard to mental contents (*dhammesu*).

The arousal of mindfulness involves bodily energy (*kāyikaviriya*) inasmuch as physical discipline

regarding posture, duration, etc. forms a necessary part of all meditational practices; mental energy (*chetasikaviriya*) is also involved inasmuch as there is in meditation as alert and intense application of mind counteracting langour, drowsiness and distraction.

10 (viii) *sammā samādhi*;

Right concentration;

The word 'samādhi' is explained in *Kathāvatthu* thus: "It is the establishing of consciousness exclusively and voluntarily on any single object". Buddhaghosa adds that it is to establish the mind and mental processes evenly (*samam*) and rightly (*sammā*). More specifically, *samādhi* refers to the concentration of mind which is already wholesome and purified (*kusalachitt'ekaggatā*).

Its essential characteristic is 'absence of distraction' (*avikkhepa*);

its function is to 'establish well' (*samādhāna*). It presupposes meditational practices and attainments. The commentaries furnish the analogy of one being able to read well only when he is fully conversant with the alphabets. It is for this reason that it is enumerated as the final constituent of the Eight-fold Path.

There are four concentrations corresponding to the four trance stages in the spiritual escesis of tranquility (*samathajhānasamādhi*).

The first two constituents belong to the wisdom-group (*paññikkhanda*), the next three to the virtue-group (*sīla*-) and the last three to the concentration-group (*samādhi*-). The evil tendencies lying dormant in the personality waiting for opportunity to express are suppressed by the first group; the

tendencies which prompt transgressions are eradicated by the second group; and the subtle tendencies whose activity is confined to the mind are controlled by the third group.

11. *ayam kho, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā - pe - nibbāṇāya samvattati.*

11. *This then, O monks, is the middle path - (as before) -to nibbāṇa.*

12. (a) *idam kho, bhikkhave, dukkham ariyasaccham:*

12. (a) *This, O monks, is the noble-truth of Suffering:*

Having enumerated the constituents of the Eight-fold path the Master proceeds to furnish the theoretical justification for this Path. The formulation of the four noble-

truths is the real theme (*paṭiniddesa*) of the discourse, for they were the special subjects of the Buddha's teaching (*sāṃukkamsika-desanā*).

Mahāvastu and *Lalitavistara* versions introduce before this enumeration of the four noble-truths the statement: “*Chatvāri khalvimāni, bhikṣavo, āryasatyāni, katamāni chatvāri?*” (“Thses four, O monks, are the noble-truths; which four?”)

Why are the truths called ‘noble’? It is because the noble ones such as the Buddha discovered them. Alternately, they are ‘noble’ because they are beyond dispute (*avisamvādakāni*). Or simply, the word ‘*āryasacchāni*’ means ‘*ariyassa sacchāni*’ (‘the truths of the Noble One, namely the Buddha’). The employment of the adjective ‘*ariya*’ distinguishes these four truths from other truths such as the verbal truth

(*vāchāsaccha*), active truth (*viratisaccha*), ideological truth (*diṭṭhisaccha*) and absolute truth (*paramatthasaccha*).

Both Buddhaghosa and Upatissa explain that the four noble truths are to be understood in eleven ways (*ariya-saccha-upāyā*): by their word-meanings (*vachanatthato*), by their several several charecteristics (*lakkhaṇato*), by the order of their enumeration (*kamato*), by their functions (*samkhepato*), by similes (*upamāto*), by their distinctions (*pericchedato*), by their number (*gaṇanāto*), by their unity (*ekattato*), by their variety (*nānattato*), by their classification (*kamavitthārato*) and by their inclusion (*samgahato*).

The first truth formulates the positive existence of suffering. The word ‘*dukkha*’ is interpreted by Buddhaghosa as composed of

‘kucchita’ (‘bad’) and ‘*tuccha*’ (‘mean’). Its characteristic is said to be ‘trouble’ (*bādhana*), and essence ‘torment’ (*santāpana*); it is further said to be the mainspring of all action.

Paṭisambhidhāmagga, which is an analytical treatise included in the ‘Sutta-Piṭaka’ collection, mentions four characteristics by which ‘suffering’ can be identified: Oppression (*pīḷana*), production by a combination of causes (*samkhata*), incessant burning or torment (*santāpa*), and change (*vipariṇāma*).

‘Suffering’ is classified into two broad groups (a) Suffering dependent on objects (*vatthudukkha*), such as birth, death, association with the unpleasant, dissociation from the pleasant, etc, (b) Suffering which is entirely subjective (*sabhāvadukkha*) such as misery, lamentation,

depression, etc. (*Vimutti-magga*, XI, 2).

12. (b) *jāti pi dikkha; jarā pi dukkhā; vyādhi pi dukkā; maraṇam pi dukkham; appiyehi sampayogo dukkho; piyehi vippayogo dukkho; yampiccham na labhati tam pi dukkham.*

12 (b) *Birth is suffering; old age is suffering; disease is suffering; union with the unpleasant is suffering; separation from the pleasant is suffering; not to get what one wants is suffering.*

Vibhāṅga explains ‘birth’ as ‘being born in particular groups of living beings’, ‘coming into being’ (*adhinippatti*), ‘descent into the womb’ (*okkanti*), ‘appearance of aggregates’ (*khandānam pātubhāvo*). What birth really means is not the

formation of the individual being as a whole, but the arising of the groups of existence and the appearance of organs (*sammoha-vinodanī*).

‘Ageing’ is ‘decay’ (*jīraṇatā*) ‘becoming toothless, grey-haired and wrinkled’. It is the failing of the vital forces and the wearing out of the sense-organs. It is condition when life is being eaten up.

‘Death’ is the ‘breaking up’ (*bhedo*), ‘disappearance of the groups of existence’ (*antaradhānam*), ‘casting away’, ‘cessation of the vital force’ (*jīvitindriyassa-upacchhedo*).

“Union with the unpleasant’ is characterised by ‘trouble to the mind’ (*chittavighāta*). *Vibhaṅga* mentions six classes of sense-objects which are desirable, agreeable and appealing to mind.

‘Separation from the pleasant’ is characterised by ‘production of grief’ (*sokuppādana*). *Vibhaṅga* mentions six classes of sense-objects which are desirable, agreeable and appealing to mind. This is omitted from the *Mahāvastu* reading.

‘Not to get what one wants’ (‘even after striving for it’ *paryesanto*, is added in the *Mahāvastu* and *Lalitavistara* recensions) is characterised by ‘striving for the object’ (*tappariyesana*) and the ‘not getting’ (*appatti*).

12 (c) *samkhittena, bhikkhave, pañch’ upādānakkhandā dukkhā.*

In brief, O monks the five grasping aggregates are suffering.

The five aggregates (*khandas*) which cling to the transient ego-

feeling and thus reveal the image of an enduring personality are comporeality (*rūpa*), feeling-sensation (*vedanā*), perception-conception (*saññā*), organisational processes (*samkhāra*) and consciousness (*viññāṇa*). The commentaries explain that even as the fire clings to the faggots, or the fruits and flowers cling to the tree, the above mentioned factors 'birth', 'ageing', 'death', etc cling to these five aggregates.

13. *idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccham; yāyam taṇhā ponobbhavikā, nandirāgasahagatā, tatra-tatrābhinandinī, seyyathidam kāmataṇhā, bhavataṇhā, vibhavataṇhā.*

This then, O monks, is the noble-truth of the origination of suffering; this craving which

is recurrent, associated with enjoyment and attachment, and which revels here and there : to wit, sense-craving, individuality-craving and annihilation-craving.

This is the second noble-truth, dealing with the arousal of suffering from the remnants of the breeding factors (*avasesapaccayasamāyoga*). 'Origination' is defined by the Ven. Ledi Sayadaw thus: "cause of ever continuing this psychophysical process of existence" (*Sacchadīpanī*). Its characteristic is to 'produce', to 'maintain continuity'. Whatever in the world is dear (*piyarūpa*) and pleasant (*sātarūpa*) engenders craving. This craving is described as recurrent, that is to say causing renewal of existence, leading back to birth, conditioning re-birth (vide, *Visuddhimagga*, 16,16). The Sanskrit for 'ponbbhavikā' is given as 'paunarbhavikī'.

Further, craving is described as 'revelling here and there'. Buddhaghosa explains that wherever there obtains the notion of self (*attabhāvo*) there does craving revel.

The craving is analysed into three broad types. The first type is *kāma-taṇhā*, craving for sensual satisfactions. The second is *bhava-taṇhā*: 'bhava' means individual existence, and craving for it implies the wrong outlook of permanence (*sassatadiṭṭhi*). The third is *vibhava taṇhā*, where 'vibhava' means the opposite (*vi-*) of individual existence, namely, individual annihilation. this signifies a belief in the wrong outlook of non-becoming (*ūcchhedadiṭṭhi*), mentioned in the *Brahmajālasutta*. Where bhava is found, its oppsite vi-bhava also is found (*Buddhavamsa*, II, 1-27).

The mention of the three types of taṇhā occurs only in the

Mahāvagga version of the Discourse.

14. *idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodham ariyasaccham, yo tassā eva taṇhāya asesā virāga-nirodho, chāgo, paṭinisaṅgo, mutti, anālayao.*

This then, O monks, is the noble-truth of the Elimination of suffering, which is the complete and dispassionate suppression of this craving, forsaking, renunciation, liberation and freedom.

This third noble-truth formulates the cessation (*atthagama*) of the phenomenon of suffering. The expression 'nirodha' means 'samudayanirodha'. The characteristic of this truth is 'calm' (*santi*); its function is to render the individual free from the worldly snare

(*nippapañcha*). Metaphysically, this is the same as Nibbāṇa (*Visuddhimagga*, p.355).

The suppression of craving here is 'complete', that is to say, without leaving any traces or remnants whatsoever (*anusayamugdhānato*). If when a tree is cut the roots are left, the tree will sprout again; even so if any remnants of craving are left, suffering will surely sprout from that source. The compound '*virāga-nirodha*' is interpreted by Buddhaghosa as '*virāgena nirodha*' ('suppressed by dispassion').

The 'renunciation' refers to the abandonment of illusions (*maññita*), egotism (*ahamkāra*), selfishness (*mamimkāra*), and proclivities of pride (*mānānusaya*). (vide, '*Vacchagottasutta*' in *Majjhima-Nikāya*). This is known as non-grasping (*anupāda*). It is interesting

to note that the Sanskrit restoration of the Tibetan Kānjūr version (Mdo XXX) would read '*paṭinissaggo*' as '*pratiparivṛttih*.'

'Freedom is doing away with desires, it is non-attachment with craving. The expression '*an-ālaya*' signifies 'not giving room' to craving. The Kānjūr version qualifies '*anālaya*' as '*muktāvanālayah*', which is traditionally interpreted as "not having indolence with regard to doing away with desire", the is to say, energetic activity with regard to liberation (Aiyaswami Sastri, *op. cit.*)

15. *idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccham! ayam eva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo; seyyathidam: sammā-diṭṭhi - (pe) - sammā-samādhī.*

This then, O monks is the noble-truth of the Path leading

to the elimination of suffering.
It is the same as the Eight-fold
Path; to wit - Right Views -(as
before) - Right concentration.

This is the fourth noble-truth
formulating a method for the
attainment of the third noble-truth.
Buddhaghosa points out that *Nibbāṇa*
(which is the *nirodhasacca*) is not
phantasy, like the horns of a hare
(*sasavisāṇa*), but is something that
can be attained by following a method
(*upāyena upalabbhanīyo*), and this
method is the eight-fold path detailed
above.

The path is characterised by
the following functions, according to
Paṭisambhidāmagga: leading to
deliverance (*niyyāna*), causing the
attainment of worth or Arahattā
(*hetu*), helping realisation of the four
noble-truths (*dassana*), and enabling
one to overcome the three-fold

craving, and thus to attain mastery
over oneself (*ādhipateyya*).

These are the four noble-truths:
Suffering, (*dukkha*), Origination
(*samudaya*), Elimination (*nirodha*)
and Method or Path (*paṭipadā or*
magga). They are only four, neither
less nor more, because they are
comprehensive, and it not possible
to think of another (*aññassa*
asambhavato). They are arranged in
terms of: (a) to be known; to be
overcome; to be realised; and to be
developed (*pariññeyya; pahātabba;*
sacchikātabba; and bhāvetabba); (b)
subject of craving; craving;
suppression of craving; and the way
of suppressing craving (*taṇhāvatthu;*
taṇhā; taṇhānirodha; and
taṇhānirodhupāya); (c) establishment
(in *samsāra*); inclination to this
establishment; abandoning this
establishment; and the way to
abandon this establishment (*ālaya;*

ālayārāmatā; ālayasamugdhāta; and ālayasamugdhātakupāya).

The commentaries describe the truth of suffering as name and form (*nāmarūpa*), the truth of Origination as Ignorance, craving for existence (*avijjā, bhavataṇhā*), the truth of elimination as the abandonment of this (*pahāna*); and the truth of path as tranquility, insight (*samatha, vipassanā*). The truth of suffering is a composite constituted by wholesome, unwholesome and neutral factors (*kusalākusalābyākata*), the truth of Origination is unwholesome (*akusala*), the truth of elimination is neutral (*abyākata*) and the truth of Path is wholesome (*kusala*).

Here ends the formulation of the four noble-truths which constitute the discovery of the Master, and which form the foundation of his

gospel. The Master then proceeds to narrate the application of these truths in his own life; he enunciates briefly how these truths dawned on him and made him 'the entirely enlightened one'.

16. *idam "dukkham ariyasaccham"
ti me bhikkhave pubbe
ananussutesu dhammesu
chakkhum udapādi, ñāṇam
udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā
udapādi, āloko udapādi.*

*"Suffering is a noble-truth" -
thus, O monks, my eye was
opened to those operations
which I had not understood
before; judgement arose,
knowledge arose, intuition
arose, vision arose.*

Till the moment of enlightenment, the Master had not understood the phenomena aright;

his vision was blurred by the worldly processes. Now there was the attunement of the mind in conformity with the real principles.

The Sanskrit restoration of the Tibetan version (Kāñjur Mdo XXVI) as well as the text of the *Mahabhiniṣkramaṇa - sūtra* has a variant reading: ‘*pūrvam a sruteṣu dharmeṣu yoniśo manasikārāc chakṣur udapādi jñānam, vidyā buddhih, bodhir udapādi.*’ The expression ‘*yoniśo manasikārāt*’ is alternately read as ‘*yoniśo manasikurvatah*’.

17. *tam kho pan'idam "dukkham ariyasaccham pariññeyyam" ti me bhikkhave, pubbe - (pe) - āloko udapādi.*

“Suffering is a noble-truth that is to be understood” -thus, O monks, my eye was opened - (as before) -vision arose.

If the preceding statement enunciates the truth (*saccha*), this statement enunciates the task (*kiccha*).

18. *tam kho pan'idam "dukkham ariyasaccham pariññātam" ti me bhikkhave - (pe) - āloko udapādi.*

“Suffering is noble-truth that was understood (by me)” - thus, O monks - (as before) - vision arose.

This statement enunciates the accomplishment (*katam*) of the first noble-truth. Truth, the task of understanding it, and the fact of having understood it - these are the three aspects of the truth of suffering. The truth was revolved in the master’s mind thrice (*ti-parivattam*), that is to say, it was considered by him in its three aspects.

Now follows the second truth in its three similar aspects:

19. *idam* “*dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccham*” *ti me bhikkhave*
- (*pe*) - *āloko* - *udapādi*.

“*Origination of suffering is a noble-truth*” - *thus, O monks*
- (*as before*) - *vision arose*.

20. *tam kho pan'idam*
“*dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccham pahātabbam*” *ti me bhikkhave* - (*pe*) - *āloko*
udapādi.

“*Origination of suffering is a noble-truth that must be cut off*” - *thus, O monks* - (*as before*) - *vision arose*.

The expression ‘*pahāna*’ (‘*to cut off*’) signifies uprooting (*ucchinnamūla*), like the falling down of a palm tree. When cut off thus, further sprouting is made impossible

(*anabhāvakatam* = *pahīnam*); the entity is deprived of separate existence, (vide) *Anguttara-nikāya*, ‘*Trika-nipāta*’, 33).

21. *tam kho pan'idam*
“*dukkhasamudayam ariyasaccham pahinam*” *ti me bhikkhave* - (*pe*) - *āloko*
udapādi.

“*Origination of suffering is a noble-truth that was cut-off (by me)*” - *Thus, O monks* - (*as before*) - *vision arose*.

Thus the second truth was revolved in the Master’s mind thrice, in its three aspects: truth of origination, the task of cutting-off this origination, and the fact that origination was cut-off.

Now follows the third truth in its three aspects:

22. *idam “dukkhanirodham ariya-saccham” ti - (pe) - udapādi.*

“Elimination of suffering is a noble-truth” - thus - (as before) - arose.

23. *tam kho pan’idam “dukkhanirodham ariyasaccham sacchikātabbam” ti - (pe) - udapādi.*

“Elimination-of-suffering is a noble-truth that must be realised” - thus - (as before) - arose.

24. *tam kho pan’idam “dukkhanirodham ariyasaccham sacchikatam” ti - (pe) - udapādi.*

“Elimination of suffering is a noble-truth that was realised (by me)” - thus - (as before) - arose.

Thus the third truth was revolved in the Master’s mind thrice:

the truth of Elimination, the task of realising it, and the fact of having realised it.

Now follows the fourth truth in its three aspects:

25. *Idam “dukkhanirodhagāminī - paṭipadā ariyasaccham’ ti - (pe) - udapādi.*

“The path leading to the elimination of suffering is a noble truth” - thus - (as before) - arose.

26. *tam kho pan’idam “dukkhanirodhagāminī - paṭipadā ariyasaccham bhāvetabbam” ti - (pe) - udapādi.*

“the path leading to the elimination of suffering is a noble truth that must be developed” - thus - (as before) - arose.

27. *tam pan'idam "dukkhanirodha-
gāminī - paṭipadā bhāvitam" ti*
- (pe) - udapādi.

*"the path leading to the
elimination of suffering is a
noble truth that was developed
(by me)" - thus - (as before)*
- arose.

Thuse the fourth truth was
revolved thrice in the Master's mind:
the truth of the path, the task of
developing the path, and the fact of
having developed it.

Now the Master sums up:

28. *Yāva kivañcha me, bhikkhave,
imesu chatusu ariyasacchesu
evam tiparivaṭṭam dvāda-
sākāram yathābhūtam nāṇadas-
sanam na suvisuddham ahosi,
neva tāvā'ham, bhikkhave,
sadevake loke samārake*

*sabrahmake sassamaṇa-
brāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadeva-
manussāya anuttaram
sammāsambodhim adhi-
sambuddho ti pacchaññāsim.*

*Till such time, O monks, as my
correct knowledge and intuition
regarding the four noble-truths
in triple-aspects and twelve-
fold modes were not perfectly
clear, I did not announce to
this world of gods and angels
(or) to this mankind, consisting
of monks, priests and others
that I obtained entirely the
incomparable and perfect
enlightenment.*

The three aspects of each
noble-truth are: the truth (sacca),
the task (kicca) and the
accomplishment (kata). These
aspects are called 'revolutions'
(parivaṭṭa) in the master's mind. Each

of the four noble-truths having three aspects, we have twelve modes (ākāra):

1st parivaṭṭa	2nd parivaṭṭa	3rd parivaṭṭa
I saccha: 'dukkham'	pariññeyam'	'pariññātam'
II saccha: 'samudayam'	pahātabbam'	'pahīnam'
III saccha: 'nirodham'	sacchikātabbam'	sacchikatam'
IV saccha: 'maggam'	'bhāvetabbam'	bhāvitam'.

29. *yato cha kho me, bhikkave, imesu-(pe)-ñāṇadassanam suvisuddham ahosi, athā'ham, bhikkhave, sadevake-(pe)-pacchaññasim.*

When, however, O monks, my correct knowledge and intuition- (as before) - were perfectly clear, then I announced to this world - (as before) - enlightenment.

It is this understanding, elimination and development that made him the Buddha (vide *Theragāthā*, 98): “*abhiññeyyam abhiññātam, bhāvetabbam cha*

bhāvitam; pahātabbam pahīnam me tasmā buddho'smi brāhmaṇa!”

The Sanskrit restoration of Kānjūr Mdo. XXX add after this: “*idaṁ cha jñānam ātmadarśana-bhūtam apūrvavimuktiḥ ātmā-navaśeṣam apunarbhavopādānam nīrvāṇam*”.

30. *ñāṇam cha pana me dassaṇam udapādi, akuppā me chetovimutti, ayam antima jāti, n'atthi' dāni punabbhavo ti*”.

Knowledge as well as intuition arose in me; deliverance of mind was unshakable; this is my final birth, and there is no more becoming for me.”

Here ends the Master's lecture to the five ascetics who had assembled to hear him at Banāras. What follows is Ānanda's remark winding up the Discourse.

31. *idam avocha bhagavā; attamanā
te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṃ
abhinandum.*

*Thus spoke the Blessed One;
the assembly of monks rejoiced
and accepted what was said by
the Blessed One.*

NOTE 1

THE BUDDHA'S ENLIGHTENMENT

The Pāli tradition has preserved the following account:

After hard toil of seven long years, Gotama of the Sākya clan attained the perfect Enlightenment on the Full Moon Night of *Vaiśākha* (corresponding normally to April), sitting at the foot of the big peepul tree (known subsequently as the *bodhi*-tree) at Gayā in the Uruvelā Jungles. The attainment made him free, wise and pure: he emerged as the Buddha.

For seven days at a stretch he sat there cross-legged, alone and still, enjoying the bliss of emancipation (*vimutti*) and pondering over the profound implications of his Enlightenment.⁷ Then he got up and went to a banyan tree nearby (remembered by posterity as the Ajapāla-tree) and spent a week under its shade. From there he repaired to the Muchalinda-tree, guarded by a serpent, and spent a week there, all the while enjoying the "sublimity of solitude." Then he walked to the Rājāyatana-tree, and while spending the week there met the travelling merchants, Tapussa and bhallika, who offered him honey-cakes and rice-food after a fast of twenty-eight days from the day of Enlightenment. The Buddha then returned to the Ajapāla-tree.

Resting there, after intensely reflecting for nearly a month over

the aspects and implications of the Enlightenment, he considered whether it was worth his while to reveal this phenomenon to mankind. Knowing the stuff of which mankind was made, he was naturally at first reluctant:

“With great pains have

I acquired it

“Enough. Why should

I proclaim it?

“The doctrine will not be understood

“By beings lost in lust and hatred”.

“Given to lust and surrounded by thick darkness they will not see what is repugnant (to their minds), abstruse, profound, difficult to perceive and subtle”. He wondered why he should not spend the rest of his days alone in the forest, enjoying the quiet bliss of his Enlightenment.

But at length the consideration of the welfare of mankind overpowered him, and he decided to announce his Enlightenment for the benefit of those who cared to listen to him. Legends represent this reconsideration as response to the entreaties of Brahmā - Sahampati.

Having decided to announce his discovery for the benefit of mankind, the Buddha now considered which of his acquaintances was worthy enough to receive his message first, competent enough to understand his findings. His former teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, were both eminently fitted for this honour, but it was found that they were both by then dead. The Buddha thereupon decided for the first revelation on the five ascetics with whom he was practising the austerities in the Uruvelā jungles. The ascetics had been intent on

obtaining the Light by the severest privations, and were hopeful that Gotama would lead them to the Goal - for he had been most courageous and steadfast in his asceticism. But when Gotama discovered the futility of these hard practices and returned to normal life, the five ascetic companions had despaired of him and had gone away to Banaras.

The Buddha now went in search of them. From Gayā to Banaras was a long way in those days. And on the third day of his journey, he met an *ājīvaka* ascetic, Upaka, who was attracted by the Blessed One's looks of enlightenment. In answer to his inquiry the Buddha announced:

“To set in motion the
Dhamma-wheel

“I wend my way to Banaras
town,

“In the world enveloped by
darkness

“To beat the drum of
Deathlessness!”⁸

On reaching Banāras, the Blessed one found the five ascetics in the Deet Park (*Migadāya*) or the Woodland Retrat of the sages (*Isipatana*). They were at first reluctant to accept him as spiritually senior to themselves: but the discourse he delivered to them soon converted them.

This was the Buddha's very first discourse (*paṭhamadesanā*). It inaugurated his career as a teacher, a leader of an Order of Ascetics (*samgha*), and as a profoundly wise saint. It was delivered on the full Moonday of Āṣadha, exactly two months after the attainment of Buddhahood.

NOTE 2

A fortnight after the Master passed away, Mahākassapa, acting as the leader of 'seven thousand disciples', appointed five hundred eminent monks to compile the *dhamma*, that is, to recall and record the teachings of the Master as they had heard them from the Master himself. They decided to convoke the First Conference in Rājagaha during the ensuing rainy season. This compilation of the Master's words (*Buddhavachana*) engaged the monks for seven months "who were bent on delivering the entire mankind."

The *Vinaya* and *Sutta Piṭakas* came into being as a result of the First Council. About a century later, the second council was convoked at vesati to eliminate the heresies that had entered the *Vinaya*, and to revise the canon. This Council had to countenance schism in the *Saṅgha*. The Mauryan Emperor Aśoka caused the Third Council to be convoked to edit the original texts which were getting corrupt.

The canonical texts were for the first time reduced to writing in Sri Lanka during the first century before Christ, at the instance of the monarch Vaṭṭagāmaṇi - Abhaya.