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The Seven Siddhi Texts:

The Oḍiyāna Mahāmudrā Lineage in its Indic and Tibetan Contexts

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the  
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy  
in Religious Studies

by

Adam Charles Krug

Committee in charge:

Professor Vesna A. Wallace, Chair

Professor José I. Cabezón

Professor David G. White

June 2018

The dissertation of Adam Charles Krug is approved.

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David G. White

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José I. Cabezón

---

Vesna A. Wallace, Committee Chair

June 2018

The Seven Siddhi Texts:  
The Oḍiyāna Mahāmudrā Lineage in its Indic and Tibetan Contexts

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by

Adam Charles Krug

# Vita of Adam Charles Krug

2018

## EDUCATION

**Ph.D.** Religious Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara 2018  
Buddhist Studies, South Asian Religions

**M.A.** Indo-Tibetan Buddhism with Language Concentrations in Sanskrit 2010  
and Tibetan, Naropa University

M.A. Thesis: “A Study in Dhāraṇī: Magic and Philosophy in the Mahāyāna, Language and Ineffability of the Absolute, and Applying Pragmatics to the Interpretation of Dhāraṇī”

**B.A.** Religious Studies, Vassar College 2002

## Ph.D. FIELD EXAMS

“Indian Esoteric Buddhism; Buddhist Political Theory,” with Vesna A. Wallace

“Historiography in Tibetan Buddhism; The Early Emergence and Polemics of the Mahāmudrā Doctrine in Tibet,” with José I. Cabezón

“Supernatural Powers and the People Who Wield Them in South Asian Religion, Culture, and Society,” with David G. White

## DISSERTATION

“The Seven Siddhi Texts: The Oḍiyāna Mahāmudrā Lineage in its Indic and Tibetan Contexts”

Committee members: Vesna A. Wallace (chair), José I. Cabezón, David G. White

## RESEARCH LANGUAGES

Classical Literary Tibetan: Advanced reading proficiency, six years of formal study

Modern Colloquial Tibetan: Advanced proficiency, three years of formal study

Sanskrit: Advanced reading proficiency, six years of formal study

German: Intermediate reading ability, two years of formal study

## FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2018 The Professor Gerald J. Larson Dissertation Award
- 2016-2017 Visiting Scholar, Tibet Himalayan Initiative, CU Boulder
- 2016 Graduate Division Dissertation Fellowship, UC Santa Barbara
- 2015-2016 Fulbright-Nehru U.S. Student Grant, U.S. Department of State
- 2015 CAORC Multi-Country Research Fellowship, U.S. Department of State
- 2013- 2014 Professor R. Ninian Smart Memorial Award for the Comparative Study of Religion and Philosophy, Department of Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara
- 2012 FLAS Fellowship, U.S. Department of Education
- 2011-2014 Rowny Fellowship, Department of Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara
- 2011 Stephen Hay Fellowship, Department of Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara
- 2009-2010 SOTIP scholarship recipient, IBA, Kathmandu, Nepal

## PUBLICATIONS

- 2017 "Tantric Epistemology and the Question of Ineffability in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*." In *Buddhism and Linguistics: Theory and Philosophy*. Edited by Manel Herat. United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017. Edited Volume.
- 2017 "I'll See You Again in Twenty-Five Years: Tibetan Buddhism in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* and American Pop Culture in the 90s." In *The Assimilation of Yogic Religions Through Pop Culture*. Edited by Paul Hackett. Maryland: Lexington Books, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017. Edited Volume.
- 2016 "Pakpa's Verses on Governance in *Advice to Prince Jibik Temür: A Jewel Rosary*." In *Cahiers d'Extrême Asie 24: Kingship, Ritual, and Narrative in Tibet and the Surrounding Cultural Area*. Edited by Brandon Dotson (2015). Journal Publication.
- 2016 "A Review of Thomas Doctor's Reason and Experience in Tibetan Buddhism: Mabja Jangchub Tsöndrü and the Traditions of the Middle Way." In *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*. Book Review.
- 2015 "Siddhis." In *Ghosts, Spirits, and Psychics: The Paranormal from Alchemy to Zombies*. ABC-CLIO Publishers, Matt Cardin ed. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO. August 2015. Encyclopedia Entry.

- 2015 "Meditation." In *Ghosts, Spirits, and Psychics: The Paranormal from Alchemy to Zombies*. ABC-CLIO Publishers, Matt Cardin ed. Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO. August 2015. Encyclopedia Entry.

### **Work in Progress**

- 2018 "*The Seven Siddhi Texts (Grub pa sde bdun)*: Remarks on the Formulation and Transmission of the Corpus and its Employment in Sa skya- Bka' brgyud Mahāmudrā Polemical Literature. In *Tibetan Mahāmudrā Traditions*. Edited by Klaus-Dieter Mathes and Roget Jackson. Leiden: Brill Publishers. In review.

### **CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS AND GUEST LECTURES**

- 2018 "Three Chapters on Consecration in the Oḍiyāna Mahāmudrā Lineage." The World of *Abhiṣeka*: Consecration Rituals in the Buddhist Cultural Sphere. University of California, Santa Barbara, CA (May)
- 2017 "The Early Indian Mahāmudrā Canon and Practical Canonicity in the Esoteric Buddhism of India and Tibet." AAR Annual Conference. Boston, MA (November)
- 2017 "The Advanced Tantric Yogic Observance (*vrata*) or Practice (*caryā*) and its Modern Formulations." Himalayan Studies Conference V. Boulder, CO (September)
- 2017 "Internal, Threshold, and External Economy: Toward an Economic Model for Early Buddhist Monasticism in India." Buddhism and Business, Market and Merit Conference. Vancouver, BC (June).
- 2017 "Embodied Enlightenment and the Problem of Vajrayāna Ethics," AAR Mountain Regional Conference, Boulder, CO (March)
- 2016 "The *Grub pa sde Bdun* and Mahāmudrā Polemical Literature." Conference of the International Association of Tibetan Studies. Bergen, Norway (June)
- 2016 "The Seven Texts on Siddhi." Fulbright-Nehru Annual Conference. Jaipur, India (February)
- 2015 "Philosophy and Polemics in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*." AAR Annual Conference Atlanta, GA (November)
- 2015 "I'll See You Again in Twenty-Five Years: Tibetan Buddhism in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* and American Pop Culture in the 90s." AAR Annual Conference Atlanta, GA (November)
- 2015 "*The Seven Texts on Siddhi* and The Indian Origins of Tibetan Mahāmudrā." *Interdisciplinary Humanities Center South Asian Religions and Cultures Lecture Series*, UC Santa Barbara (May)

- 2014 “Buddhist Ethics in the ‘Heyday of Poisons:’ ‘Phags pa bLa ma’s *Advice to Prince Jibik Temür.*” AAR Annual Conference San Diego, CA (November)
- 2014 “Finding Balance in the Dual-System of Religious and Political Power: ‘Phags pa Bla ma’s *Advice for Prince Jibik Temür: A Jewel Rosary.*” Presented at The Mongolia Society and Mongolia Heritage Foundation of New York Conference to Celebrate the 130<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dilowa Khutughtu, NY, NY (October)
- 2014 “Toward an Economic Theory of Early Indian Buddhist Monasticism.” *Interdisciplinary Humanities Center South Asian Religions and Cultures Lecture Series*, UC Santa Barbara (May)
- 2014 “Integrating Textual Scholarship and the Scientific Study of Meditation: Meditation in Indrabhūti’s *Jñānasiddhi*, or Attainment of Gnosis.” Buddhist Meditation Conference, University of Virginia (February)
- 2013 “Divining Exile: Divination in Tibetan Exile Narratives.” South Asia Conference, University of Texas, Austin (November)
- 2012 “Buddhism in Tibet.” Guest lecture for *Introduction to Buddhism*, UC Santa Barbara (November)

## **FIELDWORK AND STUDY ABROAD**

- 2015-2016 Fulbright-Nehru student research fellow, India
- 2015 CAORC Research Affiliate, Nepal and India
- 2012 AIIS Sanskrit Summer Language Program, Pune, Maharashtra, India
- 2009-2010 International Buddhist Academy School of Tibetan Translation Program, Kathmandu, Nepal

## **SERVICE**

- 2014- 2015 Graduate Student–Faculty Liaison, Department of Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

### **Adjunct Positions**



2018 "Tibetan Buddhism," Department of Religious Studies, University of Colorado, Boulder, Spring

2017 "Foundations of Buddhism," Department of Religious Studies, University of Colorado, Boulder, Fall

### **Teaching Assistantships**

2015 "The Gods and Goddesses of India," Department of Religious Studies, UCSB, Spring

2015 "Asian Religious Traditions," Departments of Religious Studies and East Asian Languages and Cultures, UCSB, Winter

2015 "American Migrations Since 1965: Asians and Others in the United States" Asian American Studies Department, UCSB, Fall

2014 "Religious Approaches to Death," Department of Religious Studies, UCSB, Fall

2013 "Religions of Tibet," Department Religious Studies, UCSB, Winter

2012 "Introduction to Buddhism," Department of Religious Studies, UCSB, Fall

2009 "The Second Turning of the Wheel: The Bodhisattva Path," Department of Religious Studies, Naropa University, M.A. level course, Spring

2008 "The First Turning of the Wheel: The Nature of Mind and Emotions," Department of Religious Studies, Naropa University, M.A. level course, Fall

2008 "Contemplative Practice Seminar," Undergraduate Core Curriculum, Naropa University, Spring

2007 "Contemplative Practice Seminar," Undergraduate Core Curriculum, Naropa University, Fall

### **Language Instruction**

2010 English Language Tutor, IBA Monastic Leaders Program, Kathmandu, Nepal, Fall 2009- Spring 2010

### **RESEARCH ASSISTANTSHIPS**

2014 Graduate Assistant, José I. Cabezón, Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara, Spring

- 2014 Graduate Assistant, Vesna A. Wallace, Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara, Winter
- 2013 Graduate Assistant, José I. Cabezón, Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara, Spring
- 2012 Graduate Assistant, José I. Cabezón, Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara, Spring
- 2012 Graduate Assistant, José I. Cabezón, Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara, Winter
- 2011 Graduate Assistant, José I. Cabezón, Religious Studies, UC Santa Barbara, Fall
- 2009 Graduate Assistant, Judith Simmer-Brown Religious Studies, Naropa University, Spring
- 2008 Graduate Assistant, Judith Simmer-Brown, Religious Studies, Naropa University, Fall
- 2008 Graduate Assistant, Religious Studies Department, Naropa University, Spring
- 2007 Graduate Assistant, Religious Studies Department, Naropa University, Fall

### **EDITORIAL EXPERIENCE**

- 2017 Editor for *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*. Translated by Wiesiek Mical for 84,000: Translating the Words of the Buddha.
- 2014 Manuscript Editor for Professor José I. Cabezón, *Sexuality in Classical South Asian Buddhism*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2017.
- 2014 Manuscript Editor for Professor Vesna A. Wallace ed. *Buddhism in Mongolian History, Society, and Culture*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015.
- 2012 Manuscript Editor for Professor José I. Cabezón. *The Buddha's Doctrine and the Nine Vehicles: Rog Bande Sherab's Lamp of the Teachings*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- 2010 Tsadra Foundation Consultant and Editor for *Gdams ngag mdzod*, (*Treasury of Spiritual Instructions*) by Jamgön Kongtrül Lodrö Thaye (1813-1890).

### **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP AND AFFILIATIONS**

American Academy of Religion  
 International Association of Buddhist Studies  
 International Association of Tibetan Studies

American Institute of Indian Studies, research affiliate, 2015.  
Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, research affiliate 2015  
Mongolia Society

## **REFERENCES**

### **Vesna A. Wallace**

Department of Religious Studies  
University of California  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106  
vwallace@religion.ucsb.edu

### **José I. Cabezón**

Dalai Lama Endowed Chair  
Department of Religious Studies  
University of California  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106  
jcabezón@religion.ucsb.edu

### **David G. White**

Rowny Professor of Comparative Religions  
Department of Religious Studies  
University of California  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106  
white@religion.ucsb.edu

## ABSTRACT

The Seven Siddhi Texts:

The Oḍiyāna Mahāmudrā Lineage in its Indic and Tibetan Contexts

by

Adam Charles Krug

This study examines *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, a short corpus of tantric Buddhist works that the Tibetan tradition identifies as the *mahāmudrā* transmission from the famed semi-mythical land of Oḍiyāna. Owing to the nature of the corpus itself, this study is best characterized as properly Indo-Tibetan in its scope. *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are first examined here as independent treatises that reflect the development of Vajrayāna Buddhism in its Indic cultural and historical contexts between the eighth and tenth centuries. They are then approached as a means for examining the formulation of Vajrayāna institutions and their attendant corpora in Nepal. Finally, they provide a case study in the phenomenon of practical canonicity in their employment in *mahāmudrā* polemical literature in Tibet from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries.

Part I argues for the adoption of a demonological paradigm in the study of South Asian religions. Using data from *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in dialogue with the Āyurvedic discipline of demonology (*bhūtavidyā*), it highlights that Vajrayāna Buddhist traditions maintained a dual apotropaic-soteriological goal in their conception of the practice of yoga.

Part II addresses the sociological implications of sect and sectarian identity in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. It presents the phenomenon of dissimulative asceticism in Vajrayāna Buddhism as a potential social context for the highly Śaiva-Buddhist hybrid forms of ritual that emerged with the Buddhist *yoginītantras*. It then addresses the issue of inclusivist and exclusivist expressions of sectarian identity from the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Part III discusses the formulation and transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a corpus of *mahāmudrā* works in light of the broader phenomenon of practical canonicity in Buddhist traditions. It presents philological evidence that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were part of a known *mahāmudrā* practical canon in Nepal prior to their transmission to Tibet. It then discusses historical data and Tibetan historiography on their transmission to Tibet beginning in the eleventh century. It concludes with a discussion of *The Seven Siddhi Texts'* incorporation into two Kagyü *mahāmudrā* practical canons in Tibet at the turn of the sixteenth century, and the role that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* played in a number of *mahāmudrā* polemical works composed by the subsequent generation of Kagyü authors.

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## Introduction

### I. Methods

This dissertation examines *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, a group of seven tantric Buddhist treatises composed by seven India *mahāsiddhas* sometime between the eighth and tenth centuries CE. Working with a corpus such as this presents a number of methodological challenges. The greatest challenge lies in the reliability of the current edition of the six works from the corpus that survive in Sanskrit manuscript sources. The Sarnath edition of these works, published under the title *Guhyādi-Aṣṭasiddhisamgraha*, was the very first work of its kind to be published in the Rare Buddhist Text Series from the Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India. This edition has been critical to my own work on *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, and I am entirely indebted to the efforts put forth by this first generation of editors for the Rare Buddhist Texts Series. However, I have come across numerous problems with the Sarnath edition over the course of this study. For this reason, I took it upon myself at an early stage in my research to collect all of the extant Sanskrit manuscript sources for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* housed both in the Nepal National Archive and in the manuscript collection at the Shantarakshita Library in Sarnath. The philologically minded reader may perhaps be disappointed that this dissertation does not include critical editions and translations of these works. They should know that I have provided a great deal of translated material in the dissertation itself, and that these translations have been completed in consultation with the Sarnath edition, the extant manuscript sources at my disposal, and the canonical Tibetan translations of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. While I have put aside the task of providing a critical

edition and translation of these works in this dissertation, I recognize that a critical edition and translation remains a desideratum and will be forthcoming in the near future.

The second methodological concern lies in the survival of a living Tibetan tradition that preserves the study and implementation of the ritual and ascetic practices that are outlined in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. This issue is particularly pressing with respect to the advanced *caryā* and *vrata* practices that defined the transgressive ascetic culture of the Buddhist *mahāsiddhas* who wrote these works. I conducted numerous interviews with Tibetan teachers within these traditions over the course of my research and discovered that, on the whole, my sources were largely reluctant to go on at length about these texts, their authors, and the practices described throughout the corpus. The reasons for this reluctance were varied. Some informants were forthcoming, but many felt that the texts themselves were too important to their own traditions and in some cases too advanced to warrant discussing them with anyone other than an advanced initiate who is intent on putting them into practice. In my opinion, such reservations are entirely warranted. But while my informants' general reticence presented an obstacle to engaging the role that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* continue to play in the living Tibetan Vajrayāna traditions in detail, it also provided a critical indication of the enduring importance that the corpus holds to this day. Still, those readers who are more ethnographically minded might notice a relative lack of engagement with the living tradition in this study. This lacuna is largely a result of the enduring cult of secrecy around these texts and the practices they describe. Further engagement with the living traditions that preserve these practices also remains a desideratum, and I plan to take this task up in the coming years in a study devoted to the modern reformulations of *siddha*

style transgressive asceticism and its importance to the perpetuation of the Tibetan Vajrayāna traditions in diaspora.

## II. Theory and Interpretive Challenges

There are also a number of interpretive challenges that have shaped my engagement with *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in this study. First, the works contained in the corpus have been widely influential in at least three distinct cultural-geographical regions associated with Vajrayāna Buddhism—India, Nepal, and Tibet. Second, the authors of these works are each concerned with different Vajrayāna textual traditions, and working with all seven works requires a broad level of engagement with Vajrayāna texts ranging from the *kriyātantras* to the *yoga-* and *yoginītantras*. Third, while it is exceedingly clear that these works were considered a unified corpus in Tibet, their status as a unified corpus in their original Indic context(s) is far from certain, though my research has provided some evidence of a related Indic corpus of seven '*siddhi*' texts. Finally, the Tibetan tradition considers *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to be one of the earliest corpora on *mahāmudrā* or the "Great Seal," and traces the origins of this corpus to Oḍiyāna, the semi-mythical font of the Buddhist tantric revelations. The fact that they hold such an exalted status in the Tibetan tradition thus presents a number of potential challenges to understanding *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in their original Indic contexts.

In response to the issue of the broad cultural-geographic region in which these works have had a notable influence on the development of Vajrayāna Buddhism, this study is designed to engage *The Seven Siddhi Texts* within its multiple cultural and historical contexts. It devotes a significant amount of time to situating these works in relationship to two of the most prevalent positions in etic historiography on the development of Vajrayāna

Buddhism in India—David Seyfort Ruegg's pan-Indic religious 'substratum model' and Alexis Sanderson's unidirectional 'borrowing model.' In terms of their influence on Vajrayāna Buddhism in Nepal, this study analyzes the extant Sanskrit witnesses to these works, most (if not all) of which are of Nepali origin, to discuss the potential Nepali precursors to the formulation of these texts into a unified corpus in Tibet. The important role that the Vajrayāna Buddhist institutions of the Kathmandu Valley played in preserving and teaching these works is also brought to light by analyzing Tibetan accounts of their transmission from the tenth century forward. Finally, the corpus is discussed in its Tibetan cultural and historical context through an analysis of the role that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* played in the formulation of two *mahāmudrā* practical canons in Tibet in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The formulation of these practical canons is then correlated to the deployment of the corpus in a volley of Sakya-Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical works, some of which continue to lend structure to the *mahāmudrā* curricula in these schools to the current day.

### **III. A Summary of the Work**

My engagement with these issues is divided over three parts, each consisting of four separate chapters. The chapters in Part I focus on my broad argument for the adoption of a demonological paradigm in the history of South Asian religions. Chapter one begins with an examination of Ruegg's 'substratum model' that outlines the basic argument and a number of issues that continue to challenge Ruegg's promotion of a pan-Indic religious substratum with which Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions have been in dialogue for more than two millennia. Here I argue that although Reugg's presentation of his 'substratum model' suffers

from an inability to identify the kind of properly 'religious' substratum that it requires, a certain religious 'substratum' can be located among the localized spirit cults that proliferate in all corners of South Asia. The study of these traditions and their impact on the formulation of organized religious sects in South Asia, however, requires that one approach these traditions from the perspective of the demonological paradigm. This hermeneutic reveals that all of these traditions, from the most popular and diffuse to the most organized and institutional, have been in some sense in dialogue with the same basic existential perspective—that the psycho-physical person is ultimately an open conduit embedded in a world that is overrun by a pantheon (or *pandemonium*) of potentially harmful spirit beings.

Chapter two makes the case for the broad ranging impact that local spirit deity cults have had on the formulation of institutional religion in South Asia. Here I take the Āyurvedic science of demonology (*bhūtavidyā*) as evidence of the degree of influence that localized, popular forms of religious expression in South Asia have had over their more elite and institutionalized counterparts. I explore the issue of Śaiva and Buddhist appropriations of local spirit religions and the preservation of familial and ritually protective structures in the renunciatory traditions. Here I argue that despite their own rhetoric of renunciation, these traditions maintain their own sense of familial identity along with a dossier of ritual methods for protecting both renunciants and the institutions they formulate over time. Thus renunciant communities and their institutions provide a kind of protective structure that, when analyzed through a demonological paradigm, can be shown to be in dialogue with the religious 'substratum' of spirit deity cults in South Asia and to be constructed in response to the same existential condition of an embodied personhood that is inherently vulnerable to influence from demonic beings.

Chapter three applies this argument to the specific case of the generation stage yogas that came to define esoteric Buddhist ritual in the *yoga-* and *yoginītantras*. In this chapter, I move systematically through *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to show the degree to which these works and their authors construct the central soteriological purpose of the generation stage yoga—attaining a state of spontaneous union of one's own psycho-physical body with the deity-*maṇḍala*—in dialogue with the basic existential condition that is brought to light within the demonological paradigm. This analysis reveals the practice of generating oneself as the deity-*maṇḍala* that constitutes the central goal of the Vajrayāna generation stage yoga is itself a method for rendering the psycho-physical body impermeable and invulnerable to interference from the world of spirit beings. Through this analysis, I argue that these traditions preserve a dual apotropaic-soteriological goal in which more philosophically-oriented components such as the realization of the nature of ultimate reality or non-dual gnosis are just as heavily invested in a demonological discourse as the ritual components of generating the body as an impenetrable fortress. This dual apotropaic-soteriological goal finds expression in the methods provided in these texts for becoming an 'indestructible being,' or *vajrasattva*, a term that simultaneously describes an apotropaic vision of 'being' that resolves the basic existential condition underlying the demonological paradigm and the embodied enlightenment as the Buddha Vajrasattva.

Chapter four moves on to the *caryā* and *vrata* ascetic practices that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* identify with the Vajrayāna completion stage yogas. Here I argue that the 'anti-ritual' rhetoric of the Buddhist *siddhas* is a product of the need to demonstrate one's attainment of the state of an 'indestructible being' at the culmination of the generation stage yoga. In this sense, the transgressive asceticism of the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* practices represent a



stage during which the advanced Buddhist ascetic must leave the protective structure of the physical *maṇḍala* behind and surrender any and all ritual means of protection from the world of spirit beings. This highlights the dual connotations of the term '*siddhi*' in this literature as the 'proof' of 'attainment' of the state of an indestructible being (*vajrasattva*). I provide a comprehensive survey of the rites and parameters for the performance of ritual that are prescribed in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and, by placing these in dialogue with the Āyurvedic literature on demonology, reveal that nearly all of them function in some way to prevent madness and disease brought on by demonic possession. I thus argue that the rejection of these rites is aimed at demonstrating that the advanced Buddhist ascetic who performs the transgressive practices of the *caryā* and *vrata* has perfected the spontaneous and embodied realization of perfect union as the deity-*maṇḍala*.

Part II turns to the topic of of sect and sectarian identity to explore some of the sociological implications of the ritual and ascetic culture at the heart of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Chapter five provides an outline of Alexis Sanderson's 'borrowing model.' Like my treatment of Ruegg's 'substratum model,' this chapter both affirms the value of Sanderson's approach while also pointing out a number of enduring issues in its practical application. Sanderson, like Ruegg, neglects the influence of non-sectarian popular religious cults on the formulation of Śaivism. It also fails at times to identify the potential Buddhist precursors to the emergence of Śaiva monastic institutionalism. The reified sense of sectarian identity that the 'borrowing model' requires ignores the possibility of holding multiple sectarian affiliations and the dynamics of egalitarian patronage practices in South Asia.

Chapter six turns to the topic of secrecy, dissimulation, and simulation in the performance of the *guhya*caryā in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. This work provides uniquely

detailed instructions on a number of advanced Vajrayāna ascetic practices. The chapter examines these practices as a form of cultivated social marginality that repurposes the Āyurvedic literature on the symptoms and pathology of madness brought on by demonic possession. Here I point out some obvious parallels with early precursors to this kind of asceticism among the Śaiva Pāśupata orders and their later counterparts. However, I also argue that the Buddhist versions of these practices differ in that they are oriented toward proving the advanced ascetic's invulnerability, not toward courting possession as they are in the Śaiva context. The chapter then examines some of the most controversial practices in this tradition in which it is clear that advanced Buddhist ascetics engaged in dual dissimulative-simulative practice of both hiding their identities as initiates and disguising themselves as members of rival ascetic orders. This dual dissimulative-simulative ascetic practice is the primary connotation that the term *guhya* is meant to carry as a member of the compound *guhya-caryā*. Thus, at least in this context, I argue that the term *guhya-caryā* signifies a kind of 'clandestine activity,' and that this practice provided a social context for the kind of 'borrowing' from Śaiva tradition that emerged in the extremely Śaiva-Buddhist hybrid ritual systems of the *yoginītantras*.

Chapters seven and eight focus on identifying the sense of sectarian identity that the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* project in their own work. Chapter seven contains a systematic presentation of instances in the corpus in which the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* express their conception of their own sectarian identity in their own words. It opens with evidence from the corpus of the guru-disciple relationship as the primary determinant of sectarian identity in Buddhist initiatory traditions. It then turns to examples from the texts in which the authors direct their instructions at both members of non-Buddhist sects and

Buddhists who are not affiliated with their specific initiatory cult. These examples show that the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Text* walk a fine line between exclusivism and inclusivism in as they define their own sectarian identity over and against others. Here I suggest that this line is drawn around the rite of consecration and initiation into a given sect itself where inclusive rhetoric operates as a kind of missionizing strategy and public fact of the tradition while a strict sense of exclusivism is applied to those who have already become bound by their commitments to a specific initiatory cult.

Chapter eight discusses the rhetoric of inclusivism in *mahāmudrā* cosmography. This theme appears in a number of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as well as in one work from a related corpus, Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*. Here I draw out a direct connection between inclusivist rhetoric in this literature and the doctrine of *mahāmudrā* itself, arguing that the Buddhist soteriological doctrine of the 'Great Seal' as both the origin and all encompassing nature of reality requires our authors to find some place for the variety of doctrinal viewpoints expressed by rival sects in their own cosmography. *Mahāmudrā* is thus posited as the singular nature of all things and the ultimate origin point of all divergent sectarian views. Our authors then posit that the variety of sectarian viewpoints is merely a manifestation of this singular nature in a form that appeals to the variety of dispositions of living beings. This movement of contraction and expansion is itself overlaid on the process of the spontaneous embodied manifestation of the deity-*maṇḍala* that characterizes the Vajrayāna generation stage yoga. Chapter eight then concludes by returning to the issue of sectarian identity in light of the fundamental logic that underlies initiatory traditions and the process of consecration. Here I argue that despite the exclusivist rhetoric of the initiatory traditions, the process of initiation itself can only operate on the assumption that identity is a

fundamentally fluid phenomenon. I then bring the theoretical framework that I outline in Parts I and II of the dissertation to a close by arguing that Ruegg's 'substratum model' and Sanderson's 'borrowing model' are not diametrically opposed theories for the origins of institutional religion in South Asia. Both approaches are valid, and to assume their opposition posits a false dialectic that can only result in a more constrained and misrepresentative historiography of the development and dialogical interactions that construct religious identity in South Asia.

Part III of the dissertation focuses on the formulation of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a *mahāmudrā* practical canon. Chapter nine contains a philological analysis of the extant Sanskrit manuscripts of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that are currently at my disposal. It opens with a discussion of the foundational research that was conducted on these works in the twentieth-century. Here I note that Malati J. Shendge, owing to the 1949 publication of George Roerich's translation of *The Blue Annals*, noticed that the '*siddhi*' texts she was working with were part of a known corpus of works in the Tibetan tradition. I then introduce one of the persistent problems in identifying the Tibetan historiography on this corpus by pointing to the misidentification of the compound *Drupnying* and its permutations in *The Blue Annals* as a signifier for Saraha's *dohā*. As it turns out, this compound actually signifies *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and their attendant corpus, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, of which Saraha's *dohā* are only one part. The chapter then turns to a detailed philological analysis of the Sanskrit manuscript sources for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* at my disposal. Far from being a merely descriptive exercise, this analysis offers material evidence for the potential existence of a known corpus of seven works among the multiple-text manuscripts that contain witnesses to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. This evidence, combined with the correct

identification of the Tibetan compound *Drupnying* as a signifier for the corpus in *The Blue Annals*, provides material data to support my hypothesis that there was a known corpus of seven '*siddhi*' texts that had gained widespread recognition in Nepal prior to its transmission to Tibet in the eleventh century.

Chapter ten opens with a broad examination of the theory of practical canonicity in Buddhist traditions that was first posited in Anne Blackburn's work on the formal/practical canon distinction in Theravāda Buddhism. My examination of the formal/practical canon distinction in Blackburn's research and the works of a number of other scholars in the field results in a framework for establishing the status of any corpus of works as a practical canon. In this framework I posit that the practicality of any corpus of works depends upon its ability to dictate curriculum. This means that identifying contexts in which a group of works are put to a specifically curricular purpose establishes their practicality and their status as an institution-specific practical canon. This theoretical discussion is then put into practice as I argue that the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* contains evidence of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* being employed in a distinctly curricular work that is oriented toward teaching a *mahāmudrā* doctrine. When it is combined with the material evidence for a known set of seven '*siddhi*' texts among the multiple-text Sanskrit manuscripts analyzed in chapter nine, the data presented here from the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* suggest that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* may have been recognized as a corpus of works that functioned within a broader *mahāmudrā* practical canon outside of Tibet.

Chapter eleven examines Tibetan sources and historiography on the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The chapter opens with a description of the various formulations of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that appear in both

canonical and extra-canonical Tibetan literature. It then moves on to a brief discussion of the two earliest witnesses to the corpus in Tibetan literature in the works of the Kagyü patriarch Gampopa and the Sakya patriarch Sakya Paṇḍita. The *mahāmudrā* doctrines attributed to these two patriarchs are at the center of the Sakya-Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical literature that drew upon *The Seven Siddhi Texts* from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. However, while references to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in their works reveals their familiarity with the corpus, it remains unclear whether or not either Gampopa or Sakya Paṇḍita considered it part of a broader Indian *mahāmudrā* canon. The chapter then turns to historical accounts of the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to Tibet from Gö Lotsawa's *Blue Annals*. Here, broadening my analysis to include all instances in which Gö Lotsawa records the transmission of the *Drupnying* corpus allows for a far more robust historical account of the various transmissions of these works beginning with Atiśa's arrival in Tibet in the mid-eleventh century. The data from Gö Lotsawa's *Blue Annals* also provide further evidence that by the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Vajrayāna institutions of the Kathmandu valley were largely responsible for the preservation and propagation of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of a *mahāmudrā* practical canon.

Chapter twelve provides a case study in the application of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a *mahāmudrā* practical canon in Tibet by discussing their incorporation into two practical canons within the Kagyü tradition around the turn of the sixteenth century and the deployment of that practical canon in the *mahāmudrā* polemical works that were produced by a subsequent generation of Kagyü scholars. It is in this chapter that the dynamics of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of a broader *mahāmudrā* practical canon are most evident. The chapter opens with a discussion of the historical context behind the Seventh Karmapa

Chödrak Gyatso's publication of his three-volume collection of *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. It then turns to a discussion of a similar *mahāmudrā* practical canon whose initial publication is believed to trace to the Drikung Kagyü patriarch Kūnga Rinchen, who was himself a student of the Seventh Karmapa and received the latter's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* from his uncle and root-guru. Here I argue that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and their attendant *mahāmudrā* corpora provided a basic structure for the formulation of these two Tibetan *mahāmudrā* practical canons, and that these projects were carried out in an attempt to revitalize Kagyü institutions that had fallen into disrepair with the rise of the Geluk sect in the fifteenth century. The chapter then turns to the role that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* played in a volley of *mahāmudrā* polemical works that were composed by Sakya and Kagyü authors from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Here I show that the primary doctrinal issue that the corpus was used to address revolved around whether or not the conferral and realization of *mahāmudrā* was exclusively related to the four-fold consecration structure outlined in *yoginītantra* works such as the *Hevajratantra*. This analysis reveals a number of strategies employed by Tibetan *mahāmudrā* polemicists such as misrepresenting or misquoting canonical scriptures and massaging the content of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* themselves to support their own position. This chapter, and the dissertation, then concludes by discussing the hermeneutic problems of working with Tibetan authors who subscribe to and promote the rhetoric of a homogenous "Indian Tradition."

**Part I:**  
*The Seven Siddhi Texts and*  
**the Demonological Paradigm**



## Chapter 1:

### Demonology and the 'Pan-Indic Substratum' Model

#### I. Introduction

Theories regarding the development of Buddhist tantric traditions in India can be largely identified as aligning themselves with two etiologies that have come to dominate the field from the mid-twentieth century forward. The first position, formally advanced by David Seyfort Ruegg, argues that the concordances between Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions reflect these traditions' participation in a shared, pan-Indic cultural and religious substratum. The second argument, advanced by Alexis Sanderson in response to Ruegg, and specifically within the context of the development of the Śaiva and Buddhist tantric traditions, states that there is no evidence for such a pan-Indic substratum independent of the literary, art historical, and epigraphic data at the historian's disposal, and these data are always inevitably bound up in some specific sectarian identity. Thus, the appearance of common elements between various sects must be considered an act of borrowing or appropriation, and it is the historian's duty to discover the context and the direction of such acts of inter-sectarian appropriation. The current chapter presents the merits and shortcomings of David Seyfort Ruegg's 'substratum' model. The discussions of Ruegg that follow are intended to lay the groundwork for the broader argument in Part I of this study for the importance of adopting a demonological paradigm in the study of the history of Buddhist traditions and, in particular, the esoteric ritual and ascetic practices found in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and the broader array of textual traditions of Vajrayāna Buddhism. Unlike Sanderson's borrowing model, Ruegg's model extends beyond those textual traditions commonly referred to as 'tantra.' Although the

relevance of his substratum model to tantric Buddhism is the primary topic in this analysis, some attention is also given to exploring this argument in the context of the more exoteric genres of Buddhist literature.

David Seyfort Ruegg introduced his 'pan-Indian religious substratum' argument first in a 1964<sup>1</sup> article, defending it decades later in 2001 in a short essay<sup>2</sup> followed by a full-length volume in 2008.<sup>3</sup> These two later works offer a corrective to what he sees as a potential misunderstanding of his argument by clarifying that his 'pan-Indian religious substratum' should not be thought of as something "allogeneic, or exogenous, in relation to the form of Buddhism incorporating it,"<sup>4</sup> but rather as a shared 'substratum' in the sense of both underlying and inhering within Buddhist and Brahmanical/Hindu traditions.<sup>5</sup> Ruegg argues that the *laukika/lokottara* or 'worldly/transcendent' distinction in Buddhist literature is an emic structure reflecting his own 'substratum' model that functions as an important tool for understanding the way Buddhists have imagined themselves in relationship with the laws and religious beliefs of others. Following his original 1964 publication, Ruegg went on to publish a major work in 1965 arguing that the *laukika/lokottara* distinction constituted an essential

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<sup>1</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg, "Sur les Rapports entre le Bouddhisme et le 'substrat religieux' indien et tibétain," in *Journal Asiatique* 252 (1964): 77–95.

<sup>2</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg, "A Note on the Relationship Between Buddhist and 'Hindu' Divinities in Buddhist Literature and Iconology: The *Laukika/Lokottara* Contrast and the Notion of an Indian 'Religious Substratum,'" in *Le parole e i marmi: studi in onore di Raniero Gnoli nel suo 70. compleanno*, ed. R. Torella (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2001), 735–42.

<sup>3</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahminism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with 'Local Cults' in Tibet and the Himalaya Region*, *Beiträge zur Kultur—un Geistesgeschichte Asiens* 58 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Ruegg, "A Note on the Relationship Between Buddhist and 'Hindu' Divinities in Buddhist Literature and Iconology: The *Laukika/Lokottara* Contrast and the Notion of an Indian 'Religious Substratum,'" in *Le parole e i marmi: studi in onore di Raniero Gnoli nel suo 70. compleanno*, ed. R. Torella (Rome: Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, 2001), 735–42.

<sup>5</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahminism/Hinduism in South Asia and of Buddhism with 'Local Cults' in Tibet and the Himalaya Region*, *Beiträge zur Kultur—un Geistesgeschichte Asiens* 58 (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2008).

<sup>4</sup> Ruegg, *Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahminism/Hinduism*, vi.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, vi.

conceptual framework for the outlining of Buddhist political theory in India and its later flourishing in Tibet.<sup>6</sup>

Ruegg focuses on applications of the *laukika/lokottara* model that emphasize continuity between the worldly and transcendent, arguing that the distinction need not necessarily represent a fixed, hermetic, and exclusive hierarchy.<sup>7</sup> This continuity of the *laukika/lokottara* distinction is perhaps best expressed within the context of the more political applications of the term 'dharma.' Here it has served as a fundamental tenet underlying the soteriological connection between a ruler's proper enactment of 'dharma' in terms of his enforcement of worldly 'law' and a ruler's ultimate concern with 'dharma' in its 'trans-mundane' or *lokottara* sense as a vehicle for a greater soteriological goal. Such continuity can be seen in the following verse from Nāgārjuna's (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) *Prajñāsāhita*, a work within the Sanskrit genre of *nītiśāstra* or 'political science,'<sup>8</sup> that is widely referenced in the Tibetan exegetical tradition on the interrelationship of *laukika-* and *lokottara-dharma*:

When the laws of men are practiced well,  
The journey to the god realm is not far.  
If one ascends the ladder of gods and men,  
One is in the vicinity of liberation.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> David Seyfort Ruegg, *Ordre spirituel et ordre temporel dans la pensée Bouddhique se ;'Inde et du Tibet: Quatre conférences au Collège de France* (Paris: Collège de France, 1995).

<sup>7</sup> Ruegg, *Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahminism/Hinduism*, vi.

<sup>8</sup> Johannes Bronkhorst, *Buddhism in the Shadow of Brahmanism* (Leiden: Brill, 2011), 163. Bronkhorst notes the following work dealing with the topic of the section of the Tibetan *Bstan 'gyur* that contains a number of works on *nītiśāstra*. See Suniti Kumar Pathak, *The Indian Nītiśāstras in Tibet* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974). For a treatment of this topic in the context of Tibetan literature on governance and its Indian precursors see Adam C. Krug, "Pakpa's Verses on Governance in *Advice to Prince Jibik Temür: A Jewel Rosary*," *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* 24, ed. Brandon Dotson (2015): 117–44. See also Jamgön Mipham, *The Just King: The Tibetan Buddhist Classic on Leading an Ethical Life*, trans. José Ignacio Cabezón (Boulder, CO: Snow Lion Publications, 2017).

<sup>9</sup> Nāgārjuna, "Shes rab brgya pa zhes bya ba'i rab tu byed pa (Skt. *Prajñāsāhitanāmaprakāraṇa*)," in *Sde dge bstan 'gyur*, Tōh. no. 4328, *Thun mong pa'i lugs kyi bstan bcos ngo*, 103r.4; 205.4. Tibetan:

Nāgārjuna's verse supports Ruegg's argument for substratal continuity in the *laukika/lokottara* distinction, expressed here with the metaphor of a ladder. This work's location in the Dégé (Sde dge) edition of the *Translations of the Treatises (Bstan 'gyur*, henceforth *Tenjyur*) strengthens Ruegg's argument that Buddhists themselves, or more precisely in this case the various Tibetan redactors between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries who produced the stemma to which the Sde dge edition of the *Bstan 'gyur* bears witness,<sup>10</sup> acknowledged the value of literary material that was not specifically Buddhist, but that represented the collective knowledge of a shared cultural 'substratum' deemed worthy of preserving in the canon. Compilations of the *Bstan 'gyur* that follow the organizational schema reflected in the Sde dge edition categorize this and a handful of other *nītiśāstra* works as "held in common [with other, non-Buddhist traditions]" (*thun mong pa*). As Ruegg notes, Buddhists also considered the first four categories in the classical schema of the five sciences (*pañcavidyāsthāna*, *rig gnas lnga*)—grammar (*śabdavidyā*, *sgra rig pa*), medicine (*cikitsāvidyā*, *gso ba rig pa*), logic (*hetuvidyā*, *tshad ma rig pa*), and the arts (*śilpakarmasthānavidyā*, *gzo ba rigs pa*)—as 'common' categories of knowledge, or subjects that were common to both Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The final category of the five sciences termed 'our own science' (*adhyātmavidyā*, *nang chos rigs pa*), or Buddhism proper, is explicitly distinguished from the first four, signaling that Buddhists recognized their own

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/mi yi chos lugs legs spyad na/  
 /lha yul bgrod pa thag mi ring/  
 /lha dang mi yi them skas la/  
 /'dzegs na thar pa gam na 'dug

<sup>10</sup> This range of dates reflects a general arc for the progressive organization of the *Bstan 'gyur* following from the work of figures such as Jomden Rikrel (Bcom ldan rig pa'i ral gri 1227–1305) and Butön (Bu ston rin chen grub 1290–1364) through to the Sde dge edition of the *Tenjyur*'s publication in the mid-eighteenth century.

specifically Buddhist categories of knowledge as distinct-from, yet also related-to a set of commonly held categories of knowledge that they deemed to be of value.<sup>11</sup>

Two of these five sciences, logic and medicine, are potentially important for testing whether or not Ruegg's substratum model is able to locate broader, non-sectarian cultural discourses of knowledge underlying a corpus of works like *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Both *hetuvidyā* (or *pramāṇavidyā*) and *bhūṭavidyā*, or demonology (a sub-genre of *cikitsāvidyā*), are central components of the esoteric Buddhist traditions,<sup>12</sup> and there are common threads of discourse in these fields across traditions and sectarian identities.<sup>13</sup> Using the *pañcavidyāsthānas* as an example, Ruegg correctly points out that his 'pan-Indian religious substratum' is not, as Sanderson alleges, a collection of "entities inferred but never perceived,"<sup>14</sup> and that there are indeed instances in which it has left its mark on the historical record in a genre of literature that is not necessarily directly claimed-by or affiliated-with any specific sectarian identity.

Ruegg extends the kind of *laukika/lokottara* continuity acknowledged in Buddhist formulations of the genres of *nītiśāstra* and the *pañcavidyāsthāna* to a more specifically religious context—the relationship between Buddhist deities and their related ritual formulae and those of the Brahmanical/Hindu traditions. He admits to there having been "some

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<sup>11</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahminism/ Hinduism*, 8.

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the intersection of tantric literature and epistemology in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* see Adam C. Krug, "Tantric Epistemology and the Problem of Ineffability in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*," in *Buddhism and Linguistics: Theory and Philosophy*, ed. Mane Herat (United Kingdom: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 149–84.

<sup>13</sup> This is perhaps more accurate in the case of the medical sciences than the science of logic, particularly in the case of the topic of *pramāṇa*, a highly contested area of study in South Asian literature. *Pramāṇa* or 'epistemology' has functioned as one of the primary ways that different sects identified themselves over and against their contemporaries throughout the history of religion in South Asia, and Buddhist works on the subject of epistemology within category of *hetuvidyā* tend to preserve an identifiably sectarian Buddhist approach.

<sup>14</sup> Alexis Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," in *Buddhism into the Year 2000: International Conference Proceedings* (Bangkok and Los Angeles, Dhammakaya Foundation, 1994), 92.

conflict" between Buddhist traditions and their Brahmanical contemporaries likening the situation to a "'confrontational inclusivism' of the kind postulated by Paul Hacker."<sup>15</sup> Yet his analysis seems to be heavily oriented toward playing down the conflict between Buddhists and non-Buddhists in the classical and medieval periods, a bias that has become increasingly untenable in the wake of Giovanni Verardi's 2011 monograph on the *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India*. Verardi presents significant evidence that a continual and protracted pattern of violence and conflict on the part of Vaidika Brahmins and the new theological Brahmanism against Buddhists is to blame for Buddhism's contraction and near-disappearance from the subcontinent by the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries of the common era, and not the Turkic invasions and the rise of the Mughal empire.<sup>16</sup> It is in his extension of the *laukika/lokottara* distinction to the relationship between Buddhists and non-Buddhists (and not just the relationship, conceived within Buddhist circles, between 'worldly' and 'trans-mundane' categories of knowledge) that Ruegg's analysis overreaches in its bias toward inclusivity.

Noting several instances in his textual, art historical, and epigraphic data that reflect a kind of inclusivist continuity and fluidity between Buddhist and non-Buddhist traditions, Ruegg insists that reading iconographic data such as the images of Vajrayāna deity couple Heruka-Vajravārāhī, who stand trampling their Śaiva analogues Bhairava and Kālarātrī underfoot,<sup>17</sup> need not necessarily follow what he calls a "more or less secular and historicist

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<sup>15</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahminism/Hinduism*, 47–48.

<sup>16</sup> Giovanni Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2011). This is essentially the thesis for Verardi's entire book. I direct the reader here to his general overview in the introduction to this work and in Chapter 1 on "Historical Paradigms," but the entire work is worthy of a close look to fully appreciate Verardi's contribution.

<sup>17</sup> Alexis Sanderson, with whom Ruegg is primarily in conversation in his 2001 and 2008 works defending his pan-Indian religious substratum model, accepts almost unequivocally that such images are attempts by the Buddhist side to profess the superiority of their own deities and ritual cult over its Śaiva analogue. In this argument, the Buddhist tantric deity's 'transcendence' of their Śaiva counterparts is

interpretation...representing the agonistic or hostile relation 'Buddhism vs. Hinduism.'"<sup>18</sup>

Summarizing this argument in the introduction to his 2008 work, he states that the interpretation of this iconography as specifically intended to portray a Buddhist deity triumphing over its Śaiva counterpart is "not supported by the way such figures have been understood in a large number of relevant Buddhist texts where, iconographically, the schema represents rather the superordination of the transmundane over the mundane and subordinate level."<sup>19</sup> This particular argument for a simultaneous continuity and subordination within the *laukika/lokottara* distinction follows Hacker's theory of inclusivism as a strategy in which similar elements observed in other traditions are posited as equivalent, yet somehow also subordinate or inferior to one's own.<sup>20</sup>

Ruegg argues that the kind of continuity displayed in the *laukika/lokottara* schema tends to be overlooked or entirely ignored by the proponents of what he refers to as Sanderson's 'borrowing model.' He writes:

To affirm a certain continuity between Indian Buddhism and Indian civilization, and to propose a ('pan-Indian') substratum model to help describe and understand the relationship between the two, is of course by itself less a final and definitive interpretation or judgment than it is a means of elucidating the issues at hand. But continuity seems to be somewhat overlooked when, for example, we hear of the borrowing of Brahmanical/ Hindu divinities in Buddhism, a procedure which evidently implies that the Indian religious ground or substratum is foreign and exogenous to Buddhism. To put it pointedly, Indian Buddhists could hardly have borrowed what was already in their religious and cultural heritage. The question is, then, just how this shared heritage has been regarded and used by Buddhists.<sup>21</sup>

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imagined as a clearly hierarchical relationship. See Alexis Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Saivism During the Early Medieval Period," in *Genesis and Development of Tantrism*, edited by Shingo Einoo (Tokyo: Institute of Oriental Culture University of Tokyo 2009), 172.

<sup>18</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, viii.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, viii.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 97. Here Ruegg quotes Paul Hacker, "Inklusivismus," in *Inklusivismus, eine indische Denkform*, edited by G. Oberhammer (Vienna, 1983), 12.

<sup>21</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 89.

He goes on to argue that it is this common, shared cultural and religious substratum *that provides the possibility for any degree of borrowing to take place at all* (thus the 'borrowing model' is in agreement with the argument for a substratum, but the latter is ultimately superior in its scope). This point is essentially a reproduction of Wilhelm Dilthey's dialectical epistemology of interpretation, quoted famously in Jonathan Z. Smith's *Map is Not Territory*<sup>22</sup> and, following Smith, in numerous subsequent works that address the often-problematic nature of comparative methodologies.<sup>23</sup> Dilthey writes, "[i]nterpretation would be impossible if [past] expressions of life were completely strange. It would be unnecessary if nothing strange were in them. It lies, therefore between these two extremes."<sup>24</sup> In order to transform Dilthey's argument into Ruegg's argument against Sanderson, the reader need only substitute the term 'borrowing' for 'interpretation,' and 'Brahmanical/Hindu forms of religious expression' for Dilthey's 'expressions of life.' Ruegg's argument against the 'borrowing model' makes use of Dilthey's dialectic to argue for a necessary middle ground between the imagination of 'wholly other' sectarian identities that would logically not even be able to recognize each other let alone facilitate any level of borrowing and 'wholly similar' identities for which any act of borrowing would be entirely unnecessary.

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<sup>22</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory: Studies in the History of Religions* (Leiden: Brill, 1978), 242.

<sup>23</sup> References to this statement from Dilthey have grown too numerous to warrant listing them all here, particularly in response to J.Z. Smith's employment of it. Nevertheless, the following is a short list of sources in which the reader might find a discussion of Dilthey's take on interpretation and its implications for comparative methods in South Asian Religions, Buddhist Studies, and Religious Studies: Wendy Donniger, "Post Modern Comparisons" in *A Magic Still Dwells: Religion in the Postmodern Age*, edited by Kimberly Christine Patton and Benjamin C. Ray (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 65; Wendy Donniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013), 67; and in the context of Buddhist Studies, Barbara R Clayton, *Moral Theory in Śāntideva's Śikṣāsamuccāya: Cultivating the Fruits of Virtue* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 14.

<sup>24</sup> Jonathan Z. Smith, *Map is Not Territory*, 242. Cited by Smith from Wilhelm Dilthey, *Gesammelte Schriften 7: Der Aufbau der geschichtlichen Welt in den Geisteswissenschaften* (Stuttgart: B.G. Teubner Verlagsgesellschaft, 1958), 255. Smith notes that the work is translated in H.P. Rickman, *Pattern and Meaning in History: Thoughts on History and Society by Wilhelm Dilthey* (New York: Harper & Row, 1961), 77.



## II. Issues with the Substratum Model 1: Re-examining the Case for the *Pañcavidyāsthānas* as Substratum

One of the strong points of Ruegg's argument for a 'pan-Indian religious substratum' as a common source for the emergence of similar forms of religious praxis among tantric traditions is his identification of specifically non-sectarian literary traditions that were themselves identified as 'common' to all religious systems, at least by Buddhists, such as the first four of the five sciences. Ruegg's clarification that his 'substratum' is in no way external to the traditions in which it plays some role is also helpful. Yet there are some problems with both arguments. First, the initial four *pañcavidyāsthānas* are considered to be held 'in common' because Buddhists regard them as *containing no religious content that might cause them to be identified with any specific religious sect*. Ruegg is, after all, arguing for a pan-Indian *religious* substratum. His example of the sciences of grammar, logic, medicine, and the arts are, by the very definition given by the Buddhist architects of this system, *not religious*. Of course in the hands of Buddhist artists, the curriculum for disciplines such as the 'science the arts' or *śilpakarmasthānavidyā* may take on religious aspects when they provide schemata for drawing Buddhist deities, creating Buddhist statuary, and providing directions for the construction of Buddhist architecture, but the category of *śilpa* has a strong literary presence across traditions, each of which will have its own approach to the 'arts,' usually found in the textual genre of *śilpaśāstra* to contain instructions and guidelines for the construction and creation of religious objects pertaining to a particular sect.

Certain works within the 'common' sciences take on distinct sectarian identities by being identified as the revelation of a particular deity. Ruegg points out a relevant example in Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*. The Tibetan translation of this text preserved in the *Bstan 'gyur* and in

the works of Butön (Bu ston rin chen grub, 1290–1364) and Tāranātha (Jo nang rje btsun tā ra nā tha, 1575–1634) consider the text to have been revealed by the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, while the inherited Brahmanical textual tradition attributes its revelation to Śiva.<sup>25</sup> Ruegg, following Deshpande, appeals to the argument of Avalokiteśvara or Padmapāṇi as "the Buddhist reflex of Śiva."<sup>26</sup> But once a specific religious identity can be located in a work belonging to the 'common' sciences, the argument that these works provide evidence of a pan-Indic substratum inevitably begins to weaken. While the evidence for localized traditions that recognized the same deity as both Maheśvara and Avalokiteśvara provides a clear example of a hybridized sectarian identity, the possibility that such a cult is behind Buddhists and Śaiva claims to their own deity's role in the revelation of Pāṇini's grammar does not actually remove sectarian identity from the equation—it merely introduces the possibility of a dual or hybrid Buddhist-Śaiva sectarian identity. Such hybrid identities, which are extremely common throughout South Asia, actually strengthen the argument against the existence of a non-affiliated pan-Indic religious substratum because *they rest on the implicit assumption that two distinct religious sects have laid claim to the same deity*. In short, hybridity does not necessarily imply commonality.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps more importantly, aside from competing claims among Buddhists and Śaivas as to which deity inspired Pāṇini's *Aṣṭādhyāyī*, his grammar is further evidence that the four divisions of the *pañcavidyāsthāna* that are considered to be 'common' are classified in this way because they lack any religious content.

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<sup>25</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 12. On this topic see Madhav M. Deshpande, "Who Inspired Pāṇini? Reconstructing the Hindu and Buddhist Counter-Claims," *JOAS* 117 (1997): 444–65.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>27</sup> It does, however, offer some basis from which to critique the overly reified sense of sectarian identity that appears to be at work in Sanderson's 'borrowing model.' This topic is taken up in chapter five.

The classical medical sciences, however, do contain elements that constitute a non-sectarian and extremely widespread cultural substratum that, by some definitions, might rightfully be termed 'religious.' These elements are found in the Āyurvedic literature on demonology (*bhūtavidyā*),<sup>28</sup> a subfield of medicine whose expansion appears to have coincided with the tantric cults' rise to prominence throughout the first half of the first millennium CE. The relationship between the scholastic discourse on demonology or *bhūtavidyā* and the initiatory cults commonly referred to as 'tantra' is best exemplified in the emergence of the literary genre of *bhūtatantra*. The *bhūtatantras* are recognized as a distinctly Śaiva literary development, but there were certainly Buddhist works like the *Mahāmāyurīvidyārājñīsūtra* containing taxonomies and prescriptions for addressing and manipulating the world of spirit deities.<sup>29</sup> It would be careless to assume that the discursive culture of knowledge regarding the world of spirit beings that the Āyurvedic science of *bhūtavidyā*, the Buddhist *dhāraṇī* literature, and the *bhūtatantra* have in common is exclusively Śaiva. Ruegg's argument that the *vidyāsthānas* provide evidence of a 'pan-Indian

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<sup>28</sup> This is admittedly a limited translation of the term. Within the context of the classical medical sciences of *Āyurveda*, *bhūtavidyā* encompasses things such as knowledge of the elements (*bhūta*), particularly in their specific influence on the development of the child in the womb and the resulting elemental balances and imbalances at birth, as well as the taxonomy, symptomology, diagnosis, and treatment of various disorders caused by possession by unseen forces or 'spirits' (*bhūta*), which contains a detailed symptomology that covers a range of potential possessing beings.

<sup>29</sup> The Śaiva *bhūtatantras* are largely believed to be modeled upon the systems of symptomology, diagnosis, and pathology that are found in the Āyurvedic literature on *bhūtavidyā* or 'demonology.' The claim to any exclusively Śaiva identity for this class of works remains tentative given the fact that no examples of *bhūtatantras* have actually been brought to light. Instead, our knowledge of this genre of texts is derived from later Śaiva works like the *Netratantra*, the nineteenth chapter of which quotes a number of texts that may at one time have formed a compendium of *bhūtatantras*. On this strata of the *Netratantra* see David Gordon White, "Netra Tantra at the Crossroads of the Demonological Cosmopolis," *Journal of Hindu Studies* (2012): 145–71. For further evidence for a broad literature and its relation to later Śaiva sources on *bhūtavidyā* see Michael James Slouber, "Gāruḍa Medicine: A History of Snakebite and Religious Healing in South Asia," (PhD diss., University of California, Berkeley, 2012). Finally, for evidence of one potential fragmentary witness to the *bhūtatantra* genre see Diwakar Acharya, "Three Fragmentary Folios of a 9<sup>th</sup>-Century Manuscript of an Early Bhūtatantra Taught by Mahāmaheśvara," in *Tantric Studies: Fruits of a Franco-German Project on Early Tantra*, Collection Indologie 131; Early Tantra Series 4; ed. Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson (Institut Français de Pondichéry, École française d'Extrême-Orient, Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg, 2016), 157–79.

religious substratum' is correct in this case, but the evidence that Ruegg provides fails to locate a specifically *religious substratum* among the five sciences because it neither addresses the topic of *bhūtavidyā* nor acknowledges the discourse that demonology shares with popular religious spirit deity cults across South Asia. The *Āyurvedic* discourse on demonology actually does provide evidence for the existence of a 'pan-Indian religious substratum,' and this substratum is particularly (though not exclusively) important to the shared ritual and ascetic cultures of Śaiva and Buddhist tantric literature. Ruegg's failure to acknowledge this example, which would provide ample response to Sanderson's critique, is likely a result of a long-standing bias within the modern European scholastic tradition he has inherited toward a categorical distinction between 'magic' and 'religion.'

### **III. Issues with the Substratum Model 2: Locating 'Ambient Religion'**

More troubling than this oversight, however, is Ruegg's appeal to the idea of an "ambient religion," a move that seems to submerge his 'substratum model' in precisely the kind of overly ideological quagmire for which he was accused by Sanderson. Given the fact that the phrase is placed in the singular, not plural,<sup>30</sup> and applied within an argument for a shared religious substratum, "ambient religion" must be read as an indication or gesture in the direction of a religious substratum that, by definition of its being 'shared,' must not belong to any single sect or religious group exclusively. The use of the term "ambient" here is not just a reference to other social and religious realities that were simply close at hand for Buddhists,

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<sup>30</sup> It is difficult to identify a viable referent for the term when it is used in the singular, while in the plural it would clearly refer to actual religious sects that existed at any given time alongside Buddhism. The choice to place the term in the singular is thus telling. To speak of ambient *religions* might make sense, but to speak of a singular ambient *religion* arguably does not. Ruegg moves between both in his argument, which leads to ambiguity around whether or not 'ambient religion' refers to a plurality of specific religious identities or a single homogeneous and pervasive religious identity in which all potential sects participate.

but a reference to the existence of these social and religious realities as evidence for a pan-Indian religious substratum. His presentation of Buddhism's relationship to this "ambient religion" only reinforces the argument that specific sectarian identities are largely inescapable when one deals with the material historical data for Buddhism. Ruegg writes:

[T]he Buddhists of India were after all Indians, even if we do not wish to reify these names. To say this is, after all, merely to state what should be obvious, namely that the ambient culture of India was the matrix from which, historically, sprang Buddhism as well as Brahmanism/Hinduism and Jainism and in which they developed and flourished over the centuries.<sup>31</sup>

The lack of nuance in this statement provides a clear sense of the methodological flaws underlying Ruegg's substratum theory. Although he appears to exercise some caution against 'reifying' phrases such as "the Buddhists of India," *there is no possible way to maintain as vague a notion as an "ambient religion" or "ambient culture" without such acts of reification.* One wonders which Buddhists are spoken of here, or even more troubling, what exactly it means to reference the existence of "India" at all prior to the late colonial period.

Ruegg supports his argument for a relationship between the Buddhist conception of worldly law (*laukika dharma*) and an 'ambient religion' with number of examples from textual sources, citing evidence for Buddhist influence in the *Manusmṛti* and the periodic adoption or protest against the Vaidika *varṇāśramadharmā* as proof of the shared social realities between Buddhists and other religious systems. Citing an example from Bhāvaviveka's (500–578 CE) *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* in which the author refers to "the ultimate *brahman* which the gods such as Brahmā and the like do not understand" (*paramaṃ brahma brahmādyair yan na grhyate*) as "the ultimate truth that the sage who speaks the truth taught," (*paramaṃ satyaṃ satyavādī jagau munih*) Ruegg that "[a]mong Buddhists... awareness of a common matrix and milieu shared with the ambient society, religions and

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<sup>31</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahminism/ Hinduism*, 1.

ways of thinking of India did not lead to the loss of a sense of identity and distinctiveness in respect to religion, or indifferentism in respect to philosophy[.]”<sup>32</sup> Yet the verse cited from Bhāvaviveka's *Madhyamakahrdayakārikā* does not, in fact, speak of an 'ambient' society or religion. It is a critique of a specific set of rival philosophical traditions that employed the language of *brahman* as 'ultimate reality,' and whose origins can be traced to the literature of a specific religious sect—the Vaidika-Vedāntin literature of the *Upaniṣads*.

Ruegg's appeal to a common religious substratum to account for the shared iconographic, doctrinal, and ritualistic elements between Buddhist, Śaivas, Vaidika Brahmins, Vaiṣṇavas, and Jains might suffer from an overly simplistic model of the 'development' of Buddhism. This oversimplification is evident in Ruegg's generalized employment of the notion of a unified "India" operating as the backdrop for a shared cultural milieu for Buddhists and the surrounding "ambient religion:"

What accounts for the fact that gods, divinities and celestials bearing the same (or very closely related) names are to be found in Buddhism as well as in other religions of India? As far as Indian Buddhism is concerned, the answer, briefly stated, may well be that these entities are Indian, that Buddhists were Indians, and therefore that Buddhism was in the first place an Indian religion that made use of widely spread Indian ideas. To suppose that Buddhism arose and developed in some sort of water-tight compartment separate from its Indian milieu and matrix would make almost impossible any treatment of Buddhism as a religion and as a system of thinking of India.<sup>33</sup>

The accusation here that any scholar might actually subscribe to such a hermetic vision of Buddhism's development in South Asia appears overly dialectical. It is difficult to imagine any scholar who would actually subscribe to such a view, which suggests that the argument hinges on positing a false dialectic.

The category of 'India' that Ruegg employs in his argument for an 'ambient religion'

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<sup>32</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism and Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 12–15.

<sup>33</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 41.

might benefit from a closer consideration of scholarship on the historical context for Buddhism's emergence in Magadha around the fifth century BCE. Two works, Johannes Bronkhorst's *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India*,<sup>34</sup> and Jan Heesterman's *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship, and Society*, provide insight into the degree to which a 'pan-Indian religious substratum' might have factored into the emergence of Buddhism and the shift toward the ritual theory of the classical Vedic *śrauta* sacrifice. Bronkhorst locates the religious 'substratum' for the emergence of the early Buddhist *saṅgha* in a cultural milieu that was largely independent of Brahmanical society, while the Heesterman argues that the impetus for the major theoretical shift in the Brahmanical conception of the Vedic sacrifice in the first millennium BCE was entirely internal. Both perspectives remain theoretical, of course, but they do provide potential counter-points that might challenge the 'pan-Indian religious substratum' model's ability to account for the relationship between Buddhist and Brahmanical traditions in the centuries leading up to the advent of the Buddhist *saṅgha*.

Bronkhorst argues that the ancient kingdom of Magadha and the surrounding area of the eastern Gaṅgā-Yamunā river basins constituted a cultural milieu that was independent from Brahmanical influence in the early half of the first millennium BCE. He notes that Brahmanical sources identify this region as a separate cultural area that developed to the east of the riverine systems extending between the Indus and the Yamunā river basins.<sup>35</sup> The geographic area to the east of the Yamunā also appears to have been the original locus for the

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<sup>34</sup> Note that Bronkhorst himself employs the category of 'India' in the title of his work. Bronkhorst is clearly not using the term here in the same sense that Ruegg uses it to argue for the existence of an 'ambient religion,' because his entire thesis in *Greater Magadha* is oriented toward proving that Magadha represented a cultural, religious, and social sphere that was entirely distinct from the Brahmanical areas on the western Gangetic plains. We can be assured that Bronkhorst engages in the anachronism of using the term 'India' here out of convenience, while Ruegg's use of the term is explicitly meant to invoke a sense of a homogenous 'Indian' culture to support his argument for an 'ambient religion.'

<sup>35</sup> Johannes Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha: Studies in the Culture of Early India* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 3.

so-called 'second urbanization' between the ninth and eighth centuries BCE.<sup>36</sup> *Śatapatha-brāhmaṇa* 13.8.1.5 refers to this region as a separate cultural sphere, noting that its inhabitants maintain burial practices that differ from those of the Brahmins. What's more, these burial practices just happen to sound somewhat similar to the basic architecture of the early Buddhist stūpa:

Four-cornered (is the sepulchral mound). Now the gods and the Asuras, both of them sprung from Prajāpati, were contending in the (four) regions (quarters). The gods drove out the Asuras, their rivals and enemies, from the regions, and being regionless, they were overcome. Wherefore the people who are godly make their burial places four-cornered, whilst those who are of the Asura nature, the Easterners and others, (make them) round, for they (the gods) drove them out from the regions.<sup>37</sup>

Bronkhorst also provides a short list of pre-Buddhist conceptions of *karma* that distinguished the cultural region of Greater Magadha from its Brahmanical counterpart to the west. This list includes belief 1. in rebirth and karmic retribution; 2. that activity (*karma*) as something that must be altogether halted in order to put an end to its effects, either through refraining from all activity (the Jain and Ājivika models) or through realizing that the eternal Self is inherently inactive (which would later form the basis of the *karmayoga* of the *Bhagavadgīta*); and 3. that karmic retribution follows all deeds, not just those deemed morally good or bad.<sup>38</sup> Some of the broader cultural features of the Greater Magadha cultural sphere that Bronkhorst notes are distinct from its contemporary Brahmanical counterpart include medicine, the notion of cyclical time, and the original Sāṃkhyā tradition associated with the founder Kapila.<sup>39</sup>

When we compare the perspectives on *karma* that Bronkhorst identifies with the

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<sup>36</sup> Bhairabi Prasad Sahu, "Introduction," in *Iron and Social Change in Early India*, ed. Bhairabi Prasad Sahu (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 3.

<sup>37</sup> Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, 5.

<sup>38</sup> Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, 53.

<sup>39</sup> Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, 54–71.



'Greater Magadha' region with Heesterman's work, the range of theoretical positions on the workings of *karma* that acted as a 'substratum' for the emergence of the early Buddhist *saṅgha* appear to be quite distinct from Brahmanical conceptions of *karma* in both the pre-classical and classical configurations of the Vedic sacrifice. Heesterman argues that an important shift took place in the conception of *karma* between the pre-classical and classical phase of the Vedic *śrauta* sacrifice that coincided with the period in which the *Brāhmaṇas* were composed, and that reflects a point at which the classical Vedic notion of *karma* emerges. This period also happens to roughly coincide with the rise of the 'Greater Magadha' cultural region. Heesterman locates this shift in the *Jaimanīya Brāhmaṇa*'s mythical account of Prajāpati and Yama's ritual battle, where Prajāpati triumphs over Yama's more archaic rites through his discovery of the ritual technology of symbolic and numerical equivalence (*sampad* and *saṃkhyāna*). This discovery marks Prajāpati's victory over death via the sacrifice and the end of the pre-classical agonistic model.<sup>40</sup> Heesterman notes:

Henceforth man depends on his own (ritual) work, his own *karman*. He is born in the world which he has made himself, as Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa 6.2.2.27 has it. The world is no longer recreated through the contest and the exchange between the rival parties: the single individual creates it by himself through his own works, good as well as bad.<sup>41</sup>

The passage quoted above from *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa* 13.8.1.5 has already shown that the Brahmanical authors of this literature considered themselves to be culturally distinct from those people living in Bronkhorst's 'Greater Magadha' east of the Yamunā river. The same text, by Heesterman's analysis, indicates a shift toward the classical model of the Vedic sacrifice in which *karma* continues to signify *ritual* action, albeit a ritual action that has

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<sup>40</sup> Jan Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition: Essays in Indian Ritual, Kingship, and Society* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1985), 33–34.

<sup>41</sup> Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*, 34.

found a new application in this context.<sup>42</sup> We might now add Heesterman's broader argument that the pre-classical and classical models of the Vedic sacrifice both remained relatively unconcerned with the public function of ritual (*sacra publica*), and remained primarily focused on the internal world of the sacrifice. Both models provide support for Heesterman's argument that tradition emerges through a largely internal process of reconciling the conflict between "its immanence in society and its transcendent aspiration to solve the fundamental problem of human existence."<sup>43</sup> Heesterman's broader thesis does not entirely negate the possibility that exposure to the ritual logics of other traditions might amplify this conflict, but it does argue that the resolution of this kind of conflict proceeds based on a tradition's own internal logic. By this argument tradition is identified as the culmination of a largely internal process.

Which is the 'India' to which Ruegg refers in his substratum model? If it is an 'India' that was chronologically prior to the advent of Buddhist traditions, there is a strong possibility that the religious milieu from which Buddhism emerged was at best only marginally conversant with its Brahmanical contemporaries. The identification of the territories east of the Yamunā as existing outside of the Brahmanical culture of the *Śatapathabrāhmaṇa*, Heesterman's argument that the shift from the pre-classical to classical Vedic sacrifice occurred in response to a fundamentally internal conflict, and the absence of a sense of *sacra publica* in both the pre-classical and classical Vedic models suggests a Brahmanical tradition that was geographically and theoretically detached from the doctrinal

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<sup>42</sup> Here Heesterman writes, " In the classical system of the ritual, as presented in the *brāhmaṇas* and the *sūtras*, the pivot of the ritual is the *yajamāna*, the patron at whose expense and for whose sole benefit the ritual is performed. He is supposed symbolically to incorporate the universe- he is identified with the cosmic man, Prajāpati. The ritual culminates in his ritual rebirth, which signifies the regeneration of the cosmos." Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*, 26–27.

<sup>43</sup> Heesterman, *The Inner Conflict of Tradition*, 12.

developments that preceded the emergence of the Buddhist *saṅgha*. The Buddhist conception of *karma*, which is distinct from all of these models in that it emphasizes an exclusively psychological karmic pathology, developed in dialogue with its precursors in the 'Greater Magadha' region. Bronkhorst and Heesterman's portrayal of the distinct religious worlds spanning the Indus and Gangetic river basins during the early stages of the 'second urbanization' indicates that it may not be accurate or even possible to identify a religious substratum that was common to both Brahmins and Buddhists at the advent of the Buddhist *saṅgha*. Neither theory supports the existence of an 'ambient religion' that was shared between Buddhists and Brahmins in this period. This is not to say that Buddhists and Brahmins did not come to occupy the same cultural spaces and exert a profound degree of influence upon each other. But these interactions are also always characterized as taking place between two groups that recognized themselves as distinct religious sects.

It may be more accurate to say that this later dialogical process highlights a common 'substratum' shared by Buddhists and non-Buddhists that was social, cultural, and political instead of being overtly religious. Ronald Davidson's *Indian Esoteric Buddhism* provides a well-crafted argument for a shared social and political backdrop for the rise of esoteric Buddhism and its contemporary initiatory movements. Davidson interprets the *Trilokyavijayamaṇḍala* as a ritual iconography that reflects a Buddhist *realpolitik* in which the political realities of the centuries following the collapse of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka Empire were adopted as a model for the esoteric rites and iconography of the *yogatantra*.<sup>44</sup> This argument relies on a kind of 'ambient culture' or substratum that, relating to Davidson's

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<sup>44</sup> Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 139.

critique of Ruegg's model as too 'Platonic,'<sup>45</sup> presents epigraphic, iconographic, and textual data for a shared socio-political culture from which the ritual technology of royal consecration was adapted and re-deployed within a specifically religious framework. Ruegg is aware of Davidson's work,<sup>46</sup> yet does not seem to have acknowledged that Davidson's argument actually affirms a common substratum behind the development of Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva, and Buddhist tantric traditions, albeit one that signals a shared socio-political substratum instead of a religious substratum.

#### **IV. Issues with the Substratum Model 3: The *Laukika/Lokottara* Distinction in Esoteric Buddhism**

The 'pan-Indic substratum' argument also lacks adequate consideration of the implications that the ritual world of the Buddhist *tantras* holds for the notion of inclusivism and fluid continuity that he posits in the *laukika/lokottara* distinction. Examples from Buddhist works point to the manipulation of the *laukika/lokottara* distinction toward the performance of violent and exclusivist rites against the opponents of one's religious tradition. Such rites exploit the vertical hierarchy between *laukika* and *lokottara* deities and stake the entire functioning of the science of mantras upon the ability of deities of the *lokottara* class to control and violently destroy if necessary those of the lower, *laukika* class. Yet in his analysis

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<sup>45</sup> Davidson. *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 172. Here Davidson writes, "Unhappily, Ruegg's model cannot entirely account for the spectrum of specifics, based on caste, gender, locale, affiliation, and other variables. It appears not entirely applicable, especially because of its postulation of a Platonic plane wherein resides the forms iterated in specific religious systems. His position seems analogous to Saussure's *langue/parole* model, wherein the entire potential of a language (*langue*) is never expressed in the particular speech of a person (*parole*). Because of their structural formulations, neither Saussure's nor Ruegg's models—and this is part of Sanderson's criticism—can easily take into account the regional variation, incomprehensible idioms, place-specific identity, and the sudden emergence of a new prototype that overwhelms some parts of a religious system but not others."

<sup>46</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 41 note 65.

of Buddhist subjugation iconography Ruegg insists that, "in Buddhist thought the structured opposition *laukika: lokottara* does not itself normally correspond to a secular antagonism, on the historical and sociological levels, between Hinduism and Buddhism."<sup>47</sup> Among the elements adopted to these ends in esoteric Buddhist ritual culture are the four tantric *karmas*: pacification (*sāntika*), increase of wealth (*pauṣṭika*), subjugation (*vaśikaraṇa*) and rites for executing the king's enemies (*abhicāra*), all of which are often accomplished through various forms of the *homa* or fire offering sacrifice.<sup>48</sup> Adaptation of the *homa* to a Buddhist ritual context, if we follow Davidson's argument, might very well provide sound evidence for the ritualization of the kind of antagonism and violence that periodically characterized the political background for the ritual cultures that emerge in the Buddhist esoteric tradition.

The opening of chapter 50 of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* prescribes the kind of agonistic deployment of the subjugation imagery that one finds in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and so many other Buddhist works. The chapter outlines the theory and praxis behind a set of rituals performed before a painting (*paṭa*) of the wrathful lord (*krodharājā*) Yamāntaka. It specifically states that one performs these rites "for the purpose of destroying those who bring harm to the three jewels," (*ratnatrayāpakāriṇām nigrahārtham*), for "hindering all wicked kings" (*sarvaduṣṭarājñām nivāraṇārtham*), and that the rite should be used against "sentient beings such as the great *yakṣas* who are powerful, intent upon acts of benevolence or oppression, and who lack great compassion" (*sattvānām mahāyakṣāṇām mahotsāhinām nigrahānugrahapravṛttānām mahākaruṇāvīrahitānām*).<sup>49</sup> Here the text provides a list of *laukika* beings that are powerful and either contradict or act with open hostility toward the

<sup>47</sup> Ruegg, *The Symbiosis of Buddhism with Brahmanism/Hinduism*, 48.

<sup>48</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 142.

<sup>49</sup> *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* III, edited by T. Gaṇapati Śāstri (Trivandrum: Superintendent, Government Press, 1925), 547. For Tibetan see "'Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," in *Bka' 'gyur (Sde dge par phud)* 88 (na) Tōh. 543 (Delhi: Delhi Karmapae chodhey gyalwae sungrab partsun khang, 1976–1979), 272r.6.

Buddhist teachings. The chapter goes on to describe that the single-syllable mantra of Mañjuṣa, the mantra of Yamāntaka, and the mantras of a number of Bodhisattvas provide protection from all harmful beings for all of those assembled who have taken the commitment (*samaya*). It then describes the apostate who has broken this *samaya* by "engaging in the dharma of commoners," (*grāmyadharmānuvartite*), "having abandoned all of the excellent mantras," (*tyakto mantravaraiḥ sarvaiḥ*), "having no faith in the teachings," (*aprasanneṣu śāsane*), and "having decided that the sacred jewels of the dharma and saṅgha should be rejected" (*saddharmaratnasāṅghe ca pratikṣeptavyāḥ samāhite*). The fate of such apostates is clear—the text explicitly states that, "the wrathful one kills them" (*teṣāṃ krodho vināśayet*).<sup>50</sup> The list of those subjected to violent subjugation in these rites is composed of individuals who bring harm upon the Buddha's teachings and the *saṅgha* as well as apostate Buddhists who have violated and failed to repair their *samaya*. The conclusion of Mañjuṣa's proclamation of the power of Yamāntaka's *samaya* reads:

In every respect, all childish fools  
 Who are negligent, falling under the sway [of passion],  
 Except for those whose passions are gone forever  
 Such as Pratyekabuddhas, Ārḥats, and Śrāvakas,

Shall all be executed and disciplined  
 By the Lord of Wrath without exception.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* III, 550–551. For Tibetan see "'Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 274r.2–274r.5.

<sup>51</sup> *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* III, 551. For Tibetan see "'Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 274r.6–274r.7.

Sanskrit:

savathā bālīśāḥ sarve pramādā vaśāgāmināḥ |  
 vītarāgāṃ sadā muktvā pratyekārḥaśrāvakāṃ ||  
 sarve vai krodharājasya vadhyā daṇḍyāśca sarvataḥ |

Tibetan:

/byis pa rnams kun thams cad dang /  
 /rtag tu 'dod chags bral gyur ba'i/  
 /rang rgyal dgra bcom nyan thos kun/  
 /khro bo yi ni rgyal po yis/  
 /thams cad du ni 'ching dang gcod/

The description of the ritual painting of Yamāntaka described in chapter fifty-one does not actually promote an iconographic program of 'trampling' upon a particular deity in the manner that would become so common in the *yoginītantras*.<sup>52</sup> Yamāntaka's namesake as one who causes Yama's death (*yama+antaka*)<sup>53</sup> does evoke the image a Buddhist deity triumphing over a worldly deity that traces back to the Vaidika pantheon but his primary significance as one who brings death to death himself is arguably not concerned with the act of subduing a worldly deity but with Yamāntaka's power to triumph over the inevitable fate of all living beings. However, while the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* iconography for Yamāntaka does not depict him trampling on any worldly deities, the rites related to Yamāntaka in the text do make use of this theme in ways that are explicitly violent.

The fifty-first chapter of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* provides an explicit list of potential targets for the "violent rites that bring death to one's enemies" (*karmāṃ raudrāṃ śatrūpaghātakāṃ*)<sup>54</sup> that one can perform using the painting in tandem with a variety of ritual techniques. The chapter specifically names those who commit offenses against Buddhist teachings or Buddhist practitioners as targets. One of the rituals in the chapter requires that the *mantrin* draw a representation of the target's tutelary deity and trample it underfoot. The relevant verses read:

One should write the name of the deity  
 To whom [the target] is devoted or his astrological sign,  
 Make an effigy with charcoal from the cremation ground and  
 Place it on the ground in front of the painting.  
 Then, trampling upon it from the feet to the head,

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<sup>52</sup> The *paṭa* requires instead that Yamāntaka "should be drawn to look like the form of the god of death and mounted on a bull," (*kṛtāntarūpasankāśaṃ mahiṣārūḍhaṃ tvālikhet*) appropriating Yama's traditional iconography. *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, 553; Tibetan see "'Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 275r.3–275r.4.

<sup>53</sup> The definition for Yamāntaka's name appears the chapter as "he who terminates the life of Yama," (*yamajīvitānāśaṃ*). *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* III, 554; "'Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 275r.4.

<sup>54</sup> *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, 553; Tibetan "'Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 275v.2–275v.3.

The wrathful one should perform the mantra recitation.<sup>55</sup>

Trampling plays a role in the rites prescribed in chapter fifty-two as well. Here the text mentions that the mantra or constellation associated with the deity to whom the target is devoted may be trampled underfoot to perform the rite, but then goes on to say that an exception should be made if the target's tutelary deity is a *vidyā* that is associated with a

Tathāgata:

The rite as it applies to all manner of gods and spirit beings is as follows: One should trample upon the deity to which [the target] is devoted and perform the rite. Trample upon the target's [deity] represented by its constellation or mantra with the left foot and perform the rite, with the exception of the *vidyā* goddesses who are female tathāgatas. Regarding all of [the female tathāgatā *vidyā* goddesses,] one should hold them in the middle with one's big toe and perform the rite, and should never insult them by trampling on them. [But] one should trample upon all worldly mantra deities and perform the rite.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, 557; Tibetan ""Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 276v.7–277r.1

The phrase "from the feet to the head" is problematic in the Sanskrit (*pādatas mūrdhnā*) because its second member should likely be in the accusative. But given that a straightforward reading of the grammar as it stands makes little sense, I am translating it as if *mūrdhnā* were the accusative *mūrdhānam* that, perhaps, has been shortened for the sake of meter.

Sanskrit:

yo yasya devatābhaktaḥ nakṣatre vā nāmato likhet ||  
śmaśānāṅgaraiḥ kṛtiṃ kṛtvā paṭasyāgratabhūṣṛtam |  
ākramya pādato mūrdhnā saṅkrudho japamācaret ||

Tibetan:

/gang zhig gang la dad lha'am/  
/skyes pa'i skar ma ming yang rung /  
/ras ris mdun du gzugs bya ba /  
/dur khrod sol bas bris pa la/  
/mgo la rtog pas mnan nas ni /  
/khros bas bzlas pa brtsam par bya/

<sup>56</sup> *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* III, 561; Tibetan ""Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 280r.1–280r.2.

Sanskrit:

| yo yasya devatābhaktas tam ākramya kuryāt | tasya nakṣatramantrasaṃjñatām pādenākramya vāmena  
karma kuryāt | varjayitvā tu tāthāgatīm vidyām | sarveṣāṃ ca pādānguṣṭham vāmena gṛhītvā karma  
kuryān na cākrameṇāpi ca laṅghayet kadā sarvalaukikamantrās cākramya kuryāt |

Tibetan:

/de bzhin du lha thams cad dam lha mo thams cad dam 'byung po thams cad gang zhig dang gi lha la dad  
pa de rkang pas mnan pa'i las bya ba'am/ yang na de'i skar ram sngags sam ming dag la rkang pas mnan  
la las bya ste/ de bzhin gshegs pa'i rig pa ni ma gtogs te/ thams cad kyis kyang zhabs kyi mthe bo gyon pa  
bzung ste las bya'i/ mnan par yang mi bya ba bgom par yang mi bya'o/ /gang yang 'jig rten pa thams cad  
kyi sngags ni mnan nas las bya'o/



Thus according to the Yamāntaka *abhicāra* rites of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, when a rite performed against a potential enemy involves a Buddhist tutelary deity one does not trample upon its effigy, but when the rite involves worldly mantra-beings (*laukikamantra*) it is entirely permissible, even prescribed, that one trample upon them. The proscription against trampling upon Buddhist or Buddhist-affiliated deities implies that a *mantrin* performing the Yamāntaka rite might direct his sorcery at a Buddhist king or enemy, a point that should not be surprising given the statements in the previous chapter on Yamāntaka's destruction of those who violate their *samaya*. More importantly, it bears certain consequences for Ruegg's apologetics regarding the *yoginītantra* iconography, in which Buddhist deities trample or stand upon non-Buddhist deities. The ritual employment of this kind of 'trampling' in the Yamāntaka *abhicāra* rites of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* suggests a potential conceptual referent for the trampling iconography that is so prevalent in the *yoginītantras*. If this is the case, then the *yoginītantra* iconography cannot possibly be said to represent an inclusivist continuum between worldly and transcendent classes of deities. In fact the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* indicates that there is a strict separation between these two classes of beings by prescribing a modified version of the rite that is exclusive to Buddhist *vidyā* goddesses that have been elevated beyond the status of worldly deities.

## **V. Conclusion: Demonology and Localized Spirit Cults as Substratum**

Locating the point of maximum relevance for the *yoginītantra* trampling iconography in the *abhicāra* rites prescribed in the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* does not provide us with an exclusively Buddhist origin for this iconography. Rites such as those contained in the fifty-first chapter of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* and much of the iconography, ritual, and ascetic culture of the

later *yoga* and *yoginītantras* are both products of the same culture of the cremation ground, and as a result a number of similarities can be observed between them.<sup>57</sup> But as Goodall and Isaacson have shown, similar practices involving a kind of sympathetic magic in which an effigy of the victim is pierced or smeared with various substances can be found in the *Ārthasāstra* and *Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa*, and the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* itself shares a great degree of intertextuality with one of the primary textual corpuses of the Śaiva *atimārga*, the *Niśvāsātattvasaṃgraha*.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> These similarities become evident when one adopts a demonological paradigm as the central methodology for one's analysis of these materials. As I explain at great length in chapters three and four, the entire framework of the generation and completion stage yogas outlined in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* revolves around the idea of cultivating an embodied realization in which one is impervious to attack from the realm of spirit beings. In an attempt to demonstrate this invulnerability, the *sādhaka* who performs the *caryā* or *vrata* practices associated with the completion stage must abandon all ritual techniques that might protect him while he inhabits locations and engages in behaviors that court attack from spirit beings. The *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* rites for the deity Yamāntaka explain the gravity of inhabiting the same kind of environment that the *sādhaka* must inhabit in great detail, and they prescribe protective rites that must be performed to guarantee, for instance, that the painter whom one commissions to create the ritual painting of Yamāntaka not be harmed while he performs his extremely dangerous task. *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* 51.21 tells us that the painter must be well-paid because his work, which he carries out in a charnel ground using the type of substances one might expect to find there, is 'dangerous' (*sahābhayam*), while *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* 51. 23–24 notes that the painter risks his own and his entire family's life by creating the *paṭa*, and as a result he must have protection rites performed on his behalf. The passage makes it particularly clear that the recitation of the *vidyā* is critical for protecting whomever is creating the *paṭa*. See *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* III, 553; Tibetan "'Phags pa'jam dpal rtsa rgyud," 275r.7–275v.2.

Sanskrit:

parisphuṭam tu paṭam kṛtvā vittam dattvā tu śilpine||  
 prabhūtam cāpi mūlyam vai yena vā tuṣyate sadā|  
 avadhyam tasya kartavyam dharmam cāpi sahābhayam ||  
 yātheṣitam tasya kurvīta vīramūlyam samāsataḥ |  
 saphalam śilpine karma nirāmiṣam cāpi varjayet ||  
 tathā yathā prayuñjīta yathāsau sampratuṣyate |  
 mahāraṅgā ca kartavyā anyathā mṛyate hyasau ||  
 sakuṭumbo naṣyate karmī ātmanaścāpi rakṣayet |  
 japtavidyena kartavyam nānyeṣāṃ vidhirucyate ||

Tibetan:

ras ris yongs su rdzogs byas na/ /ri mo mkhan la sbyin pa'ang bya/ nor ni rab tu mang po'am/ /yang na  
 gang gi dge ba'ang sbyin/ /las kyang 'jigs pa chen po bas/ /de yi don med mi bya'o/ /mdor na dpa' bo'i  
 rin du ni/ /ji ltar 'dod pa de la bya/ /bzo yi las ni 'bras bcas bya/ /kha zas med pa'ang rnam par spang/  
 /ji ltar de ni yang dag dga'/ /de lta de ltar rab tu sbyar/ /srung ba chen po'ang rab tu bya/ /gzhan du de  
 ni 'chi 'gyur zhing / /bzo bo bza' dang bcas 'jigs pas/ /bdag gis kyang ni mngon par bsrung/ /rigs pa bzlas  
 nas bya ba ste/ /gzhan du cho gar brjod pa min/

<sup>58</sup> Dominic Goodall and Harunaga Isaacson, "On the Shared 'Ritual Syntax' of the Early Tantric Traditions," in *Tantric Studies: Fruits of a Franco-German Project on Early Tantra*, ed. Dominic Goodall and

All of these sources point to a particular 'substratum' that, for one reason or another, Ruegg seems to have overlooked. At the same time Alexis Sanderson, despite his rejection of Ruegg's substratum model, seems to affirm his own substratum in his discussion of the charnel ground culture<sup>59</sup> of ritual and ascetic practices aimed at manipulating and harnessing the powers of spirit beings.

Sanderson, however, stops short of acknowledging his own affirmation of this common religious substratum in any of his arguments against Ruegg, and seems to prefer to keep locate his charnel ground culture in an almost exclusively Śaiva context. It is this author's position that despite the various shortcomings of Ruegg's substratum model, the 'culture of the cremation ground' actually affirms his argument and stands as evidence of a shared pan-Indic religious substratum underlying both Śaiva and Buddhist ritual and ascetic cultures. This seems to be a point on which both Ruegg and Sanderson can be brought into agreement. The remaining chapters in part one thus argue that applying a demonological paradigm to the historiography of these traditions represents one application of Ruegg's

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Harunaga Isaacson. Collection Indologie 131. Early Tantra Series 4. (Institut Français de Pondichéry, École française d'Extrême-Orient, Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg. 2016), 42–5. The reader should note that the examples referred to here from Goodall and Isaacson involve the creation of a ritual effigy, which these scholars take to mean a 'doll' of sorts. However, one of the terms for this effigy, *pratikṛti* (Tib. *gzugs brnyan*), appears in *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* chapter fifty-two in the phrase "Drawing the likeness and the name of the man or woman," (*pratikṛtiṃ abhiliḥya nāma ca puruṣasya striyā vā*) which indicates that this *pratikṛti* need not be a three-dimensional effigy, but can simply be a drawing with the accompanying name of the intended target. This coincides with the verses referenced above in which the victim's tutelary deity's image, corresponding astrological sign, and/or name, are trampled underfoot. Although the term *pratikṛti* does not appear in the passages that involve such 'trampling,' it is clear in this case that drawing the image, name, or constellation of a deity constitutes a kind of 'effigy.' See *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa* III, 568; For Tibetan see, "'Phags pa'i 'jam dpal rtsa ba'i rgyud," 284v.7–285r.1. The passages referenced in Goodall and Isaacson are *Arthaśāstra* 14.3.69–72 and *Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa* 31, 9.4–5.

<sup>59</sup> The phrase 'the culture of the cremation grounds' on which my own statement is based is first discussed in Alexis Sanderson, "Purity and Power among the Brahmins of Kashmir," in *The Category of the Person: Anthropology, Philosophy, History*, ed. M. Carrithers, S. Collins and S. Lukes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 200. This 'culture,' as I argue later in this study, represents one potential 'shared religious substratum' for Śaiva and Buddhist *mantrins*, *yogins*, *sādhakas*, and *siddhas*. It is derived from a broad, non-sectarian affiliated religious and cultural system (or systems), it is shared between both Śaivas and Buddhists, and is responsible for a great degree of intertextuality and apparent exchange of ritual technologies between the Śaivas and Buddhists.

model that illuminates the profound influence that the shared religious substratum of popular religion has had on both Śaiva and Buddhist ritual and ascetic cultures.

## Chapter 2:

### The Demonological Paradigm

#### I. Introduction: The 'Demonological Paradigm' and *Bhūtavidyā* as Substratum

Religious practices dealing with the propitiation, mediation, and appeasement of the world of spirits and unseen beings are a common religious phenomenon that has contributed to the definition and periodic reinvention of the major religions of South Asia. The legacy of our own discipline's bifurcation of 'magic' and 'religion' has led scholars to drastically underestimate the degree of influence that popular religious cults concerned with the world of unseen beings have exerted throughout the history South Asia religions. This form of religious expression, which notoriously evades any singular or static identity, is referred to here as 'demonology' or 'the science of spirits' (*bhūtavidyā*). The term *bhūtavidyā* is mentioned as early as the *Chāndogyaopaniṣad*, and the religious world of spirit beings it signifies finds detailed and formal expression in the early Āyurvedic works of the *Caraka-* and *Suśrutasamhitās*. The latter of these two works defines *bhūtavidyā* as a branch of Āyurveda concerned with appeasing and making offerings to beings such as 'seizers' (*graha*), who cause mental and physical illnesses and humoral imbalances, in order to pacify them and release afflicted patients from their effects.<sup>60</sup> The term *bhūtavidyā* is thus primarily a product of the scholastic project of South Asian medical literature of Āyurveda—it is not a term that participants in the many localized spirit cults use to refer to their customs and practices, and to this author's knowledge no such single term exists.

The term 'paradigm' is employed here following Pierre Bourdieu's definition in his *Science of Science and Reflexivity* as something that "determines the questions that can be

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<sup>60</sup> Acharya, "Three Fragmentary Folios," 157.

asked and those that are excluded, the thinkable and the unthinkable; being both 'received achievement' and a starting point, ... a guide for future action, a programme for research to be undertaken, rather than a system of rules and norms."<sup>61</sup> The demonological paradigm is "the equivalent of a language or a culture" that is, unsurprisingly, directed at the boundaries and interactions between the seen and unseen worlds and the beings that inhabit them. We can identify a 'paradigm' pertaining to demonology in South Asian religions through its observable ongoing discourse (a "language," to use Bourdieu's terminology) and the observable, ongoing proliferation of broader cultural formations around that discourse. The demonological paradigm is suggested here as "programme for research" that is specifically oriented toward eradicating any tendency to alienate discourses on magic and the world of spirit beings from our efforts to better understand and theorize the history and function of religious movements in South Asia. It requires a hermeneutic of consent that refuses to treat the spirit beings at the focus of popular religions cults as merely symbolic, allegorical, or products of a defunct science that can be psychologized or otherwise rationalized away. Adopting a demonological paradigm implies recognition that the pervasive presence of traditions centering on a pantheon (or *pandemonium*) of spirits and other supernatural beings has been had a long and enduring influence on religious life in South Asia. The demonological paradigm is thus a course of study that encourages researchers to reject (or at least challenge) the classical bifurcation of "religion" and "magic," in order to reveal any persistent blind spots it may have caused in the study of South Asian religions.

The nineteenth and early twentieth century scholars of South Asian religions who rejected localized spirit cults as inferior and vulgar (in all senses of the term) were not alone

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<sup>61</sup> Pierre Bourdieu, *Science of Science and Reflexivity*, translated by Richard Nice (Cambridge and Chicago: Polity Press and the University of Chicago, 2004), 15.

in their attitudes toward this mode of religious expression. Emic sources also refer to these traditions in pejorative terms, describing as 'the religion of the common folk' (*gramyadharmā*) or simply 'worldly' (*laukika*) traditions. The *Maitrāyaṇīyaopaniṣad*, for example, criticizes lay practitioners who offer to pacify *yakṣas*, *rākṣasas*, *bhūtas*, *gaṇas*, and *piśācas* for a fee, and the Buddhist *Jātaka* stories devote at least one narrative to a similar polemic against entrepreneurial exorcists.<sup>62</sup> But even if many of South Asia's major religious movements claim to reject the authority of popular, localized spirit cults, they have never been able to completely get away from these traditions. Acknowledgement of the existence of free-agent spirit mediums and exorcists in works like the *Maitrāyaṇīyopaniṣad* not only confirms the existence of religious traditions that operated without any sense of a solid sectarian identity, it also provides some indication of a certain degree of animosity and competition between these traditions and those that cultivated more distinct and defined religious identities.

The success of South Asian religious traditions with more structured and institutionally bound sectarian identities has depended, at least in part, on adapting localized spirit cults into their own metaphysical, ritual, and iconographic systems. Still, these same traditions often openly criticized the very practices they were adopting. Such is the case with Patañjali's distinction of the Vaidika deities and those deities that are *laukika* in his commentary to Paṇini's grammar, Jain authors' efforts to define their doctrine as *pāralaukika* or 'better than worldly,' and Buddhist distinctions of *laukika* and *lokottara* classes of deities. As Robert Decaroli notes, the fact that these traditions define themselves in opposition to such 'worldly' practices is a strong indication of the influence that informal, localized, popular religious cults have had on their contemporaries among the more formally organized

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<sup>62</sup> Robert Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 44.

religious sects.<sup>63</sup> The popular religious practices subsumed here under the term *bhūtavidyā* were likely one of the single most influential forces in South Asian religion from at least the late centuries BCE forward. These traditions are the wellspring from which many of the modes of religious expression of the more organized religious traditions in South Asia emerged. They have consistently provided logical frameworks for the economic activities that have sustained religious institutions in South Asia from the earliest Buddhist *vihāras* into the modern period, and they are one of the primary means by which the more organized and institutionally structured trans-local traditions of South Asia have renewed and periodically reinvented themselves.

Because they often lack their own textual traditions, the study of localized religious spirit cults has remained largely the territory of anthropological research. These forms of religious expression are privileged as sources for the study of contemporary 'lived' religion, or the way that the beliefs and practices of religious communities are actually enacted 'on the ground.' But these traditions were also an integral part of the worlds in which the textual traditions of Śaivism and Buddhism developed, and they have much to tell the textual historian of South Asian religions. The spirit beings whose propitiation and ritual mediation are the central issue of concern for these traditions inhabited the same worlds as the most erudite Brahmin, Buddhist, and Śaiva authors. What Decaroli terms 'spirit religions' have a wealth of data to contribute to understanding the development of traditions such as Vajrayāna Buddhism, which so thoroughly embraced the ritual idioms and *theozoology* of the South Asian world of supernatural beings. These traditions provide a means for examining the basic existential conditions that underlie even the most scholastic and rigidly institutional South Asian religious traditions. For these traditions and their architects, any notion of 'being in the

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<sup>63</sup> Decaroli. *Haunting the Buddha*, 13–14.



world' necessarily carried the connotation of being in a world populated, and at certain times and places completely overrun or infested, with a broad pantheon of supernatural beings.

The refusal to recognize the historical value of these traditions has perpetuated a number of methodological and theoretical blind spots in the study of South Asian religions. One example has already been provided in chapter one's discussion of Ruegg's failure to recognize popular spirit religions as the extra-sectarian, pan-Indian religious phenomenon that his 'substratum' theory requires. Alexis Sanderson nods to the importance of popular religion in his idea of a 'cremation ground culture' underlying much of the ritual and doctrinal innovation that led to the development of the transgressive asceticism of the Śaiva *mantramārga*, but he also tends to only acknowledge a Śaiva sectarian identity in these phenomena. His references to the influence of popular religion on Śaivism's rise to dominance in the medieval period are references to *popular Śaivism*, and 'cremation ground culture' is meant to refer to Śaiva cremation ground asceticism.<sup>64</sup> Perhaps the most obvious reason that these traditions are neglected is that they have no texts of their own. Even *bhūtavidyā* is an Āyurvedic appropriation and reformulation of popular spirit religion within the framework of medical symptomology, diagnosis, and pathology. The Āyurvedic *bhūtavidyā*'s ritualized counterparts, the *bhūtatantras*, are largely lost to history, and those fragments that remain are identified within a Śaiva sectarian milieu.<sup>65</sup> The lack of an

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<sup>64</sup> Alexis Sanderson, "The Impact of Inscriptions on the Interpretation of Early Śaiva Literature," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 56 (2013): 211–44.

<sup>65</sup> Diwakar Acharya's recently published edition and translation of a *bhūtatantra* textual fragment held in the Kathmandu National Archive bears some witness to what this literary genre may have looked like. Lists of the *bhūtatantras*, supposedly twenty texts in all, appear in a number of later Śaiva works, but until Acharya's recent publication all of these works were believed to have been lost. The central deity in Acharya's textual witness is Skanda, who is accompanied in an extensive *maṇḍala* by a host of *bhūtas*, *grahas*, *mātrkas*, *nāgas*, and *yakṣas*. The first chapter fragment describes the ritual *maṇḍala*, the deities that one must invite to populate that *maṇḍala* and guard its four gates, and the materials one can use to perform the rite toward various ends. This is followed by a chapter on constructing the fire alter and a single loose folio that appears to list a number of prescriptions for the ascetic practices (*caryā*) and

independent textual tradition for this religious phenomenon is not, however, grounds for its dismissal as an independent, extra-sectarian factor in the history of South Asian religions.<sup>66</sup>

## II. Śaiva Assimilation of Local Spirit Cults

Despite exhibiting varying degrees of contempt for localized spirit religions, Vaidika Brahmins, Śaivas, and Buddhists frequently appropriated and assimilated aspects of these traditions. Kunal Chakrabarti brings our attention to a similar phenomenon in his theorization of the 'Purāṇic Process' as a Vaidika Brahmin literary strategy for appropriating and transforming local religious cults. Chakrabarti argues that the Purāṇas functioned, among other things, as "a medium for the absorption of local cults and associated practices," a statement that carries far-reaching implications given the Purāṇic literature's role in defining the parameters of much of 'Hinduism' as we know it today.<sup>67</sup> Following Chakrabarti, we might say that what many understand as mainstream 'Hinduism' today is largely a product of this 'Purāṇic process' that assimilated local spirit religions into the Vaidika fold where they were inscribed within the brahmanic pantheon, brought into agreement with a brahmanic social ethos, and integrated into in a range of brahmanic ascetic and ritual traditions.

The Śaiva orders of the *atimārga* and *mantramārga* engaged in their own version of this 'Purāṇic process,' as the *atimārga* Śaiva sects began to author their own Purāṇanic

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observances (*vrata*) in this *bhūtantra*'s system, which Acharya notes may approximate the ten forms of restraint (*yama*) in Kauṇḍinya's *Paśupatasūtrabhāṣya*. See Acharya, "Three Fragmentary Folios," 158–161.

<sup>66</sup> My observations here take their lead from David Gordon White's work on the Rājastāni popular cult of Bhairava. White makes a similar argument for the pervasion and striking theoretical uniformity of what I am calling 'spirit religion' across South Asia, where he notes that the incorporation of these traditions into Āyurveda signifies their acceptance at all levels of South Asian society, thus pointing to the shortsightedness of the discriminatory practices of academics who discard such traditions as 'low' or *merely* 'popular' forms of religious expression. See David Gordon White, "Filthy Amulets: 'Superstition,' True 'Religion,' and Pure 'Science' in the Light of Indian Demonology," *Puruṣārtha* 27 (2008): 135–62.

<sup>67</sup> Kunal Chakrabarti, *Religious Process: The Purāṇas and the Making of a Regional Tradition* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 52.

literature.<sup>68</sup> Both the more orthodox *atimārga* Śaiva orders and their counterparts aligned with the *mantramārga* oriented their ritual and ascetic cultures heavily toward the very same environments in which the spirit beings of popular religious cults in South Asia are commonly said to dwell. The Śaiva literature of the *mantramārga* in particular went to great lengths to fully integrate various deities from popular religious cults in its ritual, iconography, and ascetic practices. The textual record of this process is preserved in the *yāmala* literature of the Śaiva *bhairavatantras*, a genre that focuses on worshipping and attaining a mutual identity (*yoga*) with Bhairava and his circle of eight *māṭṛkas*.<sup>69</sup> The fruits of these efforts can be seen in the Śaiva orders' successful assimilation of local deity cults across South Asia into the cults of the deity Bhairava. This development established a continual sense of Śaiva identity that extended from popular, widely accessible, local forms of religious expression to the elite practices of the Śaiva initiates and their socially elite clientele. The textual inclusivism of the Śaiva Purāṇas had a yogic counterpart in the charismatic power of the initiated Śaiva ascetics of the *mantramārga*. Śaiva *bhairavatantras* such as the *Brahmayāmala/ Picumata* outline a yoga or union via symbiotic possession by the deity Bhairava as the culmination of the performance of one of a number of observances (*vrata*) through which Bhairava and a host of spirit deities of various classes such as *māṭṛs*, *guhnyakas*, *yoginīs*, *śākinīs*, and *pūtanās* are internally mapped onto the body of the elite initiated practitioner or *sādhaka*.<sup>70</sup> Viewed in this light, the *mantramārga* literature and its

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<sup>68</sup> Richard H. Davis, "The Origin of Liṅga Worship," in *Religions of India in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 637. Davis discusses the story of Śiva's challenge to the sages in the pine forest here as told in the *Kūrmapurāṇa*, a text originally of Vaiṣṇava Pancarātra authorship that was later taken over and modified by authors who belonged to the Śaiva *atimārgic* Pāśupata sect.

<sup>69</sup> David Gordon White, *The Kiss of the Yoginī: Tantric Sex in its South Asian Contexts* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2003), Chapter 2.

<sup>70</sup> Judit Törzsök, "Yoginī and Goddess Possession in Early Śaiva Tantras," in *'Yoginī' in South Asia: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, edited by István Keul (New York: Routledge, 2013), 182.

ritual and ascetic traditions reflects an ongoing dialogical process that reformulated the negative possession associated with these spirit deities in their localized cults as a form of positive possession through a skillful deployment of the concept of yoga within a broader cultural discourse around spirit possession.

The Śaiva assimilation of popular spirit religions follows a cardinal rule of 'lords' and 'hordes,' or the belief that the hordes of inimical beings that routinely seek out vulnerabilities in human hosts operate within their own hierarchies, and thus controlling a certain class of spirit deity depends on winning the good graces of whatever deity (or deities) occupies the apex of this hierarchy. Such hierarchies provided a platform for the Śaiva appropriation and repurposing of localized spirit religions through assimilating local religious cults to the deity Bhairava, and by extension assimilating the Śaiva ascetic, through his *yoga* with Bhairava, to the idea of the *bhūtanātha* or the 'lord of spirits.' Although not the final stage of the ascetic observances,<sup>71</sup> the *sādhaka's* union with Bhairava via positive possession certainly could have lent support to the idea that he had himself become a kind of *bhūtanātha*. This kind of a reversal of the predatory possession of the *bhūtas*, *grahas*, and other beings, a model of possession that Fred Smith calls a 'hostile takeover,'<sup>72</sup> proved an effective strategy for infiltrating local spirit religion cults and placing Śaiva officiants at their head as intermediaries and 'lords of the spirits.'

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<sup>71</sup> Csaba Kiss trans. and ed., *The Brahmayāmala Tantra or Picumata Volume II, The Religious Observances and Sexual Rituals of the Tantric Practitioner: Chapters 3, 21, and 45*, Collection Indologie 130, Early Tantra Series 3 (Institut Français de Pondichéry, École française d'Extrême-Orient, Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg, 2015), 34. Kiss follows Törzök in noting that the positive possession exhibited in this early Śaiva *bhairavatantra* of the *mantramārga* derives from an *atimārga* predecessor in the *atimārga kāpālika* observances (*vrata*). In the *Brahmayāmala*, the *sādhaka's* possession by Bhairava merely allows him to advance to the next, and more powerful, level of ritual practice.

<sup>72</sup> Frederick M. Smith, *The Self Possessed: Deity and Spirit Possession in South Asian Literature and Civilization* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2006), Chapter 6.

The networks of Bhairavas (or *Bhairabs*) that encircle the peripheries of the three original cities of the Kathmandu Valley and the valley itself provide one salient example of the Śaiva appropriation of localized traditions. As David White notes, popular Bhairava cults often treat the deity as a guardian or protector dwelling on the periphery who, when properly propitiated, prevents the unwanted entry of seizers, ghosts, and other inimical beings into civic space. The local cults of deities such as Pachali Bhairab and Ākās Bhairab that persist in the Kathmandu valley preserve the dynamics of Śaiva inclusivism to this day.



Figure 1: Ākās Bhairab (author's photo), whose shrine is located just beyond the north-west corner of the Kathmandu Valley behind the Swayambhunāth *stūpa*, serves as one example of the enduring employment of *bhairava* as a deity marking the peripheries of civic space.

The original, local traditions of the 'Bhairabs' of the Kathmandu Valley are, like so many religious cults in the valley, layered with both a local and trans-local religious significance that remains highly transparent and visible. Bhairab attained an elite status in the Kathmandu valley quite early in the form of a Buddhist tantric deity Vajrabhairava, who is mentioned in an inscription from the Licchāvi king Śivadeva II (ca. 694–705 CE). Śivadeva II is also said

to have had an iconic image of Bhairava created and placed in front of his palace for protection, and the continuation of this practice can be observed today in many of the temples and palaces of the three original city-states of Lalitpur, Bhaktapur, and Bhasantapur that position both black and white Bhairava images on each side of their main gates. The emergence and persistence of Bhairava as a royal court deity in Nepal likely initiated a process of gradual assimilation of a number of localized spirit deity cults. White also notes that the aniconic stones now worshipped as *bhairabs* throughout the Kathmandu Valley likely had other names prior to the explosion of tantric culture in the tenth century.<sup>73</sup>

In a process resembling a kind of vassalage, these original cults were assimilated into the trans-local Śaiva cult of Bhairava while retaining their original function as "'scarecrows' that protect inner, domesticated space from the dead, the demonic, and enemy peoples."<sup>74</sup> In this sense White advocates for a diachronic reading of tantric *maṇḍalas* as historical documents that record the appropriation of localized popular religious cults into larger, trans-local tantric ritual systems. From this perspective the classes of beings that exist beyond the edges of a *maṇḍala*, along its periphery, and at its gates represent various degrees of appropriation and repurposing of the 'spirit deities' of local, popular cults. The imagery can at the same time be read synchronically, as a militarized urban vision of civic space that imposes a hierarchical schema on the *maṇḍala* moving from the center to the periphery of the *maṇḍala*. When viewed from this perspective, White argues that Bhairava as the lord of the spirits (*bhūtanātha*) is worshipped across South Asia "[as] the guardian of boundaries—of

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<sup>73</sup> In many cases the pan-Indic or trans-local names and mythologies associated with these deities are preserved alongside their localized names and mythologies, which lends a remarkable sense of transparency to the process of assimilation in Nepal.

<sup>74</sup> David Gordon White, "At the *Maṇḍala's* Dark Fringe: Possession and Protection in Tantric Bhairava Cults," in *Notes from a Maṇḍala: Essays in the History of Indian Religions in Honor of Wendy Doniger*, edited by Laurie L. Patton and David L. Haberman (Newark: University of Delaware Press 2010), 205.

the permeable vessel of the human body, the bounded topocosm of the village, town, or kingdom, between consecrated and unconsecrated space, between the living and the dead, as well as the turning points in various stages of the human life cycle." These peripheral Bhairavas "are the pivotal deities of local pantheons, which neutralize and drive away the spirits they control, for the benefit of their devotees."<sup>75</sup>

### **III. Buddhist Assimilation of Local Spirit Cults**

The Buddhist context offers a particularly rich data set for the conversion and appropriation of local spirit religions into a trans-local, institutionally organized religious tradition.

Scholars have been aware of the strong presence of these traditions in the earliest phases of Buddhism's development since the nineteenth century, yet thoroughgoing analyses of the relationship between localized spirit religion cults and Buddhism's flourishing across the subcontinent and beyond remain remarkably rare. Robert Decaroli's monograph on the relationship between early Buddhism and localized spirit religions provides an important response to this ongoing problem. In the introduction to his work, Decaroli points to the construction of narratives of decline among early Buddhologists as one culprit in the perpetuation of this lacuna:

Specifically, one of the consequences of telling Indian history in terms of decline is that Buddhism could in no way be portrayed as dependent on or derivative of popular religious practices that pervaded a great deal of life in ancient India. All evidence of contact between Buddhism and popular spirit religions of the time (seen as even more degraded than Hinduism in the eyes of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century European academics) had to be explained in terms of conflict or reluctant concessions to the masses.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> White, "At the *Maṇḍala's* Dark Fringe," 208.

<sup>76</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, 7.

In opposition to the nearly universal depiction of early Buddhist interaction with localized spirit religions as evidence of a capitulation to the masses or a corruption of an original, 'pure Buddhism,' Decaroli offers a refreshing inversion of such interpretations by arguing that the appropriation and adaptation of the deities of local spirit religions in South Asia and beyond indicates the active expansion of a thriving tradition, not a tradition in decline.<sup>77</sup>

Contact between early Buddhist institutions and localized popular religion was at times facilitated by Buddhism's expanding function as part of the economic infrastructure for trade in goods, currency, and information. The best documented evidence for the role that Buddhist monasteries played in the economic expansion of South Asian dynasties appears in the study of systems rock-cut cave *vihāras* that, beginning as early as the Sātavāhana dynasty (c. 50–225 CE), played an integral role in expanding and maintaining trade networks that connected western trading ports such as Sopara with inland markets and, ultimately, larger urban settlements toward the eastern coast such as Amaravati. Himanshu Prabha Ray and others have, for instance, argued that the Buddhist cave *vihāras* established throughout the remote areas of the Deccan by lay patrons belonging to various trade guilds and royal patrons provided expanded and helped maintain trade and information networks in the region.<sup>78</sup> The rock-cut Buddhist *vihāra* complexes from this period preserve important evidence of the economic aspects of Buddhism's expansion throughout South Asia. Richard Scott Cohen's work on the cave *vihāras* of Ajanṭā notes that the Buddhist *vihāra* also performed a localized economic function that revolved around the *saṅgha*'s ability to act as intermediaries between

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<sup>77</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, 187.

<sup>78</sup> Himanshu Prabha Ray, *Monastery and Guild: Commerce Under the Sātavāhanas* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 87.



spirit deities like the *yakṣiṇī* Hārītī and the *vihāra*'s local patrons.<sup>79</sup> Sites like Ajaṅṭā thus contain a potential a wealth of art historical and archeological data for Buddhist appropriation of local spirit religions.

Larger Buddhist monuments can also be read in terms of Buddhist inclusivist strategies toward local spirit deity cults. The architectural structure of the Buddhist *caityas* and the relocation of spirit deities such as *yakṣas* and *yakṣiṇīs* to the peripheral railings and *torāṇas* evidenced at *stūpa* complexes such as Sanchi indicate a pattern of inclusivity that found its iconographic expression in the negotiation of central and peripheral space. The ritualization of this strategy appears later in the tradition in the Buddhist *maṅḍala*, where the 'worldly' deities of the spirit religions are repurposed as guardians of the periphery.<sup>80</sup>

Decaroli notes that the great *yakṣa* and *yakṣiṇī* statues that constitute the earliest iconic statuary in the South Asian archeological record were carved in the round and typically situated in the center of a platform surrounded by a peripheral fence. This design would have supported circumambulatory practices at these *yakṣa* and *yakṣiṇī caityas* in much the same way that these practices are supported by the circular layout of the Buddhist *stūpa*.

Excavations at early Buddhist *stūpa* sites locate this same class of deities on the peripheral

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<sup>79</sup> See Richard Scot Cohen *Setting the Three Jewels: The Complex Culture of Buddhism at the Ajaṅṭā Caves* dissertation (Ann Arbor: UMI, 1995); and Richard S. Cohen, "Nāga, Yakṣiṇī, Buddha: Local Deities and Local Buddhism at Ajanta," *History of Religions* 37, no. 4 (May, 1998): 360–400.

<sup>80</sup> Chapter 53 of the *Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, although the section of the text significantly postdates the period in discussion here, contains at least one passage that contains an explicit description of the various beings that populate the peripheries of a *caitya* in its account of the various beings that shall gather to witness the Buddha's *parinirvaṇa* and cremation:

sarve bhūtagaṇā tastuḥ caityānte 'pi samīpataḥ  
pūjāṃ ca mahatīm cakre cucukrośa rurodanam || 53.69 ||

All the hosts of spirits  
Shall be close by on the perimeter of the *caitya*  
Making large offerings  
And crying aloud. || 53.69 ||  
Sāstrī ed., *The Āryamañjuśrīmūlakalpa*, 584.

railings and ornamented *torāṇa*, where they are effectively "relegated to positions of subservience"<sup>81</sup> to the relic cult of the *stūpa*. Other examples of this kind of subordination and relegation to the periphery include the common placement of the *yakṣiṇī* and *yakṣa* couple Hārītī and Pāñcika at the entrance of Indian Buddhist *vihāras* beginning in the early centuries. From this perspective, Buddhist *caitya* architecture may have derived its design in part from the *yakṣa* and *yakṣiṇī* shrines at the center of local spirit deity cults. If this is the case then the early Buddhist *caitya* effectively exchanged the spirit deities located at the center of the *caitya* with the Buddha and his relics, and relocated the displaced pantheon of spirit deities along its periphery.

The structure of ancient *yakṣa* and *yakṣiṇī* shrines, which consisted of a single platform surrounded by a small fence with a tree, an icon of the deity, or perhaps both at its center, also offers an example of the delineation of protected and unprotected space that likely predates its replication in the structure of the Buddhist *caitya* and *vihāra*. Decaroli notes that Buddhist literature contains a number of stories in which the *vihāra* acts as an actual refuge for individuals trying to evade harmful spirit beings. In such cases the supernatural guardians of the monastery, those potentially dangerous beings that have been tamed and converted to the Buddhist faith, play the role of turning back their hostile counterparts.<sup>82</sup> Such accounts are consistent with data representing some of the earliest phases of Buddhist architecture and literature up through the later stages of South Asian Buddhist esoteric traditions. Once they have been converted to the Buddhist faith, worldly (*laukika*) deities act as guardians and protectors on the *torāṇa* of Buddhist *stūpas*, at the thresholds of Buddhist *vihāras*, and, later, at the gates of tantric Buddhist *maṇḍalas*. The

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<sup>81</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, 68.

<sup>82</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, 130.

early Buddhist monuments and cave *vihāras* are some of the earliest structures on the subcontinent, and thus the earliest to provide an archeological record for the incorporation of the deities of localized popular religious cults into more formal religious traditions and institutions. This suggests that this particular conversion strategy, also evident in the Śaiva tantric appropriation of Bhairava and his hordes of spirit beings, may have been employed first among Buddhists.

In addition to offering protection by acting as guardians of the periphery, the same classes of supernatural beings could also be weaponized and set against one's enemies. This means that major religious groups like Buddhists and Śaivas did not only have to manage a world full of spirit beings operating as independent hostile agents, they had to contend with a world in which these same beings could be used by one's enemies to specifically target both individuals and the broader religious institutions to which they belonged. The examples presented here come from two well-known works, the *Śārdulakārṇāvadāna* and the *Bhaiṣajyaguruvaiḍūryaprabharājasūtra* (henceforth *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra*). Both are pre-tantric works that contain evidence of sorcery being performed *against* Buddhists. Interestingly, the aggressors indicated in both cases bear no explicit sectarian affiliation.

The *Śārdulakārṇāvadāna* opens with a short account of the Buddha's attendant Ānanda falling victim to a sorcerer's spell. After gathering his robe and bowl, Ānanda proceeds to Śrāvastī to beg for alms. On the way, he stops and asks an outcaste girl named Prakṛti to ladle some water into his bowl. Prakṛti is instantly smitten with Ānanda, and begins to plot to win his affection by enlisting her mother to cast a spell, which the text terms a *vidyāmantra*, to draw Ānanda to her so that she may make him her husband. Prakṛti's mother is initially unwilling to cast the spell for her daughter, first because she notes that the Kośala

King Prasenajit may kill her and all of the *caṇḍālas* if he finds out, and second because she is skeptical that her magic will be able to work against one of the Buddha's chief disciples because he is 'free from desire.' As discussed in greater detail below, keeping one's vows and cultivating a mind that is 'free from desire' is considered a powerful prophylactic in Buddhist literature against interference or possession by spirit beings. Prakṛti eventually convinces her mother to cast the spell, the spell works, and Ānanda is summoned to the house, causing him to wonder whether or not the Buddha has completely forsaken him. The Buddha then directs his attention toward Ānanda and recites his own spell, freeing him from the summoning spell cast by Prakṛti's mother. As one might imagine, Prakṛti is not exactly pleased with her mother and demands an explanation, prompting a brief interchange between the two about the superiority of the Buddha's ability to cast spells. Here Prakṛti's mother states, "The ascetic Gautama's mantras are extremely powerful, ours are not. My child, when he wishes, the ascetic Gautama can break all the mantras that have power over the entire world. Moreover, a worldly [mantra] is not able to break the ascetic Gautama's mantras. Thus the ascetic Gautama's mantras are the most powerful."<sup>83</sup> The passage continues with Ānanda returning to the Buddha's camp where he teaches Ānanda a spell that can be used to free oneself from various forms of legal reprimand such as physical and verbal abuse. The Buddha then prescribes that Ānanda, and of course by extension the reader, may wear the spell as an incanted cord tied around the arm that will bring good luck and is not able to be overpowered, except for when one's previous karma is the primary cause.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> P.L. Vaidya, ed., *Divyāvadānam*, Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 20 (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute of Post-Graduate Studies and Research in Sanskrit Learning, 1959), 315.

Sanskrit: balavattarāḥ śramaṇasya gautamasya mantrā nāsmākam| ye putri mantrāḥ sarvalokasya prabhavanti, tān mantrāñ śramaṇo gautama ākāṅkṣamāṇaḥ pratihanti| na punarlokaḥ prabhavati śramaṇasya gautamasya mantrān pratihantum| evaṃ balavattarāḥ śramaṇasya gautamasya mantrāḥ||

<sup>84</sup> *Divyāvadānam*, 316.

The performance of sorcery in the *Śārdulakārṇāvadāna* appears at first to function as another example of the 'supernatural McGuffin'<sup>85</sup> that one finds in so many other largely narrative, plot-driven works of South Asian literature. Here the recitation of these spells advance the plot by introducing the outcaste girl Prakṛti's intense desire for Ānanda, which the Buddha subsequently uses to trick her into taking ordination. The story then pivots toward the issue of ordaining outcastes as the upper classes of Śrāvastī learn that the Buddha has ordained a *caṇḍāli* girl, and the primary narrative of the story progresses from that point. The three spells at the beginning of the *Śārdulakārṇāvadāna* do, however, serve a greater purpose than functioning as a simple plot device. The author could just as easily have had the Buddha ordain an outcaste girl *without* including the narrative of her soliciting her mother's sorcery services, or without having the Buddha recite his own counter spell to free Ānanda, or without the Buddha subsequently teaching Ānanda an entirely different spell and ordering him to teach it to others.

The broader narrative of the *Śārdulakārṇāvadāna* is largely concerned with the issue of caste and the ordination of outcastes and the work can easily be analyzed within a sociological paradigm that might ignore the importance of the more supernatural ritual technologies in its opening narrative. But when the concerns dictated by a sociological paradigm are placed aside in favor of adopting a demonological paradigm, the text reveals a potential historical layer that the former would likely miss. In all three cases, the *vidyāmantras* are included in their entirety. It is as if the author wished to provide the reader

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Sanskrit:

rakṣāsūtre bāhau baddhe svastyayane kṛte [sic. na?] abhibhavitum śaknoti varjayitvā paurāṇam  
karmavipākam ||

<sup>85</sup> Adam C. Krug, "Ill See You Again in Twenty-Five Years: Tibetan Buddhism in David Lynch's *Twin Peaks* and American Pop Culture in the 90s," in *The Assimilation of Yogic Religious Through Pop Culture* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, Rowman & Littlefield, 2017), 96.

with three types of spells—one 'worldly' summoning spell, a second spell to break that summoning spell, and a third spell that can be recited or incanted into a piece of thread to protect an individual from various kinds of legal reprimand, perhaps as a consequence of being caught reciting spells (the consequences of which Prakṛti's mother appears to be well aware). Prakṛti's mother's spell enlists the help of a class of intermediary beings through the performance of a fire offering or *homa*. Here she explicitly invokes a class of *grahas* (*śikhagrahā devā viśikhagrahā devā*) by first flattering them and then asking them to bring Ānanda to her.<sup>86</sup> Perhaps most importantly, there is nothing in the text to indicate that Prakṛti's mother belongs to any specific religious order. In fact, the primary plot of the *Śārdulakārṇāvadāna*'s opening narrative revolves around the fact that admitting outcastes into renunciant orders was offensive to the higher echelons of Śrāvastī society. Including the actual formulae for these spells might lend the text a sense of believability for an audience that lives in a world in which such acts of sorcery are commonplace, and in which lower caste members of society who are not affiliated with any particular sect are known to have possessed their own brand of thaumaturgic ability. Statements regarding the superiority of the Buddha's spells in the brief interchange between Prakṛti and her mother in the opening of the *Śārdulakārṇāvadāna* are also common in Buddhist literature. Such statements provide strong evidence that the Buddhist *saṅghas* were heavily invested in presenting themselves as effective mediators of the spirit world to an audience that often found itself in need of a good

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<sup>86</sup> Vaidya, *Divyāvadānam*, 314.

Sanskrit:

amale vimale kuṅkume sumane | yena baddhāsi vidyut | icchayā devo varṣati vidyotati garjati | vismayam mahārājasya samabhivardhayitum devebhyo manuṣyebho gandharvebhaḥ śikhigrahā devā viśikhigrahā devā ānandasya āgamanāya saṅgamanāya kramaṇāya grahaṇāya juhomi svāhā ||

Oh pure, stainless, saffron colored, benevolent one, who brandishes the thunderbolt—when you so desire, the deity sends forth rain, lightning, and thunder. From among the gods, human beings, and gandharvas, you śikhagraha deities, you viśikhagraha deities [are able] to pique [even] a great king's wonder. I make this fire offering [to you] so that Ānanda may come, so that he may meet with us, so that he may approach, and so that he may be bound [to my daughter in marriage].

sorcerer, or whose own classes of local, 'freelance' sorcerers might find use for an incanting spell to protect against the potential legal consequences of being caught practicing their craft.

The evidence for sorcery in the *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra* stands follows the primary section of the text containing the Buddha's explanation of the apotropaic power of recollecting the Tathāgata Bhaiṣajyaguru. The passage reads:

Moreover, Mañjuśrī, there are beings who delight in calumny, who cause mutual strife, fighting, and conflict among sentient beings. Those sentient beings with hostile thoughts toward each other create various nonvirtues by means of body, speech, and mind, those who wish harm upon one another continually attack each other for no reason. They invoke a forest deity (*vanadevatām*), a tree-deity (*vṛkṣadevatām*), and a mountain-deity (*giridevatām*). They invoke the individual spirits in the cremation grounds. And they deprive living beings who have taken birth as animals of their life. They make offerings to the *yakṣas* and *rākṣasas* who eat flesh and blood. [After writing their] enemy's name or making an effigy, they perform a violent spell, and by enlisting a *kākhorda* or *vetāla* they desire to bring about an obstacle to [the target's] life or to destroy his body.<sup>87</sup>

The passage goes on to state that such sorcery is ineffective when cast against people who have merely heard the name of the Tathāgata Bhaiṣajyaguru, and suggests that those beings who engage in such harmful acts of sorcery are themselves pacified when they hear this name. The *Bhaiṣajyagurusūtra* is not a narrative text in the style of an *avadāna*, and this reference to the weaponization of spirit deities is embedded in the text's larger project of outlining the various contexts in which the devotee may invoke the Tathāgata Bhaiṣajyaguruvaīdūryaprabha for protection. It is thus not merely a didactic, narrative work

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<sup>87</sup> Nalinaksha Dutt et. al ed., *Gilgit Manuscripts Vol 1* (Calcutta, India: Calcutta Oriental Press Ltd.,1939), 13–14.

Sanskrit:

punaraparam mañjuśrīḥ santi sattvāḥ ye paiśūnyābhiratāḥ sattvānām parasparam kalahavigrahavivādān kārapayanti te parasparam vīgrahacittāḥ sattvā nānāvidhamakuśalamabhisamskurvanti kāyena vācā manasā, anyonyamahitakāmā nityam parasparamanarthāya parākrāmanti te ca vanadevatāmāvāhayanti vṛkṣadevatām giridevatām ca śmaśāneṣu pṛthag bhūtānāvāhayanti tiryagyonigatāmśca prāṇino jīvitād vyavaropayanti māmsarudhirabhakṣān yakṣarākṣasān pūjayanti | tasya śatrorṇāma vā śarīrapratimām vā kṛtvā tatra ghoravidyām sādhayanti kākhordavetālānuprayogeṇa jīvitāntarāyam vā śarīravinaśam vā kartukāmāḥ |

but a practical, prescriptive text. Its reference to the weaponization of the world of nonhuman beings is thus not merely a plot device, and should be taken as a reflection of the world that this text's liturgy wishes to directly address, and the world in which its audience found itself. This world is best reflected in the early esoteric Buddhist literature of the *kriyātantra*, and this is precisely where one finds this *sūtra* in the Tibetan canon.

#### **IV. Family, Collective Identity, and other Means of Ritual Protection**

Asceticism is, in ways that are social and cultural as well as metaphysical, and soteriological, largely about the manipulation, adoption, obfuscation, and destruction of identity. Buddhist renunciants who 'set forth' (Skt. *pra + vraj*) from householder life, a mimetic performance following the model of Śākyamuni's own path to awakening, literally leave home, surrendering their former social and familial identities. Interpretations of the renunciant's departure for ascetic life can easily slide into the same ideological fallacy modeled in Weber's ideal type of Buddhist 'other-worldly mysticism.' But such interpretations perhaps buy in too fully to the traditions own rhetoric of renunciation. As we see modeled in hagiographical literature on the life of the Buddha, ties to family are not so easily severed and the attempt to 'go forth' from the home does not on its own amount to somehow entering into an entirely different world, never to return again. After all, Śākyamuni's very name indicates continuity with his family identity despite his renunciation of householder life. This continuity is formally expressed in narrative accounts of the Buddha's eventual return to Kapilavastu and continued engagement with his own family. For this and other reasons, Romila Thapar encourages scholars make a distinction between 'asceticism' and 'renunciation' in her recent remarks on the Weberian classification of



Buddhism as an 'other-worldly mysticism.' Thapar states that "...unlike asceticism, renunciation does not remove the person from society, it sets up an alternate society that the renouncer can join."<sup>88</sup> Thapar's comments align well with Sondra L. Hausner's observations in her ethnographic work on modern Śaiva asceticism. Hausner notes that *sādhus* continue to generate and participate in communal networks and communal identities despite the normative rhetoric of seclusion and isolation that defines them as members of an ascetic order.<sup>89</sup> Even the most extreme forms of asceticism do not completely extract the individual from society—they embed the ascetic in one or more of a number of social structures, both supernatural and mundane, that operate at society's margins. Thus despite their own rhetoric of abandoning the comforts of home and worldly life, in actuality both the renunciants and the ascetic exchange one identity for another, or one 'family' (*kula*) for another. This is one way to interpret the phrase 'a son or daughter of the lineage' (*kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā*) so frequently used in Buddhist scripture to signify individuals who have taken on a new Buddhist identity.

*Gotra*, another term with strong familial connotations, is also used to identify Buddhist ascetics and renunciants belonging to one of the three divisions of the Buddhist path, being those whose *gotra* is that of a 'hearer' (*śrāvaka*), those whose *gotra* is that of a solitary Buddha (*pratyekabuddha*), and those whose *gotra* is that of a being intent upon awakening (*bodhisattva*). In this context the term *gotra* is often translated as a 'class,'

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<sup>88</sup> Romila Thapar, "Max Weber's Hinduism and Buddhism: Reflections on a Sociological Classic 100 Years On," October 16, 2018, Keynote Address delivered September 8, 2016 at SOAS, University of London, <https://www.soas.ac.uk/religions-and-philosophies/events/conferences/max-webers-hinduism-and-buddhism/>.

<sup>89</sup> Sondra L. Hausner, *Wandering with Sadhus: Ascetics in the Hindu Himalayas* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 2–3.

'family,' or 'genus.'<sup>90</sup> But the etymology of the term may reveal something important about the conception of ascetic identities that has broad implications for applying a demonological paradigm to our interpretation of asceticism and ascetic communities. These implications also have something to offer our understanding of the social and existential dynamics at work in the radically transgressive asceticism in the Buddhist Vajrayāna.

The Vedic etymology for *gotra* describes the term as a derivative of the noun *go* or 'cow' and an *upapādasamāsa* ending derived from the verbal root *trai*, meaning 'to protect.' Thus a *gotra* is something to 'protect the cows,' or an enclosure or cow-pen. By the time the term appears in the *Chandogyopaniṣad*, *Śāṅkhāyanaśrautasūtra*, and the *Kauśikasūtra*, its original meaning has been anthropomorphized and projected onto the family unit. Here it retains some sense of a 'pen' or 'enclosure,' and is recorded as indicating the "family, enclosed by the hurdle [i.e. fence]" alongside its other, more familiar meanings of "family, race, lineage, kin."<sup>91</sup> In the Buddhist case, the act of renunciation is thus radical in one sense in that one leaves the 'enclosure' of one's own birth family, yet it is perhaps less radical in another sense because this action is quickly followed by one's entrance into a new 'family,' the Buddhist *saṅgha*. The etymology of the term *gotra* as 'family' bears a strong historical resonance with the notion of a protective structure, and these connotations are alive and well in the very structure by which one declares oneself a Buddhist, with the community of the *saṅgha* functioning as one of three forms of *śaraṇa* or 'refuge.'

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<sup>90</sup> The topic is outlined in great detail by the 4<sup>th</sup> century Buddhist author Asaṅga in the first chapter of his *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, the *gotrapāṭalam* or 'chapter on genus.' For the Sanskrit edition of the text see Ārya Asaṅga, *Bodhisattvabhūmi [Being the XVth Section of Asaṅgapada's YOGACARABHUMI]*, edited by Nalinaksha Dutt (Patna: Jayaswal Research Institute, 1966), 17. The work has been translated from the Tibetan in consultation with the Sanskrit text in Ārya Asaṅga, *The Bodhisattva Path to Unsurpassed Enlightenment: A Complete Translation of the Bodhisattvabhūmi*, translated by Artemus B. Engle (Snow Lion: Boulder, CO, 2016), 3–20.

<sup>91</sup> Monier Williams notes that the term is used in this way in RV 8.50.10. Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *A Sanskrit-English Dictionary Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, 2005), 364 c.3.

The approach to identity in South Asian ascetic orders might be more accurately understood not only in terms of the complete obliteration of personal identity, but also in terms of a recognition the fluidity and malleability of personal identity. This is the case whether one speaks of the transition from a 'worldly' to religious life, the transition through various stages of religious life through ordination or initiation, the transition from one sect to another, or the ultimately soteriological transition from fettered existence to liberation. All of these processes involve exchanging one identity for another, an exchange that is usually marked by the bestowal of a new name. Ascetic orders and temporary ascetic practices adopted by all manner of religious actors in South Asia share in common the act of moving between identities, of shedding one identity for another, and, to allow for the possibility of the most radical if not rare cases, relinquishing one's former identity in its entirety. In the majority of instances, the fact that ascetics inevitably take on a new identity by moving from *kula* to *kula* indicates a seemingly inescapable re-inscription of identity within a larger family unit, and at least one conception of the family unit, as we see in the etymology of the term *gotra*, imagines it as a fundamentally protective structure. Thus becoming a 'son of the victor' or *jīnaputra*, another heavily familial metaphor for a Buddhist renunciant, does not leave one exposed, vulnerable, or unprotected. In fact it does quite the opposite.

The construction of the family as a protective unit can be juxtaposed against the conception of the individual psycho-physical complex as a “container or conduit” rather than “a closed, discrete system.”<sup>92</sup> The idea of the body as a permeable container within a world populated by beings, both human and nonhuman, who are intent upon laying siege to and exploiting it for their own purposes has a strong presence in South Asian literature from as

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<sup>92</sup> David Gordon White, “The Goddess in the Tree: Reflections on Nim-Tree Shrines in Varanasi,” in *The Ananda-vana of Indian Art: Dr. Anand Krishna Felicitation Volume*, edited by Naval Krishna and Manu Krishna (Varanasi: Indica, 2005), 583.

early as the *Atharvaveda*.<sup>93</sup> The protective enclosure of one's natal family could be transposed onto a new kind of family, the community of renunciants and ascetics with the *vihāra*, the domestic space occupied by the *saṅgha* as a family of renunciants, offered another level of protection against the influence of spirit beings. This protection could be reinforced, as Decaroli indicates and as one can readily observe across Buddhist traditions, by the conversion and re-purposing of one or more powerful spirit beings as the protectors of the domestic space of the *vihāra*. But the *vihāra* could only protect the permeable bodies of the Buddhist *saṅgha* when its members were inside its walls. Buddhist monastic life has always contained elements that tied the monastic community to society, with the very earliest version of this being the requirement that monks gather food by begging for alms. Buddhist monks by no means remained cloistered in the protective structure of the *vihāra*, and as a result more easily transportable methods were needed to guard the vulnerable, permeable bodies of monastic *saṅgha* members from the harmful influences they might encounter outside of the *vihāra*.

Protective spells (*paritta*) and incantations (*dhāraṇī*) fulfilled the need to protect individual *saṅgha* members who found themselves outside of the defensive structure of the *vihāra*. With the emergence of the esoteric Buddhist textual traditions, the term *mantra* eventually came to reflect a continuity of this particular function of *dhāraṇī* and *paritta*.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Fred Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 555. Here, in the conclusion to his work, Smith writes, "The recognition of disease-producing spirit possession in South Asia has an epochal history of more than three thousand years and an equally epic variation and complexity. It can be traced from the *Atharvaveda*, where *unmāda* was first discussed, to the early canonical texts of Caraka, Suśruta, and Vāgbhaṭa, where diagnostics and treatment modalities were more formally discussed. Contemporaneous with these texts, it is discussed in the *Mahābhārata* and Buddhist medical treatises. From these sources it was dispersed to a variety of Tantras and āyurvedic texts beginning in the late first-millennium and finally drifted into *dharmaśāstra* and astrological literature. It will come as no surprise, then, that, given this deep history, the idea of negative, invasive spirits has not ceased in India."

<sup>94</sup> The term *dhāraṇī* when referring to the thaumaturgical application of a particular spell or formula is frequently denoted with the compound *dhāraṇīmantram*. Such uses of *dhāraṇī* are categorized by the

This is reflected in one of the popular etymologies of the term *mantra* as something that "protects" (*trāṇa*) the "mind" (*manas*).<sup>95</sup> Beginning as early as the work of L.A. Waddell, buddhologists have noted that *paritta* and *dhāraṇī* constitute one of "the most cherished practical element[s] in the Buddhist religion."<sup>96</sup> Despite these observations at the opening of his article on *dhāraṇī* literature, Waddell's work prefigures a broader pattern in the field of ignoring the role that spirit deities and popular spirit religions played in the development of Buddhist traditions. Perhaps owing to the pejorative approach among this early generation of buddhologists, many later studies on *dhāraṇī* literature have limited themselves to the term's connotations regarding the ability to retain scripture in memory. Such studies undoubtedly place too much emphasis on this function of *dhāraṇī*. Instances in which the term *dhāraṇī* implies the ability to retain scriptural meaning or verse in memory are far outnumbered by instances in which the term is used to denote a spell that can be used for a range of apotropaic rites.<sup>97</sup> Thus while discussions of Peircean semiotics as a framework for interpreting the mnemonic function of *dhāraṇī*<sup>98</sup> are of interest to Religious Studies scholars writing in response to the twentieth century 'linguistic turn,' they tell us very little about the

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fourth century polymath Asaṅga in his fourfold classification of *dhāraṇī* from the *Yogācārabhūmi* as *mantradhāraṇī*, considered a separate category from *dharmadhāraṇī*, *arthadhāraṇī*, and *bodhisattvaḥśāntylabhāyadhāraṇī*. Asaṅga, *Bodhisattvabhūmi*, 185–86.

<sup>95</sup> Nāropapāda, *The Sekoddeśatikā by Nāropā (Paramārthasaṃgraha)*, edited by Francesco Sferra and Stefania Merzagora (Roma: Istituto Italiano per L'Africa E L'Oriente, 2006), 70.

Sanskrit:

manastrāṇabhūtavācca mantra vāgvajraṃ |

Translation:

And since it is something protecting the mind, mantra is indestructable speech. |

<sup>96</sup> L.A.Waddell, *The 'Dhāraṇī' Cult in Buddhism, Its Origin, Deified Literature and Images* (Berlin: Oesterheld & Co. Verlag, 1912), 164.

<sup>97</sup> Ronald M. Davidson, "Studies in Dhāraṇī Literature I: Revisiting the Meaning of the Term Dhāraṇī," in *The Journal of Indian Philosophy* (April: 2009), 107. Davidson writes "In reality, we seldom see dhāraṇīs that are actually effective mnemonic devices or that summarize abstract principles, in distinction to the hundreds employed in non-intellectual purposes, including many of the earliest."

<sup>98</sup> Janet Gyatso, "Letter Magic: A Peircean Perspective on the Semiotics of Rdo Grub chen's Dhāraṇī Memory," in *In The Mirror of Memory*, edited by Janet Gyatso (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), 173–214.

*dhāraṇī* literature's most common practical applications. This problematic hermeneutic is directly related to the general resistance in the field toward recognizing the influence that spirit deities, their cults, and the ritual arts that mediate between the human and the spirit world have had on the development of Buddhist traditions.

Buddhists at all levels of society were subject to the basic existential problem of possessing a porous, vulnerable body in a world of spirit beings that might do them harm. This view of the person and the world they inhabit is an important factor in the basic existential construction of the world and its inhabitants in South Asia, and Buddhist traditions are by no means an exception to this model. In his inquiry into the status of the person in South Asia, Louis Dumont argued that the South Asian conception of the renunciant was the closest thing that any 'traditional' culture had to the Western notion of individualism. In his own take on Weber's characterization of Buddhism as tradition primarily directed toward an 'other-worldly mysticism,' Dumont articulated this position in his sociological examination of caste and the status of the individual in India as follows:

The renouncer leaves the world behind in order to devote himself to his own liberation. Essentially he depends upon no one but himself, he is alone. He thinks as an individual, and this is the distinctive trait which opposes him to the man-in-the-world and brings him closer to the western thinker. But while for us the individual is in the world, here he is found only outside the world, at least in principle.<sup>99</sup>

But the model for renunciation in Buddhist traditions is not entirely 'other-worldly,' unless the entire Buddhist *saṅgha* is reduced to a homogenous unit that was exclusively focused on attaining the *nirvāṇa* of an *arhat* and transcending the cycle of rebirth. To claim that this is

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<sup>99</sup> Louis Dumont, *Religion/Politics and History in India: Collected Papers in Sociology* (Paris/The Hague: Mouton Publishers, 1970), 45. I first came across this passage thanks to Isabelle Nabakov's analysis of western comparative sociological theories of personhood in the introduction to her study on exorcism and spirit religions in Tamil Nadu. See Isabelle Nabakov, *Religion Against the Self: An Ethnography of Tamil Rituals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 13.

the exclusive function of renunciation constitutes a rather uncritical subscription to the tradition's own normative rhetoric. Instead, the Buddhist *saṅgha* is more accurately understood exactly in the way that the term *saṅgha* suggests, as a community. Generally speaking, membership within a community is one of a number of means by which individuals identify themselves in relation to the world in which they live. In a specifically South Asian cultural context in which the person is conceived within the basic existential condition of the demonological paradigm—where the psycho-physical constituents of the person are part of an inherently open, vulnerable system—membership within a community not only entails a certain degree of protection and refuge in social and political terms, it also entails a certain degree of protection from the world of spirit beings. Thus it is the case that the Buddhist ascetic would renounce one family only to claim membership in another in a repetition of the kind of subject-forming function that membership to a clan or family entails within this South Asian existential condition.

This is not to say that the ideal asceticism proposed by Dumont and others did not play an important role in the formulation of Buddhist ascetic identities. The ascetic cultures of transgressive observances (*vrata*) and practices (*caryā*) embodied in the Buddhist culture of accomplished adepts (*siddha*) were in part a response to the normalized asceticism of the Buddhist monastic *saṅgha*. The ascetic practices associated with esoteric Buddhism provided a means to renew and re-invigorate the more radical interpretations of the tradition's own renunciatory rhetoric by challenging the kind of identity-forming processes that are inherent in a subject's subscription to normative modes of social conduct. In order to express this radical reformulation, the Buddhist *siddhas* deliberately sought out spaces for their ascetic practices that lay outside of worldly conventions and the protective edifice of religious,

political, and social institutions. Such edifices were not only socially constructed, they were also quite literally constructed in the physical structure of the *vihāra* and the later, more mobile protective ritual structure of the *maṇḍala*.

These aspects of Buddhist ritual in the exoteric as well as esoteric systems of the *kriyā* and *caryātantras* were widely criticized by *siddhas* such as the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The terms employed to denigrate these practices all derive from the Sanskrit root *klṛp*, with one derivation of this term, *kalpa* becoming a term of art referring to the 'ritual manual' itself, which contains 'ordered' or 'arranged' discourses on the performance of Buddhist rituals. The demonological paradigm can provide a greater degree of nuance in our understanding of the dual significance that underlies the rejection of the 'constructs' of the *kalpa* or 'ritual manual' in *siddha* literature. When variants of the verbal root *klṛp* are used to critique the rituals of the *kriyā*- and *caryātantras*, the critique that these practices are 'conceptual' is not meant in an exclusively cognitive or idealist sense. Such critiques also bear the connotations of those terms derived from the root *klṛp* that indicate the actual construction and arrangement of consecrated ritual spaces and the construction of a purified body to facilitate the successful performance of the rite within ritually consecrated space. The interpretation of terms that are derived from the verbal root *klṛp* to signify the process of conceptual construction is, in most cases, entirely appropriate. But the dual significance that these terms take on in certain contexts requires that we interpret them as signifiers for both the process of generating conceptual constructs and their physical expression in the construction of ritually consecrated spaces and bodies. In this sense, the term *kalpa* and other derivatives of the root *klṛp* point to a semantic relationship between the conceptual processes inherent in the epistemological formation of the person and the rites prescribed in the *kriyā*-



and *caryātantras* that provide guidelines for the internal and external ritual construction of protected space in response to the basic existential problem of a personhood in which the mind-body complex is seen as a vulnerable, open conduit. The Buddhist *siddhas* criticized both the idealist and materialist aspects of this kind of 'construction.' The important role that self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedana*) plays in the yogic epistemology of the *siddhas* is clearly a rejection of the kind of dualistic epistemology that constructs the person as a subject in relationship to the perception of external objects. At the same time, they also rejected the externally constructed institutional structures that stood as an initial line of defense, the ritually constructed protective structures of the early *tantras*, and the socially constructed modes of normative conduct that guarded the body against assault from the unseen world of spirit deities. Rejecting these protective physical and conceptual constructs allowed the *siddhas* to demonstrate their invulnerability to these forces. Thus the 'attainment' of the Buddhist *siddha* sought to resolve of the basic existential problem inherent to the South Asian vision of personhood. This is at least one connotation underlying the professed goal of attaining the state of *vajrasattva* or an 'indestructible being.'

A variety of locations are prescribed for the performance of practices that demonstrate the advanced Vajrayāna *siddha's* final resolution of the fundamental problem of the permeable body, but none was more influential in dictating the ritual theory, iconography, and aesthetics of tantric Buddhism than the *śmaśāna* or 'cremation ground.' The phrase "culture of the cremation ground"<sup>100</sup> was originally coined in reference to the Śaiva ascetic movements that emerged by the middle of the first millennium CE. But Buddhists had already been practicing their own cremation ground asceticism for centuries before this ritual space gained a strong Śaiva presence with the advent of the Pañcārthika Pāśupata ascetic

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<sup>100</sup> Sanderson, "Purity and Power," 200.

system reflected in Kauṇḍinya's (c. 4<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> C.E.) commentary to the *Pāśupatasūtra*.<sup>101</sup> It is also clear that Buddhists had been practicing in and around cremation grounds for centuries before the Buddhist "culture of the cremation ground" reached its full ritual, iconographic, and soteriological expression in the *yoginītantras*. The *Laṅkāvatārasūtra*, for instance, lists "charnel ground ascetics" or *śaśānikā* as one of a number of locations for the practice of Buddhist yogins.<sup>102</sup> Using archeological evidence that locates the sights of many of the earliest Buddhist *vihāras* over megalithic burial grounds, Decaroli argues that Buddhists positioned themselves as mediators between the human and nonhuman worlds by locating their *vihāras* in many cases in the same locations as burial grounds from the megalithic period.<sup>103</sup> Decaroli provides several examples in which Buddhists converted both the charnel grounds and the supernatural beings that dwelled therein and enlisted them as servants of the *saṅgha*. He summarizes the relevant material from the chronicle of the Chinese pilgrim Faxian (in India 399–414 CE) in the following excerpt:

The Chinese Pilgrim Faxian mentions in his description of the Karaṇḍa bamboo garden near Rajagrha that 'North of the *vihāra* two or three *le* [less than one mile] was the *Śmaśānam*... Faxian also mentions the 'Great Heap' monastery, which is named after a wicked demon who used to dwell at this location. After the demon's conversion the site was turned into a *vihāra* and the formerly dangerous inhabitant was, in Faxian's time... famous for magically keeping the paths of the monastery swept. He also mentions a monastery east of Kauśāmbi near the spot where the Buddha converted an 'evil demon' and practiced meditation.<sup>104</sup>

Faxian's account positions this *vihāra* between the *śmaśāna* and the city of Rajagrha, an appropriate place to construct an infrastructure that could maintain a boundary around the

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<sup>101</sup> S.D. Vasudeva, "The Śaiva Yogas and Their Relation to Other Systems of Yoga," in *RINDAS Series of Working Papers: Traditional Indian Thoughts* 26 (2017): 3.

<sup>102</sup> Christian Wedemeyer, "'Locating Tantric Antinomianism: An Essay Toward the Intellectual History of the 'Practices/Practice Observance' (*caryā/caryāvrata*)" in *JIAS* 34 no 1–2 2011 (2012): 391. Wedemeyer provides the following location for this passage in P.L. Vaidya, (1963): 103.

<sup>103</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, 44.

<sup>104</sup> Decaroli. *Haunting the Buddha*, 44.

city, preventing the restless dead and the beings that haunt the cremation grounds from interfering in civic life.

One of Decaroli's most interesting treatments of this topic appears in his analysis of the narrative literature concerning the Buddha Śākyamuni's liberation at Gayā. As one of a number of important locations for the performance of *śrāddha* rites to ensure the recently deceased's safe passage to the ancestral realm (*pretaloka*),<sup>105</sup> Gayā has maintained some association with the management and mediation of spirit beings for nearly two millennia.<sup>106</sup> Decaroli uses the *Nidānakathā* or *Origin Story*, a fifth century hagiography of the Buddha, to highlight a number of themes in the narrative that reproduce aspects of Vaidika Brahmin *śrāddha* rites. In light of this evidence, he argues that "[t]he *Nidānakathā* enlightenment tale features Śākyamuni, a mendicant kṣatriya renouncer, assuming the role of the brahman officiate and undertaking the rites for a low-caste woman, thereby intentionally transgressing many of the restrictions expressed in the brahmanical codes," and thus, "[a]t least symbolically, the implication is made that this ritual is far more effective than the traditional *śrāddha* rites."<sup>107</sup> It is possible that there is also another important thematic layer to the Buddha's (or later Buddhists') selection of Gayā as the location for the seat of enlightenment. The brahmanical *śrāddha* rites do not only provide a means for guaranteeing the safe transition of the dead to the ancestral world, they also serve as a ritual technology for preventing the proliferation of the restless dead in the world of the living. But *śrāddha* rites are not always carried out effectively, and as a result the locations at which these rites are

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<sup>105</sup> The *Vāyupurāṇa* dedicates a significant portion of its text to the performance of *śrāddha*, and specifically to the benefits of performing *śrāddha* at Gayā. See Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare, trans. and ed. *Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology Series: The Vāyupurāṇa Part II* (Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1988), 561–648 on *śrāddha* rites; and 910–972 on Gayā as a preeminent locale for the performance of *śrāddha* rites.

<sup>106</sup> Decaroli notes that the *Mahābhārata* and *Vāyu Purāṇa* both list Gayā as an important location for the performance of funerary rites. Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, 106.

<sup>107</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, 111.

performed can become overwhelmed by the presence of the restless dead. This belief was shared with me before a recent trip to Gayā in February 2016, when I was told that people believe that there are a lot of '*bhūt*' and '*pret*' in Gayā because the brahmin priests do not always perform the offerings correctly, leaving the dead to wander and create problems. This detail provides an important perspective for the story of Śākyamuni's *māravijaya* or 'victory over Māra,' the seminal moment of his awakening. As Decaroli notes, Śākyamuni appears to have selected a site overrun with potentially harmful spirit deities when he chose to practice his austerities on the outskirts of Gayā, and his choice of such a place would have been perceived as a particularly brave act.<sup>108</sup> Decaroli's analysis thus brings the story of Śākyamuni Buddha's victory over Māra and enlightenment enticingly close to the very same cremation ground asceticism that associated with *tantric* Buddhism, and considered by some to have an entirely non-Buddhist, Śaiva derivation.

The theoretical apparatus underlying this narrative, however, differs from that of the cremation ground asceticism of the tantric Buddhist *siddhas*. This difference is the best indicator of the ethical shift between the cremation ground asceticism of the early Buddhist traditions and that of the later esoteric traditions. In both contexts, the maintenance of vows (*saṃvaram*, *samayam*) constitutes the ritual mechanism for demonstrating one's invulnerability to various inimical spirit deities, but the structure of these vows differ dramatically in the esoteric context. The original model for ritual protection from attack by spirit deities, according to Decaroli's evidence, depended on the cultivation of moral virtue through proper maintenance of monastic and lay vows. In the later, tantric traditions of the *siddhas*, the *samaya* or vow by which the yogin wins the favor of the wrathful spirit beings is specifically oriented against the maintenance of ordinary ethical modes of conduct. Both

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<sup>108</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting*, 114–15.

systems, however, reflect Fred Smith's observations on the intersection of morality and the pathology of possession in South Asian literature.<sup>109</sup> There are thus at least two theoretical models for Buddhist cremation ground asceticism—the exoteric model that emphasizes the cultivation of moral and ethical conduct via the detachment or eradication of desire as a means to guard against the forces of the spirit world, and the esoteric model that prescribes a calculated rejection of normative moral and ethical conduct through performing ascetic observances (*vrata*) and practices (*caryā*) in locations that are overrun, like Śākyamuni's Gayā, with potentially harmful spirit beings. These practices constitute a rejection of the edifice of normative ethics and morality as a protective structure that guards the vulnerable, porous, embodied person from the harmful effects of the world.

## V. Transgressive Asceticism: Reconsidering the Pāśupatas

The Śaiva cremation ground ascetic tradition of the Pāśupatas as it survives in Kauṇḍinya's *Pāśupatasūtabhāṣya* preserves a certain tension around ritual purification as the basis for cultivating immunity to the negative influence of spirit deities and its requirement that an initiate engage in social behaviors and live in locations that are broadly understood as inherently polluting. Thus the *Liṅgapurāṇa*, elaborating upon the ritual prescription of *Pāśupasūtra* 1.2 that "one should bathe with ash three times a day" (*bhasmanā triṣavanaṃ snāyita*), outlines its explanation of the rite primarily in terms of purification through fasting, bathing, and wearing white garments. The performance of the rite that appears in the *Liṅgapurāṇa* culminates in the subject smearing his body first with ash produced from the "Rudra fire" *homa*, and in a subsequent verses with ash produced from the fire of an

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<sup>109</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 473.

Agnihotra sacrifice.<sup>110</sup> The act of bathing in ash thus might be interpreted as an additional purification ritual in which one purifies the body with the residue of the *homa*. This conception of the preliminary rites of the Pāśupata practice is so completely dependent upon brahmanical notions of ritual purity that it is difficult to argue for this tradition's direct influence on the later antinomian practices in the Buddhist tantras.<sup>111</sup> But the connection between these two traditions has perhaps been too hastily rejected on the basis of a false comparison between the advanced stages of ascetic practice in the Buddhist tantras and the preliminary stage purification practice of the Pāśupatas. While the Buddhist cremation ground culture of the tantric *siddhas* undoubtedly enjoyed a far more direct relationship with Śaiva *kāpālika* asceticism, the *kāpālikavrata*, which exhibits obvious correlations with the transgressive antinomian Buddhist *vrata* and *caryā* practices, exists as a part of a continuum of Śaiva ascetic practices that inevitably leads one back to the Pāśupatas. What's more, when we adopt a demonological paradigm to analyze the relationship between the Buddhist and Pāśupata models of cremation ground asceticism, a number of structural similarities emerge between the two traditions that render their relationship a bit more obvious.

The Pāśupata sects drew their initiates come from the brahmin caste, but the structure of the Pāśupata *vrata* did constitute a rejection of the social conventions of Vaidika

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<sup>110</sup> Ganesh Vasudeo Tagare. trans. and ed., *Ancient Indian Tradition and Mythology: The Liṅgapurāṇa Part II* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1983), 666.

<sup>111</sup> In his recent work, Christian Wedemeyer argues that the Pāśupata tradition constitutes a "conditioning type" rather than a true point of origin for the later, highly transgressive cremation ground asceticism of the Buddhist *siddhas*. Wedemeyer writes, "Some have pointed to the famous Pāśupata *vrata* as one source for a shift in later Tantric communities toward a nondualist, antinomian observance. [here 'some' likely refers to Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 177–86] The existence of Pāśupata communities is attested in the early-mid first millennium (fourth century), so its practices would certainly be prior to any fully formed Buddhist or Śaiva esotericism of which we are aware at present... However, the pious comportment of this ritual overall is so thoroughly contrary to the *caryāvratā* of the Mahā- and Yoginī Tantra Buddhists (and, as we shall see in a moment, the similarly later and non-dualistic Vidyāpīṭha and Trika Hindu Tantrists), that the Pāśupata *vrata* is better considered a conditioning type rather than a true cause." see Christian Wedemeyer, *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism: History, Semiology, and Transgression in the Indian Traditions* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2013), 157.

Brahmanism. In this sense Pāśupata asceticism is more accurately understood as a Śaiva incorporation of brahmanical identity than a mainstream Vaidika brahmin practice.<sup>112</sup> The *purāṇic* narratives of Lakuli or Lākulīśa's own 'origin story' even provide a mythology for the success with which theistic Śaivism inscribed itself within a broader brahmin identity. The common mythology around the proposed author of the *Pāśupatasūtra*, Lakulīśa in twenty-three of the *Vāyupurāṇa* and chapter twenty-four of the *Liṅgapurāṇa*<sup>113</sup> recalls that

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<sup>112</sup> Wedemeyer seems to acknowledge this that the rejection of normative codes of brahmanical purity also factors in the Pāśupata ascetic practice, yet he maintains the argument that he makes earlier in that work that the requirement that a Pāśupata initiate be a brahmin and the broader *atimārga* Śaiva interest in maintaining brahmanical codes of purity differentiates this sect from the transgressive versions of the tantric Buddhist *vrata* and *caryā*. On this point he argues that, "famous, wealthy, or otherwise privileged persons pushing the limits of propriety and transgressing the same boundaries are objects of awe and respect. An esteemed religious figure descending into poverty and crossing over to the side of society's rejects in order to express divine insight, compassion, and selflessness that signifies inversion of social strictures only makes the right kind of sense if the person inverting them is already firmly established on the 'correct' side of the duality. It is no coincidence that the practitioners for whom the Śaiva *pāśupatavrata* was prescribed were pure Brahmins." Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 187–188. Here, he has essentially proven that there is a strong theoretical link between the Pāśupata *vrata* and the transgressive versions of the Buddhist *vrata* in both traditions' employment of the same ascetic inversion of normative social ethics. There is also the problem that *many of the Buddhist mahāsiddhas are remembered to have been brahmins*, including one of the most famous *mahāsiddhas* of them all, Saraha. Being a member of the brahmin caste seems to have had little to no bearing on the performance of a *vrata* premised on the ritual inversion of normative brahmanical social ethics for either Śaivas or Buddhists. The argument that only high-casted members of society would engage in this kind of practice also begins to fall away when we consider the demonological implications of social marginality, which provide a measure against which members of all castes are rendered equally susceptible to possession from demonic forces. The intersection of behavior and physical and mental illnesses brought on by demonic possession does not limit itself to normative brahmanical codes of conduct because *members of society at all levels were equally susceptible to possession and interference from demonic beings*. Regardless of caste, anyone could adopt certain modes of behavior to achieve the same dual result of social marginalization and susceptibility to possession by any number of spirit beings. This means that individuals at any level of society could also, through successful performance of the *vrata*, cultivate a charismatic superiority over all other castes by demonstrating their power over the world of spirit beings and their invulnerability to its advances. As my analyses of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* will show in chapters three and four, adopting a demonological paradigm forces us to consider the dual soteriological-apotropaic function of the entire Buddhist two-yoga system. In this system realization of non-dual gnosis and power over the demonic world of spirit beings are essentially the same thing. This is expressed in the trope of attaining the state of an 'indestructible being' or *vajrasattva*.

<sup>113</sup> See Tagare, *The Liṅgapurāṇa Part I*, 98–99; and Tagare, *The Vāyupurāṇa Part II*, 149. In both works the passages appear at the end of a long section in which Maheśvara recounts his incarnations that strikes this author as yet another product of the kind of *purāṇic* process that Kunal Charabarti argues for in his work on the Bengal Purāṇas. The list of incarnations gives a time, a place, and a specific name to the twenty-seven (in the *Vāyupurāṇa*) and twenty-eight (in the *Liṅgapurāṇa*) incarnations of Maheśvara, and leaves this author with the sense that the primary purpose of the chapter is to bring a larger set of disparate, local deity cults under the single cultic purview of the Śaiva deity Maheśvara.

Maheśvara incarnated himself as a *brahmacārin* named Lakulin by entering into a dead body that had been discarded in a cremation-ground outside of the settlement of Kāyāvātāra (or Kāyāvarohana).<sup>114</sup> These accounts speak of the resurrection of brahmanical culture through an emergent form of theistic Śaiva brahmanism by using the image of the dead body of a young *brahmacārin* that has been resurrected through union or *yoga* with Maheśvara.

The Purāṇic accounts of the origins of the Pāśupata tradition signal some differences between the Śaiva and Buddhist approaches to cremation ground asceticism that persisted even as the intertextuality between these traditions escalated in the latter half of the first millennium CE. Where the Buddhist paradigm of Śākyamuni's *māravijaya* preserves the theme of negative possession in its goal of attaining victory over the world of spirits and becoming impervious to attack by Māra and his hordes, the Śaiva paradigm in the Lākulīśa myth foregrounds the mechanics of positive possession.<sup>115</sup> The Lākulīśa myth might be read as establishing a yogic mechanics of possession as a means for gaining invulnerability and control over spirit deities through complete union with Maheśvara, while the Buddhist myth maintains that Śākyamuni gained control over the world of spirit deities through becoming impervious to its advances. The mechanics of positive possession embedded in the Lākulīśa origin story would not only find broader application in later Śaiva ascetic traditions, it would also come to be incorporated into the esoteric Buddhist goal of attaining union (*yoga*) with the deity *maṇḍala*.

The importance of the cremation grounds as an ascetic landscape shared by both Śaiva and Buddhist affiliated ascetics and the inevitable interactions between these two

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<sup>114</sup> Kauṇḍīya's commentary to the *PS* identifies as Kāravaṇa, currently located in modern Gujarat just outside of the former state of Baroda. Haripada Chakroborti trans. *Pāśupata Sūtram with Pañcārtha-bhāṣya of Kauṇḍīya* (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1970), 9.

<sup>115</sup> David Gordon White, *Sinister Yogis* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009), 193–94



participants in this ascetic culture should not be underestimated. From the Śaiva side, quite possibly the oldest stratum of this ascetic culture is found in the fourth and fifth phases of practice for an initiated Pāśupata. The Pāśupata initiate who completed the first ‘marked’ (*vyakta*) stage, the second ‘unmarked’ (*avyakta*) stage, and the third stage of ‘victory’ (*jaya*) proceeded to the fourth ‘cutting’ (*cheda*) stage where he lived out the remainder of his life in a cremation ground<sup>116</sup> before attaining the final aim of his practice, ‘the end of suffering’ (*duḥkhānta*), in the fifth stage of ‘cessation’ (*nisthā*).<sup>117</sup> While Buddhists participated in ascetic practices in which one took up temporary residence in this ascetic landscape, the final two stages for the Pāśupata ascetic indicate that Pāśupatas who completed this ascetic path most likely became permanent fixtures at the cremation grounds.

This shift in the demographics of the ascetic landscape of the cremation grounds may have begun as early as the first or second century CE. The Mathurā pillar inscription of Chandragupta II (380–413/15 C.E.) dating to the year 380 C.E. is the most commonly cited epigraphic evidence for the emergence of the Pāśupata sect.<sup>118</sup> D.R. Bhandarkar first placed Lakulīśa in the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century C.E. based on his mention in the *Vāyupurāṇa*, commonly dated to the early Gupta period. Later, in a 1931 publication, D.R. Bhandarkar corroborated

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<sup>116</sup> I hope to explore the possible connection between this fourth stage of the Pāśupata *vrata* and the Tibetan Buddhist practice of *bcod* (cutting) in my future research. The practices differ widely, but the nominal connection and the common preferred location for the practices, a cremation ground, (which is shared in common with later Hindu tantric practices in which the *sādhaka* feeds his body to the *yoginīs*) are similar enough to warrant further study.

<sup>117</sup> David N. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas Two Lost Śaiva Sects* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1991), 186.

<sup>118</sup> This evidence is widely cited in the literature by Daniel H. H. Ingalls, “Cynics and Pāśupatas: The Seeking of Dishonor,” in *The Harvard Theological Review* 55 no. 4 (Oct 1962): 284; Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, 179–80; Minoru Hara, “Pāśupata Studies II,” in *Weiner Zeitschrift für die Kunde Südasiens und Archiv für Indische Philosophie* 38, Meequita and Werba ed. (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1994), 325; Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 184; Alexis Sanderson, “The Lākulas: New Evidence of a System Intermediate Between Pāñcārthika Pāśupatism and Āgamic Śaivism,” in *The Indian Philosophical Annual* 24 (2006): 148; Diwakar Acharya, “How to Behave like a Bull: New Insight into the Origin and Religious Practices of Pāśupatas,” in *Indo-Iranian Journal* 56, no.2 (2013): 101.

these literary data through relying upon a lineage list included in Candragupta II's Mathurā inscription and extrapolating the tradition associated with this lineage back eleven generations, thus locating its first member in the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> centuries CE.<sup>119</sup> As Lorenzen notes, most scholars accept these dates based on Bhandarkar's work even though his conclusions remain problematic in that neither the name Lakulīśa nor the term Pāśupata actually appear in the inscription. Instead, the pillar inscription is connected to the Pāñcārthika Pāśupatas based on the assumption that the 'maheśvaras' it mentions belonged to the lineage of the 'Lakulin' mentioned in the *Vāyupurāṇa*.<sup>120</sup>

More recent scholarship on textual references to Pāśupata ascetics has contributed further evidence for placing the beginning of the Pāñcārthika tradition in the early centuries CE. Diwakar Acharya's 2013 study contains a thorough account of early textual references to Pāśupatas. Noting that the term 'Pāśupata' as it relates to a religious sect appears only once in a later section of the *Mahābhārata*,<sup>121</sup> Acharya's work compares a large sampling of texts stands as one of the best compilations of early textual references to the tradition to date. His earliest references are taken from Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (2<sup>nd</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> CE), the *Lalitavistara* (4<sup>th</sup> CE), and Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* (4<sup>th</sup> CE). Acharya notes two instances in which Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* references Pāśupatas, the first of which is an explicit reference made in the context of depicting various ascetic orders in theatrical performance, and the

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<sup>119</sup> See the following works:

D.R. Bhandarkar, "Lakulīśa," *Archeological Survey of India 1906–07* (1909): 179–192; D.R. Bhandarkar, "Eklingji Stone Inscription and the Origin and History of the Lakulīśa Sect," *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 22 (1908): 151–167; and D.R. Bhandarkar, "Mathurā Pillar Inscription of Chandragupta II, Gupta Era 61," *Epigraphia Indica* 21 (1931/32): 1–9.

<sup>120</sup> Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas*, 179–180.

<sup>121</sup> Acharya notes the appearance of the term in the latter part of the Nārāyaṇīya section [12.337.59 and 12.337.62]. See Acharya, "How to Behave like a Bull," 102. See Acharya's note 5 on p 102 for further information on the appearance of the term in appendices to the critical edition of the *MBh*.

second of which is an implicit reference to the appearance and behaviors of the Pāśupata ascetic in the dramatic depiction of madness. The latter reference reads:

Madness, of course, arises due to the [adverse] determinant emotional conditions (*vibhāva*) like separation from desired persons, loss of property, injury, excess of [any or all of] the three [corporeal humors:] wind, bile, and phlegm. One should act it out by ways of causeless laughing, weeping, and crying out loud; by speaking nonsense, [now] lying down, [then] sitting, standing up, running, dancing, singing, [and] reading; by smearing ashes and dust on the body, by using, carrying, and decorating oneself with grasses, used garlands, filthy clothes, rags, clay pots, bowls, and platters; with [these] many unsettled movements and imitations which are [in this context] the consequent emotional conditions (*anubhāva*).<sup>122</sup>

The behaviors prescribed here have shared correlates in the *Pāśupatasūtra*, in Kauṇḍinya's *bhāṣya*, and the sixth chapter of one of the most important of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, the Buddhist mahāsiddha Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*.<sup>123</sup> The material from the *Lalitavistara*,

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<sup>122</sup> Acharya, "How to Behave like a Bull," 102. The passage, Nāṭyaśāstra 7.83, cited in footnote 10 on p 102, reads: unmādo iṣṭajanaviyogavibhavanāśābhīghātavātāpittaśleṣmaprakopādibhir vibhāvair utpadyate. tam

animittahasitaruditokruṣṭāsambaddhapralāpaśayitopaviṣṭotthitapradhāvitānṛttagītapāṭhabhasmapāṃsv avadhūlanatṛṇanirmālyakuchelacīraghaṭakapālaśarāvābharaṇadhāraṇopabhogair anekaiś cānavasthitaiś ceṣṭānukaraṇādibhir anubhāvair abhinayet.

<sup>123</sup> The *PS* prescribes similar behaviors in both the first phase of the initiate's practice. As for the second phase of the initiate's practice, Kauṇḍinya's commentary on *PS* 4.6 *unmattavad eko vichareta loka* contains a description of several other behaviors and a pathology of these behaviors related to the *doṣa* system. See Chakroborti trans., *Pāśupata Sūtram*, 140–41. A list of prescribed behaviors resembling those found in Kauṇḍinya's *bhāṣya* is found in the following passages of *GS*, ch. 6:

paryāṭeḍ grāmarathyāsu nagarodyānabhūmiṣu |  
catvareṣu śmaśāneṣu tathā cāyataneṣu ca || 6.15 ||

He should wander about the roads and villages  
In towns, parks, and countrysides, |  
At crossroads, in charnel grounds,  
And likewise in the dwelling places of deities, || 6.15 ||

kaṭake ca viśeṣeṇa kṛtanirmālyaśekharah |  
aṅganānāṃ ca veśmāni bhāvayet paramaṃ sukham || 6.16 ||

And particularly, in the midst of a crowd,  
Wearing a crown made of leftover garlands. |  
And he should meditate upon  
The supreme bliss in a brothel. || 6.16 ||

anābhogastu vāditrainrṭyagandharvasaṃkulām(laiḥ) |  
kṣīrapradīpasampanno\*'pyajavīthīrnisevayet || 6.17 ||

which combines elements associated with Pāśupata and *kāpālika* asceticism, states “by anointing oneself with ashes, ink, the ‘dark’ substance of used garlands... carrying a water-pot of a certain style, skull-cups, and skull-staff, the[se] deluded people hold that purity is achieved.”<sup>124</sup> Using these data to extrapolate back to the early second century, Acharya argues that the “twice born in the habit of lying in ashes” in the *Buddhacarita* 7.1 as well as the account of an ash-smearing ascetic who suggests prince Siddhārtha follow the Sāṃkhya teacher Arāḍa in the same work may possibly be a Pāśupata.<sup>125</sup>

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Still not satiated by the performances  
Of [their] crowds of dancing *gandharvas*, |  
He should worship in a tavern or market\*  
With the milk and the lamps. || 6.17 ||

kvacid hasan kvacijjalpan<sup>123</sup> kvacidgeyam tu kārayet |  
kvacinnṛtyan kvacidsphoṭan kvacinnānārutāni tu || 6.18 || (v. 17.d–18.c Tib)

Sometimes he should laugh,  
Sometimes babble, sometimes sing, |  
Sometimes dance, sometimes shake,  
And sometimes [make] various noises. || 6.18 ||

Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," in *Guhyādi-Aṣṭasiddhisamgraha*, edited by Samdhong Rinpoche and Vrajvallabh Dwivedi (Sarnath: Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies Rare Buddhist Texts Project, 1987), 40.

\* My reading for this line is kṣīrapradīpasampanno dhvajavīthīnisevayam. All three Sanskrit manuscripts for *Guhyasiddhi*, the Sarnath edition, and the Tibetan all contain different readings for this line: NGMCP A 134/2 and 915/3 9v.2 kṣīrapradīpasampanno dhvajaviṣīnisevayet, though the akṣara dhva is difficult to read; NGMCP A 1012/5 12v.2 reads kṣīrapradīpasampannāthajaviṣīnisevayam; MBB 7-5 34r.4 which reads kṣīrapradīpasampannāthajaviṣīnisevayet; the Sarnath edition reads kṣīrapradīpasampanno 'pyajavīthīrniṣevayet; and the Tibetan reads 'o ma sgron mar ldan pa des/ rgyal mtshan can gyi gnas 'jug bya/ (\*kṣīrapradīpasampanno dhvajavīthīniveśyam). My own reading combines elements from these readings that are selected based on the context of the verse, which I take to be the prescription to perform outrageous actions in various public places. Thus I take this verse as an instruction for the *sādhaka* to perform his worship practice (*nisevayam*) using the disgusting *samaya* substances (*kṣīrapradīpa*) in two public locations, a tavern (*dhvaja*) or market (*vīthī*).

See Padmavajra et. al., *Guhyasiddhyādināgārjunapādādi*. NGMCP microfilm reel no. A 134/2 (Kathmandu National Archive), 9v.2; Padmavajra et. al., *Tattvasiddhisekanirṇaya*, NGMCP microfilm reel no. A 915/3 (Kathmandu National Archive), 9v.2; Padmavajra, *Śrī Guhyasiddhiḥ*, microfilm, IASWR MBB-1972-105 (MBB 7-5), 34r.4; and *Guhyasiddhyādijñānasiddhi*, microfilm reel number NGMCP A 1012/5 (Kathmandu National Archive), 12v.2.

<sup>124</sup> Acharya, “How to Behave like a Bull,” 104.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., 104–05.

The reference from Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* discusses the meaning of the terms *caryā* and *vrata* in its polemic against what appear to be Pāśupata practices. The passage follows:

‘Conduct’ means abstinence from bad conduct, [and] ‘observance’ means the observance [*vrata*] of [behaving like] a dog, or a bull, or the like. And [also], as the Nirgrantha and other like-minded ascetics [say]: ‘[an ascetic] becomes naked, does not have any cloth.’ This is an elaboration [going beyond the main statement].

[It also includes] adoption of [the rule of] holding a staff and a hide, [that of] keeping matted hairs and smearing ashes, [and that of] keeping a set of three staffs and shaving the head, and of other similar ones, seen among the brahmins, Pāśupatas, and Parivrājakas, and other similar groups [respectively].<sup>126</sup>

Here a brief excursus on Vasubandhu's mention of ‘behaving like a bull,’ which constitutes the central focus of Acharya’s study, is in order. Acharya argues that this practice may represent an early stratum of Pāśupata practice that was largely forgotten by the time that Kauṇḍinya composed his commentary. Acharya’s data indicate that by imitating the behavior of a bull, the Pāśupata ascetic would have engaged in precisely the kind of subversion of the *vrata* that appear in later, tantric uses of the term where they intentionally contradict orthodox brahmanical notions of purity and ritual purification. This later use of the term in the context of Buddhist Vajrayāna and the *kāpālika mahāvrata* explicitly proscribes the adherence to any and all normative codes of ritual purity, replacing these codes with one single overarching injunction—that all judgment as to the purity and impurity of any given action is to be entirely rejected.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 105.

<sup>127</sup> Sanderson, “Purity and Power among the Brahmins of Kashmir,” 192–93 and 198. This distinction is part of the general argument in Sanderson's article, which I have here interpreted in light of the more classical application of the term *vrata* and its inversion in the Śaiva and Buddhist tantras. The purity dynamic Sanderson associates with brahmanical orthodoxy is explained on p 192–93, while the power dynamic associated with Śaiva heterodoxy (and it’s one central proscription of the purity-impurity dichotomy) is explained on p 198.

Based on this evidence, Acharya indicates that it is possible that the Pāśupata *sādhana* was originally conceived independently of brahmanical orthodoxy and may originally have had little to do with ritual purification. This earlier strata of the ritual was largely lost and replaced by a Pāśupatism that was “presented in a modified and philosophized way, perhaps long before Kauṇḍinya”<sup>128</sup> that inscribed the *govrata* within a brahmanical orthopraxy of ritual purity and purification. Fragments of the practice remain visible in the *Pāśupatasūtra* in verse 5.18, which reads “*godharmā mṛgadharmā vā,*” and on which Kauṇḍinya comments “[t]hough these two [a cow and a deer] have many qualities, their common quality is being taken, that is the power of tolerating all contradictory sensations like physical and mental feelings, etc.”<sup>129</sup> Acharya points to the possible connections between the prescribed behaviors related to all five of the *pañcārtha* and the behavior of bulls. Among these, the ascetic practices of the *avyakta* stage in which a *sādhaka* publicly courts disfavor hold the most obvious connections to the transgressive reformulation of the tantric Buddhist *vrata* and *caryā*. His work indicates some overlap between the 'behavior of bulls' and the signs of ‘madness’ the Pāśupata ascetic displays in the second, *avyakta* stage of the practice. These signs are subsumed under the prescription in *PS* 4.6 that one “should wander alone in public like a madman” (*unmatavad eko vicareta loke*). Acharya's analysis lends support to Daniel H.H. Ingalls's suspicion that “the sūtras concerning lechery, improper action and improper speech once referred to actions less innocent than those specified by the commentator Kauṇḍinya.”<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Acharya, “How to Behave like a Bull,” 109.

<sup>129</sup> Chakroborti, trans., *Pāśupata Sūtram*, 165. tayostu sati dharmabahutve samāno dharmo grhyate ādhyātmikādīdvaṃdvasahiṣṇutvam || 5.18.3||

<sup>130</sup> Ingalls, “Cynics and Pāśupatas,” 291.

Acharya then turns to the story of Dīrghatamas from the *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa*, an elaboration on the account of this figure in the *Mahābhārata* [MBh 1.98.6–32], as evidence that the short *sūtra* on the 'bull-observance' in the *Pāśupatasūtra* may in fact hide an older, far more transgressive ascetic tradition. Here Dīrghatamas chastises a bull whom he catches eating the *kuśa* grass intended for the new moon sacrifice by grabbing him by the horns. In his own defense, the bull argues:

My dear, we have neither fatal sin nor theft. We do not distinguish at all what is to be eaten and drunk, and what is not. And, o brahmin, we truly do not [distinguish] what should be done and what not, nor who is fit for sexual relation and who not. We are not sinners, o brahmin, because all of this is known from the tradition as the nature of bulls.<sup>131</sup>

While *Mahābhārata* itself contains only one explicit reference to a religious sect known by the term Pāśupata, it also contains references to a group of brahmins practicing something called a *govrata* as an act of mimesis relating to the “Bhūtapati, the great lord (Maheśvara) of all living beings.”<sup>132</sup> Acharya also points out that the noticeable absence of specific reference to Pāśupatas in the *Mahābhārata* is matched by the notable absence of the term on Candragupta II’s pillar inscription. Perhaps Chandragupta II’s pillar inscription, which never mentions Pāśupatas but refers instead to a lineage of ‘*māheśvaras*,’ contains a reference to the very same *govrata-brahmins* who worship ‘The lord of beings/spirits, the great lord (*bhūtapati maheśvara*)’ in the *Mahābhārata*?<sup>133</sup> In any case, Acharya’s argument surely adds to the possibility that the ascetic practice described in the *Pāśupatasūtra* may at one time have reflected an approach to an embodied, physically enacted ascetic observance that was

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<sup>131</sup> Acharya, “How to Behave like a Bull,” 114–15. Acharya supplies the reference in note 39 on p 114. *Brahmāṇḍapurāṇa* II.74.54–55: *nāsmākam vidyate tāta pātakaṃ steyam eva ca | bhakṣyābhakṣyaṃ na jānīmaḥ peyāpeyam ca sarvaśaḥ || kāryākāryaṃ ca vai vipra gamyāgamyam tathaiva ca | na pāpmāno vayam vipra dharmo hy eṣa gavāṃ śrutaḥ ||*

<sup>132</sup> The passage in question is MBh 5.97.12–14; Acharya, “How to Behave like a Bull,” 113.

<sup>133</sup> Acharya, “How to Behave like a Bull,” 113.

offensive to orthodox brahmanical codes of purity. As the Śaiva *atimārga* proceeded to assimilate itself to brahmanical culture, this observance was reimagined and inscribed within the very system it had originally rejected as an act of purification through karmic exchange with those who would react adversely to the behavior of the initiate. This would imply that the original practice was not necessarily concerned with the parameters of brahmanical ritual purity, and may have more closely approximated the collapse of the purity-impurity dialectic demonstrated in the transgressive ascetic practices associated with the textual traditions of the Buddhist *siddhas*.

This a movement away from the original intent of the *govrata* may be evident in the expansion of the *Mahābhārata*'s account of Dīrghatamas in the *Brahmaṇḍapurāṇa*. As if it wasn't enough that the brahmanical authors and redactors of both the *Mahābhārata* and the *Brahmaṇḍapurāṇa* chose the name Dīrghatamas (lit. 'He who is in deep darkness' i.e. blind)<sup>134</sup> to describe what kind of individual engages in such a practice, the fate Dīrghatamas suffers by following the 'law of the bulls' (*godharma*) and taking up the 'bull-observance' (*govrata*) indicates that they sought to warn their readers about the potential fate of individuals who engage in such offensive ascetic practices. The *Mahābhārata* provides a rather thin explanation as to why Dīrghatamas was cast out by his sons, who throw him into the Ganges,<sup>135</sup> but the *Brahmaṇḍapurāṇa* fills in some of the gaps in the epic's account. This *purāṇic* version of the narrative informs the reader that Dīrghatamas's own people rejected

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<sup>134</sup> As Acharya notes, Dīrghatamas was born blind because of his objection to Bṛhaspati's incestuous rape of his elder brother Uśija's [called Utathya in the critical edition of the MBh] wife [Mamathā in the crit. ed. of MBh] who was pregnant at the time with Dīrghatamas himself. Interestingly, When Bṛhaspati is ejaculating into Dīrghatamas's mother (and thus about to waste his seed) Dīrghatamas asks him to stop. This angers Bṛhaspati, who curses the child to be born blind. Dīrghatamas, as the result of Bṛhaspati's failure to retain his semen during the rape of his brother Uśija's [Utathya's] wife, is himself a kind of contradiction—a 'blind seer.' See Acharya, "How to Behave like a Bull," 113; for the MBh passage see J.A.B. van Buitenen trans. and ed., *The Mahābhārata: I. The Book of the Beginning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), 232. See MBh 1.98.32 for the full account of Dīrghatamas in the epic.

<sup>135</sup> Van Buitenen trans. and ed., *The Mahābhārata: I*, 232. MBh 1.98.19–20.



him and threw him into the Ganges because the blind seer took his *govrata* too far and raped his own daughter-in-law.<sup>136</sup> The narrative in the *Brahmaṇḍapurāṇa* thus cautions against participation in *vratas* that prescribe transgressive behaviors, noting that they may lead an individual to take the observance too far, and thus be rejected both by his family by society at large.

Alexis Sanderson’s research on the *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā* suggests that the Lākula/Kālamukha Śaiva orders bridged the gap between Pāśupatism and Āgamic Śaivism during a period in which the hard delineation between dualist and non-dualist Saiddhāntika Śaivism had not yet developed.<sup>137</sup> The *Niśvāsamukha*, the first of five sections of this *saṃhitā*,<sup>138</sup> paraphrases a number of sūtras from the *Pāśupatasūtra* in its description of the two divisions of the *atimārga*, which are delineated based upon their particular mode or expression of *vrata*. Here the Pāñcārthikas are designated as the first level of the *atimārga*, which the text calls ‘the observance of those beyond the estates’ (*atyāśramavratam*). The second level appears to introduce a new devotion to Rudra that it refers to as the *kapālavrata* (the skull-vow), the *lokātāvrata* (the transmudane vow), and the *mahāpāśupatavrata* (the greater Pāśupata vow).<sup>139</sup> The significance of this characterization of the Pāśupata as one who ventures beyond the confines of the *āśrama* resonates strongly with the development of the radical modes of asceticism in Buddhist *siddha* traditions that rejected the protective structures of the *vihāra* and the *saṅgha* and invoked attack from spirit deities and human

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<sup>136</sup> Acharya, “How to Behave like a Bull...” 116.

<sup>137</sup> Sanderson, “The Lākulas,” 153.

<sup>138</sup> The divisions are:

1. Niśvāsamukha (niśvāsamukhatattvasaṃhitā): ff. 1v–18v6
2. Niśvāsamūla (niśvāsattattvasaṃhitāyām mūlasūtram): ff 18v 6–23v 1
3. Niśvāsottara (niśvāsattattvasaṃhitāyām uttarasūtram): ff. 23v1–29r 5
4. Niśvāsānaya (niśvāsasaṃhitāyām nayasūtram): ff 29r 5–42r 5
5. Niśvāsaguhya (niśvāsasaṃhitāyām guhyasūtram): ff 42r 5–114v

see Sanderson, “The Lākulas,” 152.

<sup>139</sup> Sanderson, “The Lākulas,” 158. These are my translations of the various *vratas*, not Sanderson's.

beings through the public performance of a number of behaviors that would render the body of an ordinary person vulnerable to disease, possession, and censure. The demonological paradigm for which this chapter argues can bring this important structural correlation between the Pāsupata model and the asceticism of the tantric Buddhist *siddhas* to light.

The *Niśvāsa* offers some insight into the apparent confusion between *kāpālika* and Kālāmukha ascetics in the works of Rāmānuja (1017–1137) and his guru, Yāmunācārya (c. 1050).<sup>140</sup> Here Sanderson cites the following passage from Yāmunācārya’s *Āgamaprāmānya*:

The Kālāmukhas too are outside the Veda; [for] they claim to be able to obtain miraculously all that they desire whether visible or invisible simply by eating from a bowl fashioned from a human skull, bathing in the ashes of the dead, eating them [mixed with their food?], carrying a club, installing a pot containing alcoholic liquor and worshipping their deity in it, practices which all the Śāstras condemn.<sup>141</sup>

Where Lorenzen had suggested that both Rāmānuja and Yāmunācārya were engaging in a polemical conflation of the orthodox Kālāmukhas with the more radical *kāpālika* ascetics,<sup>142</sup> Sanderson suggests that there was no confusion here, intentional or otherwise. Instead both Rāmānuja and his teacher reported what the *Niśvāsa* seems to confirm, that the *kāpālikas* were Kālāmukha Śaivas who, belonging to this second division of the *atimārga*, had taken up the *kapālavrata*.<sup>143</sup> In addition to showing that the Lākulas/ Kālāmukhas served as a bridge between the Pāñcārthika Pāsupatas and the later Āgamic Śaiva tradition, Sanderson also supplies a lengthy passage from the ninth chapter of the *Caryāpāda* of the *Matanṅāgama* describing a *vrata* that appears to have inherited elements from both the Pāñcārthika and

<sup>140</sup> Lorenzen. *The Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas*, 1.

<sup>141</sup> Sanderson, “The Lākulas,” 183. Sanderson supplies the following transliteration of the passage: evaṃ kālāmukhā api samastaśāstrapratīṣiddhakapālapātrabhojanaśacabhasmasnānatatprāśanalaguḍadhāraṇasurākumbhasthāpanatathadevatārvanāder eva dṛṣṭādṛṣṭābhīṣtasiddhim abhidadhānāḥ śrutibahiṣkṛtā eva.

<sup>142</sup> Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and the Kālāmukhas*, 6–7.

<sup>143</sup> Sanderson, “The Lākulas,” 184.

Lākula traditions.<sup>144</sup> He then offers the following commentary on the third chapter of the *Niśvāsaguhya*, which also indicates certain shared elements in the *vratas* performed by Pāśupatas and Lākulas/Kālamukhas:

The first of these *Vratas*, in which a person accuses himself of the murder of a cow, his mother, his father, his brother or a Brahman guest, is evidently in the tradition of provoking unmerited condemnation through feigning sin that characterizes the Pāñcārthika in the second stage of practice, in which he conceals his identity from the world. The third, in which one smears oneself with ashes, wears rags, dances, sings, laughs and babbles like a madman, could also be said to go back to the same origin, since the Pāśupatasūtra instructs the Pāñcārthika to provoke abuse by acting like a madman (4.6: unmattavad vicareta). In the Lākula system there was an independent *Vrata* of this name, an unmattavratam. This, according to Abhinavagupta's commentary on *Bharatanāṭyaśāstra*, was the practice of Lākulas in the advanced 'Paramayogin' stage of their practice.<sup>145</sup>

Although the language of *Pāśupatasūtra* 4.6 does not specifically refer to a 'madman's vow,' the Lākula system, which has demonstrated lines of influence from the Pāśupata system, did make use of the term in its prescription to wander like a madman. A similar practice appears in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, which provides detailed and explicit instructions on the Buddhist version of the *unmattavrata*.<sup>146</sup> Participation in the culture of the cremation-ground among Śaiva orders of the *atimārga* included both the Pāñcārthika-Pāśupatas and Lākulas/Kālamukhas. The *kāpālīka* ascetics were most likely Lākula/ Kālamukhas who had taken up the *kapālavrata/ mahāvratā* mentioned in the *Niśvāsa*. The third term used to describe the Lākula observance, the *mahāpāśupatavratā*, is quite clear in its invocation of the

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<sup>144</sup> Sanderson, "The Lākulas," 202–08.

<sup>145</sup> Sanderson, "The Lākulas," 209.

<sup>146</sup> This particular ascetic observance continued to be highly influential in Vajrayāna Buddhism even after Buddhism had largely died out in India. It found its way to Tibet, where it became one of a number of standard forms of 'conduct' (*spyod pa*) or 'observance' (*brtul zhugs*) in the Tibetan portfolio of tantric ascetic practices. The madman's vow or *smyon pa'i brtul zhugs* was an undeniable cultural force in Tibet and contributed to the development of the archetypal 'mad yogin' as a kind of Tibetan Buddhist cultural hero. The most widely renowned piece of Tibetan literature, the biography of the Buddhist saint Milarepa, was both composed by a famous 'mad yogin' (Gtssang smyon Heruka) and took as its subject someone who was arguably the most famous 'mad yogin' of all time.

Pāñcārthika-Pāśupatas, an ascetic tradition predating the Lākula/ Kālamukha sect that had been appropriated and repackaged with a new emphasis on devotion to Rudra/Śiva through a *vrata* of an embodied, ritual mimesis.<sup>147</sup> Most importantly, all of these Śaiva orders were associated with the orthodoxy of the *atimārga*, not the orders of the *mantramārga* that share a obvious iconographic correlations and intertextuality with the Buddhist *siddha* traditions.

All of the data in this brief review of materials on early Śaiva ascetic orders indicate that by the time the transgressive ascetic practices of the Buddhist *siddhas* emerged in the seventh or eighth century, Śaiva initiates already constituted the majority population in the ascetic landscape of the cremation ground. However, these data also indicate a relatively nebulous conception of separate orders of Śaiva ascetic culture. The very fact that the *Niśvāsa* found it necessary to present a more systematic and organized taxonomy of various Śaiva sects and their associated ascetic practices might be some indication of how difficult it was at times to distinguish which Śaiva ascetic belonged to which sect. All of these ascetic orders engaged in deliberate acts of dissimulation, and those who sought to codify their distinct features in texts were forced to come to terms with the challenging task of disentangling one group of ascetics from another.<sup>148</sup> The acts of dissimulation prescribed in the earliest forms of cremation ground ascetic practice in the Pāśupata *vrata* are precursors to the Buddhist *vrata* and *caryā* practices outlined in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* and Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* that provide the broader context for the entire corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The importance of dissimulation in the performance of the

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<sup>147</sup> Sanderson, "The Lākulas," 158.

<sup>148</sup> It is possible that even scholars like Yāmuñācārya and Rāmānuja may also have found the task of separating out the various Śaiva ascetic orders challenging. Certainly the taxonomy of Śaiva asceticism Sanderson points to the *Niśvāsa* speaks to the need for a descriptive textual effort to actually identify which Śaiva ascetic orders tended to practice which 'observance.'

*guhycaryā* and its role in producing the highly Śaiva-Buddhist hybridized literature of the *yoginītantras* is taken up later in chapter six.

## **V. Conclusion: Esoteric Asceticism and the Demonological Horizon of Ethics**

When we interpret the problem of ethics in the Buddhist and Śaiva ascetic cultures of the cremation grounds within a demonological paradigm, we see that this problem emerges at the points at which the world with its pantheon of potentially harmful spirit deities intersects with the permeable conduit of the body. Early Buddhist communities promoted the idea that maintaining vows guaranteed some degree of protection from the spirit world, and that the perfection of those vows could afford total control-over and immunity-from possession and manipulation by spirit beings. Buddhist sources draw a direct correlation between the proper maintenance of lay or monastic vows that decrease an individual's propensity toward the core afflictions (*kleśa*) of ignorance (*avidyā*), hatred (*dveṣa*), and desire (*trṣṇā*) along with an extensive dossier of derivative afflictions and the *saṅgha*'s power to control and guard against assault from spirit deities. Aspects of the tradition that are commonly subsumed under the rubric of 'Buddhist Ethics' were thus formulated, at least in part, in dialogue with the belief that improper ethical conduct and the habitual capitulation to afflictions such as desire left one vulnerable to assault from the world of spirit deities. As Decaroli argues, the Buddhist *saṅgha* was able to position itself as a mediating force between the world of humans and spirit beings by parlaying its maintenance of moral purity into a powerful means of resisting attack from spirit beings such as *nāgas*, *yakṣas*, and *pretas*.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Decaroli, *Haunting the Buddha*, Chapter 2. As Decaroli notes, Buddhist narratives around the conversion and re-purposing of local spirit deities often revolve around the issues of morality and ethics in which Buddhists are often described as relatively immune to the interference of spirit beings due to having brought all forms of behaviors that are premised on desire or one of the other three root

Following Fred Smith's observations on the intersection of ethics and wellbeing in South Asian literature, bodily and mental health could provide proof of proper ethical conduct, whether this meant that one could effectively keep the spirit world at bay or simply that one had accumulated a great amount of virtuous karma in the current and previous lifetimes. This direct correlation between behavior and mental and physical wellbeing survives to this day in the Tibetan medical arts, where the imbalance of the three humors is directly attributed to an individual's capitulation to one or more of the three correlated root afflictions. The Tibetan medical tradition also attributes conditions that are either incurable or extremely difficult to treat either to possession by some persistent demonic being or to the force of ripening karma brought on by the *vāsanās* that one has generated in the current or previous lives.<sup>150</sup>

The Buddhist *saṅgha* could claim mastery over both through the ethical mechanics of the *pratimokṣa* vows. Aside from their obvious soteriological importance, ethics and moral conduct were thus part of an expansive portfolio of ritual methods for warding off supernatural pathogens and protecting an otherwise highly permeable and vulnerable body. This adds a new level of significance to the importance of performing the *poṣadha* or the bi-monthly monastic practice of confessing one's misdeeds and renewing one's commitment to the *pratimokṣa* vows. Management and mitigation of the spirit realm on behalf of patrons provided a key source of social and economic support for Buddhist institutions. Holding regular rituals for renewing the monastic *saṅgha's* commitments to its vows could guarantee

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afflictions under control. Decaroli also offers specific examples in which spirit beings are said to lose the ability to harm a potential victim because the target has been rendered impervious due to their unbroken maintenance of their vows.

<sup>150</sup> For a modern presentation on chronic diseases brought on by spirits and karma from previous lifetimes, see Dr. Yeshe Donden, *Health Through Balance: An Introduction to Tibetan Medicine* (Ithica: Snow Lion Publications, 1986), 19.

that the *saṅgha* would maintain its authority and power over the world of spirit deities, and in turn maintain one of its most important economic functions in South Asian societies. While the maintenance of proper ethical and moral conduct functioned as a kind of 'preventative care' plan to ward off disease and disease causing spirits, the recitation of protective spells, be they *paritta/parīṭṭa*, *dhāraṇī*, *mantra*, or in some cases even entire texts, provided protection in more acutely dangerous circumstances. While the logic behind Buddhist formulations of ethical conduct (*śīla*) did not agree with the logic underlying ethics in the Vaidika Brahmanical system, both systems still functioned on the premise that ethical and morally appropriate behavior, however defined, was directly related to the concept of purity, and, by extension, to the mental and physical wellbeing of the individual. Both also articulated their own means by which lapses in ethics and the resulting diminution of purity could be ritually repaired and restored.

Pāśupata asceticism broke with this premise in a very important way. The first and most important innovation was the role that *dikṣā* or initiation played in removing *mala* or impurity, a substance that, much like Jain (and perhaps some Buddhist)<sup>151</sup> conceptions of *karma*, was considered to have an actual physical weight bearing down on the body.<sup>152</sup> The tradition that has come down through Kauṇḍinya's *Pāśupatasūtrabhāṣa* in which initiation is

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<sup>151</sup> The fact that the Jains conceived of *karma* in this way is relatively well known, but I believe there is evidence that Buddhist traditions maintained a similar conception of *karma*, with the primary distinction being the Buddhist conception of 'virtuous' (*kuśala*) *karma* as allowing one to 'ascend' to the god realms while non-virtuous (*akuśala*) *karma* causes one to 'fall' to the lower realms. The metaphysical location of the realms of rebirth follows this model, as does the iconographic depiction of beings falling and ascending due to their negative and positive *karma* in its classical depiction in the Buddhist *bhavacakra*. A Buddhist conception of *karma* as a physical substance that grants corporeality and weighs down the body also appears in the cosmogonic narrative of the *Agaññasutta*, which draws a direct correlation between the dual mental and physical act of eating with its attendant cravings and the descent from a state of disembodied self-luminance to a physical, embodied state.

<sup>152</sup> Diwakar Acharya has noted in a recent article that this conception of *mala* as having an actual physical weight was the reason that initiates were often weighed before and after initiation to show that they have in fact become lighter. See Diwakar Acharya, "On the Śaiva Concept of Innate Impurity (*mala*) and the Function of the Rite of Initiation," in *Journal of Indian Philosophy: Special Issue on Śaiva Philosophy* 42, no. 1, guest edited by Lyne Bansat-Boudon and Judit Törzsök (March 2014): 15.

followed by the performance of a *vrata* in which one relinquishes one's personal and sectarian identity and surrenders one's commitment to the maintenance of normative brahmanical codes of ethical and ritual purity marks a rather radical departure from the traditional role of socially normative ethics in guaranteeing purity and protection from disease and possession. The Pañcārthika Pāśupata system may inscribe its own rhetoric of 'purity' and 'impurity' on this practice, but it still marks an important step in the direction of rejecting socially normative ethics and morality as the primary means of protection against the spirit world. The Pāśupata system thus made clear use of the mechanics of initiation as a means for affording protection to the initiated Pāśupata ascetic, even if that protection was partially constructed within a dialectic of purity and impurity. The Pāśupata initiation transformed the traditionally polluting practices of the *avyakta* stage in which one relinquishes all identifying sectarian marks and wanders in public courting disfavor and abuse into a means of purification. In this way, the Pāśupata ascetic rejected socially normative ethics without incurring any actual moral or ethical stain and inverted the typical relationship between morality and physical and mental wellbeing. The Pāśupata system can be said to preconfigure the transgressive ascetic practices of the Vajrayāna in the power that it affords the right of initiation to render the standard social ethics around behavior and codes of purity and impurity inconsequential.

So far working within the demonological paradigm has brought a number of factors regarding Buddhist charnel ground ascetic cultures to light. First, I have challenged the notion that traditional modes of renunciation such as Buddhist monasticism constituted a radical departure from the kind of protection offered by the basic social structure of the family. Related to this point, I have also suggested that we reject the conception of asceticism



as an essentially individualistic religious phenomenon. It is clear that Buddhist renunciants simply traded one protective familial structure for another. They 'wandered forth' from the *kula* of their birth only to immediately join a new *kula* to become 'sons and daughters of the lineage' (*kulaputro vā kuladuhitā vā*) or a 'child of the victor' (*jinaputra*). Given the Buddha's assumed superiority in governing over the world of spirit deities, joining the Buddhist *saṅgha* would actually have guaranteed a greater level of protection than the ordinary familial unit from the spirit world.

Following Decaroli's work and adopting a demonological paradigm has shown that management of the world of spirit deities was an essential aspect of Buddhist traditions from the earliest periods for which we have reliable data. Archeological and art historical evidence reveals the movement of spirit deities from the center to the periphery of the *caitya* with the advent of the Buddhist relic cult. Along that periphery, these beings retained their original role as guardians and protectors who were inscribed within an expanded hierarchical structure placing the Buddha and his *arhats* at its center. Textual and early ethnographic evidence from Chinese pilgrims indicates that the *vihāra* constituted a kind of protective structure, and that the services of powerful spirit deities could be enlisted to protect the *saṅgha* within the *vihāra*.

This examination points to two strategies that respond to the problem of possessing a permeable body in a world that is overrun by hordes spirit beings. The first is the generation and maintenance of a Buddhist *oecumene* that is conceived as a territory to which potentially harmful spirit deities cannot gain access or within which they are converted and enlisted as protectors. The second is essentially a Buddhist reworking of a broader correlation throughout South Asia between socially normative ethics and physical and mental wellbeing

in which ethical conduct provides protection from possession and other forms of interference from spirit deities. These two strategies are aimed at confronting the basic South Asian existential condition that the demonological paradigm is designed to address—the fact that the psycho-physical constituents of a person construct an essentially open system that is situated in a world populated by a *pandemonium* of spirit beings intent upon seeking out and exploiting any weakness them for their own gain. The cultivation of ethics and, ultimately, realization of the nature of reality, the use of *paritta*, *dhāraṇī*, and *mantra*, and the *caitya*, the *vihāra*, and later the *maṇḍala* all represent solutions to this problem that create and maintain a protective barrier around the open conduit of the mind-body complex.

## Chapter 3:

### Generating the Body of an Indestructible Being

#### I. Introduction

The demonological paradigm's applications in the analysis of Buddhist ritual and ascetic practices in chapter two suggested interpreting the Buddhist *maṇḍala* as a protective structure that is internally constructed through the process of visualization and externally constructed as an actual physical space. Unlike their Śaiva counterparts,<sup>153</sup> many Buddhist sects likely maintained a position of ontological non-dualism for centuries before the emergence of the ascetic and ritual cultures associated with a fully tantric, esoteric Buddhism. Thus it was perhaps inevitable that the ritual technology of the *maṇḍala*, as both a conceptually and physically constructed space, would eventually have to either be sublimated into a non-conceptual ontology or be rejected by those Buddhists who maintained the importance of eliminating, unraveling, transforming, or bypassing the processes of conceptual construction responsible for perpetuating the ignorance and delusion that lay at the root of rebirth in cyclical existence.

The kind of pronouncements against the use of the *maṇḍala* and other ritual technologies witnessed in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* can be read in light of the demonological paradigm to suggest that the *sādhaka's* act of leaving the *maṇḍala* cannot be reduced to a

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<sup>153</sup> Judit Törzsök, "Nondualism in Early Śakta Tantras: Transgressive Rites and Their Ontological Justification in a Historical Perspective," in *Journal of Indian Philosophy: Special Issue on Śaiva Philosophy* 42, no. 1, guest editors Lyne Bansat-Boudon and Judit Törzsök (March 2014): 195–223. Törzsök makes the important argument here that the early śakta tantras do not in fact subscribe to an ontological non-duality but are ontologically dualist works. They do, however, prescribe what Törzsök calls a ritual non-duality in which distinctions such as 'pure' and 'impure' must be utterly absent in the ritual context. This kind of ritual non-duality has its roots in the pre-tantric Pāśupata inversion of notions of brahmanical purity in the *pāśupatavratā*, as has been demonstrated in chapter two through Acharya's in-depth reading of the verse *godharmamrgadharmāḥ vā* (PS 5.18).

purely philosophical or soteriological interpretation. There is an apotropaic aspect to both the mental and physical construction of the *maṇḍala*, and the decision to adopt a form of asceticism that specifically rejects such a protective structure and its associated ritual practices cannot be exclusively interpreted as an ontological non-dualist rejection of such rites as 'conceptual' constructs. The construction of a *maṇḍala* and its supporting ritual techniques of mantra installation/recitation and *mudrā* must also be understood in terms of the literal role that physically and mentally 'constructed' ritual spaces play in guarding the initiate against all forms of interference from human and non-human beings. The Buddhist rhetoric around rejecting these practices constitutes both a rejection of the ontological duality they imply and a rejection of relying upon actual physically constructed, protective space for the performance of tantric ritual. These two aspects of the 'construct,' the conceptual and the physical, are not necessarily exclusive categories in a literature and tradition that demonstrates a remarkable sense of continuity between the idealist constructions of the mind and their material manifestations in the world.

The works contained in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are consistent with the rejection of the ritual technologies of the lower *kriyā*- and *caryātantra* systems in Buddhist *siddha* literature. This chapter adopts a demonological paradigm to analyze the rhetoric around rejection such practices as constructing *maṇḍalas* and the use of *mudrā* and *mantra* in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. It argues that the rejection of these practices highlights a mutual identification of the attainment of non-dual gnosis (*advayajñāna*) or ultimate reality (*tattva*) with the demonstration of a tantric practitioner's attainment of an indestructible and embodied realization. The chapter presents passages from each of the works in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that demonstrate these authors' engagement with the basic existential ground for

the demonological paradigm—possessing a permeable body that is embedded in a world populated by potentially harmful spirit beings. Two models for the management of this basic existential ground are at work in these texts. The first, the 'exoteric model,' already mentioned in chapter two, focuses on the elimination of non-virtue and the cultivation of virtue as strategies for protecting the body from harmful spirit beings. When viewed through the modality of a demonological paradigm, the cultivation of ethical conduct and insight into the nature of reality in the exoteric traditions functioned as preventative measures for guarding against demonic possession and interference from the world of spirit deities. The second, 'esoteric model,' builds upon the exoteric model by adding a number of ritual technologies centered on the mastery or union (*yoga*) and consecration (*abhiṣeka*). The incorporation of the ritual technology of initiation in this latter model, as suggested in chapter two, has strong affinities with the initiatory asceticism that is at work in Pāśupata Śaivism. One could also argue, at the same time, that this feature in both the Pāśupata and Buddhist initiatory traditions has strong resonances with the earlier *śrāmaṇa* ascetic trope of 'wandering forth' and 'going for refuge,' where the protective structure of family identity was given new expression in renunciant communities like the early Buddhist *saṅgha*. Both the exoteric and esoteric models conceive of realization as a specifically embodied phenomenon in which the soteriological goal of liberation from rebirth in cyclical existence is coterminous with the attainment of an apotropaic goal of protecting the psychophysical complex of the body and rendering it invulnerable to attack from both human and non-human beings.

*The Seven Siddhi Texts* contain a number of different strategies for cultivating a fully embodied realization that resolves the problem of the permeable body's vulnerability to possession and influence from the unseen forces of the spirit world. These strategies can be

correlated to the first of the two-phased yogas of the generation stage (*utpattikrama*) and completion stage (*utpannakrama*) and the higher consecrations that are bestowed at the culmination of the yoga of the generation stage. When they are analyzed within the demonological paradigm, the generation stage yogas and the higher consecration rites appear as ritual technologies whose aim is a fully embodied realization with a dual soteriological and apotropaic function. Their soteriological function corresponds to the realization of the nature of ultimate reality, while their apotropaic function corresponds to rendering the actual corporeal body invulnerable to attack from both human and non-human beings. This interrelationship means that demonstrating mastery in terms of the apotropaic function of these practices functions as a sign for one's mastery of their soteriological component.<sup>154</sup> The dual apotropaic-soteriological function of this ultimate goal on the Buddhist yogic path is said to depend upon a number of things such as the recognition of the nature of ultimate reality within one's own body, the generation of a spontaneous mutual identification of the body with the deity *maṇḍala*, and complete establishment of that nature in the body through the ritual mechanics of consecration. The culmination of the generation stage yoga may then be interpreted within the demonological paradigm as a process through which a *sādhaka* so thoroughly transforms the body into a *maṇḍala* that the protective structures of the *maṇḍala* need no longer be generated at all, as an external structure or an internalized visualization. The union (*yoga*) at the culmination of this stage of practice is a spontaneous (and thus not

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<sup>154</sup> Decaroli's work in *Haunting the Buddha* indicates that this phenomenon is not unique to the esoteric model. As discussed in chapter two, while membership to the protective community or family of the Buddhist *saṅgha* and residence in the protective structure of the *vihāra* could guard against interference from the world of spirit beings, it was ultimately the combined mastery of ethics and insight into the nature of reality (both aimed at abandoning the kind of mental, verbal, and physical manifestations of *kleśas* that might render one vulnerable to possession) that guaranteed this protection. As a result, the *saṅgha's* ability (both on the individual and collective level) to act as mediators between the human and non-human worlds was seen as a direct function of its claim to both superior ethical virtue and insight into the nature of reality. Its demonstrated invulnerability to the very forces it sought to mediate could thus also function as proof of this ethical and spiritual superiority.

'constructed') complete identification with the deity *maṇḍala*. Consecration initiates, enhances, and fully establishes the union of the disciple and deity *maṇḍala*. Mastery of both union and consecration must be demonstrated by exiting the protective, consecrated space of the *maṇḍala*, and this act constitutes the primary trope for the completion stage *caryā* and *vrata* practices and the *siddha* asceticism these practices came to define. Thus the physically performed act of exiting the *maṇḍala* after receiving a complete set of consecrations (in whatever form, number, or sequence that might take) is coupled with the idea that the initiate has reached an advanced stage in which there is no need to actively construct any further protective barrier between the permeable body and the external world through practices such as mantra recitation and *maṇḍala* generation. In this context, the ascetic practices of *vrata* and *caryā* are often designed to deliberately place the *sādhaka* in contexts where one would normally be vulnerable to attack from both non-human and human beings. The *sādhaka's* ability to navigate these spaces then functions as a kind of proof (*siddhi*) of attainment (*siddhi*)<sup>155</sup> of the state of an indestructible being (*vajrasattva*).

## II. Embodied Realization in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*

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<sup>155</sup> This dual significance of the term *siddhi* is present in the titles of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, and this is the reason that I have chosen not to translate the term *siddhi* in the individual titles of each work as well as in the title of the corpus itself. Six of the seven works are primarily concerned with the term's connotation as the 'proof of attainment' that the initiated *sādhaka* displays through practicing the *vrata* and *caryā*. The one text that does not contain extensive instructions on this stage of practice, *Jñānasiddhi*, actually incorporates a kind of dialogical style that is typical of the connotations that the term *siddhi* bears when it appears in the 'proof' texts of Buddhist philosophy and epistemology. Thus the work presents both a 'proof [regarding the nature of] gnosis' (*jñānasiddhi*) and a description of the 'attainment of gnosis' (*jñānasiddhi*). While this dual meaning of the term is most pronounced in Indrabhūti's work, it also applies to the other works in the corpus. In order to preserve a pathway for the reader to considering both meanings of the term, I have decided not to translate it in the titles to these texts or in the translations themselves. However, I have decided to translate the term periodically in my own analyses of these works.

Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* was composed sometime between the eighth and ninth centuries<sup>156</sup> in a style best described as part-commentary and part-independent treatise<sup>157</sup> elaborating upon the ritual system and ascetic practices of the *Guhyasamājatantra*.<sup>158</sup> The text's first reference to the dual apotropaic-soteriological conception of the realization of ultimate reality and becoming invulnerable to the world of spirit deities appears in the its opening verses, where Padmavajra describes the secret attainment (*guhyasiddhim*) as something that dispels obstructing beings (*vighnavikṣepakṛtyām*).<sup>159</sup> The first chapter of *Guhyasiddhi* then provides a sequential and condensed summary and commentary on the topics discussed later in the work. Although the practices of the generation stage yoga are covered in some detail in the text, its ultimate emphasis on the completion stage yoga is immediately apparent in verses six and seven, where Padmavajra states that the elaborate

<sup>156</sup> Bhattacharya places Padmavajra in the late 7<sup>th</sup> century, and traces the entire lineage of the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* (though the corpus was not known to him) through the late eighth century. See Benoytosh Bhattacharya ed., *Sādhnamāla Vol. II* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1968), xlii. Ronald Davidson places Padmajvara in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. See Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 199. Sanderson places Padmavajra in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. See Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 144.

<sup>157</sup> Ronald Davidson was the first to draw the field's attention to this genre of literature, and he does so in reference to Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. See Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 254–55.

<sup>158</sup> Padmavajra's text was clearly known to the Ārya school of the *Guhyasamāja* as it is referenced in Āryadeva's *Caryāmelapakapradīpa*. See Āryadeva, *Āryadeva's Lamp That Integrates the Practices (Caryāmelapakapradīpa): The Gradual Path of Vajrayāna Buddhism According to the Esoteric Community Noble Tradition*, translated and edited by Christian K. Wedemeyer (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies, 2007). For Wedemeyer's discussion of these works see p. 12; 112; and for Āryadeva's references, see p. 268 and 280.

<sup>159</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 5.

vaksye śrīguhyasiddhiṃ paramasuracitaṃ(tāṃ) śreyasī(sīm) ratnabhūtā(tāṃ)  
 buddhatvānyā(vā)ptiheto[h] parapadagamanānveṣaṇeṣvagrādūtīm |  
 nānācaryānubaddhāṃ kalimalamathanīṃ vighnavikṣepakṛtyām  
 siddhināṃ janmabhūmīdgu(miṃ gu)ṇaśatanilayāṃ mātr̥bhūtāṃ jinānām || 1.2 ||

I shall teach the Śrī *Guhyasiddhi*,  
 Supremely well composed, the most excellent Jewel,  
 The chief messenger among those who seek the path to  
 The supreme state in order to attain Buddhahood, |  
 That is related to the various practices, that destroys impurity and strife,  
 That dispels obstructing beings, that is the birthing ground of the siddhis,  
 That is the abode of hundreds of good qualities, that is the mother of the victors. || 1.2 ||



practice of the generation stage yoga becomes an obstacle to meditation in the completion stage, and must eventually be given up:

The elaborate rite of the generation [stage],  
now long past, is a beginner's meditation.  
With all one's effort, one gives it up  
For the completion stage yoga. || 1.6 ||

One relies on the true nature of the *tantras*  
That possesses the multitude of *siddhis*, |  
Giving up the entire elaborate rite  
That poses an obstacle to meditation || 1.7 ||<sup>160</sup>

The secret attainment is then described as the source of virtue, as easy, and as something that cuts off all obstructing beings (*śubhodayā nirāyāsā sarvaviḥnānikartanī*).<sup>161</sup>

The term *guhya* and its synonyms cover a remarkable amount of semantic ground throughout Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. Early in its first chapter the term's semantic relationship to notions of concealment is used to establish continuity between the doctrine presented in *Guhyasiddhi*, its primary source text the *Guhyasamājatantra*, and the scriptures of the *kriyā* and *caryā* tantras as well as the *sūtra* literature. Here Padmavajra writes:

And that ultimate reality is defined in the tantra  
Of the *Śrī Samāja* where it is exceedingly clear. |  
What was concealed elsewhere is explained  
[There] in its elaborate, numerous, and extensive forms. || 1.28 ||

The ultimate purity that is indeed singular  
Is established according to its different expressions  
In the classification [of tantras] as *kriyā*, *caryā*, etc.,  
[And] in the *sūtra* systems and baskets etc. || 1.29 ||<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>160</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 6.

utpannakramayogena tyaktā(ktvā) sarvaprayatnataḥ |  
utpattivistaraṃ dūramādikarmikabhāvanām || 1.6 ||  
tantrasadbhāvamāśritya siddhisamde(do)halakṣaṇam |  
vihāya vistaraṃ sarvaṃ bhāvanāyāntarāyikam || 1.7 ||

<sup>161</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 6.

<sup>162</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 8.

This statement is juxtaposed with an argument that is central to the embodied dual apotropaic-soteriological doctrine at the core of *Guhyasiddhi*—that just as the ultimate reality taught in the *Guhyasamājatantra* lay hidden in the teachings of the *sūtra*, *kriyā*, and *caryā*, so too is ultimate reality concealed within the body. These statements preconfigure Padmavajra's elaborate instructions on the generation stage yogas in chapters three and four, where this stage constitutes the process of recognizing, affixing, and harnessing ultimate reality's innate presence within the body, the body's yogic magnification, and its final transformation into the divine body of the deity *maṇḍala*.<sup>163</sup> Interestingly, the terminology used to describe this innate source of ultimate reality in the body that appears later in chapter three is not *tattva*, but *mahāmudrā*.<sup>164</sup> Identifying this nascent realization inherent to the body represents the initial method for mastering the dual apotropaic-soteriological applications of the generation stage yoga. As will become clear, Padmavajra ultimately argues that the

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<sup>163</sup> The opening of chapter three, for example, describes this synonym for ultimate reality or *tattva* as something that beings possess, but that they do not realize is present in their own bodies. Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 20.

atastat kathyate guptaṃ prajñopāyavibhāvanā(na)m |  
 smaraṇaṃ cittavajrasya guptād guptataraṃ paraṃ || 3.1 ||  
 ye na jānanti taṃ śuddhaṃ svadehe'pi vyavasthitam |  
 niva(rva)rtitūṃ padaṃ divyaṃ teṣāṃ samyag bravīmyaham || 3.2 ||

Now, I shall explain the secret,  
 The insight-method meditation, |  
 The tradition of Cittavajra, the  
 Supreme state, the most secret of secrets. || 3.1 ||

I teach to bring out the perfect,  
 Sublime state that they possess, |  
 But that they do not understand  
 Is present in one's own body || 3.2 ||

<sup>164</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 23.  
 svasaṃvedyā hi sā vidyā mahāmudrā parā śubhā |  
 nijadehāsrayasthāpi svalpaprajñairna dṛśyate || 3.36 ||  
 The knowledge that is self-referential awareness  
 Is the supremely good mahāmudrā |  
 Located in the innate abode of the body  
 That is not seen by those with little insight. || 3.36 ||

correct ascertainment of ultimate reality and its establishment in the body are critical to the successful performance of the completion stage practices of the *caryā* and *vrata*.

The innate ultimate reality that is recognized as already present in the body is augmented and enhanced with the ritual technology of consecration. The process of consecration is thus integral to bringing about the kind of enhanced recognition of the nature of ultimate reality that will protect the *sādhaka* while performing the advanced ascetic practices of the *caryā* and *vrata*. The sequence and relationship between these modes of practice are summarized in chapter one, where Padmavajra writes:

The Lord of Buddhas ascertained  
The ultimate reality carefully concealed |  
In the jewel vessel of the aggregates  
According to [each] beings' particular disposition. || 1.30 ||

After understanding it through [one's own] effort,  
The supremely pure *bodhicitta* |  
Is perfectly established in one's own body  
Through the blessing of the venerable teacher. || 1.31 ||

Then one should perform the practice openly  
Or meditate seated in private, |  
One who is purified by the jewel of ultimate reality  
Is free from all manner of doubt. || 1.32 ||

Otherwise, those who have abandoned  
The divine method that practice |  
The transgressive *samayas*, etc.,  
Are roasted in the Raurava hell. || 1.33 ||

Just like when fire burns  
A pile of grass and wood, etc., |  
It is scattered and becomes ash  
Never to germinate again, || 1.34 ||

So too those devoid of ultimate reality  
Perform great miracles, but |  
When they are dead they go to hell  
For as long as space endures. || 1.35 ||<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>165</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 8.

These verses provide a general sequence for the relationship between the disciple's independent cultivation of realization, the reinforcement of that realization through receiving the guru's consecration, and the disciple's progression to the performance of a post-initiation practice (*caryā*). The *sādhaka's* success in the *caryā* and *vrata* practices prescribed here depends entirely upon realization of an ultimate reality (*tattva*) that Padmavajra indicates is explicitly outlined in his own work and in the *Guhyasamājatantra*. He then draws a connection between the ultimate reality that is taught in *Guhyasiddhi* and the ultimate reality that is taught in the *kriyā* tantras, *caryā* tantras, and the *sūtras*. This assures his reader not only that the perspective on the nature of ultimate reality that underlies his work is indeed Buddhist, but also that any *vrata* might be adopted toward realization of the secret attainment as long as it proceeds based on this specifically Buddhist understanding of *tattva* or 'ultimate reality.' The conclusion of this set of verses emphasizes the apotropaic function of both recognizing and fully establishing this understanding of ultimate reality in one's own body, implying that it protects the *sādhaka* from the negative consequences of performing the transgressive *samayas* associated with the *caryā* and *vrata* practices.

The chapters on the generation stage yoga follow this sequence, beginning with recognition of ultimate reality as the body's inherent nature and then providing instructions

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sthāpitaṃ buddhanāthena tattvaṃ saṃgopya yatnataḥ |  
sattvāśayānubhedena skandharatnakaraṇḍake || 1.30 ||  
tadviditvā prayatnena svadehe saṃvyavasthitam |  
bodhicittaṃ paraṃ śuddhaṃ gurupādaprasādataḥ || 1.31 ||  
tataścaryāṃ prakurvīta bhāvanāṃ vā guhe sthitaḥ |  
tattvaratnaviśuddhātmā sarvadvandvavivarjitaḥ || 1.32 ||  
anyathā ye prakurvanti divyopāyavivarjitāḥ |  
viruddhasamayādīni pacyante te tu raurave || 1.33 ||  
yathā vahnau pradīpte'smin tṛṇadāvā(rvā)disaṃcayaḥ |  
prakṣipto bhasmatāṃ yāti prarohaṃ na punarvrajet || 1.34 ||  
ya(ta)thā tattvavihīnāstu kurvanto'tyadbhūtāni tu |  
vipannā narakam yānti yāvad ākāśasaṃbhavet(bhavaḥ)\* || 1.35 ||  
\*This line has been amended to yāvad ākāśaṃ sambhavet.

on how a *sādhaka* should construct the body that can support exiting the protective space of the *maṇḍala* to perform the transgressive *caryā* and *vrata* practices. This becomes clear in chapters three and four of *Guhyasiddhi*, which are titled respectively "The Instruction on Manifest Awakening" (*abhisambodhinirdeśa*) and "The Instruction on the Five-fold Mental Image"<sup>166</sup> (*pañcākārābhinirdeśa*). The first thirty-two verses in chapter three introduce the *karmamudrā*, or the practice of sexual union with a physical consort, as the primary means by which disciples identify the ultimate reality that is present in the body. These verses describe a sequence in which the *sādhaka* enters into an, attainment of the emanation body' (*nirmānakāyādhigate*) and the enjoyment [body] that is the nature of bliss (*sāmbhogike 'apyatra sukhasvabhāve*) followed by the gradual manifestation of the *vajra* of identitylessness (*nairātmyavajraṃ*).<sup>167</sup> The combination of these three elements approximates a classic *trikāya* structure of a Buddha's body, despite the fact that the attainment of the 'body of all phenomena' (*dharmakāya*) is not explicitly mentioned. Realization of the *vajra* of identitylessness in the *karmamudrā* practice is then used to visualize the entire cosmos as an expansive body:

And the blissful feelings of exhaustion are destroyed  
By the perfectly stainless *vajra* of identitylessness, |  
[And] unified with the awakened state

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<sup>166</sup> This topic is discussed in further detail in chapter eight. Also see Krug, "Tantric Epistemology." In this work I note that the *ākāra* of the *pañcākārābhisambodhi* practice are in fact a series (or more often multiple homologized sets) of deity images that appear in the mind during the five-tathāgata *maṇḍala* generation. It is thus more appropriate to take *ākāra* in its epistemological sense here as an image that appears to the mind, and to do away with translations of the term as 'aspect.'

<sup>167</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 21.

nirmānakāyādhigate praviṣṭe sāmbhogike'pyatra sukhasvabhāve |  
nairātmyavajraṃ vidhivat krameṇa vidhūtasamkalpavikalpajālam || 3.15 ||

While engaged in attainment of the manifestation body  
And in the complete enjoyment [body] that is the nature of bliss, |  
Accordingly, [the *sādhaka*] gradually [manifests] the *vajra* of identitylessness  
In which the net of imputed conceptual thought has been removed. || 3.15 ||

In a single moment like ghee poured into ghee. || 3.16 ||

And in that [state] those blissful feelings of exhaustion  
Have penetrated the impenetrable *vajra* of identitylessness |  
That abides there, which is called the unimpeded state,  
The omnipresent completely pure state of awakening. || 3.17 ||

Then one should meditate upon the entire cosmos as the great being  
That is the nature of the object of knowledge, that has a divine, limitless splendor, |  
That is present at the end of exhaustion,  
That has the complete set of marks and form that is inconceivable, || 3.18 ||

That is completely stainless and lacks any inherent nature whatsoever,  
That is a wish-fulfilling jewel said to be like a fortune-granting vase. |<sup>168</sup>

The section then culminates in a full *maṇḍala* visualization in which the practitioner copulates with the various consorts and analyzes the lack of inherent nature of phenomena within the three realms. The text then presents the actual performance of sexual union with a *karmamudrā* along with instructions that are given by one who speaks the truth (*bhūtavādinā*), i.e. the guru, following the interpenetration of the *vajra* and lotus (*vajrapadmasamāveśāt*). This process is said to constitute the proper means for introducing beginners to the nature of ultimate reality. It allows a beginner to gain an understanding of the omnipresence (*sarvatragasya*) that the most advanced *sādhakas* attain and allows them to understand the insight-method meditation (*prajñopāyavibhāvanam*), or sexual yoga, as it truly is in the quiescent state that is the immutable source of phenomena (*śānte*

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<sup>168</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 21.

hatāstu te tena virāmasaukhyā nairātmyavajreṇa sunirmalena |  
ekikṛtā bodhipadena sārḍhaṃ ghr̥te ghr̥taṃ nyastamiva kṣaṇena || 3.16 ||  
etāstu te tatra virāmasaukhyā nairātmyavajraṃ sudr̥ḍhaṃ praviṣṭāḥ |  
yat tiṣṭhate tatra avāryasaṃjñāṃ tatsarvagaṃ bodhipadaṃ viśuddham || 3.17 ||  
dhāyīta tenaiva mahātmaviśvaṃ jñeyātmakaṃ divyamanantatejam(jaḥ) |  
yattadvirāmasyāvasānabhūtaṃ yallakṣyanirvartyamacintyarūpam || 3.18 ||  
samantato nirmalaniḥsvabhāvaṃ cintāmaṇiṃ bhadrageṭopamākhyam ||| 3.19.ab ||

*dharmodayākṣare*). After that, Padmavajra notes that one relies upon one's own body for the practice instead of the *karmamudrā*.<sup>169</sup>

<sup>169</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 21–22.

pratyātmavedyaṃ vidhivad viditvā kāyaṃ jinānāṃ paramārthaśuddham || 3.19 ||  
tataḥ sphurannaikamarīcikādyairdehendriyaṃ yogavimucya yatnāt |  
bhāvasvabhāvaṃ vidhivadvivakṣye tridhātuke ekamanekarūpam || 3.20 ||  
grahaṇaṃ yasya tattvasya nirupāyasya yatnataḥ |  
jñātvā vibhāvayed dhīmān gurupādaprasādataḥ || 3.21 ||  
ātmānaṃ nirmalaṃ śāntaṃ tena tattvena samyutam |  
bhāvayet karmamudrāṃ vā sidhyate nātra saṃśayaḥ || 3.22 ||  
vajrapadmasamāveśāt karmamudrāsamanvitam |  
yadetad bhāvaṇaṃ proktaṃ pratyakṣaṃ bhūtavādinā || 3.23 ||  
ādikarmikasattvānāṃ bodhicittaparakāśane |  
karmamudrā(āṃ) yatastyaktvā lakṣyaṃ nānyatra labhyate || 3.24 ||  
anyathā naiva saṃvṛttiṃ tridhātumādikarṣiṇām |  
tatpade divye ādimadhyāntanirmale || 3.25 ||  
anyathā naiva saṃvṛttiṃ tridhātumādikarṣiṇām |  
satkṛte tatpade divye ādimadhyāntanirmale || 3.25 ||  
etattatvaṃ paraṃ śāntaṃ khadhātvākhyāṃ vyavasthitam |  
vajrapadmasamāveśāt sampradāyācca labhyate || 3.26 ||  
tasya sarvatragasyāpi grahaṇaṃ ādikarmikaiḥ |  
khadhātubhavane divye prāpyate sādhakottamaiḥ || 3.27 ||  
yattatparamanirvāṇaṃ sukhārūpamanākṛti |  
tanmudrā yatsamāśritya sthitā saṃvṛtsva(saṃvṛti)rūpataḥ || 3.28 ||  
evaṃ tattvena vijñāya prajñopāyavibhāvanam |  
dharmodayākṣare śānte yathābhūtaṃ vyavasthitam || 3.29 ||  
tatastu sādhanam kuryād vajriṇaḥ paramādbhutaḥ(tam) |  
svadehopāyasamyuktaṃ karmamudrā yato 'thavā || 3.30 ||  
padmastaṃ karmamudrāyā vilakṣyaṃ yad vyavasthitam |  
lakṣyaṃ śrīvajriṇaḥ śāntamuttarottarahāvanaiḥ || 3.31 ||

Having duly perceived self-referential awareness,  
The body of the victors that is ultimately pure, || 3.19 ||

Then, [the *sādhaka*] has intercourse with the various [consorts] such as  
Marīcikā, etc., [after which he] carefully unyokes the bodily organ |  
And duly analyzes the nature of reality  
In the three realms in its singular and manifold form, || 3.20 ||

After understanding the meaning of ultimate reality  
That is devoid of method through this effort, |  
The wise one should desire to meditate,  
Through the blessing of the guru || 3.21 ||

On the stainless, quiescent nature  
That is endowed with that ultimate reality. |  
Or he should meditate on the *karmamudrā* [and]  
He will undoubtedly attain *siddhi*. || 3.22 ||

After the interpenetration of  
The *vajra* and lotus, the meditation |

The sequence presented in chapter three of *Guhyasiddhi* thus depicts the performance of a sexual yoga in which the bliss produced from practice with the *karmamudrā* is directed toward generating the three awakened bodies of a Buddha and culminates in the generation of an inconceivable body with the complete set of marks (*lakṣyanirvartyam acintyarūpam*) that is a universal form of a great being (*mahātmaviśvam*) described as the completely pure

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Associated with the *karmamudrā* is taught  
Directly [*to the sādḥaka*] by the one who speaks the truth. || 3.23 ||

When teaching *bodhicitta*  
To beginner beings, |  
They do not perceive the object of meditation  
Without the *karmamudrā*. || 3.24 ||

Otherwise beginners who possess  
The conventional truth of the three realms |  
[Shall never enter into] the revered sublime state  
That is stainless at the beginning, middle, and end. || 3.25 ||

This ultimate reality, the supreme quiescence  
Signified by the phrase 'the space element,' |  
Is perceived through the interpenetration  
Of the *vajra* and lotus and from the instruction lineage. || 3.26 ||

Even beginners [can gain] comprehension  
Of the omnipresence |  
That the most advanced *sādḥakas*  
Attain in celestial palace of the space element. || 3.27 ||

Relying upon the blissful body  
That is the ultimate nirvāṇa,  
The un-fabricated *mudrā* is established  
According to its conventional form. || 3.28 ||

Thus having been truly understood,  
The meditation on insight and method |  
The way things really are is established  
In the quiescent state, the immutable source of phenomena. || 3.29 ||

After that one should perform the supreme  
Miraculous *sādḥana* of the *vajra*-bearer |  
That has one's own body as the method  
Instead of the *karmamudrā*. || 3.30 ||

The lotus abode devoid of object  
That was determined by the *karmamudrā* [practice], |  
The peaceful state of the glorious *vajra*-bearer  
[Is fully realized] by the highest of highest meditations. || 3.31 ||



body of the victors (*jinānāṃ paramārthaśuddham*), and that constitutes an initial understanding of omnipresence (*sarvatragasyāpi grahaṇam*).

The chapter moves to the practice of the generation stage yoga that relies upon *mahāmudrā* instead of the *karmamudrā* in *Guhyasiddhi* 3.33–60. The term *mahāmudrā* is frequently employed in *Guhyasiddhi* to signify an ultimate soteriological principle that is inherent to the body but is not recognized by ordinary beings. References to the term indicate that the *mahāmudrā* is recognized through meditation, firmly established in the disciple through initiation, and then expanded through performance of the generation stage yoga.<sup>170</sup> The *sādhaka's* recognition of the *mahāmudrā* abiding in the body is described as possessing an ordinary body that is endowed with the best of all mental images (*sarvākāraropetam*).<sup>171</sup> The theme of generating an expansive, universal body that was

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<sup>170</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 23.

svasaṃvedyā hi sāvīdyā mahāmudrā parā śubhā |  
nijadehāśrayasthāpi svalpaprajñairna dṛśyate || 3.36 ||  
jñāyate paramekena svadehe sāvīkāriṇī |  
gurorājñāprasādena yathābhūtaṃ vyavasthitam || 3.37 ||  
evaṃ jñātvā prayatnena prajñāpāramitāṃ śivāṃ |  
utpannakramayogena vyāpinīṃ parameśvarīm || 3.38 ||  
The knowledge that is self-reflexive awareness  
Is the supremely good *mahāmudrā* |  
Located in the abode of the innate body  
That is not seen by those with little insight. || 3.36 ||  
One who is supreme perceives that  
Unchanging [*mahāmudrā*] in his own body. |  
It is determined [there] just as it is  
Through the kindness of the king of gurus. || 3.37 ||  
Thus, having diligently understood  
The quiescence that is the perfection of insight, |  
She becomes pervasive, a supreme sovereign  
Through the completion stage yoga. || 3.38 ||

<sup>171</sup> This term provides the strongest evidence connecting the term *mahāmudrā* to the broader South Asian tradition of representationalist epistemology, including the Buddhist *pramāṇikas*. Here the term *mahāmudrā* is in fact a synonym for the compound *sarvākāravaram* or 'the best of all mental images,' with the terms *mudrā* and *ākāra* sharing a notable semantic overlap as 'sign' or 'image.' For my arguments regarding tantric epistemology and the synonymy of the terms *ākāra* and *mudrā* see Krug, "Tantric Epistemology." The term appears here in Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 26.

sarvākāraropetaṃ sarvalakṣaṇabhūṣitam |  
vihāya prākṛtaṃ kāyaṃ divya[phat]kāramānaṣaḥ || 3.68 ||  
Having obtained an ordinary body

alluded to in his instructions on the *karmamudrā* appears again here as Padmavajra describes the *sādhaka's* continued meditation on ultimate reality that enhances the production of a new supreme body born out of joy (*ānandajam*) that is an instantly produced mental image (*dhagityākārasambhūtaṃ*) that expands and contracts (*spuratsaṃhāarakāram*), illuminating all that exists.<sup>172</sup> The final attainment of this body is then described as follows:

Those who meditate on ultimate reality attain  
A rainbow-like body |  
A body that is variegated and multiple  
With garlands that blaze with the fire of gnosis. || 3.79 ||

Through the yoga of meditation  
And maintaining the *samayas* |  
One attains a body like that,  
Which even the Victors are not able to express. || 3.80 ||

One should meditate upon the body one possesses  
In that supreme and omnipresent state |  
Where there is no body, speech, and mind  
Using the instruction lineage [one has received]. || 3.81 ||

Aho! It causes such wonder!  
Aho! It is peace, beyond the senses! |  
Aho! The ultimate profundity,  
The miraculous emanation of *bodhicitta*! || 3.82 ||

And in this way, having attained  
The ultimate stage of deity yoga, |

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That possesses the best of all mental images |  
[And] ornamented with all of the marks,  
One whose mind is the divine syllable phaṭ || 3.68 ||

<sup>172</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 26.

tastu bhaktisāmarthyā(d)bhāvanābalanirmitam |  
tasminnutpadyate rūpaṃ kimapyānandajam param || 3.73 ||  
dhagityākārasambhūtaṃ sphuratsaṃhāarakāram |  
bhūrbhuvahṣvami(ri)dam sarvaṃ dyotayatsacarācaram || 3.74 ||

After that, created through the power  
Of meditation that is based on devotion, |  
The supreme body that is born out of joy  
Arises further in that [state]. || 3.73 ||  
It instantly arises as a mental image  
That expands and contracts, |  
Illuminating this earth, atmosphere, heavens,  
[And] all animate and inanimate [phenomena]. || 3.74 ||

One should then perform the *caryā*  
In order to attain the state of buddhahood. || 3.83 ||<sup>173</sup>

The verses that immediately follow then instruct the *sādhaka* who has perfectly generated this body to perform the clandestine practice (*guhyacaryā*) associated in this text with the completion stage yoga. Thus in this first chapter of Padmavajra's generation stage yoga practice, both the *karmamudrā* and the *mahāmudrā*<sup>174</sup> are specifically centered on the body as a locus of realization, both culminate in the expansion of that body as a universal form, and the generation of such a body is presented as the prerequisite to the performance of the *caryā* and *vrata* practices of the completion stage.

Chapter four of *Guhyasiddhi* contains an explanation of the generation stage yoga for beginners that is somewhat different (*kiñcid anyat*) and discussed according to its more elaborate form (*vistararūpatas*).<sup>175</sup> This chapter provides more detail on precisely how the

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<sup>173</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 27.

sphurajjñānāgnimālābhirvividhānekavigraham |  
indrāyudhanibhaṃ kāyaṃ labhante tattvabhāvakāḥ ||  
bhāvanāyogasāmarthyāt samayānāṃ ca pālanāt |  
īdṛśaṃ prāpyate rūpaṃ na vācyaṃ yajjinairapi || 3.80 ||  
yatra kāyo na vācittaṃ sthānaṃ yatsarvagaṃ param |  
saṃpradāyavaśāt tatra yasya rūpaṃ vibhāvyaṭe || 3.81 ||  
aho suvismayakaramaho śāntamatīndriyam |  
aho paramagambhīraṃ bodhicittavikurvaṇam || 3.82 ||  
īdṛśaṃ tu kramaṃ prāpya devatāyogamuttamam |  
tataścaryāṃ prakurvīta buddhatvapadasiddhaye || 3.83 ||

<sup>174</sup> Padmavajra only mentions the *jñānamudrā* in passing in chapter three, but it is likely that his instructions on the *karmamudrā* actually progress into practice with the *jñānamudrā* in verses 3.19–21 where the *sādhaka* follows the realization he has generated through practice with a *karmamudrā* with what appears to be a visualized sexual yoga that he performs with the various divine consorts such as Māricī.

<sup>175</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 28.

ato 'nyat tu pravakṣyāmi kiñcid\*vistararūpataḥ |  
ādikarmikasattvānām utpattikramabhāvanam || 4.1 ||  
Now I shall explain the generation stage  
Meditation of those beings who are beginners,  
Somewhat differently,  
According to its elaborate form. || 4.1 ||

\* I deviate from the Sarnath edition here and follow Padmavajra et. al., *Guhyasiddhyādināgārjunapādādi*, NGMCP microfilm reel no. A 134/2 (Kathmandu National Archive), 6r.13–6v.1.

*sādhaka* transforms his body through the practice of the three consorts: the *karma-*, *jñāna-*, and *mahāmudrās*. This transformation is presented as part of a four-stage meditation process consisting of 1. affixing the syllables to the body (*akṣaranyāsa*); 2. self-generation as the deity; 3. meditation involving an imagined consort (*jñānamudrā*); and 4. meditation on *mahāmudrā*.<sup>176</sup>

Padmavajra's short description of the form and function of the *akṣaranyāsa* practice draws upon a yogic method for transcending the epistemically bound state of the ordinary body that is characteristic of the Vaiṣṇava Pañcarātra textual traditions. Diwakar Acharya speaks to this point in his recent work on *Early Tantric Vaiṣṇavism*, where he argues that the practice of *nyāsa* that is so central to the Pañcarātra traditions is likely a characteristically Vaiṣṇava contribution to the tantric movements of medieval India that was present in the Pañcarātra before it was reformulated to more closely approximate some of its Śaiva counterparts. The original Vaiṣṇava *nyāsa* practice is in some sense a ritual performance of the kind of omni-presencing (*vibhūti-yoga*) that Kṛṣṇa performs in the *Bhagavadgīta* when he

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Padmavajra et. al., *Tattvasiddhisekanirṇaya*, NGMCP microfilm reel no. A 915/3 (Kathmandu National Archive), 6r.13–6v.1. The rendering in this manuscript (both are actually the same manuscript that has been catalogued twice) also matches the Tibetan.

<sup>176</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 28.  
 prathamam tvakṣaranyāsamutpattikramasamsthitam |  
 bhāvanam sādhakendrāṇam dvitīyam tu svarūpataḥ || 4.3 ||  
 tṛtīyam ca param divyam jñānamudrāvibhāvanam |  
 caturtham cottaram proktam mahāmudrāvibhāvanam || 4.4 ||

The first is affixing the syllables [in the body],  
 Which is the basis for the generation stage. |  
 The second is the meditation  
 Of the lords of the adepts as one's own form. || 4.3 ||

And the third is the supreme sublime  
 Meditation using an imagined consort. |  
 The fourth and final is called  
 Meditation on the *mahāmudrā*. || 4.4 ||

reveals his universal form (*viśvarūpa*) to Arjuna. As Acarya notes, the Vaiṣṇava conception of an all-pervasive deity expressed in the *Bhagavadgīta* is unique in that it maps all other deities onto Viṣṇu's body, describing him as consisting of all deities (*sarvadevamaya*), a feature that seems to fall away in later Pañcarātra works.<sup>177</sup> The Buddhist analogue for this the term, being composed of all of the Buddhas (*sarvabuddhamaya*), appears among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, a work that is particularly interested in arguing for gnosis as a state of pervasion.

As White argues, the episode of Kṛṣṇa's *vibhūti-yoga* in the *Bhagavadgīta* stands in many ways as one of the earliest prototypes depicting the supreme being as a yogin.<sup>178</sup> It seems fitting then that the *nyāsa* plays an important role in the Buddhist generation stage yoga, a practice that is intended to facilitate a yogin's self-identification as a deity who is coterminous with the ultimate, omnipresent nature of all phenomena. Padmavajra's brief teaching on the *akṣaranyāsa* practice demonstrates some clear parallels with the "self-magnifying self" of its Vedānta precursors such as *Kaṭhopaniṣad*.<sup>179</sup>

The meditation that is illustrated  
 By the yoga of affixing the syllables |  
 That is taught to beginners  
 Is what causes [the deity *maṇḍala*] to descend. || 4.6 ||

Therefore, I shall explain the first  
 Exactly as it is established. |  
 The generation stage yoga  
 Makes what is singular fivefold. || 4.7 ||

I say that the supreme virtue is completely

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<sup>177</sup> Diwakar Acharya, *Early Tantric Vaiṣṇavism: Three Newly Discovered Works of the Pañcarātra, The Svayambhuvapañcarātra, Devāmṛtapañcarātra, and Aṣṭādaśavidhāna*. Collection Indologie 129. Early Tantra Series 2. (Institut Français de Pondichéry, École française d'Extrême-Orient, Asien-Afrika-Institut, Universität Hamburg, 2015), xviii. One of Acharya's sources, the *Aṣṭādaśavidhāna*, stands as solid evidence of the centrality of *nyāsa* practices to the Pañcarātra traditions, with the first twelve of its eighteen rituals (*vidhāna*) devoted to the performance of a particular *nyāsa* practice.

<sup>178</sup> White, *Sinister Yogis*, 182.

<sup>179</sup> White, *Sinister Yogis*, 88.

Established in this [stage] by means of the gnosis  
That is complete manifest awakening in a five-fold mental representation,  
Which is correctly understood in the following manner. || 4.8 ||

Cittavajra said that, "By gradually  
Becoming greater and greater |  
Through the yoga of affixing the syllables,  
I become the nature of the phenomenal expanse." || 4.9 ||

Bearing the characteristic of space, sublime,  
Free from all conceptual imputations, |  
Gnosis is completely pure, stainless  
At the beginning, middle, and end. || 4.10 ||

The inherent natures of all phenomena established  
In that one in their individual forms |  
Are diligently analyzed  
Through the yoga of lack of self and other. || 4.11 ||

Free from all mental proliferations,  
A body that is supreme peace,  
That gnosis is said to be  
The nature of the phenomenal expanse. || 4.12 ||<sup>180</sup>

Here the *akṣaranyāsa* is described as a method of self-magnifying in which a yogin fixes the phenomenal expanse (*dharmadhātu*) in his own body. After making that body coterminous with the cosmos itself, he then applies the analysis of the yoga of the lack of self and other (*nairātmyaparayoga*) to this expansive self, effectively lending the *nyāsa* practice of expansion a specifically Buddhist function. The goal of this *nyāsa* practice is given distinctly

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<sup>180</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 28–29.

akṣaranyāsayogena bhāvanam yadudāhṛtam |  
ādikarmikasattvānām taduktamavatāraṇam || 4.6 ||  
prathamam kathyate tāvad yathābhūtam vyavasthitam |  
utpattikramayogena ekamekam tu pañcadhā || 4.7 ||  
pañcākārābhisambodhijñānena paramam śubham |  
saṁsthitam tadbravīmyatra yathā vijñāyate dṛḍham || 4.8 ||  
yaduktam cittavajreṇa uttarottarataḥ kramāt |  
akṣaranyāsayogena dharmadhātvātmako hyaham || 4.9 ||  
ākāśalakṣaṇam divyam sarvasaṁkalpavarjitam |  
jñānam sarvatra saṁśuddhamādimadhyāntanirmalam || 4.10 ||  
svabhāvā yatra dharmāṇām pṛthagrūpā vyavasthitāḥ |  
prayatnāt pratyavekṣyante nairātmyaparayogataḥ || 4.11 ||  
sarvaprapañcanirmuktaṁ rūpaṁ yat paramam śivam |  
dharmadhātusvabhāvākhyam jñānam tadiha kīrtitam || 4.12 ||

Buddhist title that approximates one of the traditional five types of gnosis, gnosis of the phenomenal expanse (*dharmadhātu*).

Locating a precursor for Padmavajra's *akṣaranyāsa* in the *Guhyasamājatantra*, the source on which his *Guhyasiddhi* is based, presents some difficulty. The *Guhyasamājatantra* contains an *akṣaranyāsa* practice in its eleventh chapter.<sup>181</sup> The level of detail involved in the practice is nowhere near that of its Vaiṣṇava counterparts, but use of the verbal root *nyas* and the clear bodily locations on which one places the three mantra syllables associated with this practice—oṃ āḥ and hūṃ placed in the heart (*hṛdaye*), throat (*vākpathe*), and the mind (*cittam*) respectively—is enough to qualify it as an *akṣaranyāsa*. The chapter appears to be a composite work composed of a number of short, simple *nyāsa* practices aimed at the generation of particular *samādhis*.

The *Piṇḍīkṛta-* or *Piṇḍīkramasādhana* of the *Guhyasamājatantra*, attributed to the tantric pseudo-Nāgārjuna, contains a far more elaborate *nyāsa* ritual. Here the practice is used to install the *tathātagatas* and their consorts—the homologues for the entire psycho-physical world that are most commonly associated with the *pañcākārābhīsambodhi* practice—along with an array of bodhisattvas and protector deities in various places in the body.<sup>182</sup> The *Piṇḍīkramasādhana* contains two practices for installing the deities in the yogin's body and one practice for installing them in the body of the consort.<sup>183</sup> Here the initial *nyāsa* practice follows the yogin's performance of a self-visualization as the deity in

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<sup>181</sup> Yukei Matsunaga ed. *The Guhyasamāja Tantra* (Kitaku, Osaka: Toho Shuppan, Inc., 1978), 32. The title of the chapter is itself an explicit reference to the quintessential brahmanical term for the supreme being (*puruṣottama*) who is coterminous with the entirety of his own creation.

<sup>182</sup> Roger Wright, "The Guhyasamāja Piṇḍīkṛta-sādhana and its Context," (master's thesis, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 2010), 84–87.

<sup>183</sup> Wright, "Piṇḍīkṛta-sādhana," 19.

contrast to the practice of *akṣaranyāsa* as it appears in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* where it precedes the self-visualization.<sup>184</sup>

### III. Embodied Realization in Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*

Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* is less overt in its presentation of a dual apotropaic-soteriological theory of embodied realization than Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, yet the text still shows traces of these two aspects of the tradition. There is strong evidence, for example, in Anaṅgavajra's explanation of the apotropaic function of consuming the *samaya* substances. Although relevant to the current discussion of adopting a demonological paradigm to understand the implications of embodied realization in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, this topic is addressed later in chapter four because of its direct relationship to the completion stage practices that the *sādhaka* performs outside of the protective structure of the *maṇḍala*. The current treatment of embodied realization in *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* is concerned only with Anaṅgavajra's explicit use of terms that relate a yogin's successful practice to the attainment of a specific type of body.

The extant Sanskrit versions of the text open with a homage to the "indestructible being," or Vajrasattva, as "the stainless true nature of the Buddha that is the unequalled dharma body (*dharmasārīra*)" that is "unsullied by the film of compounded false concepts wherever it is."<sup>185</sup> Anaṅgavajra deviates from the standard term *dharmakāya* here, opting

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<sup>184</sup> Wright, "Piṇḍikṛta-sādhana," 84. Verse 55, which immediately follows the self-visualization as the deity Guhyasamāja, reads,

"Then [the yogin] skilled in analyzing the psycho-physical aggregates, etc., should place the mantra syllables [on the body]."

Sanskrit:

tato nyāsam prakurvīta skandhādīnām vibhāgavit

<sup>185</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," in *Guhyādi-aṣṭasiddhisamgraha*, edited by Samdhong Rinpoche and Jaganath Upadhyay (Sarnath: Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies Rare Buddhist Texts Project, 1987), 67.



instead to refer to the state of an indestructible being as a *dharmāśarīra*, and the decision has the effect of placing a greater emphasis on the physical, corporal body instead of the more intangible notions of embodiment that the term *dharmakāya* traditionally signifies. The connection that Anaṅgavajra's opening verse draws between the indestructible being (*vajrasattva*) and a body of dharma prefigures the characterization of *caryā* and *vrata* practices elsewhere in the corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as components of the *vajrasattva sādhana* or the 'practice method of the indestructible being.'<sup>186</sup>

Anaṅgavajra's first chapter on his "Detailed Explanation of Insight and Method" (*prajñopāyavipaṅca*) opens with twenty verses that move the reader through a series of statements on the definition of insight (*prajñā*), the definition of method (*upāya*) and the definition of the combination of insight and method that provide a foundation for understanding the rest of the text. This detailed definition of the union of insight and method leads to the following verses, which outline a dual apotropaic-soteriological conception of embodied realization:

Devoid of apprehender and apprehended object,  
Free from the view of existent and non-existent, |  
Liberated from signs and signified objects,  
Pure, naturally stainless, || 1.19 ||

Not two and not non-dual, peace,  
The quiescence present everywhere— |  
That unwavering self-reflexive awareness

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yatrābhūtasamastakalpapaṭalāliptiṃ svabhāvāmalaṃ  
baudhaṃ dharmāśarīraṃ apratisamaṃ saddharmavṛddhyāspadam |  
sambhogam ca vicitrarūparacitaṃ sannirmitaṃ jāyate |  
prajñopāyam ayaṃ praṇamya tadalaṃ cetasa tad evocyate || 1.1 ||

Unsullied by the film of all conceptual thoughts wherever it is,  
The stainless true nature of the Buddha that is the unequaled  
Dharma body, the abode where the true dharma flourishes, |  
The perfect enjoyment arises, constructed and made up of various forms. |  
Having bowed to this insight and method, I shall discuss just that. || 1.1 ||

<sup>186</sup> This topic is introduced in the conclusion to this chapter and discussed at length in chapter four.

Is unconfused insight and method. || 1.20 ||

That is the supremely marvelous  
Abode of all the Buddhas, |  
The divine state that brings the highest welfare  
That is called the phenomenal expanse. || 1.21 ||

It is the non-abiding nirvāṇa that is honored  
By the buddhas of the three times |  
The delightful state of self-consecration,  
The quiescence of the perfection of insight, || 1.22 ||

It is the three bodies and three vehicles,  
The incalculable tens of thousands of mantras, |  
The unsurpassed circle of *mudrās* and *maṇḍalas*,  
That belong to [his particular] clan. || 1.23 ||

All of the gods, demigods, lords, and  
Humans who have arisen from that  
And others such as the ghosts, etc.,  
Cease in that as well. || 1.24 ||

The entire world abides at all times  
Like a wish fulfilling jewel, |  
As the perfect state of worldly enjoyment and liberation  
Through nature of insight and method. || 1.25 ||

The perfect Buddhas, and Sugatas of the past  
Arrived at this [realization] and |  
Attained buddhahood in all cases.  
Those who benefit the world shall be perfectly awakened. || 1.26 ||

Because it is the state of limitless bliss  
It is known as the glorious great bliss, |  
The foremost Samantabhadra  
Who brings about perfect awakening. || 1.27 ||

The Lords of Sages taught an ultimate reality that is  
A body of supreme bliss [that benefits] oneself and others,  
The equanimity of the unlimited mass of various objects of knowledge, |  
Of supreme intelligence joined with desire  
Of unequalled compassion that is the unique activity  
That brings ruin to all of the suffering of the three worlds. || 1.28 ||<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>187</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 69.  
grāhyagrāhakaśaṃtyaktaṃ sadasatpakṣa varjitam |  
lakṣyalakṣaṇanirmuktaṃ śuddhaṃ prakṛtinirmalam || 1.19 ||

The verses advocate for a synonymy between more exoteric terms for describing the nature of ultimate reality such as self-reflexive awareness (*pratyātmavedya*), the phenomenal expanse (*dharmadhātu*), the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*), and the three bodies and three vehicles (*kāyatrayam triyānaṃ ca*) with more explicitly esoteric terms such as the state of self-consecration (*svādhiṣṭhānapada*) and the tantric ritual technologies of *mantra*, *maṇḍala*, and *mudrā*. Then, in verse 1.24, Anaṅgavajra lists a number of apotropaic results of understanding the union of insight and method by arguing that it is both the source of all manner of human and non-human beings and the point in which all of these things cease. Following the general rule of 'lords' and 'hordes,'<sup>188</sup> the implication is that realization itself is able to provide protection from potentially harmful human and non-human beings. This level of realization is an embodied state that Anaṅgavajra describes as a body of supreme bliss (*parasukhāṅghaṃ*). Thus the realization of ultimate reality outlined in Anaṅgavajra's opening chapter correlates exoteric soteriological terms to esoteric methods that lead to a fully

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na dvayaṃ nādvayaṃ śāntaṃ śivaṃ sarvatra saṃsthitam |  
 pratyātmavedyam acalaṃ prajñopāyam anākulam || 1.20 ||  
 tadeva sarvabuddhānāmālayaṃ paramādbhutam |  
 śreyaḥsaṃpatkaraṃ divyaṃ dharmadhātuḥ prakīrtitam || 1.21 ||  
 apratiṣṭhitanirvāṇaṃ tryadhvasaṃbuddhasevitam |  
 svādhiṣṭhānapadaṃ ramaṃ prajñāpāramitāśivam || 1.22 ||  
 kāyatrayaṃ triyānaṃ ca asaṃkhyā mantrakotayaḥ |  
 mudrāmaṇḍalacakraṃ ca kaulikaṃ tadanuttaram || 1.23 ||  
 sarve vinirgatāstasmād devadaityendramānavāḥ |  
 pretādayastathā cānye nirudhyante ca tatra hi || 1.24 ||  
 cintāmaṇirivāśeṣajagataḥ sarvadā sthitam |  
 bhuktimuktipadaṃ samyak prajñopāyasvarūpataḥ || 1.25 ||  
 idameva samāgamaṃ saṃbuddhāḥ sugatāḥ purā |  
 saṃbuddhyante ca sarvatra saṃbhotsyante jagaddhitāḥ || 1.26 ||  
 anantasukharūpatvāt śrīmahāsukhasaṃjñitam |  
 samantabhadramagryaṃ tadabhisambodhikāraṃ || 1.27 ||  
 trijagadakhiladuḥkhadhvamsanaikapravṛtteḥ |  
 anupamakaruṇāyāḥ saṅgayuktāgrabuddheḥ |  
 aparimitavicitrajñeyarāśeḥ samatvaṃ  
 svaparaparasukhāṅgaṃ tattvamūcurmunīndrāḥ || 1.28 ||

<sup>188</sup> This dynamic has already been introduced in section two of chapter two on the "Śaiva Assimilation of Local Spirit Cults."

embodied realization, and the body that one wins through these esoteric methods performs an apotropaic function of bringing an end to all potentially harmful beings, both human and non-human.

#### **IV. Embodied Realization in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi***

*Jñānasiddhi* introduces the theme of realization granting a yogin protection from spirit beings in its first chapter on "The Instruction on Ultimate Reality" (*tattvanirdeśa*). Indrabhūti introduces the apotropaic function of an embodied realization of ultimate reality following his verses praising the guru, the guru's ability to grant consecration, and the importance of maintaining the *samayas*:

That yogin who is the nature of all buddhas,  
Having become a lord of the world |  
Shall be praised by the hosts  
Including all of the gods, their hands joined. || 1.38 ||

The heroes, the bodhisattvas with their  
Great powers and the buddhas too, |  
The great beings who are always  
Present as *vajra* bodies protect [him]. || 1.39 ||

He is the chief of the true dharma  
Who sets forth upon the path of the buddhas. |  
The respectful ones who are fully endowed  
With the highest authority praise [him]. || 1.40 ||

Likewise, the guardians of the world and others  
Who attack with great force |  
Are there, protecting him  
As he travels through all kinds of places. || 1.41 ||

And the *māras* and *vighnas*  
Who are present in every region, |  
Do not create any obstacle for him  
And [when] frightened, they disperse. || 1.42 ||

All the gods, etc., the *siddhas*,

All who course and do not course in space, |  
Who are fearful of lower rebirths  
Also do not injure him. || 1.43 ||

There is a loss of vigor [and a loss]  
Of the attainment of a perception of gnosis |  
If, due to their delusion,  
Deluded beings cause [him] harm. || 1.44 ||<sup>189</sup>

This passage is perhaps one of the most explicit indications in the corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that the gnosis conferred upon a disciple through consecration is considered an effective means to ward off attack from harmful spirit beings.

*Jñānasiddhi* also preserves an older conception of guarding the body against such attacks along with this component from the esoteric, initiatory traditions. Indrabhūti's eighth chapter on "The Method for Attaining the Accumulations of Merit and Wisdom" (*punyañānasambhāraprāptyupāya*) opens with a liturgy for the seven limb prayer followed by a *maṇḍala* offering and a *samaya* rite for which the reader is referred to the [*Sarvatathāgata*]*tattvasaṃgraha*. The transgressive element is missing from this passage, and seems to be explicitly rejected in verse 8.19 where Indrabhūti clarifies characterizes the *samaya* "established in tantras such as the *Tattvasaṃgraha*" as explicitly proscribing acts such as killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and speaking falsehood.<sup>190</sup> Thus in this case the

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<sup>189</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," in *Guhyādi-aṣṭasiddhisamgraha*, edited by Samdhong Rinpoche and Vrajvallabh Dwivedi (Sarnath: Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies Rare Buddhist Texts Project, 1987), 96–97.

<sup>190</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 119.

sarvakalpavimuktātmā gṛhṇīyāt samayādikam |  
tattvasaṃgrahatantrādau sthitaṃ samaysaṃvaram || 8.18 ||  
prāṇinaśca na te ghātyā adattaṃ naiva cāharet |  
nācaret kāmamithyā vā mṛṣāṃ naiva hi bhāṣayet || 8.19 ||

One who is free from all conceptual thought,  
Should take the *samayas*, etc. |  
The *samayas* and vows are established  
In *tantras* such as the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, etc. || 8.18 ||

One should not kill living beings.

generation of *bodhicitta* also bears its more traditional exoteric connotation and the *samayās* are directed at the cultivation of virtue and merit, not a ritualized rhetoric of transgression. The passage does, however, indicate the specific function that consecration plays in initiating the *sādhaka* into the apotropaic cult of protection from the buddhas and bodhisattvas against a host of malevolent spirit beings. The passage reads:

One must understand this *bodhicitta*.  
Otherwise, should one have an incorrect |  
[Understanding], it is not called *bodhicitta*.  
If there is inequality, || 8.25 ||

Gnosis that is free from beginning,  
Middle, and end does not arise, |  
All of the *vajra*-holders never  
Confer the consecration, || 8.26 ||

And all of the hostile ones such as  
The gods and the like do not protect him. |  
Therefore, a yogin with knowledge of method  
Is the only friend of all sentient beings. || 8.27 ||

Thus one should generate a completely  
Non-deceptive [and] steadfast intention. |  
By doing this, the perfect buddhas  
Who accomplish everything are pleased. || 8.28 ||

The ones who overpower with  
Great force bestow the blessing, and |  
There are no misfortunes such as *māras* and *vighnas*, etc.,  
Who search for an opportunity [to do harm]. || 8.29 ||

Vajrapāṇi and the like are pleased [and]  
[And] always protect [him]. |  
The best of human beings, [the *sādhaka*] attains  
The purification of all misdeeds. || 8.30 ||<sup>191</sup>

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One should not take what has not been given.. |  
One should not act upon improper desire.  
One should never speak falsehood. || 8.19 ||

<sup>191</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 120.  
bodhicittam idaṃ jñeyam anyathā vitatham bhavet |  
bodhicittam na tan nāma viṣamatvaṃ yadā sthitam || 8.25 ||  
na tad utpadyate jñānam ādimadhyāntavarjitam |

Indrabhūti argues for a specifically apotropaic result that one attains through the proper generation of *bodhicitta* and completion of the two accumulations that must be taken as equally soteriological and apotropaic both in its motivation and its end result. Mastery of the exoteric understanding of *bodhicitta* functions as a precondition for initiation into the esoteric apotropaic cult. The elements of the exoteric model linking the cultivation of virtue and insight into reality to the pacification of spirit beings are thus present, but they are augmented here with the ritual mechanics of consecration.

## V. Embodied Realization in Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi*

Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* is a relatively brief work that is primarily concerned with the theory underlying the performance of the ascetic practices associated with the post-generation stage yoga *caryā* and *vrata*, referred to here as part of the 'highest *sādhana* of Vajrasattva.'<sup>192</sup> A short work of only thirty-six verses, *Advayasiddhi* does not contain the kind of lengthy, explicit references to the dual apotropaic-soteriological conception of

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nādhīṣṭhānaṃ prakurvanti sarvadā sarvavajriṇaḥ || 8.26 ||

sarvadevādayaścāpi na taṃ rakṣanti vidviṣaḥ |

tasmād upāyavid yogī sarvasattvaikabāndhavaḥ || 8.27 ||

avisamvādakaṃ cittaṃ samutpādyam ato dr̥ḍham |

kr̥tenānena sambuddhāstuṣṭāḥ sarvakṛtātmakāḥ || 8.28 ||

adhiṣṭhānaṃ prakurvanti mahābalaparākramāḥ |

māravighnāpadaścāpi nāvatāragaveṣakāḥ || 8.29 ||

vajrapāṇyādayo hr̥ṣṭā rakṣāṃ kurvanti nityaśaḥ |

sarvapāpaviśuddhiṃ ca labhate 'sau narottamaḥ || 8.30 ||

<sup>192</sup> The implications of this term 'Vajrasattva *sādhana*' are discussed in some detail below at the end of this section on embodied realization. Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," in *Guhyādi-aṣṭasiddhisamgraha*, edited by Samdhong Rinpoche and Vrajvallabh Dwivedi (Sarnath: Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies Rare Buddhist Texts Project, 1987), 161.

deśakālatithivāranakṣatrain maṇḍalair vinā |

vakṣye 'haṃ vajrasattvasya samkṣepāt sādhanam param || 2 ||

I will briefly speak about

The highest *sādhana* of Vajrasattva |

Devoid of place, time, lunar day, fixed time of day,

Constellations and without maṇḍalas. || 2 ||

embodied realization that appear in the works by Padmavajra and Indrabhūti. But the text does provide some input into the dual apotropaic-soteriological applications of embodied realization when it directs the *sādhaka* to "continually meditate on the body as stainless by nature,"<sup>193</sup> and "always worship this body" instead of taking recourse to the usual focus of a *pūja* practice in the form of a deity-image fashioned out of wood, stone, or clay. The reason for this, and here Lakṣmīnkarā repeats a theme that is shared across the corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, is that the proper object of worship is the deity that becomes present through meditating on ultimate reality as present in one's own body. Here the process of establishing the deity in the body is explicitly linked to the visualization and offering of the *samaya* substances:

And one should also not praise deities  
 Made of wood, stone, or clay. |  
 One who has perfect concentration  
 Should always worship this body. || 15 ||

One should make the offering to the vajra bearer  
 With visualized (*bhāvitaḥ*) urine and feces |  
 That is mixed with vomit and flies  
 [And] combined with the five meats. || 16 ||

One should perform the offering to the deity  
 With the menstrual blood of women along with |  
 The milks that are the origin of the world,  
 Then establish [the deity] in the body by meditations on ultimate reality. || 17 ||<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 162.  
 sarvān samarasīkṛtya bhāvān nairātmyaniḥśṛtān |  
 bhāvayet satataṃ mantrī dehaṃ prakṛtinirmalam || 12 ||

Having made all things that emerge  
 Out of identitylessness into the same taste, |  
 A mantrin should continually meditate on  
 The body as stainless by nature. || 12 ||

<sup>194</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 162.  
 na cāpi vandayed devān kāṣṭhapāṣāṇamṛṇmayān |  
 pūjāmasyaiva kāyasya kuryānityaṃ samāhitaḥ || 15 ||



As Malati Shendge noted in her study of the text, and as the Sanskrit colophon to the work makes clear, Lakṣmīnkarā associates these practices with the self-consecration stage (*svādhiṣṭhānakrama*) in which the advanced yogin continually renews the consecration he has already received from his guru by performing the rite on himself.

For Lakṣmīnkarā the *svādhiṣṭhānakrama* is directly associated with the performance of *caryā* and *vrata* practices in which a *yogin* eschews all protective ritual techniques aside from the practice of self-consecration as the deity in an effort to demonstrate perfection of this practice. Roughly a quarter of Lakṣmīnkarā's text consists of verses with direct correspondences to Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*,<sup>195</sup> and the majority of these are derived from *Guhyasiddhi*'s sixth chapter on the performance of the *guhyacaryā* and its attendant Vajrayāna reformulations of a number of *vrata* practices. This not only proves that these two texts are directly related, it provides a demonstrable connection between the self-consecration stage and Vajrayāna Buddhist forms of *caryā* and *vrata* ascetic practice. The term *svādhiṣṭhāna* appears nowhere in Padmavajra's work, signaling that *Advayasiddhi* is incorporating a new terminology into the *caryā* and *vrata* practices presented in *Guhyasiddhi*. Lakṣmīnkarā's presentation of the self-consecration stage does not reveal any intertextuality with the third chapter on self-consecration in Nāgārjuna/Śākyamitra's *Pañcakrama*.<sup>196</sup> Instead, the presentation of this practice in *Advayasiddhi* agrees with the

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makṣikācchardisaṃmiśrair viṇmūtrādyaiśca bhāvitaiḥ |  
 pañcapradīpasamyuktaiḥ pūjayed vajradhāriṇam || 16 ||  
 abalāsvayambhukusumaiḥ sakṣīrairviśvasambhavaiḥ |  
 pūjayed devatāṃ tena dehasthāṃ tattvabhāvanaiḥ || 17 ||

<sup>195</sup> Several verses in Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* are near exact reproductions of verses found in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. Compare AS 4 to GS 6.72cd–73ab; AS 7 to GS 6.86–87 [both being reproductions of (or reproduced in) *Hevajratāntra* II.ii.50]; AS 8ab to GS 6.67cd; AS 9 to GS 6.68cd–69ab; AS 15 to GS 6.41cd–42ab; AS 16 to GS 6.27; AS 19 to GS 6.42cd–43ab; AS 22 to GS 6.71cd–72ab; AS 24 to GS 1.66; AS 25 to GS 6.74cd–75ab; AS 33 to GS 9.11.

<sup>196</sup> I have not found any nominal verse correspondences between Lakṣmīnkarā's instructions on the *svādhiṣṭhānakrama* and the instructions that appear in the third of Nāgārjuna/Śākyamitra's *Five-fold*

analysis of Padmavajra's *caryā* and *vrata* instructions that emerges within a demonological paradigm, where they are presented as a variety of ascetic modes in which one adopts a range of behaviors that might regularly elicit harm from human and non-human beings and emerges unscathed. As discussed in greater detail below, this is one interpretation of the practice method of an indestructible being (*vajrasattvasya...sādhanaṃ*) that is used to describe the text in its Sanskrit colophon.

*Advayasiddhi* concludes with a single verse that establishes a direct connection between the soteriological aspects of realizing ultimate reality and their implications for generating the body of an indestructible being. Here she writes:

This death is a conceptual imputation.  
 There is no existence in anything. |  
 One is killed by one's own conceptual imputation,  
 Due the way things appear to ordinary beings. || 36 ||<sup>197</sup>

Similar statements appear in Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi*<sup>198</sup> as well as Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*, which states, "all living beings on earth perish due to the net of conceptual thought."<sup>199</sup> Like Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi*, these texts are

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*System* or *Pañcakrama*. The presentation of the *svādhiṣṭhānakrama* in the *Pañcakrama* does, however, contain a handful of verses that are found in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, and at least one of these verses is quoted in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*.

<sup>197</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 164.

mṛtyureṣa vikalpo 'yaṃ na bhāvaḥ sarvavastuṣu |  
 hanyate svavikalpena pṛthagjanavijṛmbhitaiḥ || 36 ||

<sup>198</sup> Yoginī Cintā's work is heavily committed to the kind of doctrinal language generally associated with the *yogācara* school, devoting, for instance, its entire sixth chapter to the topic of how "The Entire Threefold World is Composed of Mind" (*sarvam traidhātukam cittamayam*). See Yoginī Cintā, "Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi," in *Guhyādi-Aṣṭasiddhi-saṅgraha*, edited by Samdhong Rinpoche and Vrajvallabh Dwivedi (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Rare Buddhist Texts Project, 1987), 177.

<sup>199</sup> This work is considered to be one of the *Snying po skor drug* among Tibetan exegetes, who take this corpus together with *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as the oldest source texts for the *mahāmudrā* teachings in India. See Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," in *Guhyādi-Aṣṭasiddhi-saṅgraha*, edited by Samdhong Rinpoche and Vrajvallabh Dwivedi (Sarnath: Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Rare Buddhist Texts Project, 1987), 197.

tatsvabhāva tu sarvaṃ vai cintātītaṃ svayambhuvaḥ |  
 sarve vikalpajālena naśyante prāṇino bhuvi || 25 ||  
 advayajñānam ekaṃ tu sarvasaṅkalpavarjitam |

clearly sympathetic to some form of the mind only view (*cittamātra*) that is characteristic of Yogācāra Buddhist thought. For Lakṣmīnkarā, the realization of ultimate reality that is demonstrated through performing the ascetic and ritual regimen associated with the 'self-consecration stage' is tantamount to attaining bodily immortality through realizing that all manner of potentially harmful influences are mental fabrication. The body is foregrounded in the ritual and ascetic practices described in *Advayasiddhi* in a manner that is fitting for the esoteric traditions of the *yoga-* and *yoginītantras*, and some vision of attaining bodily invulnerability is clearly interjected in the concluding verse of the text. Still, without any explicit reference to the apotropaic function of her vision of embodied enlightenment, the degree of correspondence between Lakṣmīnkarā's rhetoric of embodied realization and the demonological paradigm proposed in this study cannot be determined with the evidence that is internal to the text. The clear relationship that this work shares with Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* and (if we can grant some accuracy to our hagiographical sources) to Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* might indicate, however, that interpreting the *caryā* and *vrata* practices through a demonological paradigm still allows us greater access the subtext of Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi*.

## VI. Embodied Realization in Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi*

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yāvanno śāśvatochedo rāśidvayaṃ na vidyate || 26 ||

It has a self-arisen nature that is  
 Completely beyond thought. |  
 All living beings on earth perish  
 Due to the net of conceptual thoughts. || 25 ||  
 The unique non-dual gnosis  
 Is devoid of all conceptual imputation. |  
 Since there is no existence or non-existence  
 The dualism of the multitude does not exist. || 26 ||

Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi*<sup>200</sup> also does not engage in the kind of explicit demonological discourse found in other works included in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, but it does

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<sup>200</sup> In his argument for the contraction of Buddhism's institutional range via the collapse of heavy involvement by women in the tradition, Ronald Davidson argues against several points made in Miranda Shaw's *Passionate Enlightenment* and notes that "[e]ven the *Vyaktabhāvānugata-tattva-siddhi*, a text composed by a yoginī (Yoginī Cintā) actually discusses sexual yoga from the perspective of the male yogin." See Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 97. It is true that Yoginī Cintā often places her subject in the masculine singular throughout this work, which might indicate that the various levels of realization that are described here are attained by the yogin or the guru, and perhaps not attained by the consort. But there is reason to believe that Davidson has been too quick to discount the importance of this work's female authorship simply based on the fact that the instructions it contains describe a subject that is placed in the nominative masculine declension. Yoginī Cintā begins her work by informing her reader that she is writing down her guru's instructions, which signals that her description of the sexual yoga practice "from the perspective of the male yogin," as Davidson says, is a byproduct of the fact that these are in fact the words of her male guru that Yoginī Cintā tells us were 'written down here by me for my own memory' (*svasmṛtaye likhito 'tra mayā*). Language does often reveal cultural assumptions of course, and Davidson is not entirely incorrect to point out that even these instructions from an accomplished yoginī may show that the *yoginītantra* and *mahāyogatantras*, despite their own rhetoric to the contrary, were a male-dominated religious literature. But we should also exercise caution in accepting any wholesale dismissal of the idea that the elevated status of women in the ritual context of the *mahāyoga*- and *yoginītantras* is *only rhetorical* and not in any sense related to an actual increase in female participation in Buddhist tantric traditions. In fact, the root verses that Yoginī Cintā includes and comments upon in her work imply that for the sexual yoga, properly performed, *the distinction of male and female no longer applies*. Consider the following two verses, which immediately precede her instructions on 'the practice with [sexual] embrace' (*sagrahacaryā*):

priyasniḡdhālokaistadanu ca madhusyandivacanaiḥ  
tataḥ premāsārairatha [ca] rasarājairupanataiḥ |  
na jāne taccheṣakramaratarasā kāsmi sa ca kaḥ  
kimapyanyat saukhyaṃ sakḥi na vacasāṃ gamyam uditam || 3 ||

With loving and affectionate glances, and  
Then with words like a trickle of honey,  
Then with showers of affection and  
Then with the kings of elixir that are elicited,  
Due to the experience of passion of the remaining stages  
I do not know who I am and who he is.  
My friend, there is no happiness like it.  
Experienced, it cannot be put into words. || 3 ||

Yoginī Cintā, "Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi," 170.

As the passage moves from this preliminary 'courtship' of arousing bliss in both the yogin and yoginī, Yoginī Cintā does in fact switch from the nominative masculine to a dual subject, explaining the process in terms of the experiences that both parties undergo during the practice. The subject then moves into the nominative masculine singular again when it turns to the topic of, 'the range of one's own perception' (*svapratipattigocara*) but *gocara*, being a masculine noun itself, is here describing the 'range of perception' belonging to both parties whose identities have become unified and indistinguishable. The guru only becomes the subject of these instructions again when they turn to the description of his collection of the sexual and menstrual fluids from the consort. A close reading thus shows that Davidson's statement that the text "actually discusses sexual yoga from the perspective of the male yogin" is not entirely accurate.

elaborate upon the theme introduced at the conclusion of Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* that beings are killed by their own conceptual thought, for which we might assume the existential condition associated with the demonological paradigm provides at least part of the implicit context. In this sense, Yoginī Cintā's treatment of the thesis that "this entire threefold world is composed of mind" (*sarvaṃ traidhātukaṃ cittamayam idam*) challenges its reader to acknowledge that the perception of an internal-external bifurcation of the body is the basis for the belief that there are beings who act independently of one's own mind that can cause one harm.

The work's primary importance for this study of the connection between realization of ultimate reality and its complete embodiment within a demonological paradigm, however, appears in its instructions for the performance of sexual yoga and the consumption of the pill (*piṇḍā*) that is produced from the mixed sexual and menstrual fluids of the guru (or *yogin*) and consort. Yoginī Cintā's instructions on preparing and consuming the *piṇḍā* are remarkably lucid. Her interpretation of the rite offers some explanation for precisely why consuming the combined sexual fluids and menstrual discharge of a couple who correctly practice the sexual yoga might bring about a direct glimpse of ultimate reality in the initiate and install this realization in the body in embryonic form. She begins by describing the proper performance of sexual yoga in terms of the production of a self-arisen body that manifests after transcending the limitations of the sense faculties associated with the ordinary, corporeal form:

Then, the range one's own perception beyond the sense faculties, born out of the increase of profound sexual bliss of the pleasure awakened by the constantly repeated bliss ritual is born as a mass of bliss that is the essence of *samsāra*.

That bliss, which is endowed with signs [yet] devoid of the signs of [ordinary] beings, is gnosis, is a self-arisen body, is sublime bliss, is empty of mental fabrication, [and] is the mind that is arisen from ultimate reality of the mental imprints.<sup>201</sup>

Her use of the metaphor of birth to describe the production of this self-arisen body follows a general theme throughout the work that recognition of the innate (*sahaja*) constitutes the single factor distinguishing whether or not a given action of body, speech, or mind binds one further to cyclic existence or leads to liberation. In this case there are two potential bodies that might be 'born' as a result of sexual union—the 'self-arisen body' of bliss that is beyond the range of the senses, or the ordinary corporeal body that remains bound to cyclic existence. The former 'birth,' which results from the correct performance of this yoga, results in both parties attaining a fully embodied realization.

Yoginī Cintā's use of the metaphor of birth also plays an important role in her description of the collection, preparation, and consumption of the sexual fluids produced during this yoga. Her description of the couple in sexual union penetrating the epistemically bound condition of the ordinary body and realizing an unbound, self-arisen body of bliss is followed by the production of another body that is remarkably less abstract and theoretical in its description. After the yogic couple attains a self-arisen body of great bliss (*svayambhūrūpaṃ mahāsukhaṃ*), the text describes the guru's collection of the products of their union. The passage is a bit long, but it is worth including here in its entirety:

Then the one who burns up the film over the eye of all outwardly directed conceptual imputations that becomes apparent when one enters into [blissful]

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<sup>201</sup> Yoginī Cintā, "Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi," 170–71.  
ato'pyatyantābhyāsasukhakriyāvibodhitopabhogagahanasuratasukhasaṃvardhanajanitātīndriyasvapra-  
pattigocaraḥ saṃsārasārasukharāśijāto 'bhūditi |

orgasm because the mental activity of [one's] mind-stream is beyond and unimpeded by the rapid fluctuation of mental imprints that are the subtle connection to a cyclic existence that is constructed by oneself like an illusion, etc., the lord of the world who is the nature of bliss, whose nature is pure being, who is endowed with wind, clasps the residual blood that has trickled from the inside of the finest blooming eight-petal lotus from the lower-mouth below the navel of the woman whose menstrual cycle is fully arrived along with the related seminal fluids. After that the lotus appears there like a blossom closed after it has bloomed. And then the two, the blood and seminal fluid that are the origin and the innate source are mixed like the ocean of milk and formed into a pill, and it acquires the entire heap of collections of elemental dispositions that are gradually produced and come forth in succession from excessive rotation of this newly formed embryo etc. And in that [pill] in which the five [elemental dispositions] such as earth and the like are combined, in that [there is] "the feeling that causes one to behold the manifest state," [meaning that one sees that] the body that possesses the five psychophysical aggregates is the nature of [that] feeling. By being in close contact [with that feeling] and exercising restraint regarding the subsequent feeling, one becomes all pervasive, omnipresent.<sup>202</sup>

The chapter then concludes with a passage, followed by a single verse, in which Yoginī Cintā contrasts the feeling (*vedanā*) described here with ordinary feeling that leads to the production of the afflictions and continual rebirth in the round of existence.

This passage is remarkable for a number of reasons. It describes the production of the *piṇḍā* as the product of a couple whose sexual yoga results in a form of ecstasis as both parties enter into an indistinguishable union and experience a collective body of self-arisen bliss. This seemingly abstract immaterial body is juxtaposed to a rather concrete description of the male partner's collection of the products of this union from the consort's vagina.

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<sup>202</sup> Yoginī Cintā, "Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi," 171–72.

tadanantaram ca tatra kamalam anumukulitam utpadyate | tatra ca dve api raktaretasī ārambhake  
 nijaparakṛtike kṣīrasalilamiva miśrībhūya piṇḍākāratvamabhavat | tacca kalalādito  
 'tivalanaparipāṭigatānukramajātasakalabhūtasāñcayopacayaṃ labhate |  
 tadanantaram ca tatra kamalamanumukulitautpadyate | tatra ca dve api raktaretasī ārambhake  
 nijaparakṛtike kṣorasalilamiva miśrībhūya piṇḍākāratvamabhavat | tacca kalalādito  
 'tivalanaparipāṭigatānukramajātasakalabhūtasāñcayopacayaṃ labhate |  
 yatra ca pṛthivyādīnāṃ pañcānāṃ samavāyaḥ, tatra sā vedanā vyaktabhāvam anudarśayatīti  
 pañcaskandhavad vedanātmakaṃ śarīram abhavat | asāvanuvedanātinīyatapratyāsattyaiva sarvavyāpi  
 sarvagato

Yoginī Cintā then compares the production of the 'pill' to the Purāṇic cosmogonic act of churning the ocean of milk, a process that is, among other things, linked to the first appearance of the nectar of immortality (*amṛta*) over which the *devas* and *asuras* are said to be engaged in a constant struggle. The metaphor thus evokes the term *amṛta*, although it is not actually employed here, one of the most frequently used terms to describe the *piṇḍā*. The term *piṇḍā* carries a dual significance. It is first literally a 'pill' that is produced through mixing together the seminal fluids and menstrual discharge of the yogic couple. Such 'pills' constitute one of the most important *samaya* substances that a yogin or yoginī consumes during initiatory consecration rites and during the self-consecration practice.

Its second connotation, which Yoginī Cintā brings to the forefront here, is as a 'body' or, more precisely, the body of a human embryo in its early stages of development. The process of combining the seminal fluids and menstrual fluid is apparently imagined here, through the cosmogonic metaphor of churning the ocean of milk, as a kind of externalized conception, and the zygote or *piṇḍā* produced by that process is glossed here with another term for a newly formed embryo (*kalala*). This imagery is enhanced by Yoginī Cintā's reference to the process of conception in the formation of this newly fertilized embryo as one of 'acquiring the entire heap of collections of elemental dispositions' (*sakalabhūtasāñcayopacayam*). The most important point Yoginī Cintā makes here is that this *piṇḍā* contains what she calls "the feeling (*vedanā*) that causes one to behold the manifest state." Thus a trajectory is established quite clearly in the first chapter of *Vyaktabhāvānugatatattvasiddhi* from the arousal of the yogic couple to their attainment of an ecstatic bliss-body followed by the production of an entirely new, material body in the form of a newly formed embryo that, as Yoginī Cintā appears to argue here, is imbued with a



particular 'nature of feeling' that is genealogically linked to the bliss experienced during the yogic couple's embrace. It is the physical substance of the *piṇḍā* that is in turn capable of transferring their experience onto an initiate or, in cases when it is consumed by the same yogic couple who produced it, of reinforcing or reproducing that experience and establishing its physical presence in the body.

Of course Yoginī Cintā's description of this process should not be assumed as the only explanation for precisely why consuming the *piṇḍā* can induce a state of realization in newly initiated disciples and renew that realization in more seasoned yogins and yoginīs. But such vivid descriptions of the actual mechanics involved in producing the *samaya* substances of the higher consecration systems are relatively rare, and this text thus provides some explanation for the practice where so many others remain relatively vague. What is even more unique here is Yoginī Cintā's description of this particular *samaya* substance in terms of the conception of an actual newly formed embryo. Given the well-known ritual application of this particular substance as something that is consumed during initiation rites, it follows that such rites entail, at least by Yoginī Cintā's analysis of the process, consuming an actual living being of sorts. It is thus not unreasonable to suggest that in the opening chapter of *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi*, a work that is, after all, allegedly composed by a Yoginī, we have what seems like a re-purposing of the kind of activity with which yoginīs and the broader classes of female spirit beings in their more traditional demonological formulations are commonly associated—namely the consumption of sexual fluids in general and the pathology of miscarriage via consumption of a newly fertilized embryo. In Āyurvedic demonological models for pediatric medicine, such female baby snatchers (*bālagrahā*) were the assumed culprits behind failed pregnancies and childhood diseases. As Fred Smith notes,

these beings appear to be external to the Sanskrit literary traditions and were at some point incorporated into it.<sup>203</sup>

This stands as perhaps one of the primary, albeit tenuous, examples of continuity between the rites described in *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* and the demonological paradigm. To the degree that this continuity can be granted some legitimacy, it reveals yet another connection between the generation of a fully embodied enlightenment and the existential condition revealed within the demonological paradigm. At the very least, the fact that the initiate or initiated practitioner acquires power from ingesting such substances is in itself indicative of their status as "power substances."<sup>204</sup> In this particular case, that power appears to be derived from the fact that these substances have been transformed, through a kind of extra-utero fertilization process, into a living embryo. Yoginī Cintā's first chapter presents a blending of both the substance and aesthetics of power, grounding the yogic epistemology of her self-arisen body in an actual material substance, before describing the power that consuming that substance has to induce a state of epistemic unboundedness.

The instructions to actually ingest this *piṇḍā* do not appear in Yoginī Cintā's text, but can be assumed given the context. The verses that immediately follow the production and description of the *piṇḍā* describe the exercise of restraint (*atiniyata*) regarding any subsequent feelings (*anuvedanā*), indicating that the subject who consumes the *piṇḍā* must be able to focus exclusively on the 'feeling' with which it is imbued, and which it then elicits in the body of the consumer. The result is yet another kind of yogic magnification in which the subject becomes all pervasive (*sarvavyāpi*) and omnipresent (*sarvagata*). This state of

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<sup>203</sup> Fred Smith, *The Self-Possessed*, 481.

<sup>204</sup> For a chronological-historical model of the development of the notion of blood and seminal fluids as 'power substances' and its eventual interpretation within a more aesthetic paradigm from the early Kula/Kaula to the later Kaśmiri Trika Kaula system, see White, *Kiss of the Yogini*, 14–15.

being all pervasive and omnipresent has its correlates in the yogic practices of bodily magnification for which there is evidence presented above from Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* and in the epistemology of gnostic pervasion in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*.

To summarize, the sequence of instructions in Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatatattvasiddhi* presents a discourse of embodied enlightenment that proceeds along the following trajectory. First the yogic couple progresses through various states of sexual arousal through a series of interactions involving bodily gestures, glances, and touch and culminating in their bodily embrace. The couple eventually transcends their epistemically bound corporeal bodies only to attain a collective body that is beyond the range of the senses and composed of bliss. The products of this body in turn produce a new body as the seminal and menstrual fluids are mixed together to form a newly formed embryo. This embryonic body is then consumed by some-body and produces the realization of that some-body's own body as a body that is all pervading and omnipresent. Yoginī Cintā's explanation of the *piṇḍā* indicates that the act of consuming the *samaya* substances during initiation and self-consecration is highly invested in the notion of embodied realization, and it offers some explanation as to how that embodied realization might be transferred between a guru and disciple during the consecration ritual or self-administered and reinforced by the yogic couple during the self-consecration practice.

Yoginī Cintā's text contains a final affirmation of a fully embodied realization in its sixth section titled "The Entire Threefold World is Composed of Mind" (*sarvam traidhātukam cittamayam*), where the physical processes of cultivating this body are tied into classical Indic aesthetic theory through the notion of the innate (*sahaja*). The passage reads:

Thus it is said, "Because *bodhicitta* is naturally pure, whatever bodily movements issue forth from the state of *sahaja* are all the various types of

*mudrā*, and whatever verbal expressions there are, they are the various types of mantra, and the vibration that is the appearance of the innate that is incessant, non-abiding, non-compounded, unlimited, that is set in motion by the various types of sentiments, and emotional states, that is eroticism, bravery, disgust, anger, laughter, fear, compassion, wonder, peace, etc., and which is also desire, anger, delusion, madness, pride, envy, and jealousy, etc., whatever arises all has the mental representation of gnosis, has a pure nature that reflects everything." This entire three-fold world is composed of mind.<sup>205</sup>

Here the text presents a fully developed notion of embodiment that is in accord with its central doctrine of *sahaja*, and that is reminiscent of the notion of a natural connection established between the various bodily and mental behaviors of a yogin who has attained realization and the natural expression of the awakened state in the world. The list of the nine sentiments (*navarasam*) that appears here follows the exact same set and ordering of the nine sentiments that are ascribed to the manifestation of the deity Hevajra in *Hevajratantra* II.v.26.<sup>206</sup> The correlation between Yoginī Cintā's proclamation of this transformation of the entire range of mental, physical, and verbal actions and behaviors from their usual, afflicted state to their pure nature shall become clearer in chapter four as the connection between behavior, normative social ethics, and the body's vulnerability to interference from the world of spirit beings is brought into greater focus within the context of the performance of the post-generation stage *caryā* and *vrata*.

## VII. Embodied Realization in Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi*

<sup>205</sup> Yoginī Cintā, "Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi," 176–77.

etenaitaduktaṃ bhavati- svabhāvasuddhādbodhicittād ye khalvetesahajavinirgatāṅgavikṣepāḥ te sarva eva mudrāprakārāḥ ye 'pi ca vāgvikṣepāste mantraprakārāḥ, yadapi ca sahaḥjanmīlanaviṣpandanam anavaratam anavasthitam asaṃskṛtam aparimitaṃ nānākārarasabhāvaceṣṭāyitaṃ śṛṅgāravīrabibhatsaraudrahāsya bhayānakakaruṇādbhūtaśāntādīkam api ca rāga dveṣa mohamādamānamātsaryerṣyādi yatkiñcidutpadyate tatsarvaṃ śuddhasvabhāvajñānākāram pratiphālisakalamiti sarvaṃ traidhātukaṃ cittamayamidam |

<sup>206</sup> David Snellgrove ed., *The Hevajra Tantra: A Critical Study* (Orchid Press: Bangkok, Thailand, 2010), edition p. 80.

śṛṅgāravīrabhībatsaraudrahāsya bhayānakaiḥ |  
karuṇādbhūtaśāntaiś ca ravanādyarasair yutam || 26 ||

Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi* contains only traces of the influence of demonology on the tantric Buddhist imagination of the body. But despite this lack of explicit engagement in the demonological discourse on the vulnerability of the ordinary body and the yogic cultivation of a divine, invulnerable body, it is still possible to demonstrate this work as product of the same ritual and ascetic culture of the cremation ground described in greater detail in other works in the corpus. *Sahajasiddhi* is largely concerned with the performance of a *caṇḍālī* subtle-body yogic sequence drawn from (or perhaps preconfiguring) the instructions on *caṇḍālī* in the *Hevajatantra*. The work is somewhat of an outlier in the corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, and may have been included in order to have at least one of its seven works address this practice, which became integral to the imagination of *mahāmudrā* following its popularization in Buddhist circles through works like the *Hevajatantra*. Aside from *Sahajasiddhi*, there is no explicit mention of any kind of *caṇḍālī* practice elsewhere in the corpus.

The practice of *caṇḍālī* came to be understood as a critical component to the successful performance of the transgressive ascetic practices of the *caryā* and *vrata*, and the various levels of heat (*uṣman*, *drod*) that it produces are at times directly correlated to the various levels of *caryā* or *vrata*.<sup>207</sup> This treatment of *uṣman* as a means for rendering the body invulnerable to assault by any human or non-human external influences offers one interpretation for the common iconographic component of a ring of fire surrounding the wrathful deities of the Buddhist tantric pantheon. Thus the *caṇḍālī* practice in Ḍombīheruka's

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<sup>207</sup> Such a correlation between the attainment of 'heat' and the performance of the post-generation stage *caryā* and *vrata* appears, for instance, in the Sa skya pa polymath Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge's (1429–1489) primary commentary to Sa skya paṇḍita's (1182–1251) *Distinguishing the Three Vows* (*Sdom gsum rab dbye*). See Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge, "Sdom gsum gyi rab tu dbyed pa'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba" in *Kun mkhyen go bo rab 'byams pa bsod nams seng ge'i bka' 'bum*, vol tā; 9 (Dehradun, India: Sakya College, 1979) 129b.3–4.

*Sahajasiddhi*<sup>208</sup> has its place within the demonological paradigm, even without the author's explicit mention of this practice's power for guarding the body against human and non-human assailants. In this sense Ḍombīheruka's *caṇḍālī* practice might be read as yet another yogic model for cultivating a fully embodied enlightenment directly related to the kind of dual apotropaic-soteriological goal of embodied realization that is reflected more explicitly elsewhere in the corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.

### **VIII. Conclusion: What is Vajrasattva? What is the *Sādhana* of Vajrasattva?**

There may be no more important term for understanding what it means for an individual to take on the religious identity of a Vajrayāna practitioner than the term *vajrasattva*. It is most often assumed as a proper noun describing the Buddha Vajrasattva, who is commonly depicted in his *sambhogakāya* form holding a *vajra* in his right hand at the center of his chest and resting a bell in his left hand on his thigh. But the term *vajrasattva* is not limited to its function as a proper noun and demonstrates a wide range of meanings and connotations even within *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Within this corpus it is employed to describe an ontological and pervasive ground of reality, the personification of this reality as a deity, the Buddha Vajrasattva, who is the source and the original teacher of the tantric rites and ascetic practices, a general term denoting a class of awakened beings, and a synonym for either the guru, the accomplished *yogin*, or the *sādhaka*.

The term *vajra* provides a semiotic strategy for inscribing any term within a Vajrayāna Buddhist framework, with the addition of the term *vajra* to any number of terms functioning as the linguistic equivalent of the conversion and subjugation narratives that

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<sup>208</sup> Ḍombīheruka, "Sahajasiddhi," in *Guhyādi-aṣṭasiddhisamgraha*, edited by Samdhong Rinpoche and Jaganath Upadhyay (Sarnath: Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies Rare Buddhist Texts Project, 1987), Skt. 181–191; Tib. 273–283.

authorize and validate many of the developments of the *yoga-* and *yoginītantras*. This is evident in certain deities of the Vajrayāna pantheon such as *Vajravārāhī* and *Vajrabhairava*, both of whom have obvious correlates outside of any Buddhist context that likely predate their inscription and appropriation within Vajrayāna Buddhism. In the same way, the term *vajrasattva* undoubtedly holds a great deal of significance for understanding what nuance these traditions bring to this tradition's conception of a living being (*sattva*). A comprehensive genealogy of the term across Vajrayāna literature is well outside of the scope of this study, but a more limited exploration of the way that the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* use the term *vajrasattva* does provide a useful means for identifying the impact that the basic existential problem of being, conceived within the demonological paradigm, has exerted on the rhetoric of embodied realization in Vajrayāna Buddhism.

The consecration rite can be said to represent the process through which the disciple both becomes Vajrasattva and becomes *a vajrasattva*. The consecration rite provides a dual apotropaic-soteriological response to the existential crisis inherent to the demonological paradigm. It is within this context that the term *vajrasattva* is in fact correctly taken to mean, quite literally, an 'indestructible being,' or one who has essentially resolved the existential problem of existing within an inherently vulnerable body that is situated in a world full of powerful spirit beings intent on doing it harm. Soteriological ideals like *nirvāṇa*, *saṃyaksambuddha*, *abhisambodhi*, etc., have always had their bodily correlates in Buddhist traditions. In the esoteric Buddhist traditions of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, the soteriology of realizing non-dual gnosis finds its apotropaic correlate in the manifestation of an indestructible body. This kind of embodied enlightenment is signified in the literal connotations of the term *vajrasattva* as 'indestructible being.'

Three of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, Indrabhūti's

*Jñānasiddhi*, and Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi*, refer to themselves as a '*sādhana* of

*vajrasattva*.<sup>209</sup> But none of these works could truly be called *sādhana*s in the most common

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<sup>209</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 61.

bhaktiā(ktya)ṅkuśadṛdhākṛṣṭām(ṣṭa)śuddhacittena yanmayā |  
kṛtaṃ śrīvajrasattvasya sādhanam guhyacaryayā || 9.37 ||

tadidaṃ bhadrakam tāvat bhadrād bhadraṃ kimucyate |  
no cedhāsyam na sanmitramācāryāstatra(t)kṣamantu me || 9.38 ||

This is the *sādhana* of Glorious Vajrasattva  
That I composed based on the secret practice |  
With a pure intention relentlessly coaxed  
With the hook of devotion. || 9.37 ||

So long as it brings a good result,  
What can be said to be of more benefit? |  
If it is laughable, if it is not a true ally  
Ācāryas, please be patient with me. || 9.38 ||

Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 157.

vidhūtakalpanājālam vajrajñānamidaṃ param |  
sādhanam vajrasattvasya kṛtam mārgam sayuktikam || 6 ||

sāghanopāyikāṃ kṛtvā yanmayopacitam śubham |  
tenāstu sarvasattvānām vajrasattvatvamuttamam || 7 ||

This *vajra*-gnosis [from which] the net  
Of conceptual thought has been removed |  
Is the supreme *sādhana* of Vajrasattva, which is  
The path [that I] skillfully accomplished. || 6 ||

Having composed this *sādhana* instruction  
My the virtue that I have accumulated, |  
Cause all sentient beings to attain  
The supreme state of Vajrasattva. || 7 ||;

Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 161.

prakṛtiprabhāsvaraṃ nātham sarvajñam tribhavodbhavam |  
praṇamya śirasā vajramīpsitārthaphalapradaṃ || 1 ||

deśakālatithivāranakṣatrain maṇḍalair vinā |  
vakṣye 'ham vajrasattvasya samkṣepāt sādhanam param || 2 ||

Having bowed my head to the lord who is  
The naturally luminous, omniscient |  
Source of the three worlds, the *vajra*  
Who grants the fruition of the desired goal, || 1 ||



sense of the term as denoting a genre of text containing liturgical instructions for a particular deity and the sequence of yogic practices related to that deity's *maṇḍala*. This more common understanding of the term *sādhana* applies to sections of *Guhyasiddhi* and *Jñānasiddhi*, but it is certainly not a useful description of these works on the whole. In addition to the rather broad set of referents with which they layer the term *vajrasattva*, the authors of these texts must also have had a somewhat different conception of the term *sādhana* than more popular definitions of the term that might be derived, for example from a collection like the *Sādhanamālā*.

A careful look at the use of both terms in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* reveals a potential structure for the '*sādhana* of *vajrasattva*' that suggests the term *sādhana* in these works describes the entire ritual program of consecration, mastering the self-generation of the body as the deity *maṇḍala*, and performing the advanced completion stage ascetic practices of the *caryā* and *vrata*. A brief discussion of the first two, the consecration ritual and generation stage, as part of the *sādhana* of *vajrasattva* concludes the current chapter, while the third component, the ascetic practice of the *caryā* and *vrata*, shall be discussed in chapter four. Conceiving of the consecration ritual and generation stage yoga as part of this *sādhana* of *vajrasattva* or 'method of accomplishing the state of an indestructible being' highlights the dual apotropaic-soteriological function of these practices, both of which focus on attaining an embodied realization of non-dual gnosis or ultimate reality within a ritually consecrated and protected space.

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I will briefly explain  
The highest *sādhana* of Vajrasattva |  
Devoid of place, time, lunar day, fixed time of day,  
Constellations and without *maṇḍalas*. || 2 ||

Chapter five of Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* on "The Sādhaka's Mahāmudrā

Consecration" (*sādhakamahāmudrābhiṣeka*) refers to itself as a *sādhana* of *vajrasattva* in its opening verses:

Now, I will thoroughly explain  
The secret of the glorious *vajra*-bearer, |  
The *sādhana* of a *vajrasattva*,  
That is concealed by the actual practice. || 5.1 ||

The completion stage yoga  
Destroys the enemy distraction, |  
[Makes] the secret virtuous state easy to attain,  
And accomplishes [seeing] actions as [mere] play. || 5.2 ||<sup>210</sup>

The verses immediately raise the issue of distinguishing between the potential phases of the '*sādhana* of *vajrasattva*,' and Padmavajra makes a direct connection here between this *sādhana* and the 'completion stage yoga.' The actual topic of the chapter, however, is the consecration ritual that precedes the yogin's progression to the stage of an initiated *sādhaka* and that qualifies him to perform the *caryā* and *vrata* ascetic practices of the completion stage yoga. Padmavajra sheds some further light on this issue later in the chapter when he reaches the point in his consecration liturgy at which the guru imparts his final command (*anujñā*):

And then he should be given the command  
That is prescribed in the tantra: |  
"You must set the universal *vajra* in motion  
Within the wheel of the dharma as you wish. || 5.40 ||

In the unsurpassed dharma-wheel  
Of the buddhas and bodhisattvas,  
Carry out the instruction that arose from  
The mouth of the highest Buddha *Vajrasattva*." || 5.41 ||<sup>211</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 34.

athātaḥ sampravakṣyāmi guhyaṃ śrīguhyavajriṇaḥ |  
sādanaṃ vajrasattvasya gopitaṃ bhūtacaryayā || 5.1 ||  
utpannakramayogena vikṣepāriniṣūdanam |  
sukhasādhyam śubham guptaṃ krīḍākarmānusādhakam || 5.2 ||

The actual identity of the Buddha Vajrasattva in the guru command is revealed in the following chapter containing Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhyacaryā*. The chapter, discussed at length in chapter four, opens with the following verses

Now, I will thoroughly explain  
The secret practice, the arising of virtue, |  
The mother of all of the buddhas  
That slays the enemy distraction. || 6.1 ||

One whose mind is always liberated  
Should give up comfort,  
Leave the confines of *samsāra* behind, |  
And accomplish the command of Vajrasattva. || 6.2 ||<sup>212</sup>

The 'command of Vajrasattva' (*vajrasattvājñā*) is a direct reference to the command given at the culmination of the consecration rite in *Guhyasiddhi* chapter five, where it is rendered with the term *anujñā*. This indicates that the reference to the 'instruction that arose from the mouth of the Buddha Vajrasattva' in the guru's command constitutes a reference to the Buddha Vajrasattva as the ultimate source of the tantric teachings as well as a reference to the guru himself as Vajrasattva.

Explicit evidence for the mutual identification of the guru with Vajrasattva is made quite clear in the following verses from the opening chapter of Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*:

The guru who gathers disciples  
Emulates all of the Buddhas. |  
Thus spoke the Lord of the World.  
No other gurus are taught. || 1.27 ||

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<sup>211</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 37.

anujñāṃ ca tatastasya dadyāt tantrapracoditām |  
pravartayasva digvajraṃ dharmacakre yathecchayā || 5.40 ||  
buddhānāṃ bodhisattvānāṃ dharmacakre hyanuttare |  
deśanāṃ kuru buddhāgravajrasattvamukhoditām || 5.41 ||

<sup>212</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 39.

atastāṃ saṃpravakṣyāmi guhyacaryāṃ śubhodayām |  
jananīṃ sarvabuddhānāṃ vikṣepāriniṣūdinīm || 6.1 ||  
pādaprasārikam<sup>212</sup> muktvā tyaktvā saṃsārapetaṅgam |  
sādhayed vajrasattvājñāṃ nityanirmuktamānasah || 6.2 ||

Since there is indeed no comparable  
Great sage worthy of being worshipped, |  
A practitioner of the *vrata* should worship  
The best of gurus with all [of his] effort. || 1.28 ||

No comparable person worthy of honor  
Is found in the world with its three realms. |  
Vajrasattva himself, he abides  
In the world for the welfare of all. || 1.29 ||

He should be worshipped in many ways  
By disciples who desire true excellence |  
Who desire undiminishing merit  
[And] who remove all obstructing beings. || 1.30 ||

This is indeed the unsurpassed  
*Samaya* of all *samayas*. |  
You must maintain this [*samaya*] at all times,  
[For it] bestows all manner of accomplishments. || 1.31 ||<sup>213</sup>

Indrabhūti's reference to the guru as Vajrasattva is further supported in Anaṅgavajra's

*Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* during the eulogy section of his chapter on the consecration rite:

Teacher of the pure meaning of ultimate reality  
Who cuts through the ignorance of beings, |  
Arisen from the identitylessness of phenomena—  
Praise you Vajrasattva! || 3.10 ||<sup>214</sup>

If we can allow for some flexibility in reading across texts, a certain degree of clarity

emerges around Padmavajra's reference to the consecration rite in his *Guhyasiddhi* as a

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<sup>213</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 95–96.

sa guruḥ śiṣyasamgrāhī sarvabuddhānukāraḥ |  
ityuvāca jagannātho nānye vai guravaḥ smṛtāḥ || 1.27 ||  
yasmānna tatsamo hyasti pūjanīyo mahāmuniḥ |  
tasmāt sarvaprayatnena pūjayed guruvaram vrati || 1.28 ||  
na tatsamo vidyate loka mānyo na tribhave janaḥ |  
vajrasattvaḥ svayaṃ loka sarvasampattaye sthitaḥ || 1.29 ||  
ārādhyo'nekadhā śiṣyaiḥ satsampadamabhīpsubhiḥ |  
akṣiṇapūnyakāmaiśca sarvaviḥnavināyakaiḥ || 1.30 ||  
sarveṣāṃ samayānāṃ hi samayo'yaṃ niruttaraḥ |  
rakṣyo'yaṃ bhavatā nityaṃ sarvasampatpradāyakaḥ || 1.31 ||

<sup>214</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 74.

jagadajñānavicchediśuddhatattvārthadeśaka |  
dharmanairātmyasambhūta vajrasattva namo'stu te || 3.10 ||

*sādhana* of *vajrasattva*. *Guhyasiddhi* reveals that the command given at the end of the consecration rite originates with the Buddha Vajrasattva while *Jñānasiddhi* indicates that the guru who administers this consecration is himself viewed as Vajrasattva. To further complicate matters, Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi* begins its chapter on the consecration rite with the following verse:

Now, for the benefit of *sādhakas* intent on  
The state of a *vajrasattva*, I shall accurately |  
Explain the consecration that has  
Authority over the three worlds. || 3.1 ||<sup>215</sup>

This adds yet another layer suggesting that the consecration is itself a means by which the disciple becomes *vajrasattva*. Three different referents for the term can thus be identified in the context of the consecration rite—the Buddha Vajrasattva as the ultimate source of the ritual and the power it confers upon the initiate, the guru as Vajrasattva 'in the flesh,' and the disciple who becomes *a vajrasattva* through receiving the consecration and performing the subsequent yogas and ascetic practices for which he is now qualified.

Given the fact that Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, and Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* contain instructions on the generation stage yoga, the higher consecrations, and the completion stage yoga,<sup>216</sup> and that all three of these works refer to themselves as a *sādhana* of *vajrasattva*, it seems reasonable to assume that constituent elements of the term *sādhana* for these authors encompass the generation stage yogas, the consecration rite, and completion stage yogas. As this chapter demonstrates, these works

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<sup>215</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi," 74.  
athātaḥ kathyate samyag vajrasattvapadārthinām |  
sādhakānām hitārthāyābhiṣekaṃ tribhavāspadam || 3.1 ||

<sup>216</sup> Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* is in fact quite sparse on this topic aside from a handful of verses in its first chapter. The absence of any chapter containing explicit instructions on performing the *caryā* may account for the fact that *Jñānasiddhi* and *Advayasiddhi* are treated as a pair of texts, with the latter potentially providing the *caryā* instructions that the former lacks.

provide a method for dual apotropaic-soteriological goal of embodied realization. They thus outline the methods by which the *sādhaka* becomes both the Buddha Vajrasattva and a *vajrasattva* through installing the deity *maṇḍala* within his own body and completing the self-visualization as the deity through the consecration rite. Once the *maṇḍala* has become coterminous with the body through this union (*yoga*), the *sādhaka* should, in theory, be able to wander beyond the protected boundaries of all mentally, socially, and physically constructed structures and remain unharmed. The next stage of the *sādhana* in these texts, the completion stage *yoga*, prescribes that the *sādhaka* cultivate a socially marginalized identity that is designed to demonstrate his invulnerability to possession by spirit beings as well as assault and censure from human beings. The *sādhana* of *vajrasattva* thus culminates in a demonstration of perfect union between the body and the deity *maṇḍala* that proves that the *sādhaka* no longer needs to resort to any of the protective ritual practices that are so integral to the emergence of the *maṇḍala* as a locus of sacred space and ritual activity in the *kriyā* and *caryā* tantras.

## Chapter 4:

### Exiting the Maṇḍala:

#### Vajrayāna Caryā and Vrata Asceticism in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*

##### I. Introduction: Demonology and Vajrayāna Caryā and Vrata Asceticism

The advanced tantric practices of the *caryā* and *vrata* take place beyond the protective structures of the *maṇḍala*. Within the demonological paradigm, many of these practices can be read as a kind of test through which *sādhakas* and can demonstrate the degree of success they have had in cultivating the dual apotropaic-soteriological goal of the generation stage yoga. In order to test whether or not the *sādhaka's* union with the deity-*maṇḍala* is complete, all forms of ritually constructed protective structures (both mental and physical) must be abandoned. After abandoning these safeguards, the *sādhaka* then acts in ways that provoke assault from supernatural and mundane beings (both human and non-human) and frequents locations that might otherwise be considered polluting or conducive to possession and madness. This much is made clear in Padmavajra's allusion to the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* at the conclusion of his instructions on the generation stage yoga, where he mentions a familiar set of locations for the performance of these ascetic practices:

In seclusion, in a secret place, in a place with one hundred good qualities,  
On a mountain, in an empty house, in an old park, in a cave, in an abode  
Of the ancestral clan, in an underground chamber or somewhere pleasant, |  
One who demonstrates that he has become divine by remaining purified in these  
Places and locations, devoid of worldly attachment, should meditate on the jewel  
Of ultimate reality that bears the *vajra*, that brings bliss to the region. || 4.56 ||<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 33.

ekānte guhyadeśe guṇaśatanilaye parvate śunyagehe  
jīrṇodyāne guhāyāṃ piṭṛkulanilaye bhūgrhe vā'tha rāmye |  
ebhiḥ sthānapradeśaiḥ kṛtavimaladhṛtirdivyaśaṃjātalakṣyo  
dhyāyet saṅgavyapeto viśayasukhakaraṃ vajriṇaṃ tattvaratnaṃ || 4.56 ||

The *sādhaka's* ability to survive while living in the locations prescribed for the *caryā* and *vrata* functions as a kind of proof of having attained a total transformation of his actual physical body<sup>218</sup> through complete union with the deity-*maṇḍala*. In this way, the Buddhist *sādhaka's* ascetic practices demonstrate the double meaning behind the term *siddhi* in the titles of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, where it signifies the ability to demonstrate an embodied realization of ultimate reality as the proof (*siddhi*) of attainment (*siddhi*).

There are a number of structural similarities between Buddhist siddha asceticism and its Pāśupata antecedents in the general movement from the protective confines of the *maṇḍala* to the perilous and unprotected space of the charnel ground. The Pāśupata's first phase of practice takes place in a temple grounds or a simple 'dwelling place' where he remains within close proximity to the physical presence of the deity.<sup>219</sup> During this phase, it is argued here that confining the Pāśupata initiate to such a space grants him a certain degree of protection while he engages in a number of activities, such as singing and dancing loudly in a public space, that might otherwise render him vulnerable to attack by spirit beings. This early stage of the Pāśupata practice finds its correlate in the Buddhist consecration rite and generation stage yoga, both of which employ both a physically and mentally constructed *maṇḍala* rituals that seal off the consecrated space of the ritual from the world around it. In

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The term *śmasānam* or cremation ground is conspicuously absent from this list, but it may be substituted here by the term *pitṛkulanilaya* or 'an abode of the ancestral clan.'

<sup>218</sup> Or, more accurately, his body, speech, and mind. This transformation is alluded to in Vajrayāna textual traditions as the threefold *vajra* (*trivajra*) of body, speech, and mind. The term only appears among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in Padmavajara's *Guhyasiddhi*.

<sup>219</sup> This is explicitly stated in *PS* 1.9:

mahādevasya dakṣiṇāmūrteḥ || 1.9 ||

On the right side of the image of the sublime god. || 1.9 ||

See Haripada Chakroborti trans., *Pāśupata Sūtram with Pañcārtha-bhāṣya of Kauṇḍinya* (Calcutta: Academic Publishers, 1970), 61–62. Chakroborti's translation follows Kauṇḍinya's commentary, which appears to take some liberties by interpreting the compound *dakṣiṇāmūrteḥ* as 'on the right side of the image of the deity.'



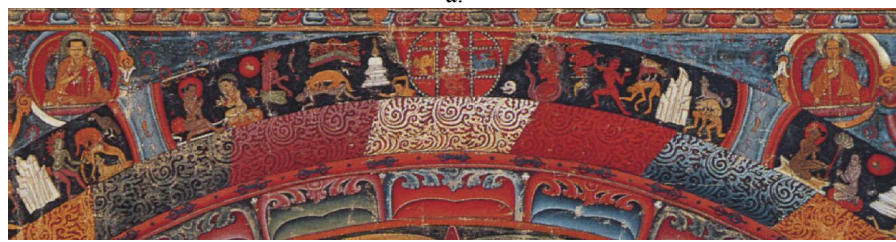
such rituals, the *maṇḍala* is protected from the attack of dangerous supernatural forces from within and without by stationing troops of various spirit beings at each of the *maṇḍala*'s gates and by the ritual construction of a barrier protecting the *maṇḍala* from the external world. This function of the *maṇḍala* survives in contemporary Tibetan Vajrayāna *torma* (*gtor ma*) rites, which include rituals in which any potentially harmful or obstructing spirit beings are fed by being invoked into one or more dough effigies and then removed from the space in which the *maṇḍala* will be generated. These effigies and the beings they contain are then literally and physically cast out of the *maṇḍala* by discarding the effigy beyond the outer wall of the monastery or temple. In this case the actual walls of the monastery or temple provide a perimeter for the ritual space of the *maṇḍala*. A similar notion of an impermeable perimeter that holds the spirit world at bay appears in Buddhist *maṇḍala* iconography as the *vajra cage* (*vajrapañjara*, *rdo rje ra ba*), indicated by a ring of *vajras*, wreathed in fire, surrounding the outer edge of the *maṇḍala* (figures 2 and 3) It is impossible to fully appreciate the iconographic program of Vajrayāna Buddhist *maṇḍalas* and the ritual cultures they represent without acknowledging the broad-ranging impact that popular religion and its Sanskritized formulation in the *bhūṭavidyā* literature on these traditions. It is also impossible to provide a meaningful historical understanding of this iconography and the ritual culture it represents without incorporating the demonological paradigm proposed in this study.

The function of many of the rites conducted within the *maṇḍala* depends upon the belief that the body is an open, permeable conduit. Although Buddhist *maṇḍala* visualization practices are incredibly diverse, they all rely at some point upon the body's ability to act as an open conduit, whether the goal is receiving blessings, taking on specific qualities from the deities involved in the visualization practice, or installing entire assemblies of deities in the

body itself. Thus within the *maṇḍala*, the body's status as a permeable, open conduit, once a source of so much apprehension and concern over guarding the body from any potentially harmful force, is re-purposed to the individual's advantage. This is the case in the externalized visualization practices of the *kriyā*- and *caryātantras* as well as the self-visualization practices associated with the *yoga*- and *yoginītantras*, where the ability to install the deities in the body through ritual techniques such as *mudrā* and *akṣaranyāsa* play a critical role in the *sādhaka*'s fully embodied union with the deity-*maṇḍala*. In the



a.



b.

Figure 2:

a. Jñānaḍākinī maṇḍala, Tibet, 14<sup>th</sup> century CE.

b. Close-up showing *siddhas* in the northwest (right, possibly depicting Padmavajra) and western (center, possibly depicting Luipa) charnel grounds, located here outside of *vajrapaṅjara*. The eight great *siddhas* are depicted in this *maṇḍala* in the following order beginning with in the east (bottom) and moving clockwise: Indrabhūti, Ḍombīheruka, Nāgārjuna, Ghaṅṭapāda, Luipa(?), Padmavajra(?), Kukkuripa, Saraha.<sup>220</sup>

<sup>220</sup> "Mandala of Jnana Dakini (Buddhist Deity) - (Three Faces, Six Arms)," *Himalayan Art Resources*, item no. 101367 (Actual painting housed in the *Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, NY) <http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm?icode=101367>. Not all *maṇḍalas* depict the eight charnel



Figure 3. Cakrasamvara maṇḍala (top half) with Siddhas outside of vajrapañjara, Nepal, 12<sup>th</sup> century<sup>221</sup>

systems of the *yoga-* and *yoginītantras* in which the rites performed within the *maṇḍala* are overtly transgressive, the practitioner attains union with the deity-*maṇḍala* by performing a number of actions that might ordinarily result in possession if they were performed outside of a consecrated space that has been cleared of harmful spirit beings and sealed off. This is the case with the practices such as the 'complete perfect awakening as a five-fold mental representation' (*pañcākārābhisambodhi*) of the generation stage in works such as

Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, consecration rituals, and practices in which sexual yogas and the

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grounds and the eight *siddhas* outside of the *vajrapañjara*. Many either do not feature a *vajrapañjara*, or depict the eight charnel grounds and their resident *siddhas* at the *maṇḍala*'s lotus-edge, but still framed within the *vajrapañjara*. Shinichi Tsuda's translation of selections from the *Saṃvarodayatantra* indicates that this work's chapter on constructing the *maṇḍala* may split the difference, instructing the reader to draw the *maṇḍala* "which is adorned with eight graveyards in the middle of the net of diamonds." See Shinichi Tsuda trans. *The Saṃvarodaya-Tantra: Selected Chapters* (Tokyo: The Hokuseido Press, 1974), 292. Six of the eight *siddhas* in this *maṇḍala* (Ghaṇṭapā, Nāgārjuna, Ḍombī Heruka, Indrabhūti, Saraha, and Kukkuripa) are easily identifiable. Of the remaining two, the *siddha* seated in the northwestern charnel ground is identified as Padmavajra based on his iconography—he is depicted in a specific cross-legged position with skull-cup raised to his mouth, matching the iconographic program of later depictions of Padmavajra in Situ Panchen's (1700–1774) masterworks on the eight great *siddhas*. The presence of the other six *siddhas* indicates that this *maṇḍala*'s iconographic program incorporates one of the standard lists of 'the eight great siddhas.' Most standard lists of which include Padmavajra, particularly if they do not include Virūpa. If the *maṇḍala* does follow this standard list of eight *mahāsiddhas*, the last unidentified *siddha* in the western charnel ground here must be Luipa.

<sup>221</sup> "Mandala of Chakrasamvara (Buddhist Deity)," *Himalayan Art Resources*, item no. 86435 (Physical painting housed in the *Collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York, NY) <http://www.himalayanart.org/image.cfm?icode=86435>.

repeated consecration rite are employed to bring about a complete union with the deity-*maṇḍala*. Notably, the *siddhas* that appear in figures 2 and 3 above as well as the Pāla bronze *maṇḍalas* depicted in figure 4 below are depicted outside of the protective structure of the *maṇḍala*, and in some (but not all) cases, outside of the protective *vajrapaṅjara* that surrounds the *maṇḍala* structure itself. The depiction of these *siddhas* beyond the protected space of the *maṇḍala* reflects the ascetic landscapes of the *caryā* and *vrata* practices that came to define the iconography of the Buddhist *siddhas* and, in turn, of the *yoginītantras*.



a. *Siddhas* depicted on the outer petals of Indian bronze *maṇḍala* sculptures. Image a.: Bronze Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala* with *siddha* 12<sup>th</sup> century Northern India<sup>222</sup>  
 Image b.: Bronze Hevajra *maṇḍala* depicting Kukuripa (lower right) 12<sup>th</sup> century Northern India<sup>223</sup>  
 Image c.: Bronze Hevajra *maṇḍala* depicting Kukuripa 13<sup>th</sup> century (location not specified)<sup>224</sup>

<sup>222</sup> "Chakrasaṃvara (Buddhist Deity)," *Himalayan Art Resources* item no. 57150. Private Collection. <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/57150>.

<sup>223</sup> "Hevajra (Buddhist Deity)," *Himalayan Art Resources* item no. 65207. Rubin Museum of Art. <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/65207>.

<sup>224</sup> "Hevajra (Buddhist Deity)-detail 16," *Himalayan Art Resources* item no. 66761. Private Collection. <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/66761/images/66761p#-1361,-2096,2786,0>.

## II. The Demonological Paradigm and 'Anti-ritual' Siddha Rhetoric

The performance of the *caryā* and *vrata* ascetic practices in the completion stage yogas also prohibit the *sādhaka* from resorting to a range of ritual methods for protecting the body. This dynamic is prominently featured in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, which contain a number of short lists of proscribed ritual methods that would normally be used to protect the *sādhaka* from harmful spirit beings. Two sources are given in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* that provide some hint of the potential textual genealogy for the proscription of such practices. The first appears in *Jñānasiddhi* chapter fifteen, which quotes *Guhyasamājatantra* 16.16:

[One with] the ultimate reality of mantra  
Should not lay the *vajra* thread |  
And apply colored sand.  
If one does it will be difficult to attain awakening. ||<sup>225</sup>

Indrabhūti supplies a short commentary on this verse that explains precisely why it is that constructing a physical *maṇḍala*, as one might in the *kriyā*- and *caryātantra* textual traditions, is forbidden after one has reached a certain level of realization:

[This means that] one should not apply colored sand, etc., using the thread-line of a *maṇḍala*. [The line,] “By [one with] the ultimate reality of mantra” means that, since it is the case that [mantra] is the protection of the mind, “knowledge of mantra is taught to be perfect knowledge.” If one acts out of delusion, “awakening becomes difficult to do.” That means that “buddhahood and the state of Vajradhara are difficult to attain by performing the actions of a being who is a beginner using a *maṇḍala*.” Therefore, drawing *maṇḍalas*, entering them, and consecration, etc., is forbidden for a great yogin who is endowed with perfect gnosis.<sup>226</sup>

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<sup>225</sup> Indrabhūti, “Jñānasiddhi,” 137.

pātanaṃ vajrasūtrasya rajaso'pi nipātanaṃ |  
na kāryaṃ mantratattvena kāraye bodhidurlabhāḥ(bhaḥ) ||

The verse as it appears in Matsunaga's edition of *The Guhyasamāja Tantra* reads *mantrasattvena* instead of *mantratattvena*:

pāraṇaṃ vajrasūtrasya rajasyāpi nipātanaṃ |  
na kāryaṃ mantrasattvena kārayaṃ bodhidurlabhāḥ | 16

Matsunaga ed., *The Guhyasamāja Tantra*, 87.

<sup>226</sup> Indrabhūti, “Jñānasiddhi,” 137.

maṇḍalasūtreṇa rajaḥpātanaḍikaṃ ca na kuryāt | mantratattveneti | manasastrāṇa bhūtatvāt |  
mantrajñānaṃ samyagjñānaṃ nidarśitamityarthaḥ | yadyevaṃ mohāt karoti cet bodhirduṣkaro bhavatīti

*Jñānasiddhi* makes a direct connection here between the popular Buddhist etymology of the term mantra as 'protection of the mind' (*manasastrāna*)<sup>227</sup> and the proscription against constructing a physically consecrated *maṇḍala* in the *Guhyasamājatantra*. The 'great yogin who is endowed with perfect gnosis' provides the proper subject for this proscription which, as Wedemeyer has so helpfully noted, indicates that the proscriptions associated with the performance of the *caryā* or *vrata* are not generalized statements on the soteriological power of ritual but instructions for a relatively rarified type of practitioner at an advanced level of ascetic practice.<sup>228</sup>

After this commentary on *GST* 16.16, Indrabhūti provides twenty-two verses that describe the *Guhyasamājatantra's* configuration of the 'complete perfect awakening as a five-fold mental representation' *maṇḍala* practice. Indrabhūti thus follows his own commentary on a verse from the *Guhyasamājatantra* that specifically forbids the generation of a *maṇḍala* with a detailed set of instructions on generating a *maṇḍala*. However, the *maṇḍala* generation practice that Indrabhūti outlines is a self-visualization practice that is intentionally

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| maṇḍalenā(ṇḍalā)dikarmikasattvakṛpākaraṇā(kṛtyakaraṇena) buddhatvaṃ vajradharatvaṃ ca durlabhaṃ bhavatītyarthaḥ | tasmāt samyagjñānābhīyuktēna mahāyoginā maṇḍalalīkhanapraveśābhīṣekādikaṃ niṣiddhamiti |

<sup>227</sup> The exact same phrasing used in *Jñānasiddhi* is found, for example, in the first chapter of Nāropa's *Sekoddeśaṭīkā*. See Nāropapāda, *The Sekoddeśaṭīkā by Nāropā* (Paramārthasaṃgraha), edited by Francesco Sferra and Stefania Maerzagora (Roma: Istituto Italiano Per L'Africa E L'oriente, 2006), 70. manasastrāṇabhūtātvaḥca mantro vāgvajraṃ | sa eva sambhogakāyaḥ prajñopāyātmako mantrayoga ityucyate |

And due to the fact that it is the protection of the mind, mantra is the *vajra* of speech. | Just that is called, "the communal enjoyment body, which has insight and skillful means, the yoga of mantra." |

<sup>228</sup> Wedemeyer, "Locating Tantric Antinomianism," 368; Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 134–135.

A second interpretation behind the proscription forbidding the construction of a physical *maṇḍala* appears later in Indrabhūti's liturgy for the *ācārya's* 'command' (*anujñā*) in *Jñānasiddhi* chapter 17 on "The *Vajra*-gnosis Consecration Ritual" (*vajrajñānābhīṣekavidhi*). Here the guru orders the newly initiated disciple not to receive any further consecration because he has been endowed with the highest realization of gnosis. This verse may imply that a disciple who has successfully received the full regimen of consecrations is forbidden participation in rites that involve the construction of a physical *maṇḍala* in order to prevent them from seeking out any further consecrations elsewhere—like from a rival Buddhist or non-Buddhist initiatory cult. The implications that this verse may hold for understanding sectarian identity and conflict among Buddhist and non-Buddhist initiatory traditions in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* is discussed in chapter seven.

juxtaposed here with practices associated with the *yogatantras* (as well as the *kriyā* and *caryātantras*) that rely on the construction of a physical *maṇḍala*. This juxtaposition highlights which *maṇḍala* practices are acceptable, and which, at a certain point in the *sādhaka*'s career, must be given up.

The scriptural basis for this kind of a rejection of a physical, external support is further reinforced in the same chapter in the following verse that Indrabhūti provides from the first chapter of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālaśaṃvara*:

Yoga does not arise with respect  
To images such as statues, etc. |  
Yogis become deities  
Due to the great yoga of *bodhicitta*. ||<sup>229</sup>

These references orient Indrabhūti's reader to the scriptural basis for the rejection of such physical supports as *maṇḍalas* and statues, but they represent only a fraction of the total list of ritual technologies and parameters that are proscribed throughout *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.

The following is a far more extensive list of these proscriptions:

1. *mudrā*
2. *maṇḍala*
3. mantra
4. *bandha*
5. fasting (*upavāsa*)
6. making a *caitya* (*caityakarman*)
7. *homa*
8. recitation of texts (*pustakāghoṣaṇa*)
9. praising the tathāgatas
10. statues
11. place (*deśa*)

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<sup>229</sup> Indrabhūti, "*Jñānasiddhi*," 144.

na yogaḥ pratibimbeṣu niṣiktādiṣu jāyate |  
bodhicittamahāyogād yoginas tena devatāḥ ||

This is a quote of *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra* 1.22. See *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālaśaṃvara* (preliminary edition from *IEI Ms. SL. 48*) edited and prepared by Péter-Dániel Szánto et. al. (Unpublished version updated May 3, 2015), 8. The verse as it appears in Szánto's critical edition contains a variant for the rendering of *bodhicittamahāyogāt* in *Jñānasiddhi* that reads:

na yogaḥ pratibimbeṣu niṣiktādiṣu jāyate |  
bodhicittamahodyogād yoginas tena devatāḥ || 1.22 ||

12. time (*kāla*)
13. lunar day (*tithi*)
14. day of the week (*vāra*)
15. lunar mansion (*nakṣatra*)
16. bathing and purification (*snāna* and *śauca* )
17. severe practices (*kaṣṭakalpana*)
18. venerating those on the path of the three vehicles (*triyānapathavartina*)
19. venerating the complete awakening of the buddhas
20. verbal debate (*vāgvāda*)
21. edible/inedible
22. drinkable/not drinkable
23. approachable/unapproachable (for intercourse)

In her contribution to this list of proscribed ritual practices, Lakṣmīnkarā notes that one "should not do *kriyā* [practices]" (*na ca kriyām*),<sup>230</sup> echoing Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, which also contains several passages that refer to the *sādhaka* who practices the *caryā* or *vrata* moving beyond the practices of the *kriyātantras* as well as the generation stage yogas.<sup>231</sup> This provides some context for the proscription of 'place, time, lunar day, and day of the week' in the opening verses of *Advayasiddhi*, all of which are common stipulations for the successful performance of *maṇḍala* rites in the Buddhist *kriyātantras* and elsewhere. Despite these direct references to the lower tantric systems, it is not enough to argue that the practices proscribed for an advanced Vajrayāna ascetic performing the *caryā* or *vrata* in *The Seven Siddhi* texts amount only to a critique or rejection of the *kriyā*- and *caryātantras*. There

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<sup>230</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 162. Here Lakṣmīnkarā's instructions on the *caryā* are undoubtedly in agreement with Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, but the verse itself is not a direct quote from Padmavajra's work.

na kaṣṭakalpanāṃ kuryānnopavāsaṃ na ca kriyām |  
snānaṃ śaucaṃ na caivātra grāma(mya)dharmavivarjanam || 14 ||

One should not engage in severe practice,  
One should not fast and should not do *kriyā* practices |  
Such as bathing and purification, and he should  
Avoid the dharma of common folk. || 14 ||

<sup>231</sup> See for instance *Guhyasiddhi* 2.2 and 4.59, which explicitly mention giving up practices associated with the lower *tantras*. See Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 12 and 33. *Guhyasiddhi* 1.6 discusses abandoning generation stage practices prior to taking up the completion stage yogas that are directly related to the performance of *caryā* and *vrata*, see Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 6.



is more at work in the proscription of these standard techniques and parameters for the performance of exoteric and esoteric rituals than a mere protest against these textual traditions. The broader demonological context in which the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* practices flourished is critical to understanding these proscriptions and their full implications for the ritual and ascetic culture of the Vajrayāna *siddhas*.

Christian Wedemeyer provides a similar list of proscriptions in his work on the connotative semiology of non-duality in Buddhist tantric literature. Although Wedemeyer's list draws from Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* and a few other treatises, it is primarily derived from scriptural sources, i.e. the *tantras* themselves. *The Seven Siddhi Texts* offer a wider range of proscriptions than these scriptural sources. This distinction is a function of literary genre. As independent treatises on the topic of '*siddhi*' as opposed to formal scriptures or *tantras*, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are more concerned with the issue of 'proof' than in the kind of revelatory hermeneutic of authority that we often find in scriptural sources. The prescription and proscription of various behaviors and elements of ritual performance in the presentation on *caryā* and *vrata* in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* is integral to the *sādhaka's* establishment of the proof (*siddhi*) of their own attainment (*siddhi*).

The reader may notice that the most important proscription for Wedemeyer's argument, the proscription against "value judgments/conceptuality,"<sup>232</sup> does not appear in my own list above. Proscriptions against acquiescing to conceptual thought appear in a wide range of Buddhist literature and are by no means a unique feature of the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* practices. As a result, this proscription may not offer the most effective means for distinguishing the emergence of the advanced tantric asceticism of the *caryā* and *vrata* from its predecessors among the lower *tantras* and the exoteric Buddhist traditions. Just as it is not

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<sup>232</sup> Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 144.

enough to characterize the transgressive ritualism of the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* as a protestant rejection of the ritual culture of the *kriyā*- and *caryātantras*, it is also not enough to argue that these works proscribe various ritual techniques and guidelines simply because they are 'conceptual' and thus useless *in a general sense*. Moreover, when we allow for the kind of polysemy in our treatment of the semantic range of terms derived from the verbal root *klrp* already suggested in chapter two, it becomes clear that the above list of ritual techniques and guidelines are not forbidden because they are based in conceptual thought (and thus ultimately useless), but because they are perceived as entirely useful and effective methods for guarding against spirit beings, both in the context of rituals that are performed in a consecrated space and in the context of the individual person's ritually purified body. The proscription of these practices acknowledges that they have valid practical applications, and this acknowledgement is a discursive product of a tradition that is engaged in the basic existential problem of the demonological paradigm. Their proscription thus signals a shift in Buddhist approaches to that existential problem, not a rejection of the efficacy of these rituals *per se*.

When one examines the practical application of the physically and conceptually 'constructed' elements of esoteric Buddhist ritual, a pattern emerges indicating that these proscriptions are related to the demonological paradigm's central existential problem of the individual person's susceptibility to negative influence from spirit beings. Again, the goal in these texts and within the broader Vajrayāna tradition is not to attain a purely cerebral realization of non-duality but a fully embodied realization in this life and in this body. As demonstrated in chapter three, the recognition that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and the broader tantric literature of the *yoga*- and *yoginītantras* are concerned with attaining a fully embodied

realization that serves a dual apotropaic-soteriological purpose suggests that it would be wise to take seriously the particular view of the body and its relationship to the world with which these works are in conversation.

From this perspective, the 'Zeitgeist' that Wedemeyer points to in order to explain the emergence of the cremation ground ascetic cultures of the Śaiva and Buddhist *tantras* may in fact be less a "religious [Z]eitgeist of antinomian practice"<sup>233</sup> and instead part of a broader trend toward an increasingly sophisticated demonological discourse in tantric circles. An increasingly complex taxonomy of *geisten*, accompanied by an increasingly precise and prolific discourse on demonology, informed the transgressive asceticism of the Śaiva and Buddhist initiatory religious movements. The evidence for this development is located in the expanding science of symptomology, diagnosis, and pathology associated *bhūtavidyā* in the Sanskrit literature of the medical sciences or Āyurveda. The pantheon of *bhūtas* (spirits) or *grahas* (seizers) responsible for the onset of 'exogenous' (*āgantuka*) forms of disease and madness in this literature increased substantially from the early centuries CE, when the *Cāraka-* and *Suśrutasamhitās* were likely composed, to around the seventh century with the composition of the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasamhitā*.<sup>234</sup> In place of a more unidirectional 'sanskritization' model, Smith argues that the expansion of *bhūtavidyā* in this period is indicative of "an epistemology that flows from folk to classical and back again, producing new and unique Indian forms of knowing."<sup>235</sup> The important shift that this expansion of *bhūtavidyā* signals in the middle of the first millennium of the common era and its potential ramifications for the development of tantric asceticism must be acknowledged given the fact

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<sup>233</sup> Wedemeyer, "Locating Tantric Antinomianism," 354; and Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 137–138.

<sup>234</sup> Marcy Alison Braverman, "Possession, Immersion, and the Intoxicated Madness of Devotion in Hindu Traditions" (PhD diss., University of California, Santa Barbara, 2003), 62, 3093529. Also see Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 482.

<sup>235</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 339.

that the prescribed locations for the performance of the ascetic practices of the *caryā* and *vrata* coincide, as Sanderson has observed in the context of Śaiva *kāpālika* asceticism, to precisely those places "where the uninitiated were in greatest danger of possession."<sup>236</sup>

To be fair, the idea that these ritual methods would be rejected because they are 'dualistic' does appear in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, for instance, indicates that the entire list of proscribed rituals techniques and guidelines on the successful performance of any ritual might be rightfully interpreted as a critique of such practices as based on 'external supports' and thus 'dualistic.'<sup>237</sup> However, a failure to fully appreciate the implications of externality in the performance of the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* runs the risk of neglecting the demonological worldview underlying the construction of rules governing the proper performance of ritual. Many of the ritual protocols employed in tantric literature, after all, trace back to the *Atharvaveda*, the compendium of rituals designed (among other things) to counteract and prevent any negative influences from disrupting the performance of the Vedic sacrifice. In this context such practices were 'external' in the sense they were external to the Vedic sacrifice, and their primary function was to ward off or destroy any potentially harmful beings who might prevent the successful completion of the primary sacrifice.<sup>238</sup> The meaning of Padmavajra's proscription of 'external' rites is certainly governed in some sense by the notion that the lower tantric traditions rely upon a number of methods that are external to the body and thus reinforce a kind of subject-object dualism. But this is not the only implication behind abandoning things that are 'external.' The kind of 'externality' that might be attributed to the *Atharvaveda* ritual systems can be invoked here as well to

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<sup>236</sup> Sanderson, "Purity and Power," 201.

<sup>237</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 43. Verse 6.51 of *Guhyasiddhi*, which contains the proscription against 'all external [practice]' is not reproduced here because it is discussed in greater detail below.

<sup>238</sup> Braverman, "Possession, Immersion," 44.

describe the abandonment of all rites that are designed to prevent interference from spirit beings. In the context of the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata*, the 'internal' component or the consecrated site that the *sādhaka* retains as the locus of ritual is the body itself. Just as the Atharvavedic rituals are an external means for protecting the internal, consecrated space of the Vedic sacrifice, the performance of 'external' offerings and rituals in esoteric Buddhist traditions are also understood as constructive methods for preventing the world of spirit beings from penetrating a ritually consecrated space. The failure to engage in such externalized ritual methods leaves one open to interference and possession by a vast pantheon of spirit beings. This means that the advanced Vajrayāna ascetic's intentional rejection of these methods is not only based on a rejection of ontological dualism, it also constitutes a performance (*caryā*) of exactly the kind of behaviors that might render the *sādhaka* susceptible to disease and possession.

*Mudrā*, one of the most frequently proscribed ritual techniques in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, has a far more extensive vocabulary in Buddhist than in Śaiva textual traditions.<sup>239</sup> On the other hand, as Goodall and Isaacson have observed, early Buddhist *tantras* such as the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* do not preserve a strong mantra-based soteriology that employs the kind of *nyāsa* practices discussed in the analysis of the *nyāsa* practice in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* and its potential scriptural sources among *Guhyasamājatantra* literature in chapter three of this study. Comparing the few times that the ritual method of *nyāsa* appears

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<sup>239</sup> Goodall and Isaacson, "On the Shared 'Ritual Syntax'," 55–56. Here Goodall and Isaacson's observations indicate that *mudrā* may in fact be a particularly Buddhist contribution to tantric culture, noting that the term *mudrā* only makes it into the Sanskrit literature on dramaturgy well after it has already become a central aspect of Buddhist ritual. Goodall and Isaacson also note that only eight *mudrās* are mentioned in the Śaiva *Niśvāsātattvasamhitā* in comparison to this work's roughly contemporary and intertextual analog the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* in which there are said to be one hundred and eight *mudrās*. Only one of the *mudrās* in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa*, the rather generic *namaskāramudrā*, corresponds to any *mudrā* that appears in the *Niśvāsa*. The proliferation of *mudrā* in the *Mañjuśrīyamūlakalpa* is matched by the nearly one hundred various *mudrā* listed in chapter eleven of the *Mahāvairocanābhisambodhi* (*MVT*) and eight 'secret' *mudrās* in *MVT* chapter fifteen.

in the *Niśvāsātattvasamhitā* to the great importance attributed to this practice in later Śaiva tantric literature, Goodall and Isaacson also suggest that the practice was at first simply considered a protective rite and later came to be understood as a means for transforming oneself into the deity.<sup>240</sup> This provides evidence to support Acharya's suggestion that the practice of *nyāsa* was a particularly Vaiṣṇava contribution to ritual techniques of the Śaiva and Buddhist initiatory religions.<sup>241</sup> The entire spectrum of practical applications of *nyāsa*, from being a practice aimed at protecting the body to one aimed at transforming the body into the deity, also bears a strong functional similarity to the Buddhist ritual applications of *mudrā*. In its more soteriological applications, *mudrā* functions as a ritual technique by which one might bring about *yoga* or union with a single deity or deity-*maṇḍala*. In addition to these more lofty applications, *mudrā* played an integral part in the performance of a wide range of rites aimed at manipulating minor spirit deities or their overlords to perform one's bidding.<sup>242</sup> The proscriptions against *mudrā* in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* should be read in light of both its practical applications as a ritual method for transforming oneself into a deity and as a method for bringing any number of spirit deities under one's control.

The proscription of *bandha* appears in conjunction with *mudrā* in Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhya-caryā*, where he notes that the 'seals and bonds are banned'

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<sup>240</sup> Goodall and Isaacson, "On the Shared 'Ritual Syntax'," 45–49.

<sup>241</sup> Acharya, *Early Tantric Vaiṣṇavism*, xviii–ix.

<sup>242</sup> David Gray has offered comment on this use of the term *mudrā* as potential evidence for metonymy at work behind the term's later identification with the Vajrayāna consort described in *yoga-* and *yoginītantra* materials. By Gray's argument, the fact that *mudrā* might be employed to attract a non-human consort such a *yakṣinī* may have led to the eventual labeling of the consort with the term *mudrā*. See David Gray, "Imprints of the 'Great Seal': On the Expanding Semantic Range of the Term *Mudrā* in Eighth Through Eleventh Century Indian Buddhist Literature," *JIAS* 34, no. 1–2 (2012): 422. Chapter fifty-two of the *Mañjuśrīmūlakalpa* on the rites relating to the Kroddharāja Yamāntaka preserves a particularly clear example of the kind of weaponized and protective thaumaturgic deployment of *mudrā* that is at least partially responsible for the fact that *mudrā* is so consistently proscribed in the literature on the advanced *caryā* and *vratā* practices. The passage references the 'great spear *mudrā*' (*mahāśūlamudrā*) that is chanted in conjunction with the recitation of the wrathful lord's mantra to "destroy all mantra [beings], slay all enemies, and ruin all magical diagrams" (*sarvamantrān vināśayati sarvaśatrūṇ ghātayati sarvayantrān pātayati*). See *Āryamanjuśrīmūlakalpa*, 561.

(*mudrābandhastu bandhanam*)<sup>243</sup> in this practice. This is most likely not a reference to the yogic technique of *mudrābandha* that appears in the much later description of the yogic practice of *mahāmudrā* outlined in the *Haṭhayogapradīpika* as a series of "internal blocks (*bandhas*) and seals (*mudrās*) that fan the fire of yoga (*yogāgni*)."<sup>244</sup> Instead, the *mudrābandha* practice Padmavajra refers to here denotes two protective techniques, one that 'seals' (*mudrā*) the body itself and another that 'binds' (*bandha*) the immediate area surrounding the *sādhaka* and prevents any proximal interference. This interpretation of the term *bandha* appears in the common practice of binding the directions (*digbandha*) that so closely resembles the employment of the Buddhist *vajrapañjara* in the ritual construction and visualization of *maṇḍalas*. An early example of this practice appears in one of the earliest works of the Śaiva *mantramārga*, the *Brahmayāmala*, in its forty-fifth chapter. The following passage addresses the daily rites of the Śaiva *sādhaka* that involve the installation of a protective perimeter:

40ab He who practices the daily consecration (*nityābhiṣeka*) will not be affected by [others' hostile] mantras and by hostile forces (*vighna*). He should install the Weapons at the points of the compass and [perform] the Closing of the Directions (*digbandha*) in the right sequence. He should perform the Release of the Weapons (*astramokṣa*). He should go to the sanctuary (*devāgāra*). 41cd–42 He should destroy the hostile forces (*vighna*) in front of himself by visualizing his weapons as blazing and very powerful (*mahāvīrya*) and enveloped in the Kavaca[-mantra]. The Sādhaka should open up the Pura [i.e. the Maṇḍala] while reciting the syllable HUM.<sup>245</sup>

As Sanderson's work has so thoroughly shown, the demonstrated intertextuality between the Śaiva *Brahmayāmala* and the Buddhist *Cakrasaṃvaratantra* leaves little room to deny that Buddhist tantric initiates were not at least somewhat conversant in the Śaiva ritual world of

<sup>243</sup> Padmavajra, *Guhyasiddhi*, 43.

<sup>244</sup> David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996), 221.

<sup>245</sup> Csaba Kiss, *The Brahmayāmala*, 237.

the *mantramārga*.<sup>246</sup> Padmavajra in particular, as discussed in chapter seven of this study, was certainly conversant with a number of Śaiva ascetic practices. It is thus reasonable that his proscription of *bandha* in *Guhyasiddhi* refers to a kind of *digbandha* practice.

When they are analyzed through the lens of the demonological paradigm, it becomes clear that almost all<sup>247</sup> of the ritual methods proscribed in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* function at least in part to protect an individual from assault from demonic spirits. The rejection of these practices is thus a rejection of any form of recourse to ritual methods that offer this kind of protection. The apotropaic effect of performing some of the more exoteric Buddhist ritual acts proscribed in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* such as constructing a *caitya*, reciting texts, and praising the tathāgatas should be clear to any reader familiar with the Mahāyāna literature on these practices. Proscriptions regarding place (*deśa*), time (*kāla*), lunar day (*tithi*), day of the week (*vāra*), and lunar mansions (*nakṣatra*) can also be understood as protective strategies that derive from guidelines outlined in the *kriyā*- and *caryātantras* (and from South Asian ritual theory more broadly) governing the spatial and temporal parameters for the successful performance of a particular ritual.

Many of the proscribed practices referenced throughout *The Seven Siddhi Texts* appear to be in direct conversation with the demonological culture reflected in Āyurvedic

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<sup>246</sup> See Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," 87–102; and Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 156–239.

<sup>247</sup> There are only two proscriptions on the list that might not fit this model. The first, *kaṣṭakalpana* or 'severe practices' is simply too vague to determine whether or not it fits the demonological model for the proscription of ritual methods during in the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata*. Such practices are often associated with the generation of *tapas*, or a kind of ascetic heat/power, that can perform a protective function, but without a more specific indication of what is meant by this term this association remains speculative. The second proscription that does not seem to fit the demonological model I'm proposing here is the proscription against verbal debate (*vāgvāda*). Given that the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* practices, as in Padmavajra's *guhyacaryā*, require that one conceal one's identity as an initiate, verbal debate might be proscribed here because it would betray the initiate's particular sectarian identity. This would not only be a violation of the very spirit of the practice, it might also expose the *sādhaka*'s sectarian affiliation and leave him vulnerable to assault from the rival orders with whom he shares the same ascetic landscapes.



pathologies of demonic possession. This literature outlines the various behaviors that might result in a 'fault,' or more accurately a split or rupture (*chidra*), in the psycho-physical body through which spirit beings could gain power over an individual. The potential 'faults' in the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*, for instance, include things such as "being in a burial ground at night (6.4.6), or inadequate attention to oblations and sacred texts (6.4.8)."<sup>248</sup> This literature also tells us that some of the ritual techniques prohibited during the *caryā* and *vrata* can even counteract any disease that might be brought on by a moral transgression one has committed in a previous life. As Smith notes, practicing Āyurvedic physicians often cite the following verse when discussing the diagnosis and treatment of mental illness:

When it takes the form of disease, a moral transgression effected in another birth may be overcome through rituals of pacification [*śānta*], medicines [*auśadha*], gift giving [*dāna*], repetition of the name of god [*japa*], fire offerings [*homa*], temple offerings [*arcana*], etc.<sup>249</sup>

The final compound of the verse, *japahomādi*, provides an explicit example of the apotropaic function of these practices. At the same time, the use of the suffix *ādi* indicates that the implied list extends beyond recitation (*japa*) and fire offerings (*homa*) to a number of ritual techniques.

The three major classical Āyurvedic treatises also provide evidence that any failure to properly observe the various restrictions that govern the proper performance of rituals such as the day of the lunar month, the time of day, and the place where the rite is performed can leave one vulnerable to possession. Like the spirit beings they are designed to counteract, the improper performance of a rite can function as an exogenous (*āgantuka*) cause of mental illness. Time (*kāla*), more broadly speaking, is also an important factor in the body's

<sup>248</sup> Braverman, "Possession, Immersion," 64.

<sup>249</sup> Smith's translation. See Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 471.

janmāntarkṛtam pāpam vyādhirupeṇa jāyate |  
tacchāntair auśadhaiḥ dānaiḥ japahomārānādibhiḥ ||

susceptibility to possession. In his compendium, Caraka presents a symptomology of madness (*unmāda*) due to exogenous interference in tandem with a pathology outlining "the times and the kinds of people upon whom these forms [of madness] chance to fall."<sup>250</sup> The *Carakasamhitā* then follows this pathology, providing the physical, mental, and behavioral symptoms of possession by a particular class of spirit being alongside the particular time of the lunar month when one might be susceptible to their influence and interference. The following excerpt provides a good example of the correspondences between days in the lunar month (*tithi*) and the body's susceptibility to possession by a class of demonic spirit referred to as a divine seizer (*devagraha*):

[6.9.]21.1 Under those circumstances, the *devas* attack [*abhidharśayanti*] a person of pure behavior, skilled in religious austerities and scriptural study, generally on the first and thirteenth lunar days [*tithi*] of the waxing lunar fortnight [*śuklapakṣa*] after noticing a weakness [*chidram*].<sup>251</sup>

Caraka goes on to list the particular days of the lunar month during which one is most susceptible to attack from eight of the most common spirit beings from among a potentially innumerable pantheon. Even with Caraka's relatively truncated list of spirit beings the lunar calendar becomes quite crowded, with virtually every single day of the waxing fortnight being assigned to one or another seizer (*graha*). The *Suśrutasaṃhitā* provides a shorter list of correspondences between spirit beings, the days of the lunar month during which they are active, and in some cases even the specific time of day at which they strike:

[6.60]17–18. *Deva grahas* enter [*viśanti*] on the full moon day, *asuras* at dawn and dusk, *gandharvas* generally on the eighth lunar day, *yakṣas* on the first lunar day, *pitṛs* and serpents [*uraga*] on the fifth day of the waning lunar fortnight, *rākṣasas* at night, and *piśācas* on the fourteenth lunar day.<sup>252</sup>

The *Aṣṭāṅgahr̥daya*, the latest of the three classical Āyurvedic works, contains some of the

<sup>250</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 488.

<sup>251</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 489–490.

<sup>252</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 492.

most comprehensive and direct correspondences between the kind of proscriptions associated with the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* and the medical pathology of possession. Unlike the *Caraka-* and *Suśrutasamhitās*, the details on this topic in the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* indicates that its compilers may have had more direct knowledge of the kind of tantric cremation ground asceticism that repurposed the mechanics of possession as a theoretical framework for the practice of *yoga* by the middle of the first millennium CE. The following verses from chapter six, the *bhūtavidyā* chapter of the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya*, illustrate the increasing correspondence between this literature and the culture of the cremation ground that came to dominate certain currents of Śaiva and Buddhist *tantras* in the latter half of the first millennium. Here we get perhaps the most overt set of correspondences between socially transgressive behaviors, environmental conditions, and disorder with regard to the performance of rites as a pathological framework for demonic possession:

[6.4.]4. An extreme transgression of one's better judgment [*prajñāparādhaḥ*], wherein one's ordained life-style, religious vows, and proper behavior are transgressed, may be due to lust and so on. In such a case, one also offends honorable men.

[6.4.]5. Uncontrolled [*bhinnamaryādam*] in this way the transgressor becomes self-destructive. The gods and others also attack, and the *grahas* strike at his weak-points.

[6.4.]6–8. These weaknesses include undertaking a transgressive act, the ripening of an undesirable action, residing alone in an empty house, or spending the nights in burning grounds and other similar places; public nudity, maligning one's guru, indulgence in forbidden pleasures, worship of an impure deity, contact with a woman who has just given birth, and disorder with respect to tantric or Purāṇic fire offerings [*homa*], the use of mantras, sacrificial offerings not involving fire [*bali*], vedic sacrificial offerings [*ijya*], and positive actions or rites that counter negative ones [*parikarma*]; as well as composite neglect of prescribed conduct in the form of daily routine and so on.<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>253</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 493–94.

The *Aṣṭāṅgahr̥daya* could not be clearer on this point—improper performance or disorder with respect to ritual action is just as likely to expose a weakness in the psycho-physical complex through which an exogenous possessing being might attack. The incorrect performance of a ritual could also render one just as vulnerable as adopting any number of transgressive behaviors.

### III. Literalism, Connotative Semiotics, and the Transgressive *Samayas*<sup>254</sup>

Literal readings of the transgressive *samayas* are notoriously unpopular both in Buddhist exegetical traditions and among most modern scholars of Vajrayāna Buddhism. Both Buddhist exegetes and their etic counterparts (who often parrot the emic exegetical tradition) appear at times to be highly invested in explaining away any literal interpretation of the transgressive aspects of these traditions. While the Buddhist exegete's movement away from literal interpretations of Vajrayāna literature is usually motivated by an attempt to integrate the ritual and ascetic expressions of its radical non-dualism within a more conservative ethical framework, modern academic exegetes are more likely motivated by the desire to prevent these traditions from losing any relevance they might have inside a modern academic institutional system that is governed by conventional bourgeois notions of propriety. The final three members on the list of proscriptions generated from *The Seven Siddhi Texts* deal more directly with individual behavioral patterns that are recognized as potential signs and/or

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<sup>254</sup> My use of the phrase 'transgressive *samayas*' is taken from my translation of the compound *viruddhasamaya*, which appears in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* only in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* yet is taken here to be a phrase that is indicative of the broader prescription of transgressive behaviors for which tantric works such as the *Guhyasamāja* and the *yoginītantras* are so famous (or infamous). The fact that Padmavajra uses a Sanskrit phrase that translates as 'transgressive *samaya*' signals a self-conscious recognition on the part of our textual witnesses that the authors of these works acknowledge the transgressive nature of the practices associated with Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* ascetic practices. To speak of these practices as 'transgressive,' then, is by no means an etic interpretation of the tradition—it is something of which our authors are very much aware.

causes of possession. These proscriptions, which require that one reject conventional notions of edible and inedible, drinkable and not drinkable, and approachable or not approachable for sexual intercourse, are not limited to the performance of the *caryā* and the *vrata*. They are also included among the *samayās* that are bestowed upon initiates within the protective structure of the *maṇḍala* during the higher consecration rites. It is this context, where the transgressive *samayās* are performed within the ritually protected structure of the *maṇḍala*, the argument that these actions primarily function as signifiers for a disciple or an initiate's realization of non-dual gnosis comes to the foreground. After all, the idea that the transgressive *samayās* are a deliberate inversion or rejection of normative brahmanical social ethics as a means of demonstrating one's attainment of non-dual gnosis is, as Wedemeyer notes, attested in the literature itself.<sup>255</sup>

But to say that this is *all* that is going on provides an incomplete understanding of the more apotropaic aspect of these traditions and their specific focus on attaining a fully embodied realization. It is highly unlikely that literalist readings are entirely inaccurate in all cases. It is also highly unlikely that there has ever been a single interpretation of these practices among the textual communities that produced and performed them. Instead, it is perhaps more constructive to acknowledge a plurality of approaches to this material that fall along a continuum between the connotative and the literal. Even a single author's interpretation might demonstrate some fluidity, moving between connotative and literal interpretations of these rites and shifting this interpretation depending on the level of realization that a given practitioner is believed to have attained.<sup>256</sup> When we allow for some

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<sup>255</sup> Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 145.

<sup>256</sup> Although anachronous for this discussion of the Vajrayāna *caryā* in its Indic context, this seems to be precisely Gos rams pa bsod nams seng ge's interpretation of the *caryā* in his *Clarifying the Intent of the Victor's Teachings: A Complete Commentary on [Sakya Paṇḍita's] Distinguishing the Three Vows (sdom*

movement from the connotative to the literal in our interpretation of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, it draws our attention to the demonological implications of rejecting normative modes of conduct in the performance of *samayās* that involve consuming various types of substances and engaging in illicit types of sexual behavior and in the advanced ascetic practices of the *caryā* and *vrata*.

The demonological horizon of transgression in these texts does not negate the argument that the transgressive behaviors they prescribe (and the normative behaviors they proscribe) signify the practitioner's attainment of non-dual gnosis. First of all, in the world of these texts and traditions, the realization of non-dual gnosis itself guards against interference from the world of spirit deities. This means that even the rhetoric around non-dual gnosis and the attainment of ultimate reality in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* is directly relevant to the more literal demonological interpretation of transgressive *samaya* rituals and the performance of the *caryā* and *vrata*. At the same time, the transgressive rites and behaviors in these texts are

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*gsum gyi rab tu dbyed pa'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyī dgongs pa gsal ba*). Gos rams pa's discussion of 'the timing of the *caryā*' (*spyod pa'i dus*) outlines specific times for engaging in various types of *caryā* practice that correspond to the level of yogic heat (*drod, uṣman*) that one has attained. As the levels of yogic heat increase, the performance of the *caryā* or *spyod pa* becomes increasingly public and increasingly literal. Thus at the stage of 'lesser heat' one engages in 'the practice of secretly giving everything up' (*kun 'dar gsang ste spyod pa*), while at the level of 'middling heat' one engages in 'the practice of actually giving everything up' (*kun 'dar mngon du spyod pa*). Go rams pa, *Dgongs pa gsal ba*, 129b.3–4.

\_/bzhi pa'i drod chung du thob nas kun 'dar gsang ste spyod pa zhes bya ba mtshan mo'i dus bza' bya dang /\_bza' bya ma yin pa gnyis su med pa la sogs pa spyod la/\_nyin mo rang gi rigs dang mthun par spyod do/\_des drod 'bring po skyes pa na kun 'dar mngon du spyod pa zhes bya ba rang gi yul 'khor spangs te/\_rigs la sogs pa gsang nas spyod zhes bya ba smyon par brdzus te spyod pa yin no/\_des drod chen po 'jig rten las 'das pa'i zag pa med pa'i ye shes thob pa na/\_kun tu bzang po'i spyod pa sbyad do/ 4. [The Timing of the *Caryā* Practice:] After attaining the lower level of yogic heat one adopts the secret *caryā* practice of giving everything up (*kun 'dar gsang ste spyod pa*, \*avadhūṭīguhyacaryā) [which means that] at night [one practices] the nonduality of edible and inedible, yet by day one behaves according to the social norms of one's own people. After that, when one produces the middle level of yogic heat, one adopts the *caryā* practice of actually giving everything up (*kun 'dar mngon du spyod pa*, \*avadhūṭyābhicaryā) [meaning that] one abandons one's own country and then performs the *caryā* practice through concealing things like one's clan identity, etc., and adopting the guise of a madman. Then, after one has attained inexhaustible transmundane wisdom [through generating] the greatest level of yogic heat, one adopts the all-good *caryā* practice (*kun tu bzang po'i spyod pa*, \*samantabhadracaryā).

not *only* connotative. In the end, a more complete understanding of these traditions only comes into view by acknowledging that they are discursive products of a cultural milieu that accepted the taxonomies, pathologies, and symptomologies of the *bhūtavidyā* as a literal account of the world. For all of their rhetoric regarding the illusory nature of phenomena, the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* accept the existential condition at the core of the demonological paradigm as a real problem, treat potentially dangerous classes of spirit beings as if they were real, and ultimately incorporate this reality into their own vision of the goal of the two-stage yoga—attaining the state of an indestructible being (*vajrasattva*).<sup>257</sup>

The various *bhūtas* and *grahas* for which the Āyurvedic literature goes to such lengths to present a coherent set of symptoms and pathologies are a key component of the public for whom the *sādhaka* performs the transgressive behaviors in the *samayas*, the *caryā*, and *vrata*. The symptomologies regarding madness that is brought on by demonic possession in the *Caraka-* and *Suśrutasamhitās* both include elements that revolve around the consumption of various types of food and drink as well as engaging in certain sexual behaviors. It is not until the *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasamhitā*, however, that a more robust set of behaviors associated with possession emerges that demonstrates a clear correspondence to the transgressive Vajrayāna ritual and ascetic practices. The *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdaya* includes the consumption of some of the *samaya* substances and the cultivation of a lustful sexual personality among its description of behavioral traits that are at once symptoms and potential

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<sup>257</sup> It also might be inaccurate to say that the term *caryā* is a 'term of art' employing an ironic inversion of a term primarily used to denote more normative conceptions of socially acceptable conduct. This is particularly the case if we assert that the artful redefinition of *caryā* emerges from a dialogical process that inverts brahmanical norms of social conduct. Many forms of conduct that Buddhists prescribe and consider 'normative' and even 'virtuous' in the exoteric traditions are already transgressions against Vaidika Brahmin social norms, and any Buddhist (not just the more radically transgressive Vajrayāna yogin) would already be considered unfit to participate in Vedic ritual. Giovanni Verrardi draws our attention to this point in his investigation of the category of the heretic in the *Vāyupurāṇa*, which refers to the "apostate brāhmaṇa who has joined the Buddhists and Jains" as 'naked' in the sense of "not being protected by the three Vedas." See Verrardi, *Hardships and Downfall*, 142.

causes of possession. The tantric traditions in which these *samayas* are embedded thus appear as participants in the same discourse on demonology that we see in the Āyurvedic literature. Following the dual symptomology and pathology of mental illness brought on by possession in Āyurvedic literature, the performance of the transgressive *samayas* and a number of behaviors associated with the *caryā* and *vrata* might be viewed as actions that both render one susceptible to possession and function as symptoms that one is possessed.

Anaṅgavajra's instructions for the *tattvacaryā* further complicate the issue of how the demonological and the soteriological interact by arguing that the *samayas* play a role in protecting the *sādhaka* from possession. This treatment of the demonological horizon of transgression and its involvement in the rhetoric of the *samayas* offers yet another reason to entertain a literal interpretation of these practices. Anaṅgavajra writes:

Ablaze with the fire of self-consecration,  
One should practice the *samayas* taught |  
On the mantra path in their entirety  
Using a yoga that is agreeable to the mind. || 5.17 ||

One should rely upon the five ambrosias  
To pacify the *vighnas* and *māras*, etc. |  
This unsurpassed protection is incurred  
By means of feces and urine, etc. || 5.18 ||

Fevers, diseases, poisons, sicknesses,  
*Ḍākinīs* and seizers who cause distress, |  
*Māras*, and *vināyakās*  
Are all pacified by this. || 5.19 ||

One who possesses insight should eat  
The five 'lamps'—[meat] that comes from a human, |  
Horse, camel, [meat] that comes  
From an elephant, and even a dog. || 5.20 ||

And with the other divine  
*Samayas* that elevate the mind, |  
One should satiate the one who has the *vajra* mind



In order to pacify the agitation of the [vital] winds. || 5.21 ||<sup>258</sup>

The passage treats the five *amṛtas* as an offering to some of the most dangerous classes of spirit beings who might interfere with the *sādhaka's* practice. A similar statement on the purpose for consuming the five *amṛtas* appears in the following passage at the opening of *Jñānasiddhi* chapter ten:

The victors, who are unrivaled in subduing  
The mind, prescribe the five *amṛtas* |  
And elephant meat and the like so that yogins  
Will not have any beings that hinder [their practice]. || 10.1 ||

Even so, [ordinary beings] who eat all manner  
Of living beings do not become buddhas. |  
Foolish beings who lack intelligence  
Do not understand [this]. || 10.2 ||<sup>259</sup>

Indrabhūti's opening statement on the point of the five *amṛtas* in *Jñānasiddhi* 10.1a is a bit less clear when the verse is translated and adjusted to fit proper English syntax, but the Sanskrit for these verses preserve a clear juxtaposition of two compounds that, when translated on their own, read "the five *amṛtas* are for the purpose of being without obstructing beings" (*pañcāmṛtam avighnārtham*).

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<sup>258</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 83.  
cittānukūlayogena svādhiṣṭhānapradīpitaḥ |  
ācaret samayaṃ kṛtsnaṃ mantraṃ mārgaparakāśitam || 5.17 ||  
vighnamārādiśāntyartham pañcāmṛtamadhiśrayet |  
eṣā tvanuttarā rakṣā viṇmūtrādivyavasthitā || 5.18 ||  
jvarā garā viṣā rogā ḍākinyupadravagrahāḥ |  
mārā vināyakāścaiva praśamaṃ yāntyanena hi || 5.19 ||  
narodbhavaṃ tathā"śvaṃ ca auṣṭraṃ mātaṅgasambhavam |  
pradīpaṃ bhakṣayet prājñāḥ śvānameva ca pañcamam || 5.20 ||  
anyaiśca samayairdivyaiścittasyotkarṣakārakaiḥ |  
mārutakṣobhaśāntyartham prīṇayet cittavajriṇam || 5.21 ||

<sup>259</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 126.  
pañcāmṛtam avighnārtham cittasamsāadhanāparaiḥ |  
[ga]ajādimāmsam apyevaṃ yogināṃ vihitam jinaiḥ || 10.1 ||  
sarve 'pi prāṇinaḥ sarvaṃ bhakṣanto 'pi na buddhakāḥ |  
na prajānanti te mūḍhāḥ sattvā vigatabuddhayaḥ || 10.2 ||

There are thus two components to the *samaya* offering in *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* 5.17–21. First, in verses 5.17–19, the *sādhaka* or yogin offers the *samaya* substances to any obstructing beings so that they may be satiated and not interfere with his practice. Then in verses 5.20–21, the *sādhaka* or yogin consumes these substances himself in order to pacify his own vital winds (*mārutakṣobhaśāntyartha*).<sup>260</sup> Anaṅgavajra's instructions for the *sādhaka* to consume the traditional five meats does leave room to argue that this constitutes a kind of symbolic expression of non-dual gnosis that rejects the Vaidika brahmin purity-impurity dialectic, but they also offer their own logic for the consumption of these substances that tells a different story. The public for the *samayas* in this case is not a human society in which brahmanical notions of purity dictate normative behavior but a public of spirit beings whose behaviors are diametrically opposed to normative brahmanical codes of purity. The inversion of normative brahmanical ethics in the consumption of the *samayas* thus performs the dual function of signaling a rejection of the purity-impurity dialectic and an adoption of the conduct of those spirit beings who exist outside of the social structures that the dualist structure of the purity-impurity dialectic is designed to maintain. We might infer, then, that consuming the *samaya* substances protects the *sādhaka* from the world of spirit beings not because it demonstrates his powerful realization of non-dual gnosis, but because their consumption demonstrates the *sādhaka*'s adoption of the normative conduct of the demonic, possessing spirits that dwell beyond the edge of civilization.

On the other hand, Lakṣmīṅkarā's *Advayasiddhi* does actually present the consumption of the *samaya* substances as a visualization practice. The visualization of these substances as an offering seems is internalized in this text as part of a subtle-body yoga, and

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<sup>260</sup> This structure of the *samaya* offering is still practiced in Tibetan Vajrayāna traditions, where the *samaya* substances are first offered externally to pacify an obstructing beings and then consumed oneself.

the *samayas* themselves are understood as homologues for the five families of the tathāgatas.

The relevant verses from *Advayasiddhi* read:

A *mantrin* should always make offerings  
By meditating on himself as the ultimate reality  
With feces, urine, and semen, etc., |  
Which originate in the *nāsika*. || 4 ||<sup>261</sup>

One should perform the sublime *samayas*  
That are the origin of the five families daily |  
And worship with the 'lamps,' etc., [and]  
With the 'milk' [*samayas*] that are the origin of the world. || 8 ||<sup>262</sup>

One should make the offering to the *vajra*-bearer  
With visualized (bhāvitaḥ) urine and feces |  
That is mixed with vomit and flies [and]  
Combined with the five meats. || 16 ||<sup>263</sup>

One who is adept at yoga should always consume  
The flesh of elephant, horse, donkey, camel |  
[And] that which comes from a dog  
Mixed together with human flesh. || 26 ||<sup>264</sup>

Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* only addresses the aestheticized and internalized the *samaya* offering, but Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* appears to agree with Anaṅgavajra that the *samayas* also function as an external offering that protects the *sādhaka* from potentially harmful spirit beings while he performs the consort observance (*vidyāvrata*). Padmavajra writes:

One should obtain a supreme, sublime,  
Pure *mudrā*, an abode of all good qualities, |  
Who possesses manifold forms,

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<sup>261</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 161.

viḍvajrodakabījādyairnāsikābhyanantarodbhavaḥ |  
pūjayet satataṃ mantrī ātmānaṃ tattvabhāvanaiḥ || 4 ||

<sup>262</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 161.

samayānāharahaḥ kuryād divyān pañcakulodbhavān |  
pūjayecca pradīpādyaiḥ sakṣīrairviśvasambhavaḥ || 8 ||

<sup>263</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 162.

maṅṣikācchardisaṃmiśrair viṇmūtrādyaiśca bhāvitaḥ |  
pañcapradīpasamyuktaiḥ pūjayed vajradhāriṇam || 16 ||

<sup>264</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 163.

hastyaśvakaragāvoṣṭrapradīpaṃ śvānasambhavam |  
mahāpradīpasammiśraṃ bhakṣayed yogavit sadā || 26 ||

Who has completely abandoned pain and death, || 7.1 ||

Be she a goddess, female *nāga*, likewise  
A *yakṣī*, demigoddess, or *kinnarī*, |  
One who possesses the form of a *gandharvī*,  
Or otherwise an accomplished *yoginī*. || 7.2 ||

And, attracting these divine women  
With the ritual methods of the noose and hook, |  
The yogin should worship them  
With the union of meditation and ultimate reality. || 7.3 ||

Through [his] effort in the *sādhana* of the divine ones,  
He is known as [one who holds] the *samayas*. |  
Subdued, they become [his] servants  
They do whatever [he] wishes, || 7.4 ||

And they never cause  
[His] mind to waver. |  
Because they are subdued by the divine *samayas*,  
These divine women grant [him] great magical power. || 7.5 ||<sup>265</sup>

The passage continues here to mention that the yogin wins magical power from these divine consorts and then wanders on the outskirts of the forest surrounded by them. The performance of the *samaya* offering thus contains components that require a literal and externalized interpretation of the rite, and the literal interpretation of these components is best understood in terms of a demonological paradigm. His ability to attract a horde of

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<sup>265</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 50.

prāpya mudrāṃ parāṃ divyāṃ śuddhāṃ sarvaḡaṇālayāṃ |  
vicitrarūpasampannāṃ śokamṛtyuvivarjitāṃ || 7.1 ||  
surīṃ nāgīṃ tathā yakṣīmasurīṃ vātha kinnarīṃ |  
gandharvīrūpasampannāmathavā siddhayoginīm || 7.2 ||  
etā divyāḥ striyo yogī samākṛṣya prapūjayet |  
bhāvanātattvayogena pāśāṅkuśavidhikramaiḥ || 7.3 ||  
divyānāṃ sādhanāṃ(naṃ) yatnāt sa eva samayā(yaḥ) smṛtaḥ |  
sādhitā[h] preṣyatāṃ yānti kurvanti ca yathepsitam || 7.4 ||  
na ca tāścittavikṣepaṃ prakurvanti kadācana |  
samayaīḥ sādhitairdivyairdivyanāryo mahardhikāḥ || 7.5 ||

female spirit beings to his side provides him some degree of protection that allows him to wander "like a lion, free from all fear."<sup>266</sup>

The passages from Anaṅgavajra, Lakṣmīṅkarā, and Padmavajra are good examples of the variety of interpretations around the *samaya* offering ritual in this literature. Anaṅgavajra treats the transgressive *samaya* substances as both offerings to malevolent spirit beings that might attack the *sādhaka* while performing the *caryā* and *vrata* as well as substances that the *sādhaka* should consume. Lakṣmīṅkarā discusses the consumption of the *samaya* substances as an internal visualization in which all forms of worship and veneration are inwardly directed. The internalization of the practice makes sense in this context, given that the *yogin* or *yoginī* who performs the *samaya* offering has mastered the embodiment of a deity-*maṅḍala* that is coterminous with the entire cosmos. The *samaya* beings that would receive these offerings have been installed in that *maṅḍala*, the *maṅḍala* has been made coterminous with the body, and that body is coterminous with the entire cosmos. This kind of yogic cosmology allows for the distinction of internal and external to fall away completely. Given that both Anaṅgavajra and Lakṣmīṅkarā refer to this stage of practice as a self-consecration, there is some reason to believe that Anaṅgavajra's description of the *samaya* offering is also

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<sup>266</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 50.  
mahecchamṛddhiṃ saṃprāpya mūtrasvedavivarjitāḥ |  
nānārūpapadā niryā(tyaṃ) niṣevyā divyayoṣitaḥ || 7.6 ||  
tāni(bhiḥ) saha spa(sa)dā yukto vijane tu vanopage |  
siṃhavad vicarenmantrī sarvasaṃtrāsavarjitaḥ || 7.7 ||

Having attained the desired magical power,  
He should always worship |  
Divine consorts of various states and forms  
Who are without urine and sweat. || 7.6 ||

Always accompanied by them,  
The *mantrin* should wander |  
In the outskirts of the forest where there are no people  
Like a lion, free from all fear. || 7.7 ||

an internal, visualized practice. But without the kind of explicit evidence that we see in *Advayasiddhi*, it is not possible to argue this point with any certainty.

Padmavajra's discussion of the *samaya* in his *vidyāvratā* chapter, which does not actually contain explicit mention of the *samaya* substances,<sup>267</sup> seems to incorporate elements of a kind of connotative semiotics by instructing the *sādhaka* to worship the female spirit deities he has drawn to his side 'using the union of meditation and ultimate reality.' Still, the text also preserves a more literal interpretation in which the *sādhaka* draws these beings to his side and makes offerings to them so that they will grant him magical power, protection, and their company as consorts. It is worth noting that the examples from Anaṅgavajra and Padmavajra seem to contradict a general proscription against external forms of ritual practice that are designed to protect the body from attack by spirit beings. These authors' particular conception of the role of *samaya* and the proscriptions against normative social ethics surrounding the dialectics of edible/inedible, drinkable/not drinkable, and approachable/not approachable actually preserve the protective function that *samaya* plays in the lower *tantras* as a ritual means by which beings are bound together in 'contract.' Lakṣmīṅkarā arguably resolves this contradiction by internalizing the entire process of the *samaya* offering. The discrepancies between these authors' instructions on the consumption of the *samaya* substances reflects the tension between literalist and figurative interpretations that have followed these traditions for more than a millennium, and that continue to frustrate modern scholars' attempts at reconstructing an accurate and comprehensive history of the Vajrayāna.

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<sup>267</sup> This is a minor point that may in fact be entirely negated depending on how one interprets the phrase 'divyānām sādhanam yatnāt' in *Guhyasiddhi* 7.4. It is, for example, entirely possible that the '*sādhana* of the divine consorts' that causes these female spirit beings to recognize the *sādhaka* as one who is bound by *samaya* involves making offerings with the *pañcāmṛta* and *pañcamāmsa*. This reading means that *Guhyasiddhi* 7.3–4 presents a sequence in which these female spirit beings are first drawn in by the 'noose and hook' rites, then worshipped 'using the union of meditation and ultimate reality,' and through such efforts come to recognize the *sādhaka* as one bound by *samaya* to whom they then offer magical abilities, protection, and themselves as is consorts.

The issue of whether or not the *samayās* are literally performed or whether they are only part of an internalized yogic practice is taken up in the ninth chapter of Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* titled, "The Chapter Illustrating the Offering to the Master of Ultimate Truth" (*paramārthācāryapūjādeśanāpariccheda*). Here Padmavajra speaks to whether or not the ritual of offering one's own consort to the guru is figurative or literally performed. The verses in question reflect the tension between these two interpretations by adopting a dialogical rhetorical structure. The first indication that there is a dialogical rhetoric at work occurs in the chapter's fourth verse, which disparages the entire teaching outlined in *Guhyasiddhi* as conceptual and 'only mere meditation' (*bhāvanāmātrakevalā*). Since it is highly unlikely that Padmavajra would decide to use the ninth chapter of *Guhyasiddhi* to effectively argue that the entire treatise is useless, the dialogical ellipsis are supplied in the verse as follows:

[According to some,]  
 The secret practice and observance and the *mudrā*,  
 That were explained [here] in full detail |  
 Are all said to be a conceptual construct [and]  
 Are only a mere meditation. || 9.4 ||

[However,]  
 What was taught [elsewhere] according to the dispositions of all beings  
 Is accomplished here in its entirety, |  
 And [the *sādhaka*] who is endowed with gnosis  
 Is established as the subject in these meditations. || 9.5 ||

In this case [the subject,] who possesses insight,  
 Abandons the entire expanse that arises |  
 From conceptual thought [and] meditates  
 Continually and with great effort on the *mahāmudrā*. || 9.6 ||

One who has repeatedly trained [in this]  
 Who is free from all dualities |  
 Attains siddhi quickly,  
 Just as Padmavajra has said. || 9.7 ||<sup>268</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 58.  
 guhyacaryāvratam mudrām yaduktam vistarātmakam |  
 sarvam etad vikalpākhyam bhāvanāmātrakevalā(la)m || 9.4 ||

This rhetorical style appears again when the chapter turns to its central topic, the performance of the consort (*mudrā*) offering to the *ācārya*. In this case the dialogue takes place around whether or not the *mudrā* offering, considered the most important of all of the *samayas*, is performed externally or internally. Once again, the apparent contradiction in these verses can only be resolved by translating them as a rhetorical dialogue:

[Some say]  
 One should ornament one's own *mudrā*  
 With delightful things such as fine clothes and jewelry |  
 And present [her] as an offering to the guru  
 So that one may attain the *siddhi* of a Buddha. || 9.13 ||

By presenting one's own *mudrā*, one shall  
 Generate the *siddhi* that is taught in the *tantras*. |  
 One does not attain *siddhi* by some other means than  
 The externally indicated *samayas*. || 9.14 ||

This indeed is the supreme ultimate *samaya*  
 That was taught by Śrī Vajranātha |  
 According to the true meaning of the *tantras*  
 For the benefit of the *sādhakas*. || 9.15 ||

[Others say]  
 The offering of the innate *mudrā*  
 Is supreme among all of the *samayas*, [and] |  
 Otherwise one does not attain *siddhi*  
 By means of *samayas* that take an external form. || 9.16 ||

Therefore [I say that] one should make offerings to the guru  
 Out of devotion and with all one's effort |  
 With the offerings of the lotus of one's own *mudrā*,  
 With the songs that come forth from her throat, || 9.17 ||

With the instrumental sounds of flutes,  
 With *vajra* possession dances, |

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sarvasattvāśayāt proktaṃ yadasmin vistarātmakam |  
 siddhyate jñānayuktastu bhāvanāsu pratiṣṭhitāḥ(taḥ) || 9.5 ||  
 tyaktvā tu sarvamevātra vikalpotthitavistaram |  
 bhāvayet satataṃ prājño mahāmudrām prayatnataḥ || 9.6 ||  
 muhurmuḥuḥ kṛtābhyāsaḥ sarvadvandvavivarjitaḥ |  
 siddhyate na cirādeva padmavajravaco yathā || 9.7 ||



With the taste of the consort's lips, |  
With the joys of slight embraces, || 9.18 ||

With cooked foods of various kinds  
With dry and moist sweet cakes, |  
With divine liquor, fish, etc., [and] |  
With various other [substances] prescribed in the *tantra*. || 9.19 ||

And following that, the highest *siddhi*  
Is generated in the offering of the innate *mudrā*. |  
Otherwise there shall be no *siddhi*.  
This is the system of not performing [the *mudrā* offering]. || 9.20 ||<sup>269</sup>

Padmavajra acknowledges that there are two viewpoints on the status of the externally performed *samayas*. The first presents the externally performed *mudrā* offering as the only way that one attains *siddhi* and elevates it above the other externally performed *samayas*, while the second elevates the innate *mudrā* (*nijamudrā*) offering above all of the externally performed *samayas* (including the externally performed *mudrā* offering) as the only way one actually attains *siddhi*. He then resolves the issue by describing s system of not performing [the *mudrā* offering] (*nayam akurvataḥ*) that actually combines both the externally performed *mudrā* offering and the innate *mudrā* offering. In other words, the external *mudrā* offering is still performed, even in the system of not performing [the *mudrā* offering] (*nayam*

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<sup>269</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 59.

vastrāṅkābhogādyairbhūṣayitvā samarpayet |  
svamudrāṃ gurupūjārthaṃ buddhasiddhiprasidhaye || 9.13 ||  
svamudrārpaṇataḥ siddhirjāyate ta[n]tracoditā |  
anyathā naiva siddhistu samayairbāhyacoditaiḥ || 9.14 ||  
eṣa vai tantrasadbhāve samayaḥ paramottamaḥ |  
uktaḥ śrīvajranāthena sādhakānāṃ hitāya vai || 9.15 ||  
samayānāṃ tu sarveṣāṃ nijamudrārpaṇaṃ param |  
anyathā bāhyarūpaistu samayairnaiva siddhyate || 9.16 ||  
tasmāt sarvaprayatnena guruṃ bhaktyā prapūjayet |  
svamudrāpadmapūjādyaiṣtatkaṇṭhedbhu(ṅṭhodbhū)tagītibhiḥ || 9.17 ||  
dardurasphoṭavādairvajrāveśapranartanaḥ |  
vidyā'dharaphalāsvādyairīśadāliṅganotsavaiḥ || 9.18 ||  
pakvānnairvidhākāraiḥ pūpikāśuṣkadalluraiḥ |  
śīdhumatsyādibhirdivyairvidhaista[n]tracoditaiḥ || 9.19 ||  
tatastu jāyate siddhirnijamudrārpaṇe parā |  
anyathā naiva siddhiḥ syādidaṃ nayamakurvataḥ || 9.20 ||

*akurvataḥ*). Padmavajra thus argues that the literal, external form and the figurative, internal form of the rite are equally necessary. Most importantly, at no point do we see evidence that the initial bestowal of *samaya* on the disciple during the *mudrā* offering is interpreted in a strictly symbolic or figurative sense.

Scholars who study these traditions should take note of this passage as evidence that there have always been factions that supported more or less literal interpretations of performing the transgressive rites and ascetic practices of the Vajrayāna. As a result there is simply no chance that one can present a coherent argument for the figurative over the literal (or vice versa) and expect to provide an accurate perspective on these traditions. Authors like Anaṅgavajra and Padmavajra who preserve literalist interpretations of these rites call for an interpretive framework that can expose the logic behind their literalism. The demonological paradigm adopted in this study provides such an interpretive framework for the generation and completion stage yogas, allowing for a literalist reading of these works that sheds greater light on the social and historical context for the ritual function of transgression in the Vajrayāna. This is not to say that literalist interpretations of the *samayas* must be adopted at the expense of their figurative counterparts. As Padmavajra has shown here, and as the dual apotropaic-soteriological goal of these traditions suggests, it is possible to simultaneously preserve literal and figurative interpretations of transgressive ritual and ascetic practices that are presented in the textual traditions of the Vajrayāna.

#### **IV. Conclusion**

Although Ruegg did not recognize it as such, the shared pan-Indian religious phenomenon of localized spirit religions and their increasing influence on the Sanskritic scholastic literature

of *bhūtavidyā* in Āyurvedic medical treatises had a substantive and functional impact on Buddhist and non-Buddhist initiatory traditions in the early medieval period. In reaction to Ruegg's oversight, chapters two and three of the first part of this dissertation have suggested that demonology provides an indispensable analytic paradigm for understanding the development of South Asian religions and for understanding the social and cultural milieu in which the transgressive ritual and ascetic practices associated with Vajrayāna Buddhism arose. This demonological paradigm also offers one avenue for tracing the ritual and ascetic practices of both Buddhist and Śaiva traditions to a common, pan-Indian religious substratum that is not the sole domain of any particular sect.

The supporting evidence for this argument has been presented from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, and analyzing these works from the perspective of this demonological paradigm has highlighted the dual apotropaic-soteriological goal that underlies the ultimate goal of '*siddhi*' or 'accomplishment.' A survey of these works has revealed that their authors address issues concerning the connection between realization of ultimate reality through the perfection of yoga and the demonstration of that realization through becoming invulnerable to possession. Every aspect of practice in these texts is conceived in some way to offer a solution to the existential problem of embodiment that lies at the core of the demonological paradigm in South Asia. It has been argued as well that the term for this mode of religious praxis among some, but not all, of the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* was 'the *sādhana* of *vajrasattva*.' Here the term '*vajrasattva*' is not only a reference to the *sādhaka*'s self-generation as the Buddha Vajrasattva, it is also a reference to the goal of becoming an 'indestructible being' that the *sādhaka* attains through perfecting the union (*yoga*) of his corporeal form with the deity-*maṇḍala*.

Viewed from this perspective, consecration rites and the generation stage yoga practices reveal themselves as a kind of controlled possession in which initiates maintain certain ritual structures as a safeguard against negative possession from obstructing beings while inviting positive possession by the tutelary deity and the deities of the *maṇḍala*. More exoteric strategies for cultivating invulnerability to possession such as the accumulation of merit and realization ultimate reality (*tattva*) also appear throughout *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, as does the practice of installing the *maṇḍala* in one's own body in order to attain a corporeal form that is no longer in danger of developing any of the various weak points (*chidra*) that the Āyurvedic *bhūtavidyā* literature identifies as a critical factor that render a body susceptible to possession. The completion stage yoga practices of the *caryā* and *vrata* have likewise been treated as means by which the *sādhaka* demonstrates the proof (*siddhi*) of his attainment (*siddhi*) of the state of an indestructible being (*vajrasattva*) by emerging unscathed from a myriad of potentially dangerous situations in which he surrenders any means of ritual protection and adopts specific behaviors that invite abuse and possession from both human and non-human beings.

**Part II:**  
**Sect and Sectarian Identity**  
**in *The Seven Siddhi Texts***

**Chapter 5:**  
**Alexis Sanderson's 'Borrowing Model'**  
**and the Issue of Sectarian Identity**

**I. Introduction: The 'Śaiva Age' Thesis**

Alexis Sanderson's 1994 article "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function" remains a landmark piece of scholarship in the fields of Buddhist Studies and South Asian Religions. Sanderson's work in this article offered a new standard for scholarly precision in support of an old argument—that the Buddhist *yoginītantras* appropriated their ritual and ascetic programs from Śaiva sources.<sup>270</sup> While some of the earliest proponents of this argument presented thin data and demonstrated substantial biases in their approach to esoteric Buddhism, Sanderson relied upon a data driven approach that successfully exposed several instances of clear intertextuality between some of the major works in the Buddhist *yoginītantra* textual tradition associated with the deity Heruka or Cakrasaṃvara and a number of important surviving Śaiva *mantramārga* works such as the *Picumata/Brahmayāmala*, *Siddhayogeśvarimata*, and *Jayadrathayāmala*. Sanderson argues that the flow of ideas between Śaivas and Buddhists was unidirectional, with Śaiva texts providing a large amount of material for the reformulation of esoteric Buddhist ritual and ascetic practices that one finds in the *yoginītantras*. His original argument is based on an apparent mistake made by the Buddhist author of the *Samvarodayatantra* while copying a standard list of Śaiva *pīṭha*

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<sup>270</sup> See Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 22–23. Wedemeyer provides a useful genealogy of this idea for the study of Buddhist *tantra*.

locations that appears to derive from the Trika Śaiva work *Tantrasadbhāva*.<sup>271</sup> Sanderson has since expanded his evidence in support of this position considerably.

This unidirectional borrowing model is framed in direct opposition to David Seyfort Ruegg's notion of a 'pan-Indian religious substratum.' Using the ritual sequence of the Buddhist *yoginītantra* system of consecrations (*abhiṣeka*) from Abhayākaragupta's (12<sup>th</sup> century) *Vajrāvali* as an illustrative example, Sanderson opens his study by positing that nearly everything included in Abhayākaragupta's consecration rite is Śaiva in form and origin, regardless of the fact that it remains wholly Buddhist in function. He provides the following argument against Ruegg's 'substratum model:'

The problem with this concept of a 'religious substratum' or 'common cultic stock' is that they are by their very nature entities inferred but never perceived. Whatever we perceive is always Śaiva or Buddhist, or Vaiṣṇava, or something else specific. Derivation from this hidden source cannot therefore be the preferred explanation for similarities between these specific traditions unless those similarities cannot be explained in any other way.<sup>272</sup>

Sanderson's critique of Ruegg argues for a theoretical approach to the study of tantric traditions that draws a direct correlation between sectarian identity and literary production. Underlying this argument is the implicit assumption that Śaivism, and not some nebulous 'substratum,' is the primary source and reference for the various esoteric initiatory traditions commonly referred to as 'tantric.' In this way, Sanderson replaces any vague idea of a non-sectarian religious substratum with a sectarian Śaiva substratum that served as the primary source for much of the ritual and ascetic culture that would come to be referred to as 'tantra.'

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<sup>271</sup> Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," 95. Sanderson points out that the Buddhist author treats the term 'gr̥hadevatā' as a *pīṭha* between Pretapuri and Saurāṣṭra in his reproduction of this list of *pīṭhas* when it is actually a class of deities that is associated with the *pīṭha* of Saurāṣṭra in Śaiva lists. Thus, Sanderson argues that the Buddhist author must have suffered a momentary lapse where he conflated the two lists. Sanderson uses this to show that the Śaiva version is likely the original and the Buddhist a later (and unintentional) corruption.

<sup>272</sup> Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," 92.

Sanderson has since expanded upon this argument in great detail in his 2009 article “The Śaiva Age: The Rise and Dominance of Śaivism During the Early Medieval Period.” This work constitutes an extensive data-driven response to critics of his 'borrowing model' and provides a wealth of evidence for Śaiva-Buddhist intertextuality as well as a more developed argument for the unidirectionality of this exchange.<sup>273</sup> Relying on epigraphic data to argue for Śaivism's quick rise to dominance from the sixth century CE forward, Sanderson follows a number of scholars who reject the argument that the era following the collapse of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka Empire was a kind of 'dark age' of excessive turmoil that coincided with a contraction in the development of literature, arts, scholasticism, and religious institutions. Instead, he argues that the post-Gupta era was marked by an expansion of the monarchical mode of government, a proliferation of new royal dynasties, a multiplication of temples, the emergence of new urban centers, an expansion of agrarian activity through increased agricultural infrastructure and land reclamation projects, and, perhaps most importantly, an increasing trend toward cultural assimilation and interaction with the populations inevitably caught up in this expansion.<sup>274</sup> Although not mentioned by name, this argument is most likely

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<sup>273</sup> Ruegg, "A Note," 738.

<sup>274</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 253. Sanderson offers a short list of scholars to whom he is indebted on this point in a lengthy footnote that reads, "For this positive characterization of the period I am indebted to the work of a number of historians who in recent decades have shown the invalidity of the widespread view that it was a time of decline, de-urbanization, fragmentation, and general impoverishment in the aftermath of a glorious classical age that culminated under the Gupta kings and ended with their demise. I acknowledge in particular the research, conclusions, and hypotheses of Noboru Karasima (1984), R. Champakalakshmi (1986), Hermann Kulke (1990, 1995a, b), Brajadulal Chattopadhyaya (1994), Upinder Singh (1994), Burton Stein (1994, 1998), James Heitzman (1995), and Cynthia Talbot (2001). That judgment, which owes more, one suspects, to the concept of the European Dark Ages after the collapse of the Roman empire than to unbiased analysis of India's epigraphical and archaeological record, has its counterpart in the not uncommon assessment that these centuries also witnessed a progressive degeneration of Sanskrit literary, intellectual, and religious culture. It is refreshing to see that the work of those historians who are engaging vigorously with the epigraphical and archaeological evidence of the age has brought forth a view that is more consonant with the abundant literary evidence of intellectual and aesthetic vigour. "



drafted in response to Ronald Davidson's employment of a post-Gupta collapse narrative in his work on the emergence of esoteric Buddhism.<sup>275</sup>

Marking the expansion of monarchical government as one of the primary political factors in the expansion of the tantric initiation cults, Sanderson examines primarily post-sixth century epigraphic sources for evidence of the religious affiliations of royal donors and patrons across South and South East Asia. This analysis proceeds by assigning a specific sectarian affiliation to a ruler based on the epithets that describe them in the related epigraphic data. Thus epithets such as "*atyantabhagavadbhakta*," "*paramabhāgavata*," and "*paramavaiṣṇava*"<sup>276</sup> are taken to signify a patron who identifies as Vaiṣṇava, epithets such as "*paramasaugata*," and "*paramatāthāgata*"<sup>277</sup> indicate a patron who identifies as Buddhist, and the epithet "*paramamaheśvara*" indicates a patron who identifies as Śaiva. Of these three, the epithet *paramamāheśvara* ("entirely devoted to Śiva") is encountered with the most frequency.<sup>278</sup> Sanderson has expanded upon this point in his 2013 article on "The Impact of Inscriptions," where he notes the following observation:

Of those reported in the inscriptions published in *Epigraphia Indica* I find that 660 are grants to brahmins (*brahmadeyam*)—these emanate from rulers of all kinds, regardless of sectarian affiliation—and that of the remaining 936, 596 (64%) are Śaiva (including 73 donations to Devīs and 8 to Skanda), 164

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<sup>275</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 25–74. Davidson devotes the entire second chapter of his *Indian Esoteric Buddhism* to "the cauldron of post-Gupta India" to which he applies John Keegan's culture of belligerence thesis (3, 25), outlining a vision of this period as one dominated by a culture of military adventurism (29) that was characterized by an emergent *samānta feudalism* system of vassalage whose precarious nature contributed to an overall chaotic political, cultural, and social milieu out of which the Buddhist esoteric systems and their non-Buddhist counterparts emerged. Davidson provides ample evidence for the cultural florescence of the post-Gupta era, yet his argument stays close to a characterization of that period as both chaotic and a period of decline, particularly with respect to Buddhism, which had flourished under the Gupta-Vākaṭakas.

<sup>276</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 58. Sanderson offers a number of examples throughout this work, with the reference to these epithets here attributed to members of the Gupta dynasty who identified primarily as Vaiṣṇava.

<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, noted in inscriptions from the Nepali Thākūrī king Siṃhadeva (r. 1110–1126) on p. 77, and with great frequency among Bhaumakara dynasty in Orissa (r. c. 825–950), Candras of southeast Bengal (r. c. 850–1050) and the Pāla emperors of Gauḍa (r. c. 750–1199) on p. 80.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, 44

(18%) Vaiṣṇava, 111(12%) Jain, 63 (7%) Buddhist, and 38 (4%) Saura. Approximately the same ratios are seen in the inscriptions of the same time range published in the *Indian Antiquary*<sup>279</sup>

Sanderson notes that following the sixth century CE when temple-centered religious practices began to increase exponentially across South Asia, the epigraphic record reveals that Śaiva temple construction projects were more numerous than those of any other sect.<sup>280</sup> These data are used to highlight the widespread public and political influence that Śaivism held from the sixth century forward. This rapid and widespread expansion is intended to provide a motivation for his 'borrowing model' by demonstrating that Buddhists began to appropriate aspects of Śaiva ritual into their own traditions in order to adapt to the groundswell of popular and royal support for Śaivism.

After arguing for the presence of various *śākta*-inspired ritual elements in the *yogatantra* tradition of the Buddhist *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, Sanderson expands his case for Śaiva-Buddhist intertextuality in the Buddhist proto-*yoginītantra* work, the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālaśaṃvara*. This work introduces the cult of the deity Heruka to the Buddhist esoteric traditions, whose iconography mirrors that of "the Bhairavas of the Vidyāpīṭha with their accouterments and attributes of the cremation-ground dwelling Kāpālika ascetic."<sup>281</sup> Other elements that appear at this point include the introduction of the *gaṇamaṇḍala* practice with its circles of *yoginīs* and their respective identifying gestures (*chomma*), a further elaboration upon the subjugation mythology from the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, and the ritualization of this mythology as part of a deity-

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<sup>279</sup> Sanderson, "The Impact of Inscriptions," 224.

<sup>280</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 44.

<sup>281</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

visualization practice.<sup>282</sup> Sanderson also notes that the very title of the work appears to be correlated in some way to the titles for two Vidyāpīṭha works, the *Sarvavīrasamāyoga* and the *Yoginījālaśaṃvara*.<sup>283</sup>

The core data set behind Sanderson's study of the intertextuality of the Buddhist *yoginītantras* and the Śaiva Vidyāpīṭha textual traditions lies in his examination of a number of correspondences between the root *tantra* for the Buddhist deity Cakrasaṃvara, the *Laghuśaṃvara*, and the *Picumata* or *Brahmayāmalatantra*. The Buddhist *yoginītantras* are identified as the point at which Buddhists began a wholesale adoption of Śaiva ascetic modalities in their formal promotion of *kāpālika*-style *vrata* and *caryā* ascetic practices and iconography. The strongest argument, which comes as an expansion upon Sanderson's original discovery of textual correspondences between several works within the Cakrasaṃvara cycle to a handful of Śaiva Vidyāpīṭha works, is undoubtedly his extensive catalogue of correspondences in the *Laghuśaṃvara* that, as he notes, "are not short passages of one or two verses but detailed and continuous expositions that run in two cases over several chapters, amounting in all to some 200 verses out of a total of about 700 with some prose equivalent in length of about 80 or more."<sup>284</sup>

Sanderson challenges the argument that the rule of *lectio difficilior potior* indicates that the Buddhist versions of passages that demonstrate strong Śaiva intertextuality predate their Śaiva counterparts. Examples of this intertextuality from Buddhist sources tend to contain a greater number of grammatical errors and metrical inconsistencies than

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<sup>282</sup> The ritualization of this subjugation mythology in visualization practices in the *SBSY* is also featured as the most advanced yogic practice in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, which reproduces an entire section of *SBSY* chapter 6 in *Jñānasiddhi* chapter 18 on "Performance of [the Sādhana] for Those with the Highest Capacities" (*adhimātrendriyavidhānam*) This particular visualization practice does not indicate the incorporation of *kāpālika* ascetic dress and refers to the central deity as 'Vajrasattva.' See Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 152—55.

<sup>283</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 155.

<sup>284</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 187–88.

presentations of the same material in Śaiva sources. This introduces the possibility, following the principle of *lectio difficilior potior*, of arguing that the Śaiva versions represent later redactions of originally Buddhist sources that have been edited to reflect proper grammatical conventions, proper meter, and to provide clearer context wherever the Buddhist text seems deficient or unclear. Sanderson rejects this possibility, arguing that the principle of *lectio difficilior potior* cannot be taken as a universal rule to be applied on the basis of grammatical and metrical inconsistencies alone, but must always be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. In this particular case, his analysis of the metrical inconsistencies in the Buddhist versions of this material shows that many of the problems with the texts arise where Buddhist influence on the material is most apparent.<sup>285</sup> Such problems are said to result from Buddhist redactors who were not deeply familiar with the textual tradition that they were "cannibalizing."<sup>286</sup> As a result the commentators on these works were "caught out, as it were, by new materials that lacked roots in the Buddhist textual corpus in which they were trained."<sup>287</sup> By this argument, these commentators grappled with passages that were difficult to interpret within a Buddhist context because they had been blindly imported from an entirely different tradition. Outcries for more supporting data from Ruegg and others in reaction to Sanderson's 1994 article "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," have been rendered largely irrelevant by his 2009 article, and the criticism that his sources are largely unpublished manuscripts to which other scholars do not have access is slowly withering away as these sources are gradually released in critical editions and translations.

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<sup>285</sup> Ibid., 190.

<sup>286</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 190.

<sup>287</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 216. This statement seems to be at odds with the argument, which Sanderson makes in the context of Padmavajra's mention of the *Kālottara* and *Niśvāsa* in *Guhyasiddhi*, that Buddhists were undeniably familiar with Śaiva scripture.

## II. Some Lingering Issues with Sanderson's "Śaiva Age" Thesis

The work that Alexis Sanderson has accomplished with his 'Śaiva Age' thesis has made it quite clear that Śaiva sects came to dominate much of the religious landscape across South and Southeast Asia from the sixth century CE forward. The assumptions that underlie this position, however, have not gone unchallenged. In his *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, Ronald Davidson accuses Sanderson's thesis of being "excessively reified" and perhaps unable to address the issues of "unique local personalities or specific movements even within these broad heterodox groups."<sup>288</sup> Christian Wedemeyer's more recent response to Sanderson revolves around two primary points. Echoing Ruegg's 'substratum' argument, Wedemeyer points out that Śaiva, Buddhist, and Jain traditions participated in a shared religious, political, and economic culture for more than a millennium from the fifth century BCE to the sixth century CE. He then further develops Davidson's suggestion that Sanderson's vision of sectarian identity in the tantric and pre-tantric era exhibits a tendency toward excessive reification. On this point, Wedemeyer states that the only way one can argue for a truly unidirectional and wholesale plagiarizing of Śaiva literature as the source of esoteric Buddhism is to "begin with an already fully-formed notion of Buddhism that does not include Tantric elements," and "adopt a normative position on what 'real' Buddhism is."<sup>289</sup>

Both Davidson and Wedemeyer's critiques are well taken. Sanderson does tend to maintain a rigid conception of sectarian identity that minimizes the possibility for individuals to hold dual, multiple, or fluid sectarian affiliations and religious identities. This critique is directly relevant to Sanderson's examination of donative inscriptions, one of the cornerstones of the 'Śaiva Age' thesis, which often overlooks or brushes aside the evidence for a culture of

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<sup>288</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 172.

<sup>289</sup> Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 31.

egalitarian patronage that these data support. This problem has since received a thorough treatment in his recent 2015 article on "Tolerance, Exclusivity, Inclusivity, and Persecution in Indian Religion During the Early Mediaeval Period," in which Sanderson provides a data-driven response to Ruegg's discussion of religious inclusivity in South Asia and a welcome corrective to the lack of critical analysis around the implications of royal patronage in South Asia in his 2009 work on 'The Śaiva Age.' The issue of patronage in 'The Śaiva Age' is discussed in detail below along with Sanderson's later corrections to this original argument. To Wedemeyer's second point, Sanderson's insistence on maintaining a strict Śaiva-Buddhist unidirectionality does support a rather incomplete portrayal of the interaction between Śaiva and Buddhist initiatory cults prior to the sixth century CE onset of his 'Śaiva Age.' This bias leads him, for example, to speak of the rapid expansion of institutional Śaiva monasticism in the middle of the first millennium as if it had no antecedent or contemporary model on which it might have been fashioned. In general, Sanderson tends to avoid discussing any potential influence that other religious sects may have had on Śaivism while maintaining an exclusive focus on the theoretical conclusion of medieval Śaiva dominance. This approach causes him to superimpose the 'Śaiva Age' thesis on his data at times when it seems unnecessary, and to neglect alternate readings of the data where they might be possible.

Sanderson's original presentation of the 'Śaiva Age' thesis also relies almost exclusively upon textual and epigraphic witnesses that represent an elite and institutionally affiliated Śaivism and its royal patrons. As a result, it lacks any treatment of the topic of popular Śaivism, or popular religion more broadly. Some degree of a corrective to this problem is offered in his 2013 article on "The Impact of Inscriptions on the Interpretation of Early Śaiva Literature," and his 2015 article on "Tolerance, Exclusivity, Inclusivity, and

Persecution." Interestingly, the correctives presented in these articles begin to move Sanderson's thesis toward something resembling a 'pan-Indian religious substratum.' These works locate the widespread presence of Śaivism among South Asian populations as a significant precursor to the rise of the more institutional and politically potent forms of Śaivism. While the idea that a widespread popular Śaivism would have facilitated Śaivism's movement to the center of South Asian political life is a strong thesis, there is also a kind of tautology at work in this theory that essentially argues that Śaivism came to dominate in the second half of the first millennium because Śaivism already dominated in the second half of the first millennium. There is no room here to consider that localized deity cults that were assimilated to the Śaiva pantheon and facilitated the rapid expansion of Śaivism had pre-Śaiva identities, and that these identities might have had a direct effect on the shape of Śaivism itself.<sup>290</sup>

Sanderson's so-called 'reification' of sectarian identity in the medieval period may likely be a function of the rhetoric of the esoteric initiatory religious sects themselves. The entire logic of initiation, after all, is exclusivist and implies that the disciple, once initiated, adheres exclusively to a specific religious identity. Yet an overly rigid delineation of sectarian identity does not seem to have been universally the case, despite the exclusivist and agonistic rhetoric of the initiatory traditions. An individual's religious identity could be far more fluid than the rhetoric behind these rites often admits. This fluidity is actually a function of the core assumptions around religious identity that the initiatory traditions themselves promote. The idea that one is able to assume a new identity through the ritual

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<sup>290</sup> Kunal Chakrabarti's argument for the "Purānic process" provides evidence for the effect that this phenomenon had on the emergence of new trends in brahminical religions, and the argument for a Śaiva version of this phenomenon was presented in chapter two of this study on the appropriation of the popular religious cults of the deity Bhairava into the Śaiva *Bhairavatantras*. See Chakrabarti, *Religious Process*, 47–52.

means of consecration can only proceed based on a more general logic of the fluidity of religious identity and sectarian affiliation. The overt rhetoric of exclusivity around initiation into a specific textual community masks an implicit recognition that identity is an essentially fluid phenomenon. At the very least, the initiatory cults certainly subscribe to a more fluid conception of identity than what one finds in the Vaidika brahmin *varṇāśramadharmā* system. The analysis of evidence for self-conscious recognition of inter-sectarian dynamics in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* discussed later in chapter seven of this study shows that some authors were even apprehensive about the fact that their disciples could adopt an entirely new sectarian affiliation or religious identity by simply taking initiation in another tradition.<sup>291</sup>

Alexis Sanderson's research has initiated a new phase in the study of South Asian religious traditions that has raised the standard for philological research on South Asian textual traditions and rendered accessible a Śaiva literature that remained poorly understudied prior to his own groundbreaking efforts. This work has begun to fill in some of the large gaps in our historical understanding that have resulted from neglecting the study of Śaivism's influence on medieval South Asian religion. The persistence of these gaps can be traced in some part to the privileging of Buddhism as a subject of study over and against Śaivism, a trend that only increased as the field of Tibetan Buddhist Studies expanded in the latter decades of the twentieth century. The huge number of works of Indic origin preserved in the Tibetan canons has been treated, to use a very Buddhist idiom, as a veritable 'treasury' of historical data on South Asian history more broadly. The relatively recent and unprecedented access modern scholars have had to the Tibetan canon along with access to living representatives of the textual traditions of the Vajrayāna in Tibet has provided an

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<sup>291</sup> Data for this argument from the consecration chapter of Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* is presented in chapter seven of this study.



opportunity to understand esoteric Buddhism in a way never before imagined. In contrast, the modern formulations of institutional Śaivism are perceived as lacking a similar degree of historical continuity. The Kaula lineages that were so important for the development of later Śaiva scholastic *tantra*, for example, are all believed to have been broken by the twelfth century with the Muslim conquest of North India.<sup>292</sup> In the Tamil South, where it might be possible to speak of an unbroken Kaula lineage in the surviving Śrīvidyā tradition surrounding the Goddess Trīpurasundarī, there has been a noticeable modification and softening of many of the originally transgressive elements of the Kaula<sup>293</sup> that is not unlike the popular, public face of *tantra* in the Tibetan cultural world. Before Sanderson began to publish his work, the study of the Śaiva, Jaina, and Vaiṣṇava esoteric initiatory cults that were contemporary with the emergence of esoteric Buddhism had arguably fallen behind as efforts to understand esoteric Buddhist traditions via their Tibetan witnesses increased. In this way Sanderson's Śaiva-centric approach has offered a much-needed corrective to this problem.

But despite being an immense contribution to the field, a Śaiva-centric methodology may distort or limit our view of history in certain areas. There are at least two instances in which Sanderson has applied a unidirectional borrowing thesis to the detriment of a more holistic reading of his data. The first involves his statements regarding the rise of Śaiva monasticism and the role that the proliferation of a wide-reaching network of Śaiva monastic institutions played in these traditions' eventual dominance. The second involves his discussion of Śaiva attitudes toward members of the lowest born strata of the *varṇāśramadharmā* system (*antyaja*). Both of these examples point to a potential bias in

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<sup>292</sup> David Gordon White, *Kiss of the Yogini*, 21.

<sup>293</sup> Douglass Renfrew Brooks, "Encountering the Hindu 'Other': Tantrism and the Brahmins of South India," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 60, no. 3 (Autumn, 1992): 405–36.

Sanderson's approach that may bear consequences for his arguments for a Śaiva-Buddhist unidirectional pattern of appropriation.

Sanderson identifies five primary factors in the South Asian medieval process through which the cultures that produced and supported the esoteric Śaiva and Buddhist cults rose to prominence on the subcontinent and beyond. These five are the spread of a new monarchical model at local, regional, and supraregional levels, the emergence systems of land-owning temples, the proliferation of new urban centers, an expansion of agrarian economies through land reclamation and settlement, and "the cultural and religious assimilation of the growing population of communities caught up in this expansion."<sup>294</sup> Part of this process involved Śaiva orders positioning themselves as inheritors and guarantors of the brahmanical social order, a critical component of Sanderson's thesis on Śaivism's rise in this period. As guarantors of the brahmanical social order *and* proprietors of their own initiatory cult, the Śaiva orders were in a unique position to guarantee both the proper order and function of the religious lives of a large majority of a king's subjects while also guaranteeing the king himself access to a transcendent religious power with which he might legitimize his rule or seek religious beatification or liberation (or both). This dual function of the tantric court preceptor is nicely summarized in White's statement on the tantric ruler as both a representation of the transcendent godhead and "the protocosmic representative of Everyman," who shares in the same concerns as his subjects regarding the potential interference in one's life by hostile supernatural beings and forces<sup>295</sup> and, although not noted by White, the pursuit of the soteriological goal of liberation. As Sanderson notes, Śaiva

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<sup>294</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 253. Oddly enough, though Sanderson lists a number of scholars whom he credits with his development of these five points, Ronald Davidson, is not among them.

<sup>295</sup> David Gordon White, "Tantra in Practice: Mapping a Tradition," in *Tantra in Practice*, edited by David Gordon White (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2000), 25.

preceptors produced modified initiation rituals for their royal patrons that would absolve them of the necessary commitments to ascetic practice but still guarantee them liberation. The success that the *atimārgic* Śaiva orders had in positioning themselves as guardians of the *varṇāśramadharmā* social order meant that their support could both reinforce the perception of a king's right to rule while also guaranteeing that the same king, as a Śaiva initiate, would hold these traditions in higher esteem than those of the Vaidika brahmins.<sup>296</sup>

The reward for the royal initiating guru's services was paid in the form of donations, the construction of temples and monasteries, and grants of revenue from lands designated to support those monasteries that served as endowments for these institutions.<sup>297</sup> The wealth that was heaped upon a royal family's guru would eventually lead to that guru and his particular sect to then to act as donors and patrons by building new monasteries, issuing land grants, supporting the arts, and building temples and entirely new settlements.<sup>298</sup>

Commenting on this dynamic, Sanderson writes "[i]n this way there developed a far-reaching network of interconnected seats of Saiddhāntika Śaiva learning. Figures at the summit of this clerical hierarchy thus came to exercise a transregional authority whose geographical extent could be greater than that of any contemporary king."<sup>299</sup> This last point is important. It indicates that the establishment of a Śaiva trans-regional network contributed significantly to social and cultural capital of the various Śaiva orders, making their involvement at court a desideratum for any ruler who might want to gain access to such a wide-reaching infrastructure. Through taking initiation and patronage of the right Śaiva sect, a king could potentially tap into an infrastructure that could allow his name to spread beyond his own

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<sup>296</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 254–57.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, 263.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

borders and facilitate the exchange of ideas, information, and goods. These points derive from a well-established canon of secondary literature on the function of monastic networks in South Asia and their importance to their many royal, guild, and merchant class patrons. This canon of secondary literature is, however, not directed at the monastic networks of the medieval Śaiva orders but at the monastic networks of the Buddhists that predated them.

It is difficult to think of a good reason for which Sanderson might describe the patron-preceptor dynamics involved in the expansion of the Śaiva monastic orders without mentioning that the Śaiva monastic orders would have found a clear model for the establishment of this kind of network among their Buddhist contemporaries. It is widely acknowledged that Buddhist monuments and *vihāras* played an integral role in the stabilization of trade and information networks across South Asia from the Sātavāhana dynasty (c. 1<sup>st</sup> BCE to 2<sup>nd</sup> CE) through the rise and fall of the Gupta-Vākāṭaka Empire. The epigraphic record left during these periods on the many Buddhist sites scattered across South Asia reveals patronage models in which monasteries were used to extend a ruler's economic and political reach into unsettled or uncontrolled territories and to control and secure lines of trade and communication between more substantial settlements.<sup>300</sup> In addition to their practical function, the construction of elaborate rock-cut cave complexes also served as monuments to the glory of their royal patrons, extending a ruler's notoriety and prestige well into the hinterlands of his own territories and potentially beyond. Given their similarities, it is strange that the possibility that the Śaiva orders derived their model for establishing a broad network of Śaiva monastic institutions from the Buddhist model receives no mention. The

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<sup>300</sup> This thesis is argued in a number of sources, but my first exposure to it was primarily through Himanshu Prabha Ray's *Monastery and Guild*. See also Richard S. Cohen, "Nāga, Yakṣiṇī, Buddha: Local Deities and Local Buddhism at Ajanta," in *History of Religions*, vol 37 no.4 (May, 1998) 360–400. For a more recent study see Jason Neelis, *Early Buddhist Transmission and Trade Networks: Mobility and Exchange within and beyond the Northwestern Borderlands of South Asia* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2011).

reason for this oversight becomes a bit clearer when we consider that to suggest that the success that Buddhist monastic networks enjoyed prior to the expansion of Śaiva institutional monasticism may have marked them as natural precursors for Śaiva monasticism would be to suggest that the inter-sectarian relationships between Śaivas and Buddhists may not have been quite so unidirectional.

The second point at which a potential Buddhist influence upon Śaivism is overlooked in Sanderson's work can be found in his discussion around Śaiva leniency regarding the issue of caste. There is no mention of any potential Buddhist precursor to the Śaiva initiatory traditions' relatively liberal approach to the issue of initiating low caste members of society. Citing evidence from commentarial works to the *Mṛgendra-* and *Raudrāgamas*, Sanderson states that the Śaiva initiation was open to all "who have been inspired by [Śiva's] power," noting the importance for this relatively inclusive position to these traditions' ability to function as a socializing force in newly conquered territories.<sup>301</sup> Even members of the lowest-born (*antyaja*) untouchable communities were drawn into the fold through a number of simplified methods. As Sanderson notes, in opposition to the exclusivist doctrine of the Vaidika brahmins, the Śaiva literary sources argued that the separation of the castes (*jātibheda*) was not a fact of reality but was something fabricated and socially unique to the brahmanical societies on the Indian subcontinent. The Śaiva orders offered an alternative perspective in which utter devotion to Śiva took precedent over social caste, with the four stages of initiation effectively filling the void for a social hierarchy in the absence of the brahmanical *varṇāśramadharmā* system.<sup>302</sup> Sanderson's characterization of the Śaiva stance on caste as a 'bold assertion' neglects that Buddhists had been saying some of the same things

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<sup>301</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 284–85. The material quoted here comes from Vakraśambhu, *Mṛgendrapradhativyākhyā*, 188 quoted by Sanderson in note 680 on p 284.

<sup>302</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 288–89.

about caste for nearly a millennium before the Saiddhāntika literature took shape. On the one hand, there is really nothing wrong about taking a Śaiva-centric approach to this issue given Sanderson's broader historical project on the rise of Śaivism. But to put this evidence forth in a work that devotes a substantial amount of energy toward supporting the thesis for Buddhist unidirectional borrowing from Śaiva traditions without even a passing mention of any movement in the other direction seems to betray a certain unnecessary bias. Such biases also constitute a potential hermeneutical problem in Sanderson's interpretation of epigraphic data on royal patronage and the rise of Śaivism.

### **III. Epigraphic Sources and the Problem of Religious Identity**

This hermeneutical problem influences Sanderson's discussion of his epigraphic data, where it is alleged that the primary religious affiliations of royal donors are recorded by the particular epithets that they left on their inscriptions. As noted above, the Śaiva epithet '*paramahésvara*' far outnumbers epithets representing allegiance to the other initiatory traditions.<sup>303</sup> The argument from this evidence relies upon the interplay of two key factors: the personal religious affiliation of the royal patron and the religious affiliation of the recipient of that patron's support. In a handful of instances, the relationship between these two factors is read from opposing perspectives relative to whether or not the patron self-identifies as Śaiva or Buddhist. The basic pattern that emerges is that any evidence of Śaiva patrons supporting Buddhist institutions is read with the implication that such data enforce the argument that these Buddhist institutions were somehow affected by Śaivism, while at the same time evidence of Buddhist rulers who acted as patrons to Śaiva temples and monasteries is *also* used as evidence of Śaivism's influence on Buddhism. So a Śaiva patron

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<sup>303</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 44.

supporting Buddhism shows how dominant Śaivism had become, and a Buddhist patron supporting Śaivism also shows how dominant Śaivism had become.

These positions are implied without any proper formulation of a general working hypothesis regarding the relationship between a patron's self-professed religious identity and the fact that the epigraphic data, at points, reflects the kind of egalitarian approach to royal patronage prescribed in works designed to govern these relationships such as the *Arthaśāstra*. The following presentation of Sanderson's reading of his epigraphic and textual historical data on the Licchavi (c. 5<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century) and Ṭhakuṛī (c. 8<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century) kings of Nepal and the Pāla dynasty (r. c. 750–1200 CE) highlights a number of instances where it may have been beneficial for Sanderson to explore the tension between a ruler's personal religious identity and his obligation to act as a patron for all religious institutions as a factor in the construction of religious identity. This is not to say that his reading of these sources is incorrect. My intention is simply to point out that a loosening of the kind of 'reified' conception of religious and sectarian identity that appears in this analysis, and for which he has been criticized by Davidson and Wedemeyer, could shed greater light on the inter-sectarian dynamics behind Śaivism's rise in the second half of the first millennium. Finally, Sanderson's data for these particular kingdoms have been selected because of their importance to the religious, political, and social milieu in which *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were composed. The Ṭhakuṛī and Pāla dynasties in particular exerted their influence during the centuries in which all of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were composed, and the geographic areas covered by both are known to have been some of the most important for the flourishing of the esoteric cults of the Buddhist *siddhas*.

Sanderson's presentation of his epigraphic evidence on the Licchavis, whose reign provides the earliest available historical data on Nepal and the Kathmandu Valley, opens with a 608 CE inscription recording a donative record for the Licchavi king Aṃśuvarman. The inscription provides a sense of the relative importance of five major Buddhist *vihāras* in the Kathmandu Valley, listing them alongside the valley's principle Śaiva site Paśupatināth and its major Vaiṣṇava temple at Cāṅgunārāyaṇa as the recipients of the royal court's highest level of donative support. These five *vihāras*, Paśupatināth, and Cāṅgunārāyaṇa all received the same level of donative support from the Licchavis, and this level of support was double that received by all temples and monasteries occupying the system's second tier. Concluding his survey of Licchavi donative practices with mention of the Licchavi king Narendradeva's (7<sup>th</sup> century) support of Buddhism, Sanderson cautions that such support was not in fact an accurate indication of a ruler's own religious affiliation because in the epigraphic evidence, "Narendradeva has the epithet *paramamāheśvara*."<sup>304</sup> Given the large body of evidence that the Licchavis were avid patrons of Buddhism, the argument for Śaiva dominance in this case literally hangs on a name.<sup>305</sup> My own reservations around using this method to determine the Śaiva identity of a given ruler does not rest on the issue of whether or not the epithets found in the epigraphic record can be accurately argued to reflect a ruler's actual affiliation. In many cases they most likely can and in fact do just this. What is in question is just how fluid a king's religious affiliation may have been in an environment dominated not by Śaivism, but by a persistent ideal of egalitarian patronage, and the degree to which epigraphic sources can capture this kind of fluidity. In the case of Sanderson's analysis of the Licchavi inscriptions,

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<sup>304</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 74–76.

<sup>305</sup> David White has offered the following comment when reviewing the argument I have presented here: "Furthermore, the *īśvara* moniker was applied to kings before it was applied to gods in the epic period; and it may be that in the Kathandu Valley of the 6<sup>th</sup> c. CE, the royal usage of the term still applied, with no sectarian implication whatsoever."



it appears that the Buddhist institutions receiving the highest level of royal support during the reign of Amśuvarman outnumbered Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava institutions five to two, yet the Licchavi are said here to all have declared allegiance to Śiva/Paśupati from Amśuvarman forward, and are thus assumed to have been Śaiva rulers.<sup>306</sup>

The presentation of evidence from the Ṭhakuṛī kings shares some similarities to that of the Licchavis. The Ṭhakuṛī rulers presided over a period when the majority of the canonical Buddhist *śāstras* were translated into Tibetan, and, perhaps most importantly, the period during which the Vajrayāna textual, initiatory, and instruction transmissions associated with the latter dissemination of the dharma (*spyi dar*) in Tibet were passed on to Tibetan translators. The Kathmandu valley, particularly the areas around the old kingdom currently referred to as Pāṭan or Lalitpur, is portrayed in Tibetan sources as a busy hub of exchange for these transmissions. Buddhism's popularity in the valley during this period is evidenced in the epigraphic record, with a large number of donations supporting the establishment of new Buddhist monasteries. Yet only one of the Ṭhakuṛī kings in this record, Siṃhadeva (r. 1110–1126) appears by Sanderson's criteria to have self-identified as Buddhist by taking the epithet *paramasaugata*.<sup>307</sup>

The conclusion Sanderson draws from these data hints at a potential over-emphasis on the exclusive nature of a king's professed religious affiliation. Noting the relative dearth of evidence from the Ṭhakuṛī period, Sanderson states that, "what there is suffices to remove any suspicion that they were Buddhists to the exclusion of Śaivism," noting that many of the Ṭhakuṛīs also supported the central Śaiva complex at Paśupatināth and supported the

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<sup>306</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 76.

<sup>307</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 77.

construction of new Śaiva temples.<sup>308</sup> Given the widespread evidence across the epigraphic data for egalitarian patronage, this statement seems out of place and reveals the implicit assumptions that underlie Sanderson's general argument. There is no reason to argue that the Ṭhakurī rulers' potential Buddhist affiliations would somehow have prevented them from acting as patrons to their Śaiva subjects. The evidence here seems to point to a culture of egalitarian patronage, not to the Ṭhakurī rulers' decision to compromise their own religious affiliation in order to act as patrons to Śaiva institutions. Sanderson's analysis here signals a general underestimation of the role of egalitarian patronage across South Asia. It replaces this phenomenon with a far more reified and exclusivist vision of royal religious affiliation to argue that, as with their Licchavi predecessors, the Ṭhakurī may have been patrons of Buddhism but were not themselves Buddhist.

Sanderson provides an extensive analysis of the literary, epigraphic, and archeological evidence for Pāla support of Buddhism as a model of a fully Buddhist kingdom responsible for constructing and propagating some of the largest monastic institutions and institutional networks in South Asia. He concludes his analysis by entertaining the possibility that the great Buddhist monasteries under the Pālas may have functioned like the imperial monasteries of China and Japan. The imperial Tibetan monastery at Samyé (*bsam yas*) should likely be added to this list not only because it signals the emergence of state sponsored Buddhism in Tibet, but because it is said to have been modeled on what was then the relatively newly constructed Pāla *mahāvihāra* at Uddanḍapura. The chapter then turns to Pāla support for Śaiva institutions, where significant epigraphic evidence is presented regarding King Nayapāla's support of temple building projects and image installations, most of them associated with some form of Śiva, without a single mention of his patronage of any

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<sup>308</sup> Ibid., 78–79.

Buddhist institution. In spite of these data it is argued that Nayapāla likely did not give up his Buddhist affiliation because he is referenced in the epigraphic record with the name *paramasaugata* and is recorded in Tāranātha's history as having had a Buddhist preceptor.

Sanderson argues that the egalitarian patronage of the Pāla rulers reflects the religious affiliations of the wider population and shows that, despite the enormous support that Buddhism received under the Pālas, it "was in no position to oust or diminish Śaivism."<sup>309</sup> Instead, he notes evidence for the symbiosis of Śaivism within even the large Pāla era monasteries.<sup>310</sup> It might be wise at this point to question just how thoroughly a ruler's religious affiliation impacts the religious affiliations of his subjects. It seems too much to grant that a ruler's self-professed religious affiliation in the epigraphic record would have somehow dictated the dominant religious affiliation of his subjects. The fact that there may have been a direct correspondence between the specific religious affiliation among the general populations in these kingdoms and the donative record is suspect given that these donations reflect the flow of resources among relatively elite portions of the population. Although it is entirely reasonable to assume that the broader population would gravitate toward those traditions for which there existed some infrastructure for public access, this means that the boom in the construction of Śaiva temples during the Pāla period, particularly during the reign of Nayapāla, might have reflected that ruler's corrective to the previously Buddhist-heavy donative practices of his predecessors. It might also signal that the Śaiva elite had become newly interested in the work of missionizing and conversion that can often accompany the construction of new temple complexes, perhaps because they were in a position of relative weakness compared to their Buddhist counterparts.

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<sup>309</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 116.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, 116.

#### IV. The Emergence of a 'Substratum' in Sanderson's Argument

Sanderson has offered correctives to the issues of egalitarian patronage practices and the role that popular religion may have played in the rise of the Śaiva sects in two recent articles. The most recent of the two constitutes an effective response to Ruegg's use of inclusivism in his 'substratum' argument and provides a far more nuanced exploration of a range of approaches to patronage and notions of tolerance, exclusivism, and inclusivism, that show up in donor inscriptions. Here Sanderson argues that sectarian antagonism was largely motivated and carried out by religious groups themselves and acknowledges that the general approach revealed in donative inscriptions is one of tolerance and equal patronage as prescribed in the *smarta* brahmanical literature and the *Arthaśāstra*. The egalitarianism that donors demonstrate is argued to be representative of a balancing act that rulers were required to perform to prevent any single religious sect from becoming too dominant over its rivals.<sup>311</sup> This important distinction locates the more exclusivist trends in South Asia in the hands of religious groups themselves, positioning the royal patron in the role of a mediator largely committed to preventing large-scale religious sectarian conflict. Sanderson also gestures here toward the idea that rulers in South Asia may have held more fluid conceptions of religious allegiance than his previous work has suggested. He admits that it is incorrect to suppose that a king's "publicly declared allegiance to one or another of these [Śaiva, Buddhist, or Vaiṣṇava, etc.] traditions was accompanied by strict exclusivity of patronage," and that "it was common, an no doubt politic, for him to extend support to religious traditions other than his own."<sup>312</sup> Whereas his previous work had focused primarily on the Khmer rulers as

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<sup>311</sup> Sanderson, "Tolerance, Exclusivity," 159.

<sup>312</sup> Sanderson, "Tolerance, Exclusivity," 201.

somewhat unique in their inclusivism, here further evidence is presented to argue that the Khmers may not have been outliers in this kind of practice and that the courts of Indian rulers were often quite tolerant of their members holding variant religious affiliations.<sup>313</sup> But Sanderson stops short of admitting that a ruler's practice of egalitarian patronage might also indicate, or perhaps even require, that the king hold a somewhat fluid personal religious identity. This possibility is compounded by the fact that sectarianism and the tendency toward sectarian rivalry is predominately located among religious sects themselves who may consequently not have been altogether interested in courting patronage from a ruler who had little to no actual affinity for their tradition. Thus, even if we accept that a ruler's self-professed religious affinity can be determined simply by his epithets in the epigraphic record, the extent to which this allegiance was assumed at the expense of allegiance to all other traditions is still unresolved.

The question that remains is what precisely is meant by a royal patron's professed religious affiliation. Certainly royal patrons who declared their allegiance to any of the three major initiatory traditions, Śaiva, Buddhist, or Vaiṣṇava, preserved a dual allegiance in their commitment to simultaneously uphold the Vaidika social order. Why, then, should we assume that kings could not hold, for example, dual Śaiva-Buddhist or dual Śaiva-Vaiṣṇava identities? Furthermore, what can be said about the specificity of religious identities during this period in general? The central theoretical consideration in this chapter and the chapters that follow in Part II of this dissertation that fluid conceptions of religious identity were present at nearly all levels of medieval South Asian societies despite the fact that the new initiatory traditions promoted an exclusivist rhetoric. This fluidity of religious affiliation was in fact built into both the Śaiva and Buddhist traditions in various ways, and the exclusive

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<sup>313</sup> Sanderson, "Tolerance, Exclusivity," 205.

rhetoric of consecration had the effect of acknowledging the possibility of such fluidity as well as supplying a mechanism for its facilitation. Most importantly, the possibility that religious and sectarian identities were more fluid than is usually assumed might indicate one reason for the ease with which various aspects of Śaiva and Buddhist traditions were able to maintain their individual identities while so clearly also sharing many similar, and in some cases identical, ritual technologies, yogic and ascetic practices, and iconographic programs.<sup>314</sup>

When the role of popular religion is introduced into the 'Śaiva Age' thesis in his more recent work, the rigid conception of sectarian identity on which Sanderson's 'borrowing model' depends begins to give way to broader, more fluid conceptions of religious identity. A bit of the 'substratum' model begins to make its way into Sanderson's own thesis because the argument is actually presented in some of his sources. For instance, the ninth century Kaśmīri scholar Bhaṭṭa Jayanta's *Nyāyamañjarī* includes a debate with a rhetorical Buddhist opponent that states that Buddhism is a false tradition because it does not meet the criteria of being accepted by the "greater society (*mahājana*).\" As Sanderson notes, "[t]he Buddhist then asks rhetorically, 'What is this "greater society"; what is its form; where is it located; how big is its population; and what are its customs?' and adds that in any case the Buddhists have their own "greater society" consisting of their own co-religionists.\" After this line of questioning, Bhaṭṭa Jayanta admits to the opponent "that he has no physical or quantitative data concerning this greater society... [b]ut he does know that its values are pervasive, to the extent that the Buddhists themselves are unable to escape them, since they too avoid

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<sup>314</sup> Phyllis Granoff has written on this last point in her positing of an 'eclectic ritual culture' of medieval India in the following two articles: Phyllis Granoff, "Other People's Ritual: Ritual Eclecticism in Early Medieval Indian Religions," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28, no. 4 (2000): 399–424; and Phyllis Granoff, "My Ritual and My Gods: Ritual Exclusiveness in Medieval India," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 29, no. ½ Special issue: Ingalls Festschrift (April 2001): 109–34.

untouchables and those (the Śākta Śaivas) who indulge in orgiastic rites do so covertly, not full believing in the rightness of their transgressive actions."<sup>315</sup> Here Bhaṭṭa Jayanta assumes Vaidika brahmin social convention to be so pervasive it is inseparable from his imagined "greater society." The proposal of such a "greater society" should at this point elicit echoes of Ruegg's 'pan-Indian religious substratum' thesis, and Jayanta's initial admission that he in fact has no data to support its existence sounds remarkably similar to both Sanderson and Davidson's critiques of Ruegg. Bhaṭṭa Jayanta's argument also resembles Sanderson's argument that the Śaiva sects' ability to integrate itself into brahmanical culture as the proprietors of the Vaidika brahmin social order was one of the strongest contributing factors to its acceptance at the courts of South Asia's rulers and the subsequent rise of institutional Śaivism.<sup>316</sup>

Sanderson's data on the role of popular Śaivism in the rise of the Śaiva sects in the medieval period begins to fill in a large gap in the 'borrowing model' around the relationship between the institutional Śaivism of court preceptors and major monastic institutions and the Śaivism practiced by less elite strata of society. This argument integrates the role of localized religion within the argument for Śaiva dominance and is ultimately aimed at providing further evidence for what might have motivated a unidirectional pattern Śaiva-to-Buddhist borrowing. Based on the frequency with which Śaiva names appear among lay donors in Buddhist and Jain donative inscriptions, Sanderson concludes that "when Śaivism did rise to prominence in the epigraphic record, as it did in later centuries, it did so on the basis of an already well-established and widespread tradition of popular devotion that goes back at least

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<sup>315</sup> Sanderson, "Tolerance, Exclusivity," 189 note 69.

<sup>316</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 249–51.

to the second century BC."<sup>317</sup> Embedded within a general argument for the importance of epigraphic data in unpacking the complex social, political, and religious histories in South Asia, Sanderson argues that Śaivism appears to have had some presence among the general population before the earliest evidence for the formation of the *atimārgic* Śaiva sects and well before these sects gained prominence in the courts of South Asian rulers. This does not mean that the original top-down model of the 'Śaiva Age' thesis is completely surrendered for a more bottom-up 'popular Śaiva substratum' argument. Instead the popularity of propitiating local Mother goddesses and Bhairavas among the broader agrarian lay Śaiva base is said to have functioned as the source not for the *atimārgic* Śaiva cults but for the later *mantramārgic*, tantric formulations of Bhairava and his circle of *yoginīs* as "initiatory Śaivism set about elaborating its own systems for the elevated, 'Tantric' propitiation of these deities."<sup>318</sup>

This statement appears to be a nod, although not explicitly stated as such, to David White's work on the connection between Kuṣāṇa-era *mātrka* cults and the later Śaiva *mantramārga* representations of Bhairava and his circle of *yoginīs* in such works as the *Picumata/ Brahmayāmala* and *Siddhayogeśvarīmatā*.<sup>319</sup> White's work on this topic is largely concerned with pushing back against analyses of tantric traditions that rely too heavily upon the literary production of an elite and institutionally affiliated minority at the expense of exploring the more widespread and popular forms of religiosity that might still be rightfully understood as tantric, or, as Sanderson hints here, may actually constitute a substratum of sorts from which the later Bhairava and Śāktā *tantric* streams emerged. White has provided an entire monograph exploring precisely the connections between the more popular,

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<sup>317</sup> Sanderson, "The Impact of Inscriptions," 222.

<sup>318</sup> Sanderson, "The Impact of Inscriptions," 224.

<sup>319</sup> White, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, 27–66.



pragmatic, forms of tantric religiosity and the more elite, transcendental practices and religious agents with whom Sanderson is exclusively concerned.<sup>320</sup> He has also provided a working schema of three different groups of tantric actors—elite specialists who are formally initiated into a specific textual lineage, specialists lacking in formal initiation who are trained through oral transmission and serve non-elite clientele, and householder non-specialists whose personal religious practice still qualifies as tantric.<sup>321</sup> The bulk of Sanderson's work only addresses the first of these three groups, and regardless of whether or not one accepts White's schema, even Sanderson seems to have moved toward an admission that the view of Śaiva tantric traditions 'from the top' does not in fact provide a clear picture of the historical importance of Śaivism and its connection to tantric religiosity more broadly. The two aspects of White's schema that find no place within Sanderson's work, but which are clearly important to understanding the emergence of the tantric textual communities and their initiatory cults in history, both describe agents whose religious or sectarian identities were likely more fluid than their more elite institutional counterparts. This schema is thus far more comprehensive in scope than Sanderson's for the simple reason that it is concerned with the understanding of a tantric culture, broadly conceived, and not the representation of that tantric culture among its most prominent, elite Śaiva sectarian institutions.

## **V. Conclusion**

As Peter Gottschalk points out in his study of Hindu-Muslim identities, religious identity is itself not always the primary social and cultural determinant of identity in South Asia, despite being treated as such by both European and American scholars of South Asian Religions.

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<sup>320</sup> The exploration of tantric religiosity as essentially the fundamental mode of religiosity in South Asia is the explicitly stated intention of his *Kiss of the Yoginī*. See White, *Kiss of the Yoginī*, 2.

<sup>321</sup> David Gordon White, "Tantra in Practice," 24.

Other identity structures such as familial, collective, historical identities can and do often overrule religious identities in South Asia.<sup>322</sup> The colonial and post-colonial periods have seen a marked solidification in the boundaries of religious identity across South Asia as a product first of the broader colonial administrative project, and currently of the ongoing nationalist project in the contemporary Indian state. However, even with these developments, it is still not accurate today to argue that one's religious identity supersedes all other bases for identity formation in contemporary India. And if it is not even possible to make this argument in a contemporary India currently ruled by a Hindu fundamentalist regime, one wonders just how it would be possible to argue for religious affiliation as the primary determinant of identity in the past. It must be admitted first, therefore, that there is fluidity in the degree to which religious affiliation has any ultimate influence over the parameters of both individual and collective identities in South Asia. It is in light of this recognition that this study now turns to the topic of the fluidity of social and religious identity in the *caryā* and *vrata* practices outlined in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of the first contribution that this corpus can make to developing a greater understanding of the construction and manipulation of identity in the culture of the esoteric Buddhist initiatory traditions.

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<sup>322</sup> Peter Gottschalk, *Beyond Hindu and Muslim: Multiple Identity Narratives from Village India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9. For Gottschalk's theory on the superimposition of religious identity as primary in South Asia among European and American scholars see Matthew N. Schmalz and Peter Gottschalk ed. *Engaging South Asian Religions: Boundaries, Appropriations, and Resistances* (Albany NY: State University of New York Press, 2012), 2.

**Chapter 6:**  
**Secrecy, Dissimulation,**  
**and Simulation<sup>323</sup> in the *Guhyacaryā***

**I. Introduction: Wandering Like a Ghoul: Performing Marginality**

If normative social codes of morality and ethics can be considered part of the discursive parameters within which the notion of 'humanity' is constructed, then the rejection of such normative codes of ethics effectively renders one something other-than human, be that imagined in positive terms as *super*-human or negative terms as either *sub*-human or *inhuman*. The *Śāntiparvan* of the *Mahābhārata* establishes just such a relationship in its discussion of the behavioral determinates of caste in the following passage:

[O]riginally Brahmā created just Brahmins but those who were short tempered and violent left their *varṇa*, turned red and became *kṣatriyas*, those who took to cattle-rearing and agriculture turned yellow and became *vaiśyas*, and those who in their delusion took to injury and untruth turned black and became *śūdras*...! those who diverged still further from the proper norms and did not recognise them became Piśācas, Rākṣasas, Pretas, and various sorts of Mlecchas.<sup>324</sup>

*Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasamhitā* 6.4.1–2 provides a similar set of correspondences between normative

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<sup>323</sup> The terms "secrecy," "dissimulation," and "simulation" are used here in the sense in which they were presented so long ago in the essays of Francis Bacon (1561–1626). Bacon outlines the distinction between these three as follows: "There be three degrees of this hiding and veiling of a man's self. The first, closeness, reservation, and secrecy; when a man leaveth himself without observation, or without hold to be taken, what he is. The second, dissimulation, in the negative; when a man lets fall signs and arguments, that he is not that he is. And the third, simulation, in the affirmative; when a man industriously and expressly feigns and pretends to be that he is not." See Francis Bacon, "Of Simulation and Dissimulation," in *The Essays of Francis Bacon* (New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909), 18. To summarize, *secrecy*, in Bacon's formulation, represents the act of withholding information; *dissimulation* signifies the act of misrepresenting one's true identity or "pretending not to be what one is;" and *simulation* signifies the act of taking on a false identity or "appearing to be what one is not." These clarifications are drawn from Talal Asad's presentation of the above passage from Bacon's collected *Essays* in his study of the production of the anthropological category of 'ritual.' See Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 65–69.

<sup>324</sup> MhBh 12.181.12–18 as translated by Bronkhorst in Johannes Bronkhorst, *How The Brahmins Won: From Alexander to the Guptas* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2016), 124.

behavior and one's identity as a human being that moves this association closer to the realm of demonology and the existential problem of the body as a permeable, open conduit:

1. One should take note of a person's knowledge, understanding, speech, movement, strength, and humanity. Whenever in a man there is an absence of humanity, one might say there is a *bhūta graha*.
2. By the tenor of one's appearance, temperament [*prakṛti*], speech, gait, etc., which one assumes in conformity with a *bhūta*, one may conclude that he is possessed [*āviṣṭam*] by that *bhūta*.<sup>325</sup>

The manipulation of these dynamics of possession among the initiatory traditions was not limited to its metaphysical applications, which often conceived of the 'union' of *yoga* as a kind of positive possession—these traditions also acknowledged and used the social dynamics of negative possession to their advantage. Ascetics and spirit beings occupy the same social spaces on the fringes of South Asia's vision of civilized society. The yogic ascetic traditions of the Buddhist *siddhas* celebrated this marginality in the ritual iconography of the eight charnel grounds. These traditions portray the successful adept as a hero (*vīra*) of the periphery who, through mastery of a fully embodied realization that could transform the ordinary body into a deity-*maṇḍala*, demonstrated invulnerability to attack from spirit beings by deliberately haunting the same spaces.

The performed marginality of the Buddhist *siddhas* knew its audience well, and the *siddhas* were clearly not the first to use the behavioral correspondences with madness, possession, and social marginalization as deliberate mode of dissimulative asceticism. The dramaturgical instructions for acting out madness in Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* presented in chapter two of this study indicate that the markings of a Pāśupata ascetic had already become entwined with the social and behavioral indicators for madness by the early centuries CE. The *Pāśupatasūtra* instructions for the initiated ascetic who has progressed to the second

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<sup>325</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 493.

stage in his practice in which he relinquishes all sectarian marks are in fact part of a larger ascetic performative repertoire. It is thus possible to read Bharata's instructions on performing madness as essentially a performance of a performance of madness. IN this sense, Bharata's play actor feigning madness in the garb of a Pāśupata signals the kind of double dissimulation that is found in the *caryā* and *vrata* practices of the Buddhist *sādhaka*, in which the performer adopts a dissimulative mode by taking up an outer appearance that is itself already dissimulative. Also like Bharata's paly actor, the Vajrayāna *sādhaka* performing the *caryā* and *vrata* conceals his identity by taking on the ascetic markings associated with a number of Śaiva ascetic practices that are themselves the product of a theistic brahmanical dissimulative asceticism performed by brahmins who are concealing their brahmin identities.<sup>326</sup>

The instructions in *Pāśupatasūtra* chapter three to "wander like a *preta*" (*pretaveccaret PS 3.11*) and chapter four to 'wander alone in the world like a madman' (*unmatavad eko vicareta loke PS 4.6*) repurpose the behavioral determinates of status as a human being, possession, and madness that we see in the *Mahābhārata* and the Āyurvedic literature toward a dissimulative asceticism in which the initiate intentionally cultivates social marginalization. The *Pāśupatasūtra* recognizes the injunction to 'wander like a *preta*' as a precursor to the fourth phase of the Pāśupata *sādhana*, the *gūḍhavrata*, in which the initiate progresses from the initial dissimulative phase of relinquishing sectarian marks, wandering like a *preta*, and courting public censure to a deeper level of dissimulation in which he conceals all evidence that he is an initiate and behaves as if he is insane. In this way, the Pāśupata *gūḍhavrata* simultaneously moves the initiate closer to the margins of

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<sup>326</sup> This is particularly the case for *atimārgic* traditions like the Pāñcārthika Pāśupatas that only permitted brahmin men as initiates, though the practices would retain the same dissimulative quality when adopted by a member of any caste.

brahmanical society, and deeper into the social landscape of the world of spirit beings.

Commenting on this practice, Chakroborti notes:

The ascetic should now conceal his learning and penances which he had previously acquired; so he should perform his vows secretly and even keep his utterances concealed from others. Thus concealing all these doors (vows) he should behave as a lunatic, ignorant, epileptic, dull, a man of bad character and the like in such a way as to be abused or condemned by the unknowing public.<sup>327</sup>

The *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Pāśupatasūtra* are both examples of a performed madness that capitalizes on the emergence of a certain 'dossier' for possession that Smith argues emerges in the narrative deployment of possession in the *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*.<sup>328</sup> The dating for both the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Pāśupatasūtra* is too speculative to make an argument for which textual tradition may have been the first to formally introduce this kind of performed madness. It is clear, however, that both of these works indicate a certain degree of awareness around the ability to conceal one's identity and cultivate an intentional marginality by adopting a set of behavioral patterns that are understood as symptoms of madness, and that doing so shares a certain relationship with the behaviors and appearances of an ascetic.

The performed madness of Bharata's play actor and the Pāśupata initiate find expression as a mode of esoteric Buddhist asceticism in Padmavajra's description of the *unmattavrata* or 'madman's observance,' part of an amalgamation of known Śaiva *vrata* practices that are re-branded as Buddhist under the umbrella term *guhyaçaryā* in chapter six of his *Guhyasiddhi*. Given that there is evidence for an ascetic observance by the name *unmattavrata* in the *Niśvāsātattvasamhitā*<sup>329</sup> and strong evidence that Padmavajra was

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<sup>327</sup> Chakroborti trans., *Pāśupata Sūtram*, 26.

<sup>328</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 247.

<sup>329</sup> Sanderson, "The Lākulas," 209. Sanderson notes here that a practice by the name *unmattavrata* is treated as an independent ascetic practice belonging to the Lākula system in the third chapter of the *Niśvāsaguhyā*.

familiar with some version of this text,<sup>330</sup> it seems entirely reasonable to argue that the practice made its way into the Vajrayāna from a Śaiva source. If we include data from the twentieth chapter of the *Brahmayāmala* on "The Vidyā-Observances," the Śaiva character of the socially transgressive asceticism proposed in Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhyacaryā* becomes even more obvious. Finally, Padmavajra himself seems to admit to this kind of hybridity in the Buddhist *caryā* and *vrata* when he instructs his reader to adopt whatever ascetic practice they find agreeable, listing the Śaiva Pāśupata *vrata* and the *mahāvrata* by name. The passage occurs in chapter four as his instructions on the generation stage yoga turn to a discussion of the ascetic practices of the *guhyacaryā* completion stage practices:

Thus having truly understood  
 The meditation on the *mahāmudrā*, |  
 One should then join it with method, and  
 Choose the observance one wishes || 4.51 ||

Be it Buddhist, Jain, or  
 Śaiva [such as the] Pāśupata [observance], |  
 The divine *mahāvrata*, or another  
 Which is dear to one's heart. || 4.52 ||<sup>331</sup>

Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhyacaryā* combine elements from a number of known Śaiva *vrata* practices. He also seems quite aware of the fact that these practices are not explicitly explained in the *Guhyasamājatantra* in the following passage, where he justifies his own decision to describe them in greater detail:

The *vratin* should assume an appearance

<sup>330</sup> See my discussion of *Guhyasiddhi* 8.1–12 below, which mentions the *Niśvāsattattvasamhitā* by name.

<sup>331</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 32.

evaṃ tattvena vijñāya mahāmudrāvibhāvanam |  
 sopāyaṃ tu tataḥ kuryād yadiṣṭaṃ rocate vratam || 4.51 ||  
 bauddhaṃ cā(caivā)rhatam vāpi śaivaṃ pāśupataṃ tathā |  
 no cenmahāvrataṃ divyamanyad vā yanmanahpriyam || 4.52 ||

Whose social standing is considered |  
Reviled among the general population  
And then practice the secret observance. || 6.8 ||

Since the *caryā* referred to as secret  
That is contained in the *Śrī Samāja* [reads] |  
"Those who take feces and urine as food  
Shall attain a good result during the *sādhana*," || 6.9 ||<sup>332</sup>

And [since it is also indicated] by various other  
Things that are taught in the *tantra* |  
Such as the divine *samayas*, specifically the 'lamps,' etc.,  
And the ultimate reality of the *mudrā* consecration, || 6.10 ||

I shall explain the unsurpassed  
Secret *caryā* that was explained  
By Cittavajra in these virtuous  
*Vajra*-verses to the best of my ability. || 6.11 ||

It was concealed by Cittavajra,  
[Yet] I shall explain [it] at length |  
For the benefit of the lords of *sādhakas*  
Who long for the result of Buddhahood. || 6.12 ||<sup>333</sup>

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<sup>332</sup> Pādas 6.9cd of *Guhyasiddhi* appear to be quoting from verse five in the fifth chapter of the *Guhyasamājantra*, which discusses 'the definition of conduct' (*carya[ā]lakṣana*) or 'the meaning of the doctrine of highest dharma conduct' (*dharmacaryāgradharmārtha*). The verse can be found in Matsunaga, *The Guhyasamāja Tantra*, 15. There it reads:

ye paradravayābhiratā nityaṃ kāmaratās ca ye |  
viṃmūtrāhārakṛtyā ye bhavyās te khalu sādhanā | 5.5

Those who steal another's property  
And who are always focused on sexual desire |  
Who consume feces and urine as food,  
They attain a good result during the *sādhana*. | 5.5

Padmavajra's version of the verse drops the correlative 'ye' and adds the term 'arthā' but aside from this variant it is identical to *GST* 5.5cd.

<sup>333</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 39–40.

vikalpayonisambhūtaṃ yallopeṣu jugupsitam |  
tattadbhāvaṃ samāsthāya cared guhyavratam vratī || 6.8 ||  
śrīsamāje yathā caryā guhyākhyā samavasthitā |  
viṃmūtrāhārakṛtyārthā bhavyāste khalu sādhanā || 6.9 ||  
anyaiśca samayairdivyaiḥ pradīpādyairviśeṣataḥ |  
mudrādhiṣṭhānatattvaiśca vividhaistantracoditaiḥ || 6.10 ||  
uktā yā cittavajreṇa ebhīrvajrapadaiḥ śubhaiḥ |  
tāṃ pravakṣyāmyaham yatnād guhyacaryāmanuttarām || 6.11 ||  
gopitā cittavajreṇa vistarāt kathayāmyaham |  
hitāya sādhanakendrāṇaṃ buddhatvaphalakāṅkṣiṇām || 6.12 ||



Despite his argument that the instructions on the various transgressive practices taught in the *Guhyasamājatantra* are also instructions on the *caryā*, Padmavajra seems to admit almost in the same breath that the teaching on the *guhyacaryā* he is about to impart was 'concealed' in the text. It is not overly skeptical for the reader to observe that Padmavajra is making a somewhat weak appeal to a Buddhist scriptural precedent for his *guhyacaryā* here. The argument that these practices are 'concealed' in the teaching of the *Guhyasamājatantra* provides one of the many potential interpretations of the terms *guhyacaryā*, *guhyavrata*, and even *guhyasiddhi*—being the 'practice,' 'observance,' and 'proof of attainment' that is concealed (*gopita*) in the *Guhyasamājatantra*. At the same time these practices are also rightfully referred to as 'secret' because they involve a yogin secretly manifesting the *maṇḍala* of his tutelary deity while he wanders in public taking on the characteristics of one or more classes of socially marginalized personae, while 'wanders like a ghoul.'

The connection Padmavajra draws between the four transgressive *samayas* of killing, stealing, adultery, and lying and the *caryā* that is concealed in the *Guhyasamājatantra* deserves further consideration given its direct connection with a similar set of practices from the *smarta* brahmanical literature. Padmavajra provides a perspective on the *caryā* and *vrata* practices in chapter one that is absent in his extensive explanations of these practices later in the text. In some of the very first verses of his work, he suggests a direct connection between the transgressive *samayas* and the behaviors and appearances one takes up during the secret observance (*pracchannavrata*):

Even those who act contrary to the *dharma*  
 Attain the ultimate awakening, |  
 The un-fractured threefold vajra body,  
 By means of the secret observance. || 1.12 ||

Those who are exiled for a period of time,<sup>334</sup>  
Cruel people who have killed a living being<sup>335</sup> |  
And delight in cruel actions,  
Obtain the unsurpassed state. || 1.13 ||

Those people who, having caused  
Confusion with a net of lies |  
Make their livelihood, they too  
Quickly attain *siddhi* by means of the *caryā*. || 1.14 ||

Those who have sex with another man's wife,  
Who steal another man's wealth, |  
Even those continually engage in such  
Low and reviled actions, || 1.15 ||

Having practiced that, they quickly  
Go beyond the height of the desire realm. |  
I speak of the *sādhakas* [who attain *siddhi*]  
By means of the secret observance. || 1.16 ||

One attains the supreme divine secret *caryā*,  
Endowed with method, that grants all of the *siddhis* |  
And advances to the state of *Vajrasattva*  
In this very lifetime. || 1.17 ||<sup>336</sup>

The opening verse on those who 'act contrary to the dharma' is not only a reference to 'dharma' in the sense of the Buddhist teachings. It also draws upon the term's more broadly conceived meaning as 'the law,' though certainly both understandings of the term might also

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<sup>334</sup> My rendering of this verse reads this compound in the nominative plural to match *krūrāḥ* as follows: *kālāvadhivivarjitāḥ* |

<sup>335</sup> My translation of the Sanskrit *atipātinaḥ* follows the Tibetan rendering of this line, which reads: /srog chags gsod cing khrod ba dang /

<sup>336</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 6.

*prāpnuvanti parāṃ bodhiṃ trivajrābhedarūpiṇim |*  
*pracchannavratārūpeṇa dharmasyāpi virodhi(dha)kāḥ || 1.12 ||*  
*vrajantyanuttaraṃ sthānaṃ kālāvadhivivarjitā(ta)m |*  
*prāṇātipātinaḥ krūrāḥ krūrakarmaratāśca ye || 1.13 ||*  
*mithyāvāgvādajālena mohayitvāpi ye narāḥ |*  
*narā jīvanti te'pyāśu yatra sidhyanti caryayā || 1.14 ||*  
*paradārābhigantāraḥ paraci(vi)ttāpahāriṇaḥ |*  
*jugupsāhīnakarmāṇi kurvanto'pi nirantaram || 1.15 ||*  
*yāṃ caritvā vrajantyāṇu(śu) kāmādhātūrddha(rdhva)taḥ param |*  
*pracchannavratārūpeṇa sādhanāṇāṃ bravīmyaham || 1.16 ||*  
*guhyacaryāṃ parāṃ divyāṃ sopāyāṃ sarvasiddhidām |*  
*prāpyate janmanīhaiva vajrasattvapadaṃ yayā || 1.17 ||*

be preserved here. When read through the lens of the demonological paradigm, the term *trivajrābhedarūpin* signifies the indestructible, non-permeable body that the *sādhaka* who performs this *vrata* perfects through mastering the deity-*maṇḍala* practice of the generation stage yoga. This body is 'un-fractured' (*abhedā*), meaning that it lacks the kind of 'cracks' or 'breaks' implied by the term *chidra* in the Āyurvedic literature on demonology.

The ritualized prescription of these transgressive acts indicates the text's reliance upon some version of the *Guhyasamājatantra*<sup>337</sup> for this practice, but here Padmavajra provides an explicit connection between the transgressive *samayas* of killing, lying, stealing, and adultery and the classical function of *vrata* practices preserved in brahmanical *Dharmaśāstra* literature. All four of the transgressive acts prescribed as the initiate's *samaya* during the higher consecrations are in fact crimes that require one to do penance for a certain period of time by taking up some kind of *vrata*. Thus according to *Manusmṛti*, these are all crimes for which one would be, in Padmavajra's words, 'exiled for a period of time.'<sup>338</sup>

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<sup>337</sup> We see a similar connection between an individual who has committed great sins (*mahāpāpakṛtaḥ*) who nevertheless attains *siddhi* in the opening of chapter five of the *Guhyasamājatantra*. See Matsunaga, *The Guhyasamāja Tantra*, 15.

nirvikalpārthasambhūtāṃ rāgadveṣamahākulām |  
 sādhayet pravaraṃ siddhim agrayāne hi anuttare | 5.1  
 caṇḍālaveṇukārādyā māraṇārthārthacintakāḥ |  
 sidhyanti agrayāne 'smin mahāyāne hy anuttare | 5.2  
 ānantaryaprabhṛtayo mahāpāpakṛto 'pi ca |  
 sidhyante buddhayāne 'smin mahāyānamahodadhau | 5.3  
 ācāryanindanaparā naiva sidhyanti sādhanē |  
 prānātipātinaḥ sattvā mṛṣāvādaratāś ca ye | 5.4  
 ye paradravyaḥbhiratā nityam kāmaratāś ca ye |  
 viṇmūtrāhārakṛtyā ye bhavyās te khalu sādhanē | 5.5  
 māṭṛbhaginīputrīś ca kāmaved yas tu sādhanāḥ |  
 sa siddhim vipulāṃ gacchen mahāyānāgradharmatām | 5.6  
 mātaram buddhasya vibhoḥ kāmāyan na ca lipyate |  
 sidhyate tasya buddhatvaṃ nirvikalpasya dhimataḥ | 5.7

<sup>338</sup> Patrick Olivelle, trans. *Manu's Code of Law: A Critical edition and Translation of the Mānava-Dharmaśāstra* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 221–22. The relevant material is in chapter 11 verses 127–31 on 'Homicide' in the section of the text on 'Penances for Injury to Living Beings' that is translated by Olivelle as follows:

"(127) One-fourth the penance for the murder of a Brahmin is prescribed by tradition for the murder of a Kṣatriya; one-eighth for the murder of a virtuous Vaiśya; and one-sixteenth for the murder of a Śūdra.

The degree to which the four transgressive *samayas* of killing, lying, adultery, and stealing should be taken literally is a lively topic of debate among Indian and Tibetan exegetes as well as modern scholars of Buddhist tantric traditions. The *Guhyasamājatantra*, which introduces the *guhyābhiṣeka* and its four transgressive *samayas* to the esoteric Buddhist consecration liturgy,<sup>339</sup> indicates in its ninth chapter that these *samayas* are coded language for specific aspects of the visualization practices associated with the *kulas* of the Buddhas Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi.<sup>340</sup> At first glance, Padmavajra does not appear to be speaking about a visualization practice in *Guhyasiddhi* 1.12–17. In fact, the visualization practice that is used to explain the 'coded' language of these four transgressive *samayas* in the ninth chapter of the *Guhyasamājatantra* is precisely the kind of elaborate, generation stage practice that Padmavajra places in direct opposition to the completion stage yogas of the *pracchannavrata*.<sup>341</sup>

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(128) If a Brahmin kills a Kṣatriya unintentionally, however, he should give one thousand cows and a bull to purify himself. (129) Or, he may perform during three years the observance prescribed for killing a Brahmin, keeping himself controlled, wearing matted hair, living far away from the village, and making his home at the foot of a tree. (130) A Brahmin who kills a virtuous Vaiśya should perform the same observance for one year, or give one hundred cows along with a bull. (131) One who kills a Śūdra should perform the same vow completely for six months, or give ten white cows along with a bull to a Brahmin."<sup>339</sup> Harunaga Isaacson, "Observations on the Development of the Ritual of Initiation (*abhiṣeka*) in the Higher Buddhist Tantric Systems," in *Hindu and Buddhist Initiations in India and Nepal*, edited by Astrid and Christof Zotter (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2010), 264.

<sup>340</sup> Matsunaga, *Guhyasamājatantra*, 26–29.

<sup>341</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 6.

Sanskrit:

utpannakramayogena tyaktā(ktvā) sarvaprayatnataḥ |  
 utpattivistaraṃ dūramādikarmikabhāvanām || 1.6 ||  
 tantrasadbhāvamāśritya siddhisamde(do)halakṣaṇam |  
 vihāya vistaraṃ sarvaṃ bhāvanāyāntarāyikam || 1.7 ||

The elaborate rite of the generation [stage],  
 now long past, is a beginner's meditation.  
 With all one's effort, one gives it up  
 For the completion stage yoga [and] || 1.6 ||

One relies the true nature of the *tantras*  
 That possesses the multitude of *siddhis*, |  
 Giving up the all elaborate rites

A possible resolution to this issue is provided in the opening instructions on the *guhyacaryā* in *Guhyasiddhi* chapter six:

Having endowed one's own body with a method,  
Devoid of signs and without false appearances, |  
One should diligently visualize [oneself]  
As Vajrasattva who is supreme bliss. || 6.5 ||<sup>342</sup>

The Vajrasattva self-generation constitutes the preliminary for taking up the *vrata* here, just as committing one of the four acts of killing, stealing, lying, and adultery are prerequisites for taking up the *vrata* in *Dharmaśāstra* literature. The instructions from chapter nine of the *Guhyasamājantra* treat these offenses as homologues for the clans of the tathāgatas, and in this way to adopt the appearance of someone who has killed, lied, stolen, or committed adultery becomes an instruction for generating the body as the deity-*maṇḍala*. Becoming devoid of signs (*nirnimittam*) and without false appearances (*nirābhāsam*) could be interpreted solely in terms of the Buddhist practice of dissolving the body into emptiness prior to generating it as the deity, but it also might indicate the kind of dissimulation prescribed in the Pāśupata *sādhana* in which one increasingly relinquishes all external marks that might indicate one's identity as an initiate. Finally, in the spirit of continuing the legal metaphor in accordance with the standard prerequisite actions one must engage in before taking on a *vrata* practice as a penance for committing a crime, the idea of relinquishing marks also bears some similarities with the act of being stripped of any indication of one's social standing in preparation for entering into a period of forced exile.

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That poses an obstacle to meditation || 1.7 ||

<sup>342</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 39.  
nirnimittam nirābhāsam svadehopāyasamyutam |  
kṛtvā vibhāvayed yatnād vajrasattvaṃ paraṃ sukham || 6.5 ||

A broader portrait of the social world along the margins of brahmanical society now emerges to which we can add the figure of the convicted criminal—those who have killed, stolen, acted as adulterers, and have thus been exiled for a period of time. Criminals, the insane, spirit beings, and ascetics all partake in the rejection of normative social behaviors to varying degrees, and the relationship between these marginalized groups is both acknowledged and repurposed for the performance of the advanced ascetic practice of the *caryā* and *vrata*. Padmavajra's first verse of instructions on the *guhya**caryā* illustrates just such a relationship between the figure of the madman and the ghoul (*piśāca*):

One should take on the appearance of a madman,  
 Become one who is silent in meditative equipoise |  
 Who is in union with his own deity,  
 But wander about like a flesh-eating ghoul. || 6.13 ||<sup>343</sup>

Like the *Pāśupatasūtra* injunction to 'wander like a *preta*,' Padmavajra's instructions to 'wander like a *piśāca*' evoke an ascetic mode that is meant to emulate the social marginality of a particular class of spirit beings. The instruction to 'wander like a *piśāca*' can be interpreted in one sense as a prescription for the *sādhaka* to conduct himself in ways that would lead to being ostracized from mainstream society, accomplishing the same kind of marginalization affected by the *Pāśupatasūtra*'s instructions to 'wander like a *preta*.' This cultivated marginality marks an ascetic re-purposing of the intersection of behavior, madness, and the world of spirit beings that we have already seen in the dual symptomology-pathology of the Āyurvedic *bhūtavidyā* literature. The fact that the behavioral indicators of madness function as both symptom and pathogen allows for a dual interpretation of such injunctions as a method that allows the *sādhaka* to take on a new, socially marginalized

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<sup>343</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 40.  
 unmattarūpamāsthāya maunī bhūtvā samāhitaḥ |  
 svādhidaivatayogātmā paryaṭet tu piśācavat || 6.13 ||

position by displaying the symptoms of madness and also allows him to court interaction with spirit beings such as *piśācas* through adopting the behaviors that constitute the pathogens for possession. In the case of the Śaiva initiate this ascetic mode might be employed to court possession itself. But in the Buddhist performance of the same ascetic mode the *sādhaka* engages in such behaviors primarily to demonstrate the ability to remain invulnerable and unaffected by the same class of beings. When viewed sociologically, the same repertoire of behaviors might be seen as a method for obliterating one's identity and adopting a new, marginalized status. Ultimately, there is no reason to choose between the demonological and sociological interpretations of this practice. They are both equal contributors to the potent symbolism of the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata*. To the outside observer, the injunction to 'wander like a *piśāca*' must, if correctly performed, result in others perceiving the *sādhaka* as actually being insane and possessed by one of a number of different types of spirit beings. The instructions on the madman's observance (*unmattavrata*) accomplish this goal by prescribing the behavioral traits that indicate possession as a repertoire by which the *sādhaka* performs his madness. This is madness in the dissimulative ascetic mode, where the symptoms of possession by any number of 'seizers' or *grahas* become a script with which the *sādhaka* conceals his identity during his performance, which, after all, is another connotation of the term *caryā*.

Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* supplies a sequence for the performance of these practices that begins with the *unmattavrata* as one of a handful of dissimulative modes signified by the *guhyacaryā* and progresses to the consort observance (*vidyāvrata*). This order is explicit in the concluding verse from *Guhyasiddhi* chapter six:

As for the *sādhaka*, one advances  
To the extent that one does not cling to a mark. |

But when one advances in the completion [stage]  
Then one should abandon the secret *caryā*.  
After that, one should take up  
The divine consort observance. || 6.110 ||<sup>344</sup>

The performance of the *unmattavrata* and other dissimulative modes associated with the *guhyacaryā* in *Guhyasiddhi* is intentionally public because these practices require an audience, be it human or non-human, to witness the *sādhaka's* feigned madness. The *vidyāvratā*, in contrast, does not contain such strong elements of public performance or require an audience for its successful execution. The contrast between these two stages in the *caryā* and *vratā* instructions in both *Guhyasiddhi* and *Prajñopāyavinīscayasiddhi* may be what is intended by the two primary metaphors for the practice of wandering like a ghoulish (*paryatet ti piśācavat*), and wandering like a lion (*simhavat vicaret*).

The detailed instructions on the behaviors a *sādhaka* adopts to perform the *unmattavrata* in chapter six of *Guhyasiddhi* bear some similarities to the Āyurvedic literature on *bhūtavidyā* as well as the *bhūtavidyā* symptomology and pathology from the nineteenth chapter of the *Netratantra*, a ninth-century Śaiva work. Some of the most ubiquitous and easily recognizable behaviors that are intended to simulate madness and possession include Padmavajra's instructions to randomly laugh, babble nonsense, and break out in song and dance. The instructions for the *unmattavrata* go further, however, and in some cases even approximate behavioral profiles that resemble the symptoms and pathogens of possession related to specific classes of spirit beings. The *Carakasamhitā's* symptomology for *piśāca* possession, for example, reads:

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<sup>344</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 49.

sādhake kiñcidutkarṣas tāvalliṅgaṃ na dhārayet |  
utpanne tu samutkarṣe guhyacaryāṃ tatastyajet |  
tato vidyāvratam divyaṃ gṛhṇīyāt tadanantaram || 6.110 ||

My translation of this verse allows for a distribution of the term *kiñcid*, construing it with the modifier *utkarṣas* as well as with the negative verbal construction *na dhārayet*.



Let it be known that one whose thoughts are unhealthy, has no place to stay, indulges in dance, song and laughter, as well as idle chatter that is sometimes unrestrained, who enjoys climbing on assorted heaps of garbage and walking in rags, grass, stones, and sticks that might be on the road, whose voice is broken and harsh, who is naked and runs about, never standing in one place, who broadcasts his miseries to others, and suffers from memory loss is afflicted with unmāda [caused by possession] by a piśāca.<sup>345</sup>

The *Carakasamhitā* goes on to note that 'lusting after women,' a behavioral trait prescribed in Padmavajra's *guhycaryā* and other works among *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, is a behavior that brings on possession from a *piśāca* or *rākṣasa*.<sup>346</sup> The symptoms for *rākṣasa* and *piśāca* possession in *Suśrutasamhitā* differ from the *Carakasamhitā*, but they still include behavioral traits that correspond to the prescribed behaviors in Padmavajra's *guhycaryā*. Here the symptoms of *rākṣasa* possession include things such as desiring meat, blood, and alcohol, acting without shame, and rejecting ritual purity, while the symptoms of *piśāca* demonstrate less concordance with the *guhycaryā*, but still include chattering endlessly, wandering around, and wailing.<sup>347</sup> The *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasamhitā*'s symptomology demonstrates a strong correspondence between the symptoms of *piśāca* and *niśāda* possession and the behaviors the *sādhaka* adopts during the *guhycaryā*. Here the symptoms of possession by a *niśāda* even include residing in a number of locations that are a well-known part of the Śaiva and Buddhist *sādhaka*'s repertoire:

One whose thoughts are unhealthy, who runs around, not remaining in one place, who is fond of leftovers, dancing, *gandharvas*, laughter, wine, and meat, who becomes depressed when rebuked, who cries without reason, who scratches himself with his nails, whose body is rough and voice trails off, who trumpets his many miseries, whose speech freely associates what is relevant and irrelevant, who suffers from memory loss, who enjoys nothing, who is fickle and goes around desolate and dirty, wearing clothes meant for the road, adorned with a garland of grass, who climbs on piles of sticks and rocks as

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<sup>345</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 489.

<sup>346</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 490.

<sup>347</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 492.

well as on top of rubbish heaps, and who eats a lot is understood to be inhabited [*adhiṣṭhitam*] by a *piśāca*.

One who wanders around in rags taking up sticks, clods of dirt, etc. [or] runs around naked, with a frightened look, adorned with grass, haunting burning or burial grounds, empty houses, lonely roads, or places with a single tree, whose eye forever embraces sesame, rice, liquor, and meat, and whose speech is rough is believed to be inhabited... by a *niṣāda*.<sup>348</sup>

These basic social indicators of insanity employed as a kind of script for Padmavajra's *unmattavrata* also resonate with behaviors prescribed during the Pāsupata observance and in the performance of the *vidyāvrata* from the twentieth chapter of the Śaiva *Brahmayāmalatantra*. The *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasāṃhitā* contains a further correspondence with Padmavajra's *guhyaacaryā* instructions in its description of individuals who have been possessed for an extended period of time being followed around by a group of children,<sup>349</sup> an ascetic mode that also appears in the child observance (*kumāravrata*) prescribed in the *Brahmayāmalatantra*.

Chapter nineteen of the *Netratantra*, which features extensive sections on the symptomology and pathology of various types of possession, also contains behavioral profiles that correspond to a number of behaviors prescribed for the performance of the *guhyaacaryā*:

Oh Devi, due to many primary causes,  
They desire to kill human victims. |  
Bad behavior, wickedness, impurity,  
And being the most vile of men, || 19.34 ||

From not honoring one's parents,  
Likewise, from neglecting Vedic study |  
From excessive sex with women,  
And also especially from being drunk, || 19.35 ||

From having sex at the wrong time, from fear

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<sup>348</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 496.

<sup>349</sup> Smith, *The Self Possessed*, 497.

Of the unknown, likewise from confused wandering, |  
And those who have abandoned the [rituals of] the junctions,  
And those who have sex during the junctions, || 19.36 ||

Those who sleep at the time of the junctions  
And those who do Vedic study while eating, |  
Those who cause women without desire to have desire,  
And [who desire] the guru's wife, my dear, || 19.37 ||

The strong ones who forcefully cause the  
Young women of others to fall into ruin, |  
Likewise others who speak dishonestly,  
Who do harm to their masters, who are vicious, || 19.38 ||

[And] men who have sinful behaviors  
That are not mentioned here— |  
Due to these and other causes,  
The seizers seize [those] men. || 19.39 ||<sup>350</sup>

This passage's mention of having sex at inauspicious times and at times when one should be performing the daily rites associated with the junctions of the day is of particular interest given that the proscription against observing such guidelines is combined with sexual yoga practice in the performance of the *vidyāvratā*. According to the *Netratantra*, engaging in a sexual yoga practice with one's consort without any regard for auspicious daily, lunar, or astrological periods invites possession.

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<sup>350</sup> M.K. Śāstrī ed. *The Netra Tantram with Commentary by Kṣemarāja II* (Bombay: Tattva-Vivechaka Press, 1939), 137–39.

NT 19.34–39:

nidānairbahubhirdevi jighānsanti narānpaśūn |  
durācāraṃ durātmānamaśuciṃ puruṣādhamam || 34 ||  
mātāpitrorasammanāntathādhyayanavarjanāt |  
atistrīgamanāccaiva kṣīvatvācca viśeṣataḥ || 35 ||  
akāle maithunānmohabhayātsambhramaṇāntathā |  
sandhyāvivarjitā ye ca sandhyāmaithunasevakāḥ || 36 ||  
bhojanādhyayanaṃ nidrāṃ sandhyāyāṃ ye ca kurvate |  
akāminīḥ kāmāyante gurudārāṃśca ye priye || 37 ||  
pradhvaṃsayanti balino balāccaivānyyoṣitaḥ |  
tathānye'satyavaktāraḥ prabhudrohakṛto'subhāḥ || 38 ||  
anuktaīḥ pāpacaritairye narā samyutāstathā |  
etairanyairnidānaiśca grhṇate mānuṣān grahāḥ || 39 ||

The sections of *Guhyasiddhi* chapter six that exhibit correspondences to the above sections from the *Caraka-*, *Suśruta-*, and *Aṣṭāṅgahṛdayasamhitās* as well as the *Pāśupatasūtra* and *Netratantra* are provided here in full:

He should wander about the roads and villages  
In cities, parks, and countrysides, |  
At crossroads, in charnel grounds,  
And likewise in the dwelling places of deities, || 6.15 ||

And particularly, in the midst of a crowd  
Wearing a crown made of leftover garlands. |  
And he should meditate upon  
The supreme bliss at a brothel. || 6.16 ||

Still not satiated by the performances  
Of [their] crowds of dancing *gandharvas*, |  
He should worship in a tavern or market<sup>351</sup>  
With the milk and lamps. || 6.17 ||

Sometimes he should laugh,  
Sometimes babble, sometimes sing, |  
Sometimes dance, sometimes shake,  
And sometimes [make] various noises. || 6.18 ||<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> My reading for this line is kṣīrapradīpasampanno dhvajavīthīnisevayam. All three Sanskrit manuscripts for *Guhyasiddhi*, the Sarnath edition, and the Tibetan all contain different readings for this line:

NGMCP A 134/2 and 915/3 9v.2 kṣīrapradīpasampanno dhvajavīṣīnisevayet, though the akṣara dhva is difficult to read; NGMCP A 1012/5 12v.2 reads kṣīrapradīpasampannāthajavīṣīnisevayam; MBB 7-5 34r.4 which reads kṣīrapradīpasampannāthajavīṣīnisevayet; the Sarnath edition reads kṣīrapradīpasampanno 'pyajavīthīrniṣevayet; and the Tibetan reads 'o ma sgron mar ldan pa des/ rgyal mtshan can gyi gnas 'jug bya/ (\*kṣīrapradīpasampanno dhvajavīthīniveśyam). My own reading combines elements from these readings that are selected based on the context of the verse, which I take to be the prescription to perform outrageous actions in various public places. Thus I take this verse as an instruction for the *sādhaka* to perform his worship practice (*nisevayam*) using the disgusting *samaya* substances (*kṣīrapradīpa*) in two public locations, a tavern (*dhvaja*) or market (*vīthī*).

See Padmavajra et. al., *Guhyasiddhyādināgārjunapādādi*. NGMCP microfilm reel no. A 134/2 (Kathmandu National Archive), 9v.2; Padmavajra et. al., *Tattvasiddhisekanirṇaya*, NGMCP microfilm reel no. A 915/3 (Kathmandu National Archive), 9v.2; Padmavajra, *Śrī Guhyasiddhiḥ*, microfilm, IASWR MBB-1972-105 (MBB 7-5), 34r.4; and *Guhyasiddhyādijñānasiddhi*, microfilm reel number NGMCP A 1012/5 (Kathmandu National Archive), 12v.2.

<sup>352</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi" 40.

paryateḍ grāmarathyāsu nagarodyānabhūmiṣu |  
catvareṣu śmaśāneṣu tathā cāyataneṣu ca || 6.15 ||  
kātake ca viśeṣeṇa kṛtanirmālyaśekharaḥ |  
aṅganānāṃ ca veśmāni bhāvayet paramaṃ sukham || 6.16 ||  
anābhogastu vāditrainrṭyagandharvasamkulām(laiḥ) |  
kṣīrapradīpasampanno 'pyajavīthīrni ṣevayet || 6.17 ||

Padmavajra then provides five verses that contain instructions on participating in an assembly (*samāja*) that are reminiscent of the more well-known transgressive *ganacakra* feast practices. It is difficult at this point to determine if the rite described here is an actual performance of a gathering (*melaka*) that is part of the consecration ritual in *Guhyasiddhi*, *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, and *Jñānasiddhi*, or if the point of these verses is that the *sādhaka* should treat his public sojourns into brothels, taverns, and markets *as if* he is participating in a *melaka*. The instructions on performing the *unmattavrata* continue, with an explicit reference to taking the common symptoms of madness up as a kind of script for performing the *vrata*:

And he should eat a small amount  
Of the five ambrosias without hesitation. |  
One who has attained the state of Vairocana  
Is adorned with the madman observance. || 6.24 ||

In [his] maddened state, the *mantrin*  
Should constantly exhibit all of the symptoms (*cihnāni*) |  
According to the rule (*vidhānena*)  
During the secret *caryās*. || 6.25 ||<sup>353</sup>

The seven verses that follow this statement recapitulate a ritual sequence that describes the deity-*maṇḍala* generation and self-consecration process. Although it is difficult to determine with complete certainty, these instructions are likely an internal reproduction of the ritual performance of a *maṇḍala* generation and a communal gathering or assembly (*samāja*) that characterize the generation stage yogas. A similar movement from internal to external

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kvacid hasan kvacijjalpan kvacidgeyaṃ tu kārayet |  
kvacinnṛtyan kvacidsphoṭan kvacinnānārutāni tu || 6.18 ||

<sup>353</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 41.

pañcāmṛtaikaniṣṭhaṃ ca tadbhakṣyaṃ kṛtaniścayam |  
vairocanasamālabdha unmattavratabhūṣitaḥ || 6.24 ||  
unmatte yāni cihnāni tānyaśeṣāṇi nityaśaḥ |  
kartavyāni vidhānena guhyacaryāsu mantriṇā || 6.25 ||

practice is voiced in the transition from verses 6.4–7 to 6.7–8, where the text indicates that the self-generation practice focuses on the deity Vairocana instead of the Vajrasattva self-generation practice mentioned at the opening of the chapter. After revisiting the internal practice, Padmavajra once again switches from the internal *maṇḍala* back to the *sādhaka*'s public performance of the *unmattavrata*:

The *vratin* should not carry a pot  
 For the purpose of wandering for alms. |  
 [Instead,] he should take a dirty rag  
 From the road from which he eats. || 6.33 ||

He should wander for alms there,  
 And eat while he goes. |  
 Having eaten what is in it, satiated,  
 He should throw it away right there. || 6.34 ||

And furthermore, he should wear a loincloth  
 That is ripped and frayed, |  
 Or else he should be naked  
 And wander as he wishes. || 6.35 ||

He should have no possession,  
 Even if the thing is a mere sesame seed. |  
 The mind shall become restless  
 Due to the suffering of owning property. || 6.36 ||<sup>354</sup>

Padmavajra then provides three verses on how owning personal property results in mental distraction that causes the *sādhaka* to suffer through a series of lower rebirths. In this way the instructions in *Guhyasiddhi* on adopting transgressive behaviors that would invite possession and scorn from society appear interspersed with instructions on generating the body as the

<sup>354</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 42.

bhaiḥṣa(kṣya)paryaṭanārthāya na pātraṃ saṃgrahed vratī |  
 bhūṅkte yastu saṃgrya rathyākarpaṭamarallakam || 6.33 ||  
 tatraiva paryaṭed bhikṣāṃ yatamānaśca bhakṣayet |  
 bhakṣayitvā tu taṃ tasmin tṛptastatraiva saṃtyajet || 6.34 ||  
 kaupīnaṃ ca tato dhāryaṃ sphuṭitaṃ jarjarikṛtam |  
 digambaro'thavā bhūtvā paryaṭeta yathecchayā || 6.35 ||  
 parigrahaṃ na kurvīta tilamātre'pi vastuni |  
 parigrahād bhaved duḥkhācittasya vibhramaḥ || 6.36 ||

deity-*maṇḍala*, brief instructions on recollecting the nature of ultimate reality, instructions on participating in a tantric feast, and a number of other topics that factor into the performance of the *caryā* and *vrata*. Padmavajra's juxtaposition of statements on the Buddhist view of ultimate reality and the spontaneous, non-constructed manifestation of the body as the deity-*maṇḍala* convert these practices, which so similar to Śaiva practices in their external form, to a functionally Buddhist ascetic mode.

## II. Wandering Like a Lion: Performing Invulnerability

Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhyacaryā* follow a systematic pattern that begins with the injunction to wander like a *piśāca* and culminates in the injunction to wander like a lion.

Adopting the gait of a lion acts as a metaphor for the *sādhaka's* demonstration of complete invulnerability to all of the human and non-human beings with whom he roams beyond the boundary of civilized society. The phrase appears in the *caryā* and *vrata* instructions in both *Guhyasiddhi* and Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*. Padmavajra writes:

Then, one who is firmly rooted in  
The secret *siddhi* should wander like a lion. || 6.40 ||<sup>355</sup>

The corresponding verse in Anaṅgavajra's instructions on the *caryā* corresponding to ultimate reality (*tattvacaryā*) in his *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* reads:

Then, having arisen spontaneously [as the deity-*maṇḍala*],  
One who has turned away from all clinging |  
Who is absorbed in meditation on ultimate reality  
Should wander everywhere like a lion. || 5.10 ||<sup>356</sup>

<sup>355</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 42.

tataḥ siṃhavad vicared guhyasiddhipratiṣṭhitaḥ || 6.40 ||

<sup>356</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 82.

tataḥ svacchandamābhūya sarvāsaṅgabahirmukhaḥ |  
vicaret tattvayuktātmā kesarīva samantataḥ || 5.10 ||

This movement from wandering like a *piśāca* to wandering like a lion corresponds in *Guhyasiddhi* to a shift toward a greater proscription of a number of ritual techniques and other behaviors that might be used as protective measures or that might identify the *sādhaka* as an initiate. The reader will recognize many of the proscribed behaviors from the list provided in the extensive discussion in chapter four of this study on the implications of such ritual techniques within the demonological paradigm:

And wearing the guise of a madman  
Who has abandoned all proper appearances, |  
He should also not venerate a goddess  
That is made of clay, wood, or stone. || 6.41 ||

He should not create *maṇḍalas*  
Or do a hand *mudrā* even while dreaming. |  
He should not venerate those who  
Are on the path of the three vehicles, || 6.43 ||

Even [those on the path of] the complete awakening of the buddhas—  
How much less so others such as the Liṅgats? |  
And one whose thought is intent upon meditation  
Should not engage in verbal debate [with them]. || 6.44 ||

[This] produces a deviation from *samaya*.  
Due to that deviation, the mind is scattered. |  
And one who understands ultimate reality must truly  
Always abandon things like ritual protocols and the like. || 6.45 ||

Abandoning the pride derived from Vajrasattva,  
He must no longer generate it, |  
And even the performance of rites is not observed  
By those established in the secret ultimate reality. || 6.46 ||

Because he analyzes through union with  
The state of identitylessness, |  
For one who abides in the state of non-existence and  
Is endowed with the sublime method || 6.47 ||

Whatever arose conceptually



He attains non-conceptually.<sup>357</sup> |  
Through the power of the yoga of meditation,  
It becomes present on its own. || 6.48 ||

In a mere instant, all of that is something  
That has the characteristic of attainment. |  
He should not create a *maṇḍala*,  
And the *mudrās* and bonds are banned. || 6.49 ||

The *mantrin* should not even recite the mantra,  
Which creates an obstacle to meditation. |  
The body is called “the *maṇḍala*.”  
The consort is known as “the *mudrā*.” || 6.50 ||

The *mantrin* who is the nature of Śrī Vajrasattva  
Should honor and worship him. |  
This should be performed on himself.  
The wise one should abandon all external [practices]. || 6.51 ||<sup>358</sup>

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<sup>357</sup> My translation of this line amends the Sanskrit to match the Tibetan translation because it makes sense given the context of the verse. The readings from the Sanskrit manuscripts do match the Sarnath edition and read as follows:

IASWR MBB 7-5 36v.5 reads:

sidhyate nirvikāreṇa yatkiṃcitkalpacoditam |

NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 10r.7 reads:

sidhyate nirvikāreṇa yatkiṃcitkalpacoditam |

NGMCP A 1012/5 13v.2 reads:

siddhyate nirvikāreṇa yatkiṃcitkalpācoditam |

The Tibetan reads:

/rtog las gang zhig 'byung ba rnam/

/ma brtags par ni 'byung bar 'gyur/

/bsgom pa'i sbyor ba'i stobs kyis ni/

/dngos grub mtshan nyid gang ci'ang rung /\_49\_/

My reconstruction of the Sanskrit in 6.48ab based on the Tibetan in 6.49ab reads:

siddhyate nirvikalpena yatkiñcit kalpanoditam |

<sup>358</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 42–43.

unmattaveśadhṛg bhūtvā sarvākāravivarjitaḥ |

na cāpi vandayed devīm kāṣṭhapāṣāṇamṛṇmayām || 6.41 ||

pūjāmaśai(syai)va kāyasya kuryād vai vandanaṃ guroḥ |

śailamṛṇmayastūpādīn na kuryāt pustake ratim || 6.42 ||

maṇḍalāni na svapnena(pi) kuryānmudrāṃ na hastayoḥ |

vandanaṃ naiva kurvīta triyānapathavartinām || 6.43 ||

buddhānāmapi saṃbodhiṃ kuto'nyeṣāṃ tu līṅganām |

vāgvādaśca na kartavyo bhāvanāsaktacetasaḥ(sā) || 6.44 ||

jāyate samayabhraṃśo bhraṃśād vikṣipyate manaḥ |

prayogādīṃśca tattvena varjayet tattvavit sadā || 6.45 ||

vajrasattvādahaṅkāraṃ muktṛvā nānyatra kārayet |

prayogāpi(śca)[ādīṃśca?] na budhyante guhyatattve vyavasthitaiḥ || 6.46 ||

nairātmyapadayogena yāvat tatpratyaवेक्षा(kṣya)te |

niḥsvabhāvapadasthasya divyopāyayutasya ca || 6.47 ||

siddhyate nirvikāreṇa yatkiñcit kalpacoditam |

These verses are critical to understanding the importance of keeping the demonological paradigm in mind when interpreting the instructions on the *guhya*caryā. After providing a sequence of instructions that combine an internal (and thus 'secret') deity-*maṇḍala* generation with an external prescription to simulate the symptoms of madness, Padmavajra finally advocates for the proscription of all manner of ritual techniques that might guard the *sādhaka* from attack from both human and non-human beings. *Guhyasiddhi* 6.48 then informs us of how the dual apotropaic-soteriological power of the deity-*maṇḍala* persists without having to be generated as Padmavajra plays with the discursive overlap in the Buddhist treatment of derivatives of the root *klrp* denoting both conceptual and actual physically constructed edifices. The pride (*ahaṅkāra*) of being the deity that is often used as a metaphor for mastery of the generation stage yoga must be given up, and the *sādhaka* must now prove that he can rely only upon a natural, spontaneous, instant union (*yoga*) with the deity-*maṇḍala*. This instantaneous self-identification is directly correlated to the notion of a spontaneous or instantaneous union between the *yogin* and the deity-*maṇḍala* that signals the culmination of the generation stage yoga.

A more detailed explanation of this aspect of the advanced stages of deity-yoga practice appears in the second chapter of Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, where it is critical to his argument that the deity body that a *yogin* takes on in meditation is not bound by the same logic that governs the conceptual construction of an image as an object of meditation.

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bhāvanāyogasāmarthyāt svayamevopatiṣṭhate || 6.48 ||  
 tatsarvaṃ kṣaṇamātreṇa yatkiñcit siddhilakṣaṇam |  
 maṇḍalaṃ naiva kartavyaṃ mudrābandhastu bandhanam || 6.49 ||  
 mantraṃ naiva japenmantrī bhāvanāyāntarāyikam |  
 dehaṃ maṇḍalamityuktaṃ prajñā mudreti kīrtitā || 6.50 ||  
 mantrī śrīvajrasattvātmā vandanaṃ tasya sevanam |  
 etadādhyātmikaṃ kuryāt sarvaṃ bāhyaṃ tyajed budhaḥ || 6.51 ||

Indrabhūti introduces this passage with a set of formal logical arguments posited by a rhetorical opponent that culminate in the author's own counter-argument regarding two methods by which deity yoga meditation practices are no longer conceptually constructed, and thus not subject to the faults of a mentally constructed image:

If Vajrasattva is a constructed  
Deity body, [it would follow that] |  
[One has] produced something compounded,  
And thus it perishes, as in the example of a vase, etc. || 2.13 ||

It then follows that oftentimes the practice for awakening  
As well can arrive at state that lacks a result. |  
What would be the point of meditation if  
[The deity body] comes to be and then perishes? || 2.14 ||

How can a compounded mental fabrication  
Be called the bodily form [of a deity]? |  
And how can [the body of a deity] perish?  
Listen now, you who [drift upon] the ocean of delusion. || 2.15 ||

[Some assert that]  
This [deity body] is a construct of the mind that surely  
Bears the characteristic of a compounded phenomenon |  
[And ask] how something that is mentally  
Constructed could not perish? || 2.16 ||

[Others criticize statements such as]  
Endowed with arms and colors  
Just as it was previously established, |  
Now I meditate upon  
The non-constructed form of the deity || 2.17 ||

[And argue that]  
If you meditate upon a  
Non-constructed form of the deity, |  
You meditate upon something previously  
Established as unarisen, [so] what is the point? || 2.18 ||

[One performs] the meditation [thinking]  
"I shall become that body" or "I am that [body]."<sup>359</sup> |

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<sup>359</sup> NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 18r.1 reads  
bhāveyaṅtādṛśaṃ rūpaṃ tatvāhamiti bhāvanā |  
bhāvane dve vicāryātra yoginā rūpaṃ sādhanē ||

The yogin should practice these two meditations  
During the *sādhana* on the form [of the deity]. || 2.19 ||

When one conceives of meditative absorption  
[Thinking] "I shall become like that" |  
Then meditative absorption becomes  
Clear and that deity is perceived. || 2.20 ||

[Just as] one sees the body in a painting, etc.,  
So too one perceives what has appeared [in the mind],  
But that comes about through meditative concentration  
[And] is not produced in any other way. || 2.21 ||

If the non-arisen body of the deity  
Comes about in that state meditative absorption |  
Due to the presence of all of the supernatural perceptions,  
The [deity] body is instantaneously [present]. || 2.22 ||<sup>360</sup>

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NGMCP A 137/4 reads:

bhaveyantādr̥ṣaṃ rūpaṃ tatvāhamutibhāvanā |  
bhāvane dve vicāryatrayoginā rūpasādhane ||

IASWR MBB 7-4 11v.7-8 reads:

bhāveyaṃtādr̥ṣaṃ rūpaṃ matvāhamiti bhāvanā |  
bhāvane dve vicārye 'trayoginārūpasādhane ||

The Tibetan reads:

/rnal 'byor pa rnam s gzugs bsgom pa/  
/de 'dra'i gzugs su gyur pa'am/  
/de ni bdag yin zhes bsgoms pa/  
/bsgom pa gnyis su 'di rnam brtag/\_19\_/

As the Tibetan confirms, the correct reading of the 2.19b is *tatvāhamiti bhāvanā*, which is recorded in NGMCP A134/2 and A 915/3. My translation follows this rendering.

<sup>360</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 104-5.

kṛtaṃ devatārūpaṃ vajrasattvo bhaved yadi |  
saṃskṛto jāyate tasmād naśyate tu ghaṭḍivat || 2.13 ||  
tato niṣphalatāṃ yāyād bodhicaryā tvanekadhā |  
bhāvanā'pi kimarthaṃ syād yadi bhūtvā vinaśyati || 2.14 ||  
manomayakṛtaṃ rūpaṃ kathaṃ saṃskṛtam ucyate |  
kathaṃ vinaśyati caitat śrṇu mohārṇavādhunā || 2.15 ||  
cittasya kalpanā hyeṣā sāpi saṃskṛtalakṣaṇā |  
manasā kalpitaṃ yat tadavināśi kathaṃ bhavet || 2.16 ||  
bhujavarṇasamāyuktaṃ yathāpūrvavyavasthitam |  
akṛtaṃ devatārūpaṃ bhāvyaṭe tanmayā'dhunā || 2.17 ||  
akṛtaṃ devatārūpaṃ bhāvyaṭe tat tvayā yadi |  
sthitam pūrvamanutpannaṃ bhāvyaṭe kiṃ prayojanam || 2.18 ||  
bhaveyaṃ tādr̥ṣaṃ rūpaṃ matvāhamiti bhāvanā |  
bhāvane dve vicārye 'tra yoginā rūpasādhane || 2.19 ||  
tādr̥ṣo'haṃ bhaveyāmiti yadā dhyānaṃ prakalpyate |  
tadā dhyānaṃ sphuṭibhūtaṃ dr̥śyate devatā tu sā || 2.20 ||  
patādau rūpaṃ ālokya tathā jā(dhyā)tasya buddhyate |  
samādhinā bhavet tattu nānyenotpādyate hyasau || 2.21 ||  
ajātaṃ devatārūpaṃ dhyāne tatra gataṃ yadi |  
sarvābhijñāpravṛttestu tad rūpaṃ caiva tatkṣaṇāt || 2.22 ||

These verses form part of Indrabhūti's "Negation of Form Meditation" (*rūpabhāvanāniṣeda*) in chapter two of *Jñānasiddhi* and are integral to this work's overall project to argue for a fully cataphatic realization of ultimate reality.<sup>361</sup> The rhetorical opponent in *Jñānasiddhi* 2.13–22 is reminiscent of Padmavajra's rhetorical opponent in *Guhyasiddhi* 9.4, where he defends his treatise against the claim that all of the practices discussed therein are conceptual and thus 'mere meditation.' The same argument for the nature of the deity-*maṇḍala* during the completion stage as spontaneously appearing, non-constructed, and non-conceptual is also recorded Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*, which Tibetan sources list among *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po skor drug*), the companion corpus to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.<sup>362</sup>

This spontaneously generated, direct identification as the deity-*maṇḍala* implies that the *sādhaka* who advances in his performance of the *guhyacaryā* abandons all ritual procedures for generating the deity, but it does not mean that the notion of perfecting the body *maṇḍala* is abandoned altogether. The proscription against taking recourse to the many ritual techniques for generating oneself as the tutelary deity means that one gives up these practices because at this stage, the *sādhaka* is supposed to attain a state in which the *sādhaka* is spontaneously and permanently in union with the deity-*maṇḍala* that he has generated and

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<sup>361</sup> Indrabhūti's argument in this passage is consistent with the representationalist epistemology promoted in all of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that serves as the basic premise for their being understood as *mahāmudrā* works. The preservation of a representationalist epistemology, even the highest stage of realization of ultimate reality, is signified by the frequent use of a number of permutations of the term *ākāra* rendered here according to its epistemological meaning as a 'mental image' throughout *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The term *ākāra* in fact shares some degree of synonymy with the term *mudrā*.

<sup>362</sup> This argument appears several times in this work, particularly in those sections that describe the generation stage yogas. See Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 192–208. From at least the fourteenth century forward, Tibetan sources group the *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* together with *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and regard both corpora as part of a practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works using the collapsed compound *grub snying gi skor* (or several variations on this compound). For a thorough discussion of this corpus and its relationship to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, see chapter 10 in this study titled "Practical Canonicity and the Indian Mahāmudrā Canon."

brought to completion during the generation stage yoga. This is precisely the point at which his ability to prove that he has become impervious to attack from both human and non-human beings becomes an important means of testing/demonstrating his completion or perfection of the deity-yoga. The permanence of the *sādhaka*'s generation of the body as a *maṇḍala* at this stage is explained in *Guhyasiddhi* 6.57cd–61. The passage follows a short set of verses that describe the process of self-consecration in which the deity-*maṇḍala* is non-conceptually generated through the performance of sexual yoga and ingesting the *bodhicitta* that is the product of that union:

When he is always lustful, longing for  
Intoxicating joy whatever the undertaking, || 6.57 ||

The *vajra*-being attains *siddhi*.  
What more can I say? |  
Without shame, always  
Devoted to *samaya* conduct, || 6.58 ||

Wherever the silent one who wears the guise of a madman,  
Who has a charnel ground as his abode, |  
Meditates, he is accompanied by  
The multitude of the indestructible beings' *mudrās* || 6.59 ||

Such as Māmakī and Locanā, and the like.  
Ornamented with the various ornaments, |  
He should meditate on all of them there  
Through union of the *vajra* and space element || 6.60 ||

With the bodily appearance of the three-faced one and  
With the expanse of waves of trembling gnosis |  
He should draw in  
The gnostic bodies of the buddhas. || 6.61 ||<sup>363</sup>

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<sup>363</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyashiddhiḥ," in *Guhyādi*, 44.  
nityarakte yathodyukte pramadānandalolupe || 6.57 ||  
siddhyate vajrasattvastu bhānyate kimataḥ param |  
tyaktalajjaḥ sadā bhūtvā samayācāratatparaḥ || 6.58 ||  
unmattaveśadhṛṇmaunī śmaśānanilayaṃ(yaḥ) kvacit |  
bhāvayed vajrasattvasya mudrāvṛnde(nda)samanvitam(taḥ) || 6.59 ||  
māmakīlocanādyaiṣtu nānālaṅkārabhūṣitaḥ |  
khadhātuvajrasamyogaiḥ sarveṣāṃ tatra bhāvayet || 6.60 ||  
trimukhākārarūpeṇa sphura[.]jñānormivistaraiḥ |

Verse 6.58 contains an important use of the term *vajrasattva* that invites an interpretation of the term both as a proper noun denoting the Buddha Vajrasattva and as a term for the *sādhaka* himself, who has become an indestructible being through union with the deity-*maṇḍala*. The passage also provides a good example of the connotation of the term *guhya* in the performance of the *guhya*caryā as a dissimulative mode in which the *sādhaka*'s adopts an external appearance, in this case the guise of a madman (*unmattaveśa*), that conceals his actual identity as a yogin in union with the deity-*maṇḍala* of Vajrasattva.

Padmavajra concludes his instructions on the performance of the *unmattavrata* with the following set of verses:

He should perform all of the *samayas*,  
 Subsisting on whatever he can obtain |  
 [When] the traders, brāhmins, *śūdras*, or anyone else who  
 Invites him to a feast in which an animal is slaughtered, etc., || 6.81 ||

Are satiated and throw out  
 The innards and bones, |  
 He should take them and eat the disgusting  
 [Food] that is desired by dogs right there || 6.82 ||

With the union of meditation and ultimate reality,  
 Otherwise he does not attain siddhi. |  
 Acting the same way toward all castes  
 Is the behavior of someone who is insane. || 6.83 ||

And surrounded on all sides  
 He is accompanied by hundreds of children |  
 Who dance, sing, clap their hands, [and perform]  
 The divine steps of the *vajra* dance. || 6.84 ||

Belching out the songs and melodies,  
 He should conceal the performance of the *vajra* song |  
 And make it appear as if it is another [song]  
 That is famous in the three realms. || 6.85 ||

[Singing] the song mixed with various noises,

He should wander about like a flesh-eating ghoul. |  
Indeed, that wrathful activity  
By which living beings are bound || 6.86 ||

Is also that by which, joined with method,  
They are liberated from the bonds of existence. |<sup>364</sup>

This final set of instructions for performing the *unmattavrata* requires that the *sādhaka* display the symptoms of one who has been possessed for a long time that include being followed by a crowd of children in the *Aṣṭāṅgahrdayasamhitā*. If Padmavajra's instructions are interpreted chronologically, then it can be reasonably concluded that at this stage in the *guhycaryā* the *sādhaka* has been feigning madness brought on by possession for some time, and the instructions to begin to display the symptoms of chronic possession would be entirely appropriate.

### III. Secrecy and the *Guhycaryā* Instructions for Householders

The *unmattavrata* serves as the primary practice for Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhycaryā*, but a short set of separate instructions are also provided for initiates who cannot afford to leave behind their livelihood, give up their public identity, and wander the margins of society. This mode of the practice, designed for householders, changes the dynamics of dissimulation that are prescribed in the *guhycaryā*. The dissimulation of the *unmattavrata*

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<sup>364</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 46.

ācāret samayān kṛtsnā[n] yathālabdhopajivikān |  
vaṅgbrāhmaṇaśūdrādyaiḥ kāraṇādinimantraṇaiḥ || 6.81 ||  
bhūtvā trptaistu yat kṣiptaṃ bāhyato'ntakaraṅkakaṃ |  
ādāya bhakṣayettatra śvāvidiṣṭaṃ jugupsitaṃ || 6.82 ||  
bhāvanātattvayogena anyathā naiva sidhyati |  
sarvavarṇasamācāraḥ kiñcid unmatteṣṭitaṃ || 6.83 ||  
śiśubhis tālaśabdaiśca samantāt pariveṣṭitaṃ |  
nrtyamā(gā)naśatair divyair vajranṛtyapadair yutaṃ || 6.84 ||  
udgiran geyaśabdāṃśca avyaktaṃ vajragītikam |  
vyaktaṃ tu kārayed anyam prasiddham yat tridhātukam || 6.85 ||  
geyam nānārutoni(tairmi)śraṃ [paryaṭeta]piśācavat |  
yena yena hi badhyante jantavo raudrakarmaṇā || 6.86 ||  
sopāyena tu tenaiva mucyante bhavabandhanāt |



prescribes that the *sādhaka* conceal his identity by adopting the behaviors of someone who has been possessed as he performs the *guhyacaryā* in public. The instructions for householders also require that one conceal one's identity as an initiate, but they do not require the kind of publicly performed dissimulation prescribed in the *unmattavrata*. This mode of the *caryā* might be characterized as secretive rather than dissimulative. Padmavajra's instructions for this practice state:

Otherwise, if one is not able to  
Completely abandon the entirety of his estate || 6.92 ||

Or [perform] the practice that is taught in  
The glorious *Guhyasiddhi* that is the source of good qualities, |  
Then he should stay at home  
And secretly practice the *samayas*. || 6.93 ||

He remains one devoted to worldly conduct,  
As long as it does not produce a violation [of *samaya*]. |  
But at night he should reveal that he is  
One devoted to the 'milk' [*samayas*] || 6.94 ||

And perform [them] with a *mudrā*  
Who is trustworthy and no one else. |  
And in this way too he should perform  
The urine and excrement *samayas*, etc., every day. || 6.95 ||

One who is devoted to the practice of *samaya*  
Shall attain the unsurpassed true state. |  
Endowed with a secret companion  
And the highest state of gnosis of ultimate reality, || 6.96 ||

He should perform the *samayas* and the like  
That are explained in the *tantra* in the same manner as above |  
By means of divine pleasures and divine women, etc.,  
Likewise through lying with divine [women]. || 6.97 ||

One who is endowed with gnosis who has exerted himself  
In meditation on ultimate reality shall attain siddhi. |  
Even at home, one who is devoted to  
*Samaya* conduct always attains siddhi. || 6.98 ||<sup>365</sup>

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<sup>365</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 47.

yadi vā 'tha na śaknoti tyaktuṃ veśmasuvistaram || 6.92 ||

The term *samaya* appears with striking frequency in these verses, and the importance of maintaining the *samayas* clearly acts as the justification for choosing in the secretive mode of the *guhycaryā* as a householder over its more public dissimulative mode.

Padmavajra then reinforces his argument that the public performance of the *guhycaryā* is not critical to one's success with a reference to those who perform the Śaiva forms of the *unmattavrata* or any number of other Śaiva *vrata* practices that resemble the *guhycaryā*:

But one who takes on the disgusting  
State that prescribed here |  
Whose power has not arisen  
Who makes a living by running a temple, || 6.104 ||

Who performs the *samayas* and the like  
While in the presence of lower [people], |  
Who has an impotent worldly intention,  
Who maintains a fire pit and a pavilion,<sup>366</sup> || 6.105 ||

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śrīguhyāsiddhinirdiṣṭāṃ caryāṃ vātha guṇodbhavāṃ |  
tadā veśmashthito bhūtvā samayān guptamācareṭ || 6.93 ||  
lokācāra(rai)kaniṣṭhastu yathā bhedo na jāyate |  
rātrau tu prakāṭo bhūtvā kṣīrābhyāsaikatatparaḥ || 6.94 ||  
mudrayā saha kurvīta viśvāsinyā na cānyathā |  
pratyaḥaṃ caiva kurvīta viṇmūtrasamayādikam || 6.95 ||  
siddhyate 'nuttaram tattvaṃ samayābhyāsatatparaḥ |  
suguptena sahāyena tattvajñānottamena ca || 6.96 ||  
tenaiva saha kurvīta tantroktaṃ samayādikam |  
divyastrīdivyabhogādyair divyaśayyāsanaish tathā || 6.97 ||  
siddhyate jñānayuktastu tattvabhāvakṛtaśramaḥ |  
gṛhe 'pi siddhyate nityaṃ samayācāratatparaḥ || 6.98 ||

<sup>366</sup> This verse is problematic in the Sarnath edition and the extant Sanskrit manuscripts. NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 19v.1 reads

pratyakṣaṃ hīnajātīnām kurute samayādikām |  
laukikāśaktaścittaśca kṛtavāṅḍamaṅḍapaḥ ||  
NGMCP A 1012/5 15r.10–11 reads

pratyakṣahīnajātīnām kuruta samayādikām |  
lokikāśaktaścittakṛtavāntuṅḍamaṅḍapaḥ ||  
IASWR MBB 7-5 41r.12–41v.1 reads

pratyakṣam hīnajātīnām kurute samayādikām |  
lokikāśaktaścittaśca kṛtavāntuṅḍamaṅḍapaḥ ||

The Tibetan reads:

/dman pa'i rigs la sogs pa la/  
/rtag tu dam tshig sogs spyod cing/

Who teaches a position other than what is prescribed  
Is one who destroys the teachings. |  
On the other hand, one who has given up marks  
Who performs the *sādhana* in this text || 6.106 ||

Should perform the *samayas* at night,  
Or else secretly by day |  
And in such a way that he is not seen by others  
Such as *śrāvakas* and inferior people. || 6.107 ||

And so the *mantrin* should practice  
In secret for the sake of his own attainment |  
In such a way that he is not bothered by the public  
And does not bother those who remain in the world. || 6.108 ||<sup>367</sup>

The passage indicate Padmavajra's awareness that the practices prescribed in his *guhyacaryā* are not the exclusive property of Buddhists, but are very close if not in some cases identical with the *vrata* practices prescribed by certain sects within the Śaiva *ati-* and *mantramārga*. Mention here of one whose power is not arisen (*anutpāditaśaktiḥ*) and who makes a living by running a temple (*maṭhavṛtṭyā ca vartate*) hint at a potential Śaiva subject of this critique, as does his description of such a person as someone who maintains a fire pit and pavilion (*kṛtavān kuṇḍamaṇḍapaḥ*). The final piece of evidence that Padmavajra is criticizing the

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/'dod dang bcas pa'i sems nyid kyis/  
/thab khung dkyil 'khor sogs byed pa/

The last verse of the Tibetan suggests *GS* 6.105 d should read: karoti kuṇḍamaṇḍalam | Taking all of these variants into consideration, my translation of *GS* 6.105cd follows NGMCP A 1012/5 and IASWR MBB 7-5 with a slight correction to the verse to read:  
laukikāśaktaścittaśca kṛtavān kuṇḍamaṇḍapaḥ |

<sup>367</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 48.

yaḥ karotyatra tu sthānaṃ prakartavyaṃ jugupsitam |  
anutpāditaśaktiśca maṭhavṛtṭyā ca vartate || 6.104 ||  
pratyakṣaṃ hīnajātīnāṃ kurute samayādikā(ka)m |  
laukikāśa(sa)ktacittaśca (karoti) tu(ku)ṇḍamaṇḍapaḥ(pam) || 6.105 ||  
śāsanocchedakṛt prokto yaḥ sthito vidhinā 'thavā |  
athavā liṅgamuktastu yaḥ karotyatra sādhanam || 6.106 ||  
sa kuryāt samayān rātrau divā vātha sugopitān |  
ta(ya)thā na dṛśyate cānyaiḥ śrāvakairhīnajātibhiḥ || 6.107 ||  
tathā vai mantriṇā kāryaṃ suguptaṃ cātmasiddhaye |  
yathā na bādhyate lokair lokāsaṃtyāśca(n yaśca na) bādhate || 6.108 ||

Śaiva forms of the ascetic practices of his *guhya*caryā comes in verse 6.106, where he contrasts a subject who 'teaches a position other than what is prescribed' (*prokto yaḥ sthito vidinā 'thavā*) and is this 'one who destroys the teachings' (*śāsanocchedakṛt*) with the *sādhaka* who is liberated from marks (*liṅgamuktaḥ*). This epithet can be interpreted according to a number of connotations that include one who has given up on clinging to marks or characteristics (describing an advanced Buddhist meditator), one who has given up any external indications of being an initiate, and one who has literally given up on the *liṅga*, or a Śaiva apostate.

It is clear that Padmavajra was very much aware of the Śaiva *vrata* practices that had gained currency among *ati*- and *mantramārga* sects by the ninth century when *Guhyasiddhi* was likely composed. Passages such as *Guhyasiddhi* 4.51–52 indicate that he anticipated an eclectic audience for his instructions on the *guhya*caryā and make it entirely possible that one of the reasons that aspects of the *guhya*caryā so closely resemble Śaiva *vrata* practices is that some the initiates performing them were Śaiva apostates. What's more, given his obvious familiarity with Śaiva scriptures and the intricacies of Śaiva ascetic practice, it is also possible that Padmavajra himself was a Śaiva apostate. This possibility is reinforced by the fact that he prescribes practices whose external form are undoubtedly Śaiva, he mentions Śaiva scriptures by name, and he assumes that his reader is familiar with both these practices and their Śaiva scriptural sources. Despite the exclusive rhetoric of the Śaiva and Buddhist initiatory traditions, Padmavajra and the anticipated audience for his *Guhyasiddhi* provide a good example of the fluid nature of sectarian and religious identity that provides the basic logic for the process of initiation itself. Practices such as the *guhya*caryā and *vidyāvratā* required the Buddhist initiate to perform his practice in the same locations that are prescribed

in Śaiva texts, and the Buddhist *sādhaka* performing the *guhycaryā* would thus be required to interact with initiates among the various Śaiva ascetic orders. This means, in keeping with the general practice of dissimulation at the heart of the *guhycaryā*, Śaiva ascetics constituted a population from whom the Buddhist *sādhaka* had to conceal his true identity.

#### **IV. The *Gaṇavrata*: Clandestine Activities, Covert Opps, and Intelligence Gathering**

The demonological paradigm has its benefits as a broad ranging discourse through which one might interpret the transgressive rhetoric of the Vajrayāna. It fails, however, to account for the some of the more social implications of the transgressive ascetic and ritual practices prescribed in these works and in the broader Vajrayāna tradition. The distinction is muddled by the fact that in many cases the very same behaviors that would invite attack from various spirit beings might also invite abuse and censure from human beings. A psychological interpretation of this phenomenon might even reduce the demonological interpretation of the relationship between behavior, madness, and possession to a social projection originating with the determinants of normative behavior. This study takes the position that the demonological should not be reduced to its sociological or psychological implications.<sup>368</sup> Understanding the demonological in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* on its own terms has already been shown to be critical to understanding the dual apotropaic-soteriological goal of this textual tradition. But while psychological reductionism brings us farther away from the world of these texts and deeper into an etic discourse, the sociological implications of the *caryā* and *vrata* is acknowledge in these works by the authors themselves and provides a legitimate avenue for understanding the texts on their own terms.

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<sup>368</sup> Nor, for that matter, should the sociological be reduced to the demonological, though given the broad tendency toward ignoring the topic of demonology, this is hardly as great of a potential concern for a modern academic readership.

The fact that the transgressive ascetic rites of the *caryā* and *vrata* have clear social implications is certainly not lost on the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, nor is it lost on subsequent Vajrayāna Buddhist authors in both the Sanskrit and Tibetan traditions. Chapter eight of Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* on the "Instruction on the *Gaṇa* [Observance]" (*gaṇoddhṛtanirdeśa* [sic. *gaṇavratānirdeśa*])<sup>369</sup> is keenly aware of the potential social repercussions of taking on a tantric consort as well as the measures that one might have to take to ensure that one's true identity is concealed before adopting this practice. This is clear in the opening verses of the chapter, which read:

Now I will explain the most miraculous  
*Sādhana* of an outcaste woman |  
 That is taught in the *tantra*  
 Exactly as it was received. || 8.1 ||

One should abandoned the area of [one's] birth  
 And take on the appearance of a Lord of *Gaṇas*. |  
 Then one should enter other lands,  
 In which one is not recognized anywhere. || 8.2 ||

One should adopt the guise of a *gaṇa*,  
 [Meaning that one should] shave one's head |  
 Preserving a mass [of hair] on top  
 That is made into a single matted lock, || 8.3 ||

Wear a necklace on the neck  
 That is a mixed alternately with *rudrākṣa* beads |  
 And divine crystals that hang down  
 To the lower torso, || 8.4 ||

[Wear] the divine upper arm and wrist

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<sup>369</sup> The Tibetan for this chapter title reads *tshogs kyi brtul zhugs nges par bstan pa'i le'u* which would back-translate to the Sanskrit as *\*gaṇavratānirdeśapaṭala*. Luckily, the title of this chapter appears in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, where Bendall's edition records it as *gaṇavratānirdeśaḥ*. See *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, edited by Cecil Bendall (Leipzig: Harrassowitz, 1905), 44. The proximity of the compound *gaṇavrata* to the compound *gaṇavratā*, which would match the Tibetan *tshogs kyi brtul zhugs*, prompted me to check Bendall's edition against the manuscript of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* that I have in my possession. This source confirms the Tibetan translation of the title for the chapter as *gaṇavratānirdeśaḥ*. See *Subhāṣitasamgrahaḥ* NGMCP A 1057/20 (Kathmandu: Nepal National Archive), 15v.3. Given the contents of the chapter, which does indeed provide instructions for dressing up like a *gaṇa*, and that these two readings of the title are a match, I have amended the title to *gaṇavratānirdeśaḥ* in my translation.

Bracelets that flutter in the darkness like a firebrand, |  
Make the three-fold marking [on one's forehead] and  
[Place] a copper ring on [one's] index finger. || 8.5 ||

One should wear a loincloth  
Over [one's] private parts, and |  
A sword that hangs on the shoulder  
That is made out of iron. || 8.6 ||

Having taken the form of a Lord of the Gaṇas,  
His every limb ornamented, |  
Hiding deep in the forest,  
One should enter a place where outcastes live. || 8.7 ||

Having thus fashioned a charming disguise  
For the purpose of *siddhi*, |  
One should wander about in beautiful places<sup>370</sup>  
Where one is not recognized at all. || 8.8 ||

And having entered into the midst of  
Outcastes and the like who are devoted |  
To The Destroyer of the Triple-city and do not  
Recognize any other deity as absolute, || 8.9 ||

Who are devoted to the *siddhānta*,<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>370</sup> There is a problem in the Sarnath edition here.

NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 12r.12 reads:  
paryate divyadeśeṣu yatra na jñāyate kvacit |  
NGMCP A 1012/5 16v.6–7 reads:

paryate divyadeśeṣu yatra na jñāyate kvacit |  
IASWR MBB 7-5 44v.8 reads:

paryate divyadeśeṣu yatra na jñāyate kvacit |  
The Tibetan matches these and reads:

/gang zhig sus kyang mi shes par/  
/bzang po'i yul du 'khyam par bya/

My translation follows this rendering of the verse.

<sup>371</sup> This line is problematic in the Sarnath edition and in the Sanskrit manuscripts at my disposal:

NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 12r.13 reads:  
sidhyaṅte bhāvitā nityaṁ snānadevārcane rātāḥ |  
NGMCP A 1012/5 16v.7–8 reads:

sidhyate bhāvitā nityaṁ snādevārvane ratā |  
IASWR MBB 7-5 44v.11 reads:

sidhyate bhāvitā nityaṁ snānadevārcane ratā |

The Tibetan offers an alternate and likely preferable reading:

/rtag tu khros dang lha mchod cing /  
/rtag tu rang gi grub mtha' bsgom/

A reconstruction of the Sanskrit from the Tibetan might read:  
siddhānte bhāvitāḥ nityaṁ snānadevārcane ratāḥ |

Who delight in honoring the gods by bathing them, |  
Who become engaged in the view of a treatise  
Based on a mere fraction of the words [they contain].<sup>372</sup> || 8.10 ||

The determined *sādhaka* should thus  
Enter into their midst |  
[And] meditate on ultimate awakening  
In a form [familiar to] the outcaste community. || 8.11 ||

And then he should teach them  
A preliminary doctrine and tenet system |  
Such as the purification practice in the *Kālottara*, etc.,  
Or something that comes from the *Niḥśvāsa*. || 8.12 ||

And to win [their] trust,  
All of them are instructed in that *tantra*. |  
They become one's own disciples, and perform  
The preliminary for the offering *maṇḍala*. || 8.13 ||

Then one should give the pile of things  
That they donated during the guru offering |  
Back to them [so that each one]  
Possesses [their] property as before . || 8.14 ||

And [instead,] one should take one of their young girls  
Who has a beautiful face and lovely eyes |  
And make her very learned in the true nature  
Of mantra and authorized [to take] the *samaya*. || 8.15 ||

The wise one who is determined to attain buddhahood  
Should [then] practice the consort observance [and] |  
He shall surely attain *siddhi* here, in this very life

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My translation follows this rendering in the Tibetan, but takes the Tibetan *bsgom* (*bhāvitāḥ*) in the sense of 'devoted to.'

<sup>372</sup> The Sanskrit in the Sarnath edition and the manuscripts at my disposal is corrupted here.

NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 12r.13 reads:

kiñcidakṣaram mārgeṇa[?] prasaktenāstradarśane |

NGMCP A 1012/5 16v.8 reads:

kincidakṣaram mārgeṇa[?] praśakṣe[?]ṇāstradarśane |

IASWR MBB 7-5 44v.12 reads:

kiñcidakṣaram mārgeṇa praśakte śāstradarśane |

The Tibetan reads:

/yi ge las ni cung zhig gis/

/rang 'byung lha la chags gyur pas/

A potential reconstruction of the Sanskrit from the Tibetan might read:

kiñcidākṣaramargeṇa prasaktāḥ svayambhūdeve |

My translation amends this verse as follows:

kiñcidakṣaramārgeṇa prasaktāḥ śāstradarśane |



By means of the *samayas* that are taught in the *tantra*. || 8.16 ||<sup>373</sup>

Several scholars have referenced this same passage in their work. Sanderson refers to the passage to support his Śaiva-Buddhist unidirectional appropriation thesis to argue that Padmavajra's explicit mention of two Śaiva scriptures, the *Kālottara* and the *Niśvāsattattvasaṃhitā*, is irrefutable evidence that Buddhist tantric ascetics were well versed enough in Śaiva scripture to teach it and perform Śaiva *maṇḍala* initiation rituals.<sup>374</sup>

Davidson references this passage to argue that siddhas proselytized among tribal peoples

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<sup>373</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 53–54.

yaduktaṃ sādhanam tantre anta(ntyajāyā mahādbhutam |  
atastaṃ saṃpravakṣyāmi yathā saṃprāpyate dṛḍham || 8.1 ||  
janmāvadhim parityajya kṛtvā rūpaṃ gaṇeśvaram |  
praviśya cānyadeśeṣu yatra na jñāyate kvacit || 8.2 ||  
gaṇaliṅgaṃ samādhāya muṇḍayitvā tu mastakam |  
dhārayitvā śikhāmekāṃ sthūlāmekajaṭākr̥tim || 8.3 ||  
rudrākṣaiḥ sphaṭikairdivyaiḥ parasparavimīśritām |  
vidhāya kaṇṭhikāṃ kaṇṭhe adhobhāge'valambinīm || 8.4 ||  
keyūram kaṅkaṇam divyaṃ sphuliṅga[ga]hanākulam |  
kṛtvā tripuṇḍrakam yatnāt tarjanyā(nyām) tāmramudrikām || 8.5 ||  
kaupīnam ca tato dhāryam purato bhāgalambakam |  
skandhāvalambitam kṛtvā karaṇḍam sa(ca) salopa(ha)kam || 8.6 ||  
kṛtvā gaṇeśvaram rūpaṃ sarvāvayavabhūṣitam |  
kākṣāvaguṇṭhanam kṛtvā praviśed antyajālayam || 8.7 ||  
evam kṛtvā tu taṃ divyaṃ suguṇṭam siddhihetave |  
paryāted divyadeśeṣu yatra na jñāyate kvacit || 8.8 ||  
praviśya cāntyajādīnām madhye ye tripurāntake |  
bhaktiā jānanti naivānyam daivataṃ paramārthataḥ || 8.9 ||  
siddhyante bhāvitā nityam snānadevārcane ratāḥ |  
kiñcidakṣaramārgeṇa praśa(sa)kte śāstradarśane || 8.10 ||  
evam praviśya tanmadhye sādhamo dṛḍhaniścayaḥ |  
caṇḍālagāṇarūpeṇa bhāvayan bodhimuttama(mā)m || 8.11 ||  
darśayecca tatasteṣām dharmasiddhāntapūrvakam |  
kālottarādisaṃśuddham no cenniḥśvāsasaṃbhavam || 8.12 ||  
pātayitu(tuṃ ca) viśvāse sarvāmstān tantracoditān |  
kṛtvā cā(caivā)tmanah śiṣyān dīkṣāmaṇḍalapūrvakam || 8.13 ||  
tato yat saṃcitam dravyam tairdattam gurupūjane |  
tat teṣāmarpayitvā tu pūrvam ci(vi)ttena saṃyutam || 8.14 ||  
grhītvā kanyakām teṣām cāruvaktrām sulocanām |  
tām kṛtvā mantrasadbhāvovi(vābhi)jñām samayasammatām || 8.15 ||  
cared vidyāvratam dhīmān buddhatvakṛtaniścayaḥ |  
siddhyate janmanīhaiva tantroktaiḥ samayairdṛḍham || 8.16 ||

<sup>374</sup> Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 144–45.

who, in turn, shaped the *siddha* movement.<sup>375</sup> Wedemeyer has remarked on these verses as well to challenge Davidson's reading of the passage, noting that this is an instance in which a Buddhist *sādhaka* is instructed to teach these materials *to* people on the margins of brahmanical culture, not evidence of Buddhist tantric ascetics learning *from* tribal or outcaste peoples.<sup>376</sup> All of these points are well taken, yet none of these authors actually directly deal with what the content of the passage itself has to tell us about the role that simulation and dissimulation played in Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* practices.

A more straightforward analysis of the passage requires at least some acknowledgement that its central purpose is to instruct the Buddhist *sādhaka* in the performance of both dissimulative and simulative ascetic modes. These modes, laid out quite candidly here in Padmavajra's instructions on how to pull off an elaborate "guru con," are critical to understanding the transition from the early transgressive ritual and asceticism of the *Guhyasamājatantra* and the more thorough and overt inscription of these practices in the literature of the Buddhist *yoginītantras*. The passage contains a set of instructions in which a Buddhist *sādhaka* is essentially told to disguise himself as a Śaiva ascetic in order to deceive a community of outcastes into giving him one of their daughters as tribute in exchange for a fake Śaiva *maṇḍala* initiation. It would seem logical to pause and examine the reasons that a Vajrayāna Buddhist ascetic performing the *caryā* and *vrata* might be told to disguise himself as one of any number of Śaiva ascetic orders, particularly given the fact that the later,

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<sup>375</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 226. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 29–30 comments that Davidson's reading of the his sources for the argument that references to the 'tribal landscape' of *siddha* culture abound in the literature is instead "a chimera of long-standing scholarly rhetoric" on the tribal origins narrative for Buddhist tantric traditions.

<sup>376</sup> Wedemeyer, "Making Sense," 26. I would add to this observation that the 'teaching' in the passage is not even Buddhist.

standardized versions of these practices in the *yoginītantras* are widely hypothesized as Buddhist appropriations of forms of Śaiva asceticism.

The terms *guhyavrata* and *guhyacaryā* signify a culture of ascetic dissimulation and simulation, and it is possible that this ascetic culture may have found its first detailed expression in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* prior to its incorporation into the *yoginītantras*. Scriptural sources on the *caryā* such as the *Hevajratantra* instruct the advanced initiate to take on the physical appearance and dress of the tutelary deity Hevajra (or Heruka in other textual traditions), and the practice is largely interpreted as a mimetic performance in which the *sādhaka* takes on the outer appearance of the central deity of the Hevajra *maṇḍala*. Such practices are widely recognized as evidence of Buddhist appropriation and re-purposing of Śaiva ascetic forms because of the striking similarities in appearance between Buddhist deities like Heruka and Hevajra and the dress that is worn during a number of Śaiva *kāpālika* ascetic practices.

The appearance of the *kāpālika* dress in *Guhyasiddhi*, however, indicates that before these practices were mimetic, they were strategies of dissimulation and simulation that Buddhist *yogins* adopted to hide their true identity so that they could mingle in the same circles as their Śaiva counterparts. The dissimulative component of the *kāpālika* dress allowed both Buddhist and Śaiva ascetics to conceal their actual identities. For the Buddhist, however, it had the added benefit of allowing the *sādhaka* to conceal his identity *as a Buddhist* from a specific social group—the Śaiva ascetics—in order to avoid detection while haunting the very same ascetic landscapes. This dissimulation is complemented by a simulative component in which the dress of a *kāpālika* ascetic was adopted both to conceal a Buddhist identity and to project a false Śaiva identity. Looking at practices like the

*guhyacaryā* and *guhyavrata* in this light supplies a potential social context for the exchange of Śaiva and Buddhist ritual theory and a social context for the appropriation of forms of ritual praxis from the former by the latter. This deception, which is an inherent component of this ascetic mode, provides grounds for translating the term *guhyacaryā* as 'clandestine activity.' The *siddhas* who performed this clandestine activity of the *guhyacaryā* might be viewed as the deep-undercover black-ops of the Buddhist yogic world who surrendered their Buddhist identities completely, dressed as Śaivas, infiltrated communities of Śaiva ascetics, collected whatever intelligence they could, and repurposed it toward their own goals. The result was the intensely hybrid Śaiva-Buddhist tantric literature of the Buddhist *yoginītantras*.

Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhyacaryā* and *vidyāvrata* read as an amalgamation of a number of 'observances' that appear in the twenty-first chapter of the Śaiva *Brahmayāmalatantra*. The twenty-first chapter of the *Brahmayāmalatantra* consists of a set of nine different instructions on the *vidyāvrata* corresponding to the nine syllables of the Vidyā Caṇḍā Kāpālinī's primary mantra.<sup>377</sup> There are both similarities and differences between the nine *vidyāvrata* in the *Brahmayāmalatantra* and the various elements of these practices that appear in Padmavajra's *guhyacaryā*. Alexis Sanderson has provided a wealth of data on the similarities between the Śaiva and Buddhist versions of these practices, but it is also helpful to spend some time acknowledging the ways in which they differ.

As Csaba Kiss notes, the observances outlined in the *vidyāvrata* chapter of the *Brahmayāmalatantra* are all prescribed during the first phase of a Śaiva initiate's practice and precede his assignment to one of the three classes of *sādhaka* that are outlined in the text. Kiss describes the Śaiva *vidyāvrata* as "basically ascetic practices aiming at self-purification,

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<sup>377</sup> Kiss, *The Brahmayāmalatantra*, 32.

the pacification of the Yoginīs and at obtaining a meeting (*melaka*) with them by gradually embracing non-conventional practice (*nirācāra*).<sup>378</sup> In contrast, the Vajrayāna *caryā* and *vrata* practices are performed at a relatively advanced stage in the *sādhaka*'s career and employ a doctrine of ontological non-duality that collapses the purity-impurity dialectic. The Śaiva versions of the *vidyāvrata* prescribe the kind of external protective ritual techniques that are forbidden in the Buddhist forms of the practice. A number of the Śaiva *vidyāvrata* practices require that the *sādhaka* follow a daily ritual regimen and protect himself while roaming in public by performing the *mantranyāsa*, both of which are specifically proscribed in the Buddhist practices related to the *guhyaacaryā*. All of the Śaiva *vidyāvrata* require that the *sādhaka* maintain chastity, a feature that is certainly not present in the Buddhist *vidyāvrata*, which is specifically oriented toward the performance of sexual yoga with a divine or human consort. The fact that the *vidyāvrata* instructions are oriented toward the goal of attracting the attention of *yoginīs* through maintaining chastity and that this encounter culminates in a positive possession by Bhairava and his pantheon of attendants also stands in opposition to the function of the *vidyāvrata* and the *guhyaacaryā* in Buddhist sources. In the latter, the goal is not to become possessed but to prove that one is impervious to possession. In the Buddhist two-stage yoga introduced in the *Guhyasamājatantra*, the *sādhaka* has already brought about a kind of positive possession with the tutelary deity and a retinue of *maṇḍala* protector deities during the generation stage yoga, well before taking up the *vidyāvrata*. The instructions in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* on the Buddhist consecration rites and the generation stage yoga that engage in a kind of positive possession also demonstrate some degree of ambivalence by emphasizing, via the doctrinal theory of *mahāmudrā*, that the deity-*maṇḍala* and the entire cosmos that emerges from it is already naturally and

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<sup>378</sup> Kiss, *The Brahmayāmālatantra*, 31.

spontaneously present in one's own body. The Buddhist conception of embodying the deity-*maṇḍala* employs a yogic theory of positive possession, but it also reconciles this yogic theory with a Buddhist representationalist epistemological discourse around the nature of self-reflexive awareness (*pratyātmaveda* or *svasaṃveda*). In this respect, the central function of the *vidyāvratā* in the *Brahmayāmalatantra* is seemingly antithetical to the entire purpose of the Vajrayāna practices of the same name. Such discrepancies are no doubt precisely what Alexis Sanderson had in mind by arguing that the form of ritual in Vajrayāna is derived from Śaiva sources, but the function of those rituals remains entirely Buddhist.<sup>379</sup>

These important differences aside, there is much about Padmavajra's *guhya* instructions on the *unmattavrata* that indicates a Śaiva source for the practice, possibly even the *Brahmayāmala* itself, even though an exact one-to-one intertextuality is not evident here as it is in the case of the almost verbatim incorporation of passages from the *Brahmayāmala* into the *Laghuśaṃvara* and its related works. The most obvious indicator is the fact that the *unmattavrata* was certainly an established Śaiva ascetic practice prior to the early to mid-ninth century, when Padmavajra is believed to have been active.<sup>380</sup> Both Padmavajra and the *Brahmayāmala* prescribe behaviors that are ubiquitous social markers for insanity such as randomly breaking into song, laughing for no reason, dancing, yelling, and other behaviors that had become a part of the mad ascetic's repertoire as early as the *Pāśupatasūtra*. Since the components of Padmavajra's *unmattavrata* have already been presented above, Csaba Kiss's translation of the *Brahmayāmala*'s instructions on the *unmattavrata* is provided here for comparison:

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<sup>379</sup> Sanderson, "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function," 92.

<sup>380</sup> This is evident in the fact that this practice appears in the *Niśvāsaḡuhya* as an ascetic observance associated with the Lākula Pāśupatas, as noted in Sanderson, "The Lākulas," 209. This passage is quoted in full in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

He should always be naked, his hair unbound. He weeps, he laughs, sometimes he bursts out in song. Sometimes the Sādhaka dances, sometimes he jumps up, sometimes he runs [away]. He states, "I am Brahmā! I am Viṣṇu! I am Íśvara! The gods are in my hands! They have become my servants! "Look at me—I am Indra, mounted on [his elephant] Airāvata!" he says, "Indrāṇī is my wife!" And, "I am a dog! I am a pig!" I am horse-headed [?] and my body is that of a horse!" He should lie down on the road, then get up and run. He should not set foot on the site of pantheon-worship (*yāgasthāna*) and should not perform worship, not even mentally. He should salute the junctions of the day (*samdhya*) by [offering his own] urine. He should sometimes pour some of it on his head. When seeing women, he should greet them thus: "Mother! Sister!" This is how the Mantrin should engage in conversation. He should not abuse [them]. Roaming (*bhramaṇa*) is [to be performed] in the same way in this case (*iha*) [as taught above], as [is the sequence of] the daily rituals (*āhnikā*). He should not eat in the daytime, even though [he behaves like] a madman. He should throw sesamum seeds on his head and, pretending that they are (*kṛtvā*) lice, he should eat them. Or he should kill [the 'lice'] with a big fuss in order to delude people. The Sādhaka should, O Mahādevī, pursue the Madman-like [observance] (*unmattaka*) thus, with different patterns of behavior. This is for the benefit of yogins.<sup>381</sup>

There are a number of moments in this passage where the Śaiva authors and redactors of the *Brahmayāmala* have offered their own creative take on the behavioral traits that would allow a *sādhaka* to feign madness. But we also see the same kind of repurposing of *bhūtavidyā* symptomology here that was evident in Padmavajra's instructions on the *unmattavrata* as part of the clandestine activity of the *guhycaryā*. This phenomenon appears in the passage above in its instructions to declare that one is a Brahmā or Íśvara, a behavioral indicator of madness that resembles the symptomology of *asura* possession that appear in a passage quoted from the *Kriyākālaguṇottara* in *Netratantra* chapter nineteen.<sup>382</sup> All of the *vidyāvrata* instructions

<sup>381</sup> Kiss, *The Brahmayāmala Tantra*, 214. Sanskrit edition p 116.

<sup>382</sup> *Netratantra II*, 157.

ahaṃ viṣṇurahaṃ brahmā rudro 'hamiti bhāṣate ||  
 ahaṃ skando viśākhaśca nāsti matsadṛśo bhuvī |  
 kadācidbhojanaṃ bhūṅkte naiva bhūṅkte kadācana ||  
 apamanyeta devāṃśca brahmaṇāṃścāpamanyate |  
 asurena gṛhītasya etadbhavati lakṣaṇaṃ ||  
 He says "I am  
 Viṣṇu, Brahma, Rudra" ||  
 I am Skanda, I am Viśākha,

in the *Brahmayāmala* suggest the *sādhaka* alternate between performing his daily rites and wandering around in some form of disguise. The structure of Padmavajra's *guhyacaryā* instructions, which alternate between verses on perfecting union with the deity-*maṇḍala* and verses on adopting the external appearance of a madman, might indicate a daily routine that is similar to the Śaiva version of the practice but replaces its ritual components with Buddhist practices. The passage's proscription against performing any kind of worship, even if it is done mentally, is reminiscent of the proscriptions of a broad range of practices in the instructions on the *caryā* and *vrata* practices in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The *Brahmayāmala* elaborates upon this proscription later in chapter twenty-one in its general instructions for practicing the nine *vidyāvrata*. Here the text tells us that the *sādhaka* must "perform the rituals for the divinities (*devakarman*), [i.e.] the four daily rituals (*āhnikā*), in a hidden, secret place, [even/only] at night."<sup>383</sup> This indicates that the Śaiva *sādhaka* performing his *vidyāvrata* keeps his daily regimen of ritual practice largely concealed from public view while projecting a public persona during his phases of 'wandering' that conceals his identity as an initiate. This is reminiscent of at least one of the connotations of the term *guhya* in Padmavajra's *guhyacaryā* /*guhyavrata*. It also indicates that both Buddhists and Śaivas performing these dissimulative ascetic practices would have been able to keep their ritual

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There is no other like me on this earth!" |  
 Sometimes he eats food  
 And sometimes he does not eat ||  
 He is disrespectful to the gods,  
 And is disrespectful to brahmins. |  
 That is the mark of  
 One who is taken by an asura. ||

<sup>383</sup> Kiss, *The Brahmayāmalatantra*, 217–18.



activities, and thus their particular sectarian affiliations, a secret from the general public as well as from other *sādhakas*.<sup>384</sup>

The fact that the Śaiva *sādhaka* performed the practices that might identify him as an initiate of a particular order while in seclusion or among a small inner circle of fellow initiates has implications for my argument that the clandestine activity of the *guhya*caryā allowed Buddhists to live among Śaiva ascetics without being detected. The following analysis of Padmavajra's prescription for the Buddhist *sādhaka* to take on the appearance of a *kāpālika* ascetic brings the simulative nature of this practice to light. The sequence of instructions leading up to this practice begins as follows:

I will give a systematic explanation  
Of the ordinary *mudrās*. |  
At first one should obtain a woman of the lowest caste  
And he attain *siddhi* with them. || 7.13 ||

The low-caste woman [might be] a sister,  
A mother, a daughter, or dier |  
Who has been born in a despised family  
Or one who is otherwise easily obtained. || 7.14 ||

But in the specific case of a daughter,  
She should be trained to follow the *tantras* |  
And gradually instructed in performing  
All of the *samayās* from childhood on. || 7.15 ||

One should make skilled and devoted to *bodhicitta*  
And one who is able to bear the nature of reality. |  
In due course the wise one shall *siddhi*  
In she who embodies the un-fractured threefold *vajra*. || 7.16 ||<sup>385</sup>

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<sup>384</sup> The *Brahmayāmala* also specifies that the *vidyāvratā* practices are to be performed on one's own, with the exception that the *sādhakaḥ* may perform them with a group of trusted, close friends who are also initiates. Kiss, *The Brahmayāmalatantra*, 218.

<sup>385</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 51.

tāstu mudrāḥ pravakṣyāmi sāmānyāstu krameṇa tu |  
antyajāmāditāḥ kṛtvā yābhiḥ siddhiravāpyate || 7.13 ||  
antyajā bhaginī mātā duhitṛī rañjakī tathā |  
jugupsākulasambhūtā cānyā vā labhyate sukhaiḥ || 7.14 ||  
viśeṣato duhitṛiṃ tu kṛtvā tantrānuvedhitām |  
samastasamayācāraiḥ śiśubhāvā(śikṣā)\*dikaṃ kramāt || 7.15 ||

It is highly unlikely that the use of the terms 'sister,' 'mother,' and 'daughter' (*bhaginī mātā duhitrī*) in this passage refer to a violation of the incest taboo. Not only do we get the impression that the outcaste women in the passage come from another family, by this point the *sādhaka* has already completed the ascetic regiment of the *guhycaryā* and, unless he is performing the *guhycaryā* as a householder, he would likely be far away from anyone who might recognize him, let alone his own family. The terms 'sister,' 'mother,' and 'daughter' signify the consort's age and/or the role she plays in her own family, not her relationship to the *sādhaka*.<sup>386</sup> These verses also seem to indicate that an outcaste of low standing whose family is particularly disliked is desirable simply because it is easier for the *sādhaka* to get her (or her family) to agree to their union. It thus appears, at least in this case, that there is a practical aspect to the injunction to take an outcaste as one's consort that may take precedent over interpreting the practice as a rejection of the rules governing sexual relationships with low caste women outlined in the brahmanical legal literature.

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bodhicittaratām daksām kṛtvā vai dharmatākṣamām |  
trivajrābhedarūpiṇyām sādhyed vidhivad budhaḥ || 7.16 ||

My translation drops this additional material from the Sarnath edition and simply reads the verse as śiśubhāvādikaṃ kramāt.

<sup>386</sup> Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, however, preserves a far more ambiguous position on the potentially literal reading of passages in the tantras that prescribe violating the incest taboo. The topic is the centerpiece of *Jñānasiddhi* chapter eleven, "Free from Approachable and Not Approachable [for Intercourse]" (*gamyāgamyarahita*). This brief chapter argues essentially that all beings in *samsāra* have acted in every conceivable familial role over countless rebirths and uses this argument to justify statements in the tantras to the effect that a daughter is allowed, "when purifying the mind of yogis" (*yoginām cittaśodhane*). Indrabhūti leaves the reader to decide whether or not this means that one may use one's actual daughter as *dakṣinā* during the initiation rite or that any *mudrā* whom one might offer as *dakṣinā* is appropriate because she has essentially been one's daughter at some point over countless rebirths in cyclic existence. What is even more fascinating about the chapter is that Indrabhūti applies the very same basic logic that underlies the classic Mahāyāna practice of cultivating *bodhicitta* by considering that all beings have acted as one's mother in a past life to argue, at least potentially, for the irrelevance of the incest taboo. See Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 127.

After he has trained his consort in the ritual and performed an offering ceremony to her, Padmavajra's *vidyāvratā* instructions then tell the *sādhaka* to disguise himself as a Śaiva ascetic:

The *mantrin* should sprinkle himself with ash  
And make his own appearance and hers |  
That of a holy [person] with a heap of matted locks  
In [the following] specific manner: || 7.18 ||

He should be clothed in a tiger skin,  
Adorned with the various ornaments, |  
And bear a *vajra*, *khatvāṅgha*,  
And bell along with a *ḍamaru*. || 7.19 ||

[He should] be adorned with fragments of bone  
In his ears, on his throat, and also on his arms, |  
[And hold] a human skull in the left hand,  
And a *ḍamaru* in the right. || 7.20 ||

Likewise, they may take on a form  
In which the *mudrā*'s and one's own likeness  
Is oneself as the supreme *vajra*-bearer  
Accompanied by Māmākī, Locanā, or the like. || 7.21 ||<sup>387</sup>

One should perform the consort observance  
According to the ritual system taught in the manual. |  
One who is certain regarding non-duality

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<sup>387</sup> There are problems with this verse in the Sarnath edition.

NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 12r.5–6 reads:

vidhāya drgvidhiṃ rūpaṃ mudrāyāñcātmanastathā |  
māmakīlocanādyastu svayaṃ vajrāgradhāriṇaṃ |

NGMCP A 1012/5 16v.9–10 reads:

vidhāya drgvidhiṃ rūpaṃ mudrāyāñcātmanastathā |  
māmakīlocanādyastu svayaṃ vajrāgradhāriṇaṃ |

IASWR MBB 7-5 45v.9–10 reads:

vidhāya drgvidhiṃ rūpaṃ mudrāyāñcātmanastathā |  
māmakīlocanādyastu svayaṃ vajrāgradhāriṇaṃ ||

The Tibetan reads:

/bdag dang phyag rgya de bzhin du/

/mA ma kl'am sbyan dag gam/

/bdag nyid rdo rje mchog 'dzin pas/

/'di 'dra'i gzugs su byas nas ni/

The Sarnath suggests amending drgvidhiṃ to īdravidhiṃ based on the Tibetan 'di 'dra (īdrś). It seems to me that it is possible to arrive at a very similar if not the same translation from the Sanskrit manuscripts without amending them to match the Tibetan here, and my translation follows NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3.

Shall attain *siddhi* in this very lifetime. || 7.22 ||<sup>388</sup>

As the reader may recall, *Guhyasiddhi* an independent treatise that provides instructions on the generation and completion stage yogas of the *Guhyasamājatantra*. As we have already seen, the *nyāsa* practice outlined in chapter four of *Guhyasiddhi* does not have a direct correlate in the *Guhyasamājatantra* itself.<sup>389</sup> This lack of direct correlation is precisely the reason that *Guhyasiddhi* is less a commentary than a semi-independent work on the *Guhyasamājatantra*. It appears that Padmavajra's introduction of the markings of a Śaiva *kāpālika* ascetic in his *vidyāvratā* provide another case in point regarding the independent nature of the text. The *Guhyasamājatantra* does not feature a *maṇḍala* iconography in which the central deity is clothed in the kind of *kāpālika* style ascetic dress prescribed in *Guhyasiddhi* 7.18–20.<sup>390</sup> Padmavajra may be superimposing a style of *caryā* and *vratā* associated with the *yoginītantras* onto the *Guhyasamājatantra* system here, but it is still not possible to say that a *sādhaka* who is initiated into the *Guhyasamāja* system and dresses like a *kāpālika* ascetic to perform a *vidyāvratā* is engaged in a mimesis of the primary tutelary deity of the *guhyasamāja-maṇḍala*. Instead, the mimetic version of the practice is offered as one of two options.

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<sup>388</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 51–52.

uddhūlya bhasmanā divyaṃ jaṭāmukutaṃmaṇḍitam |  
svabimbaṃ kārayenmantrī tasyāścaiva viśeṣataḥ || 7.18 ||  
vyāghracarmāmbāro bhūtvā nānālaṅkārabhūṣitaḥ |  
gṛhītvā vajrakhaṭvāṅgagaṇḍaṃ[ghaṇṭa] ḍamarukānvitam || 7.19 ||  
karṇe gale tathā bāhau asthikhaṇḍairvibhūṣitam |  
nr̥kapālaṃ kare vāme ḍamarukaṃ tathottare || 7.20 ||  
vidhāya(ye)dr̥gvidhiṃ(dhaṃ) rūpaṃ mudrāyāścātmanas tathā |  
māmākilocanādyāistu svayaṃ vajrāgradhāriṇam || 7.21 ||  
cared vidyāvratam divyaṃ kalpoditavidhikramāt |  
siddhyate janmanihaiva nirdvandvakṛtaniścayaḥ || 7.22 ||

<sup>389</sup> See chapter three of this dissertation.

<sup>390</sup> Neither iconography of Vajrasattva, Mañjuvajra, or Akṣobhyavajra feature any of the *kāpālika* components that Padmavajra prescribes here. See Abhayākaragupta, *Niṣpannayogāvalī*, translated and edited by Lokesh Chandra and Nirmala Sharma (New Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture and Aditya Prakashan, 2015), 20–38.

The first outfit Padmavajra prescribes for the *vidyāvratā* does match that of the Śaiva *kāpālīka* ascetic in a number of the *vidyāvratā* practices outlined in the *Brahmayāmalatantra*, which prescribes similar manners of dress for the *muktabhairāvratā*, the *vardhamānavratā*, and the *bhairava* or *mahāvratā*. The *mahāvratā* is even mentioned in by name in *Guhyasiddhi* 4.52, translated above, as one of a number of non-Buddhist forms of the *vratā* that the *yogin* who has truly realized *mahāmudrā* might take up. Padmavajra himself draws attention to the discrepancy between the *Guhyasamāja* iconography and the prescribed *kāpālīka* dress of his *vidyāvratā* by providing an alternative mimetic option. When we consider the simulative and dissimulative character of Padmavajra's *caryā* and *vratā* instructions, the injunction for a high-level Buddhist initiate to dress up as a relatively lower-level initiated Śaiva ascetic during the *vidyāvratā* might qualify as a form of clandestine activity (*guhyacaryā*). There are other explicit allowances for simulating the appearance of Śaiva ascetics that can support this interpretation of Padmavajra's *vidyāvratā* instructions as well, such as the instructions on performing the 'guru con' in chapter eight of *Guhyasiddhi*.

This analysis suggests a hypothesis regarding the interactions between Buddhist and Śaiva ascetics and their relationship to the emergence of the *yoginītantra* ritual culture that Sanderson has shown to be so thoroughly Śaiva in form. It is possible that Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* was composed during a period in which the *siddha* traditions were in transition between the *yoga*- and *yoginītantra* versions of the *caryā* and *vratā*. If this is the case, then the text may predate the full appropriation of *kāpālīka* ritual iconography and the wholesale plagiarism of Śaiva textual content for which there is evidence in the *yoginītantras*.<sup>391</sup> In this

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<sup>391</sup> Sanderson has located the introduction of the *kāpālīka* iconography in Buddhist circles in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinijālaśaṃvara-tantra*, a work which he points to as the "beginning of Śaiva-Buddhist intertextuality." See Sanderson, "The Śaiva Age," 145–56. The *SBSY* is one of the primary sources for Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, and is quoted liberally in that work. Indrabhūti also quotes at some

context, Padmavajra's prescription of the clandestine activity of the *guhyacaryā* would have allowed Buddhists to intermingle among Śaiva ascetics. This observation provides at least one social context for the wholesale appropriation of Śaiva elements that would produce the hybridized and eclectic yogic ritual iconography, rituals, and ascetic practices associated with the *yoginītantras*. Adopting the external appearance of the Śaiva *vidyāvratā* in name and form and prescribing that the practice be performed in precisely the same locations as their Śaiva counterparts allowed the Buddhist *sādhakas* to carry out the kind of undercover work that would have been required for the direct Buddhist appropriation and repurposing of Śaiva ritual that emerges in the *yoginītantras*.

The memory of this practical application of the *guhyacaryā* survived in Tibet least until the time of the fifteenth century Sakya polymath Gorampa Sönam Sengé (Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge, 1429–1489), who wrote the following in his commentary to Sakya

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length from the *Guhyasamājatantra*, and is familiar with its appendix/eighteenth chapter, the *Samājottara*. The passage Indrabhūti quotes from the *SBSY* in his generation stage instructions includes the kind of wrathful, subjugating imagery that one might associate with deities such as Heruka, yet it refers to its central deity not as Heruka but as Vajrasattva. Unlike Indrabhūti, Padmavajra, who clearly prescribes taking up the *kāpālika* dress as part of his *vidyāvratā*, does not mention the *SBSY* in his *Guhyasiddhi*, which is conceived entirely as a commentary or further clarification on the *Guhyasamāja* textual tradition. This is not to say that Sanderson and others are somehow wrong in locating the literary genesis of the Buddhist Heruka iconography in the *SBSY*. It is also not my intention to argue that Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* predates the *SBSY*, nor to argue that Padmavajra was himself entirely unaware of this text. It is even possible that Padmavajra was entirely aware of the full incorporation of the kind of mimetic *caryā* practice in which the Vajrayāna ascetic adopts the *kāpālika* dress that we seen in the *Buddhakāpālatantra* and *Hevajratantra* at the time that he composed his *Guhyasiddhi*. The problem is that there currently exists no substantial evidence to prove the periodization of Padmavajra's works such that we can reach a satisfactory conclusion on any of these issues. Nor, I believe, is it necessarily possible to speak of such a periodization through arguments from absence. Thus we cannot say with complete certainty that Padmavajra was not already aware of works such as the *SBSY* and the later *yoginītantras* that he is also closely associated with when he composed his *Guhyasiddhi* simply because he draws exclusively upon the *Guhyasamāja* textual tradition in this work. Nevertheless, I suggest here that his decision to prescribe a *kāpālika* style of dress in his instructions on the *vidyāvratā* for which there is no precedent in the *Guhyasamāja* textual tradition, and without any reference at all to those textual traditions in which there is clear precedent, indicates that it is at least a possibility that *Guhyasiddhi* tells us of one point at which the *kāpālika* iconography was introduced within the *Guhyasamāja* system not as a performative, mimetic ascetic practice but as a mode of dissimulation and simulation befitting the kind of 'covert operations' that characterize the *guhyacaryā* throughout the text.

Paṇḍita's (Sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan, 1182–1251) *Distinguishing the Three Vows*

(*Sdom gsum rab dbye*):

Disguising oneself as a madman refers to performing the *caryā* after concealing one's social identity, etc., and adopting the behaviors of the madman's vow. When one has not yet attained the highest level of heat of a great regent, [one should call it] the conduct of a young prince. When one hides among yogins without their consent and adopts this conduct, one should call it the *guhycaryā*.<sup>392</sup>

The historical and cultural context for Gorampa's statements, like his correlation in the same work between the stages yogic heat (*drod, uṣman*) and the *caryā*, is anachronous. Yet it does show that my own interpretation of Padmavajra's *guhycaryā* as a kind of clandestine activity in which the *sādhaka* hides his identity while cohabitating with initiates who belong to an entirely separate and potentially hostile tantric sect was accepted as a valid description of this practice in Tibet at least until the fifteenth century.

By the time that Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* was composed, Buddhists had been overrun and displaced by the Śaiva and Vaiṣṇava schools in virtually all corners of South Asia aside from the territories held by the Pālas in the northeast, the Bhaumakara territories in Orissa, and of course Sri Lanka. If we can accept that *Guhyasiddhi* and five of the other works in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are indeed written by authors from Oḍiyāna, and if Oḍiyāna is rightfully identified with the area in northern Pakistan around the Swat valley that once served as a major overland trade route controlled by the Oḍi dynasty, this may provide further insight into the historical context for the kind of clandestine activity prescribed in the *guhycaryā*. According to the historical narrative recently offered by Giovanni Verardi,

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<sup>392</sup> Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge, "Sdom gsum rnam bshad," 139b.1–2. / smyon par brdzus te rigs la sogs pa gsang nas spyod pas na smyon pa brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa dang / rgyal tshab chen po drod chen po ma thob pas na rgyal bu gzhon nu'i spyod pa dang / rnal 'byor par khas mi len par gsang ste spyod pas na gsang spyod ces bya'o/

Buddhism's contraction across the subcontinent was the result of a series of deliberate, consistent, and violent attempts at purging Buddhism and its influence from brahmanical society.<sup>393</sup> A comparison of the reports of Chinese pilgrims who passed through the Northwestern region of Oḍiyāna confirms that Buddhism waned in the region around the middle of the first millennium. Importantly, and perhaps by intentional design, the transgressive rites and ascetic practices of the *yogatantra* and *yoginītantra* do not actually require an institutional infrastructure. In many ways, these traditions' development of a ritual technology in which one installs the deity-*maṇḍala* in one's own body would be entirely appropriate for a situation in which the physical infrastructures that the *maṇḍala* iconography reflects were no longer available. The Śaiva encroachment and complete takeover of formally Buddhist institutions and locations, sometimes even in the case of major institutions within the Pāla Buddhist empire such as Nālandā and Bodhgayā, further complicated the issue of maintaining an exclusively Buddhist identity. A detailed consideration of all of these factors is beyond the scope of this study. Still, Padmavajra's instructions on the *guhyacaryā* and *vidyāvratā* are quite candid in their engagement with the broader tantric ascetic culture around them, and this culture was dominated in large part by Śaiva schools that were hostile toward Buddhists. Thus we can hypothesize that Padmavajra's *caryā* and *vratā* instructions present a dual dissimulative and simulative strategy that would have allowed Buddhist *sādhakas* to perform the *vidyāvratā* undetected. This means that the *guhyacaryā* had the potential to place these Buddhist *sādhakas* in the company of Śaiva ascetics who would have recognized the feigned madness of the *unmattavratā* or the bone ornament markings of the *vidyāvratā* as part of their own tradition. This Buddhist infiltration of Śaiva ascetic

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<sup>393</sup> See Giovanni Verardi, *Hardships and Downfall of Buddhism in India* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers & Distributers, 2011).



communities could account for the direct appropriation of Śaiva sources that we see in the Buddhist *yoginītantras*.

## V. Conclusion

There is a natural progression in these textual traditions from the *yogin*'s annihilation of his identity through union with the deity during the generation stage to the public annihilation of his identity during the completion stage *caryā* and *vrata*. As he advanced in these practices, the *sādhaka* went deeper undercover and moved progressively farther into the margins of society. This centripetal movement is reflected in the iconographic depiction of the *siddhas* of the eight charnel grounds located along the periphery of the *maṇḍala* iconography of the *yoginītantras*.

The *sādhaka*'s dissimulative practice then progressed from this centripetal movement toward the margins of society in which he 'wandered like a ghoul,' to the next stage in which his union with the deity-*maṇḍala* became a completely instantaneous, non-conceptual reality. This stage of the *guhacaryā* signaled his complete relinquishment of all manner of ritual techniques that might be used to construct a *maṇḍala* both externally and internally, and is described with the phrase 'wandering like a lion' to signify that the *sādhaka*'s perfect union with the deity-*maṇḍala* rendered him impervious to any human or non-human forces that might attempt to bring him harm.

The two levels of dissimulation observed in the *guhacaryā*—hiding one's personal identity and then hiding the fact that one is actually an initiated ascetic—are a common feature of both the Śaiva and Buddhist forms of these practices. The Buddhist performance of this practice, however, adds a new simulative element. The Buddhist *sādhaka* who performed

Padmavajra's *guhyacaryā* concealed his broader identity from the world by feigning madness, but he simultaneously concealed his identity *as a Buddhist* from the Śaiva ascetics with whom he may have interacted while performing the *caryā* or *vrata* by adopting the guise of a Śaiva ascetic. This final deception suggests that the complete integration of this Śaiva ascetic culture in the *yoginītantras* was a product of the kind of *caryā* and *vrata* asceticism that we see in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. It is thus hypothesized here that the *guhyacaryā's* promotion of a culture of Buddhist clandestine activity provided the social conditions for the kind of full-scale appropriation of Śaiva ritual, iconographic, and ascetic forms that we see in the *yoginītantras*.

**Chapter 7:**  
**Sectarian Identity and Inter-Sectarian Rivalry**  
**in *The Seven Siddhi Texts***

**I. Introduction: On the Use of the Term 'Sect'**

This chapter takes up the 'borrowing model's' more reified sense of sectarian identity as an analytic paradigm and provides a systematic presentation of material in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* pertaining to issues of sectarian identity and inter-sectarian rivalry. Before proceeding with this analysis, some justification for my use of the term 'sect' to describe these different traditions is in order. Scholars of South Asian religions have noted the intensified level of hybridity in tantric traditions from the earliest decades of the discipline. It has also been argued that the amalgamation of ritual and ascetic practices commonly referred to as 'tantra' constituted the primary religious culture in South Asia from approximately the middle of the first millennium CE. until the early modern period. As a result, there is no form of religious practice from this period that has not in some way been influenced by the initiatory tantric traditions.<sup>394</sup> Many readers might argue that the traditions that participated in the flourishing of tantric religions in South Asia should be referred to as entirely separate religious orders, not as separate 'sects' within a shared religious hegemon. This is a valid point, and for this reason I caution the reader against an overly technical interpretation of my use of the term 'sect' in the pages that follow. Still, the issue of whether or not these traditions should be considered 'sects' operating within a similar tantric worldview is far from resolved.

Nevertheless, this chapter adopts the language of 'sect' and 'sectarianism' to describe the ways in which the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* cultivate a specific identity around their

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<sup>394</sup> White, "Tantra in Practice," 7.

particular textual traditions and the ways in which they relate those identities to the broader Buddhist tradition and the philosophical schools and ritual and ascetic systems of their non-Buddhist contemporaries.

Chapter six argued that the dissimulative asceticism that made its way into the Vajrayāna with the emergence of the *vrata* and *caryā* instructions associated with the *Guhyasamājatantra* provided at least one social context for the rapid increase in the appropriation of ritual and ascetic modalities from Śaiva sources. Engagement in this social milieu via the dissimulative and simulative performance of a Buddhist *sādhaka* engaged in the *caryā* and *vrata* practices of the completion stage yoga provided the impetus for the emergence of an intensely hybridized form of Buddhist-Śaiva literature in the subsequent stage of Vajrayāna literature, that of the *yoginītantra*. To truly identify this phenomenon as a form of inter-sectarian, adstratal appropriation, however, requires that the individuals who engaged in this activity held a strong sense of discrete sectarian identity and affiliation. In a broader sense, one could argue that the 'borrowing model' requires that the individuals who engaged in this activity not only identified themselves as holding a solid sectarian affiliation, but that they recognized the ritual and ascetic forms that they appropriated as originally belonging to a specific sect and not just part of a broader cultural discourse. This chapter explores the degree to which the siddha authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and its related works actually maintained an exclusive identity as Buddhists over and against other contemporary religious groups or sects that made up the ritual and ascetic landscapes of 'charnel ground culture.' This chapter presents evidence from *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that highlights the various ways in which the authors of these texts understood their own sectarian identities.

## II. Sect and Sectarian Identity in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*

Padmavajra's approach to sectarian identity in his *Guhyasiddhi* ranges from statements that promote an inclusivist position to statements that disparage the practices of other sects and even prescribe acts of violence against them. Padmavajra maintains a certain degree of allegiance to a generalized sense of Buddhist identity, but he tends to place the greatest emphasis on allegiance to the textual lineage of the *Guhyasamājatantra*, holding this work to be superior both to the systems of non-Buddhists and to the systems taught in other Buddhist works. *Guhyasiddhi* suggests that the issue of primary importance in Padmavajra's conception of sectarian identity is more the textual lineage to which one belongs than a sense of allegiance to a broadly conceived Buddhist identity, though the latter is not entirely absent from the text. On the whole, Padmavajra presents a sectarian identity that is constructed along the lines of specific textual lineages of instruction that are inextricably tied to the guru from whom one receives initiation. In this way, Padmavajra can be said to promote a more localized sense of sectarian identity that focuses on membership within a textual tradition and its textual community in which identifying as 'Buddhist' does play some role, but is not the primary determinant of sectarian identity.

The more inclusivist passages in *Guhyasiddhi* tend to emphasize realization of *tattva* or ultimate reality over allegiance to any particular sect. However, at times the very same emphasis is also used to disparage other sects that might practice similar ritual and ascetic systems, but that do not share the same interpretation of the ultimate nature of reality. For Padmavajra, anyone who has realized the correct understanding of ultimate reality can take up whatever ritual or ascetic system they wish and be attain *siddhi*. On the other hand, no

ritual or ascetic system is ultimately useful if it is practiced by someone who lacks this fundamental realization.

There are several points in *Guhyasiddhi* at which Padmavajra makes this argument. One of the earliest instances follows *Guhyasiddhi* 1.12–16, where Padmavajra states that even those who act contrary to the law attain *siddhi* through taking up the *guhyacaryā*. These verses express the correlation of the four transgressive *samayas* of killing, lying, stealing, and adultery to actions that, according to classical brahmanical legal codes such as *Manusmṛti*, require that one perform a *vrata* for a certain period of time as penance.<sup>395</sup> Even such people, we are told, can attain *siddhi*. But the phrase 'even those who act contrary to the law' (*dharmasyāpi virodhakā*) in *Guhyasiddhi* 1.12d can also imply those who act contrary to the Buddhist teachings.<sup>396</sup> This raises the question of just how important a sense of Buddhist identity could possibly have been for a tradition that perceived its own advanced ascetic and ritual expression of realization in terms of a set of vows and behaviors that are in direct contradiction with normative Buddhist ethics.

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<sup>395</sup> The various implications of the semantic layering going on between the function of *vrata* as a form of penance in the *Dharmaśāstra* literature, the identification of the four transgressive *samayas* as homologues for the Tathāgatas in the *Guhyasamājamāṇḍala*, and the correspondence between both in the presentation of these practices in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* has been discussed at length in chapter six.

<sup>396</sup> Such an interpretation is certainly possible. Consider, for instance, that the four transgressive *samayas* of killing, stealing, adultery, and lying play a prominent role in *The Discourse to the Kālāmas* (*Kālāmasutta*), where this set of four transgressions appears as a common refrain describing the derivative effects of accepting the false doctrines of brahmins and ascetics that do not free one from the three root *keśās* of greed, hatred, and delusion. The first passage in which they appear reads: "What do you think, kālāmas? When greed arises within a person, is it to one's benefit or to one's detriment?"

'To one's detriment, sir.'

'So, Kālāmas, does this greedy person, being overpowered by greed and having lost control over his mind, kill living beings, take what is not given, go with another's wife, tell lies, and encourage others to do the same, which things [*sic.*] are to his detriment and suffering for a long time?' See John J. Holder ed., "Kālāma Sutta," in *Early Buddhist Discourses* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2006), 21.

Padmavajra follows these verses with a statement indicating that a *sādhaka's* realization of ultimate reality, and not the form of the practice, is the primary factor in whether or not the *caryā* or *vrata* he engages in will result in the attainment of *siddhi*:

On the other hand, for one who lacks ultimate reality,  
What use is an observance |  
That is [merely] a means of livelihood  
[And] causes one to attain [rebirth] in hell? || 1.25 ||

*Sādhakas* for whom ultimate reality is the highest aim  
Attain *siddhi* even without the observance, [but] |  
Without ultimate reality they do not attain *siddhi*  
Even by [performing] hundreds practices and observances. || 1.26 ||

Those *sādhakas* who possess ultimate reality,  
Who are stainless, attain *siddhi* in any circumstance |  
By the power of meditation [and]  
Are completely liberated from all impurity. || 1.27 ||<sup>397</sup>

Thus while the transgressive behaviors adopted during the *caryā* or *vrata* would normally act as a cause for rebirth in a hell realm, Padmavajra's *sādhaka*, who possesses a distinctly Buddhist realization of the nature of ultimate reality, is able to perform these practices without suffering the same result.

In the same way, the Tibetan version of the text that fills in a lacuna in the Sanskrit between *Guhyasiddhi* 1.27–28 clearly has some of the Vaidika brahmin versions of the *vrata* in mind when it argues against the soteriological efficacy of a *vrata* in which one gives up one's possessions to become a beggar, seeks expiation at a *tīrtha* or temple, or practices austerities without holding a correct view of ultimate reality. Although Padmavajra does

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<sup>397</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 7.  
anyathā tattvahīnasya kiṃ vratena prayojanam |  
jīvikāheturūpeṇa narakāvāptikāriṇā || 1.25 ||  
vratam vināpi sidhyanti sādhakāstattvatatparāḥ |  
tattvahīnā na sidhyanti cīrṇā(rṇair)vrataśatairapi || 1.26 ||  
sidhyanti tattvasaṃyuktāḥ sarvatraiva hi nirmalāḥ |  
sādhakā bhāvanāśaktyā nirmuktāḥ sarvakalmaṣaiḥ || 1.27 ||

privilege the function that the *vrata* performs in his own tradition, his argument that the realization of ultimate reality renders all of these practices effective also underlies the more inclusivist approach to other sects that he adopts in other passages in the text. This position is expressed in *Guhyasiddhi* 4.51–53, already discussed in chapter two, where Padmavajra notes that the *vrata* or *caryā* ascetic practice of the completion stage can be of Buddhist, Jain, Śaiva, or any other tradition that one prefers. This approach to the form of the *vrata* provides an effective method for inscribing *Guhyasiddhi*'s non-dualist ontology into the ritual and ascetic systems of other traditions and preserves the dual-motion of affirmation and subordination that is characteristic of an inclusivist strategy.

Padmavajra indicates that his own sectarian affiliation is to the textual tradition of the *Guhyasamājatantra* over all other potential traditions, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, when the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts of *Guhyasiddhi* resume their correspondence in *Guhyasiddhi* 1.28 (Tib. 1.43). This more exclusivist strategy emerges in *Guhyasiddhi* 1.27, after he concludes his statements on the uselessness or the brahmanical *vrata* practices. Here Padmavajra singles out the *Guhyasamājatantra* as the sole textual tradition that teaches the correct realization of ultimate reality:

And that ultimate reality is very clearly  
Established in the *Śrī Samāja tantra*. |  
What was concealed elsewhere is explained  
[There] in numerous elaborate details. || 1.28 ||

The ultimate purity that is indeed singular  
Is established according to its different expressions  
In the classification [of tantras] as *kriyā* and *caryā* etc.,  
[And] in the *sūtra*-systems and baskets etc. || 1.29 ||<sup>398</sup>

<sup>398</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 7–8.

tacca tattvaṃ sthitaṃ tantre śrīsamāje parisphuṭam |  
guptam anyatra nirdiṣṭam prapañcāna(ne)kavistaraiḥ || 1.28 ||  
kriyācaryādibhedena sūtrāntaṭṭakādibhiḥ |  
ekameva paraṃ śuddhaṃ naikākāraṃ vyavasthitam || 1.29 ||



*Guhyasiddhi* contains a number of passages that require an advanced *sādhaka* to give up his reliance upon the modes logical argumentation and ritual praxes associated with the *sūtras* and lower tantras. Such statements have been shown both in Christian Wedemeyer's work and in the discussion of ritual proscription in chapter four of this study to pertain to the specific context of performing the advanced ascetic practices of the *vrata* and *caryā*.<sup>399</sup> In this sense they should not be taken as universal rejections of the use of logical analysis and complex ritual in the exoteric and lower esoteric traditions. *Guhyasiddhi* does take an inclusivist approach by simultaneously validating and subordinating the Buddhist textual traditions of the *sūtras* and the *kriyā* and *caryātantras*. Then the text defers to the author's true affiliation and reveals an allegiance to the textual lineage of the *Guhyasamājatantra*. In this way, Padmavajra distinguishes his own sectarian identity from the broader Buddhist tradition of which it is a part. His critique is notably softened when it is directed against the Buddhist *sūtras* and *kriyā* and *caryā* tantras, with Padmavajra assuring the reader that these traditions do teach an 'ultimate purity that is indeed singular' (*ekam eva param śuddham*) but that it is very clearly established (*sthitam ... parisphuṭam*) in the *Guhyasamājatantra* (*śrīsamāje*). A hierarchy thus emerges early in *Guhyasiddhi* in which Padmavajra's own articulation of his sectarian identity is tied to a specific textual lineage, and then to a lesser extent to the broader Buddhist tradition.

Padmavajra follows his statements on the superiority of the *Guhyasamājatantra* textual system with a short set of verses on the importance of the guru and the problem of the false disciple. This section contains some of the strongest polemical language in *Guhyasiddhi*, and this language is directed not at members of any rival non-Buddhist group

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<sup>399</sup> Wedemeyer, "Locating Tantric Antinomianism," 354. See also Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 133–69.

but at initiates who do not maintain their *samaya* vows by venerating the guru, who are duplicitous, or who refuse to participate in the initiatory cult at all:

Furthermore there are those cruel-minded ones  
Who are deceitful fraudulent con artists |  
Whose minds are fixated upon desire, etc.,  
Who question who they should and should not obtain it from. || 1.38 ||

Having paid homage to the guru with deceit,  
They focus on seeking out his faults. |  
They are falsely conceited, wicked,  
Always intent upon debating, || 1.39 ||

And their intention is always fixated upon  
Deceiving the *vajra* brothers and the guru. |  
Those sentient beings do not attain |  
This state that is the supreme *siddhi*. || 1.40 ||

And there are others one sees there [who],  
Having approached gurus in earnest, [praise them] |  
With prostrations, worship, and reverence  
As long as [they] get what they want, || 1.41 ||

But when the divine state is attained,  
Even though it is present right in front of them, |  
The wicked ones do not understand,  
[And think] 'What is this? Where did it come from?' || 1.42 ||

Seeing him alone in the distance  
[Such a person] bows to him in earnest, |  
But upon greeting him in the midst of  
A crowd [becomes] indigent. || 1.43 ||

Beings who are like that  
Do not attain the ultimate state, |  
The supreme *nirvāṇa* taught  
By the one who speaks the truth. || 1.44 ||

And one sees other inferior beings  
Who slander the guru, |  
Who are shameless, have bad behavior, [and]  
Disparage [his] good qualities. || 1.45 ||

In that case, because they merely grasp at the truth,

They turn away from their own inherent nature.<sup>400</sup> |  
Those learned ones are not consecrated and  
Do not amass an assembly of students. || 1.46 ||

And [there are] those who have only understood on their own  
Who become excited after studying a text [yet] |  
Lack the practice of the *samayās* [and]  
Do not understand the *ācārya* at all. || 1.47 ||

They come to the aid of sentient beings  
Without understanding the text, |  
And they do not understand ultimate reality  
Which is expressed by the one who speaks the truth. || 1.48 ||

These people and all of those  
Who commit sinful acts, |  
Who set on a false path  
Only take rebirth as hell beings. || 1.49 ||<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>400</sup> The Sarnath edition follows the Tibetan here, despite the fact that all three Sanskrit manuscripts preserve the same reading of this verse.

NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 2r.4 reads:

tatra sadgrahamātreṇa tatsvabhāvabāhirmukhāḥ |

NGMCP A 1012/5 2v.4 reads:

tatra sadgrahamātreṇa tansābhāvavāhirmukhāḥ |

IASWR MBB 7-5 5v.2 reads:

tatra sadgrahamātreṇa tanmabhāvavāhirmukhāḥ |

The Tibetan reads:

/rgyud ni bsdu ba tsam nyid kyis/

/de yi dngos la kha phyr bltas/

The Sarnath edition's reading of *tantra* for *tattva* is clearly derived from the Tibetan translation. My own translation of this verse follows the Sanskrit as it appears in NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3.

<sup>401</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 8–9.

ye punar māninaḥ krurāḥ śaṭhā dhūrtā[h] prapa(va)ñcakāḥ |

rāgādyāsaktacittāśca kuto labdham kuto na tu || 1.38 ||

śāṭhyena tu guruṃ natvā chidrānveṣaṇatatparam(rāḥ) |

mithyābhimānino duṣṭā vāgvādeṣu sadā ratāḥ || 1.39 ||

vajrabhrātrgurūṇaṃ ca vañcanābaddhacetasāḥ |

prāpnuvanti na te sattvāstatpadaṃ siddhidam param || 1.40 ||

anye'pi cātra dṛśyante paryupāsya gurūn dṛḍham |

praṇāmapūjāsatkāriyāvat prāptaṃ samīhitam || 1.41 ||

prāpte tu tatpade divye purato'pi vyavasthitam |

na jānanti durātmānaḥ ko'yaṃ kasmādhāgataḥ || 1.42 ||

dṛṣṭvā'pyekākinam dūre praṇāmaṃ kurvate dṛḍham |

bahūnāṃ tu punar madhye svāgate 'pi daridratā || 1.43 ||

evaṃ vidhāstu ye sattvāḥ prāpnuvanti na te padam |

paraṃ paramanirvāṇaṃ yaduktaṃ bhūtavādinā || 1.44 ||

anye'pi cāpare sattvā dṛśyante gurunindakāḥ |

tyaktalajjā durācārāḥ saṃbhūtaguṇadūṣakāḥ || 1.45 ||

tantrasaṃgrahamātreṇa tattvabhāvabāhirmukhāḥ |

nābhiṣiktā na tu jñātāḥ kurvante(te) śiṣyasamgraham || 1.46 ||

Nowhere else in the text is such a detailed description given for any group of people with whom Padmavajra finds fault. Certainly there is no passage in *Guhyasiddhi* that directs a similar pointed invective at, for instance, members of a separate or rival sect. There is a unique degree of specificity in Padmavajra's condemnation of people who abuse or misunderstand the guru-disciple relationship. This indicates not only that Padmavajra is more concerned with the proper conception of the guru-disciple relationship and suggests that he grants a greater degree of importance to the proper maintenance of this relationship over the issue of whether or not someone belongs to any particular sect, be it Buddhist or non-Buddhist.

Finally, *Guhyasiddhi* contains one of the only prescriptions of sectarian violence in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The passage appears in the work's ninth chapter, where Padmavajra argues for the necessity of using violent force against the rivals of Buddhist traditions:

One should strike down enemies who  
 Reproach the *ācārya* with all one's effort, |  
 Particularly those who harm  
 The three jewels and the *vajra*-bearer. || 9.26 ||

Such beings who do not understand  
 The phenomenal reality of the buddhas that is |  
 Equal to the sky shall not be saved,  
 Even having studied the highest doctrine. || 9.27 ||

And those beings who commit offenses  
 Against the Vajrayāna will die |  
 And be deprived of supreme liberation  
 For as many as one hundred eons. || 9.28 ||

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svayaṃ grhītamātrās ca pustakaṃ vikṣya harṣitāḥ |  
 ācāryaṃ naiva jānanti samayācāravarjitāḥ || 1.47 ||  
 anugrahaṃ ca sattvānāṃ kurvante(te) pustakājñāyā |  
 na ca tattvaṃ vijānanti yaduktaṃ bhūtavādinā || 1.48 ||  
 eteṣāṃ caiva teṣāṃ ca sarveṣāṃ pāpakarmaṇām |  
 asanmārgapravṛttānāṃ gatirekaiva nārakī || 1.49 ||

And there are those who escape this calamity  
By falling extremely low in cyclical existence. |  
Those who commit [such a] sin fall  
By taking birth in suffering and poverty. || 9.29 ||

Likewise those who disrespect  
The Buddha, dharma, and *saṅgha*, |  
Will go to Avīci hell [even] after  
Taking refuge in a Buddhist image. || 9.30 ||<sup>402</sup>

These verses preserve a sense that the guru and the Vajrayāna textual traditions are the primary locus of Padmavajra's sense of sectarian affiliation. But at the same time, his mention in *verse* 9.26 of those who harm 'the three jewels,' which is reiterated in verse 9.30, offers the clearest indication in the text that Padmavajra also subscribed to a more generalized Buddhist identity. Still, Padmavajra seems far more concerned with punishing those who commit offenses against the Vajrayāna in these verses. He acknowledges the existence sectarian 'other' by using the phrase 'rivals who reproach the *ācārya*' (*ācāryanindanaparān*), and characterizes these rivals as hostile to both Buddhism, broadly conceived, and to the Buddhist initiatory cults. Verse 9.27 assures the reader that missionizing efforts will not save such people, meaning that no amount of study or instruction will allay their hostility.

### III. Sect and Sectarian Identity in Anāgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*

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<sup>402</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 60.

ācāryanindanaparā[n] viśeṣaṃ(ṣād) vajradhāriṇe(ṇaḥ) |  
ratnatrayāpakartṛiṃ ca(śca) tānnihanyāt prayatnataḥ || 9.26 ||  
ye na jānanti buddhānāṃ dharmatāṃ gaganopamām |  
na uttariṣyanti te sattvāḥ śrutvaivaṃ nayam uttamam || 9.27 ||  
apāyaṃ ca gamiṣyanti vajrayānasya nindakāḥ |  
hīnāpi(dhi)muktikāḥ sattvā yāvat kalpaśatāni ca || 9.28 ||  
apāyācca samuttīrṇāḥ saṃsāre tīvrapātanaḥ |  
pātyante pāpakarmāṇo duḥkhadāridra(drya)sambhavaiḥ || 9.29 ||  
buddhe dharme tathā saṃghe ye kariṣyanti nādaram |  
saugataṃ liṅgamāśritya te [ca] yāsyantyavīcinam || 9.30 ||

Chapter two of Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, his "Instruction on Propitiating the Vajra Master" (*vajrācāryārādhananirdeśa*), contains a number of verses that echo some of the same sentiments that Padmavajra expresses against false disciples. These verses also contain Anaṅgavajra's first reference to rival religious sects. Anaṅgavajra begins this section by locating the reason that such people congregate around gurus in the guru's charismatic power, rendered here literally as his 'radiance' (*tejas*).

Through his radiance one attains  
 The supreme bliss of unending awakening, |  
 The highest state of all of the Buddhas  
 [And] in the three worlds with its animate and inanimate objects. || 2.10 ||

That is why evil-minded people,  
 Because of their mistaken, impure intentions |  
 Are drawn there to [the guru,] the embodiment  
 Of compassion who has unconditional love. || 2.11 ||

And they earnestly approach the venerable  
 True guru with false honors and salutations, |  
 With offerings and gifts such as milk, etc.,  
 Because [they] desire a long life, || 2.12 ||

But when they attain the jewel of ultimate reality  
 That is the abode of the qualities of all buddhas, |  
 The cruel ones seek out [the guru's] faults [and]  
 Do not inquire about [his] health.<sup>403</sup> || 2.13 ||

So to others with poor intentions  
 Approach the guru vajra-holder, |  
 And those evil-minded ones bring injury  
 Upon themselves alone. || 2.14 ||

[There are those who] steal<sup>404</sup> the guru's consort

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<sup>403</sup> The Sarnath edition is problematic here.  
 NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 30r.3-4 reads  
 vārttāmapī na pṛcchanti cchidrānveṣaṇadāruṇāḥ |  
 IASWR MBB 7-3 4r.12 reads:  
 cārtāmapī na pṛcchanti chidrānveṣaṇadāruṇāḥ |

IASWR MBB 7-8 8r.3-4 reads:  
 vārtāmapī na pṛcchanti chidrānveṣaṇadāraṇāḥ |  
 My translation follows the Sanskrit witnesses in NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3 and IASWR MBB 7-8.

<sup>404</sup> My translation reads *haraṇāḥ* for *haraṇe* here.

And the offering to the three jewels |  
[And there are] stubborn yogins  
Who reject the nature of reality. || 2.15 ||

And the glorious *Vajra*-lord said,  
"Those whose minds [experience] disgust |  
During the great miracle of the *samaya*  
Continually act in fear of their own mother." || 2.16 ||

[Some think,] "Having honored the guru once before,  
He does not treat me with kindness." |  
The wicked ones who are eager to mention his faults,  
Take refuge in other [sects]. || 2.17 ||<sup>405</sup>

Anaṅgavajra progresses here from a general argument for the initial attraction that false disciples feel toward the guru to a number of problems that might arise once they actually become involved in the initiation cult. The first type of unfit disciple seeks only long life through the guru's blessing yet treats him with disrespect by neglecting to even inquire about the guru's own health. The second type of false disciple reaches a deeper level of access to the initiation cult but abuses this access by committing such offenses as stealing the guru's consort and the offerings to the three jewels. The passage then turns to a third group of false disciples who are described as stubborn yogins (*nirvikalpāḥ ... yogināḥ*) who reject the nature

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<sup>405</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 71.  
anantabodhisatsaukhyam prāpyate yasya tejasā |  
śreṣṭhatvaṃ sarvabuddhānāṃ trailokye sacarācare || 2.10 ||  
tat kimarthaṃ kṛpāmūrtau tatrākāraṇavatsale |  
māyāmalinacetobhir dhaukayanti durāśayāḥ || 2.11 ||  
asatpraṇāmasatkārair dṛḍhaṃ copāsya sadgurum |  
kṣīrādīdānapūjābhirāyuryāvat samīhitam || 2.12 ||  
samprāpte tattvaratne tu sarvabuddhaguṇālaye |  
vārtāmaṇi na pṛcchanti chidrānveṣaṇādāruṇāḥ || 2.13 ||  
tathā'nye'pi durātmāno dhaukante guruvajriṇam |  
vihetḥayanti cātmānam ātmanaiva durāśayāḥ || 2.14 ||  
haraṇe\* gurumudrāyā ratnatrayadharasya ca |  
nirvikalpāḥ praktikṣepyā dharmatāyās ca yogināḥ || 2.15 ||  
uktā śrīvajaranāthena samaye tu mahādbhute |  
jugupsābuddhayo nityaṃ svamātrtrāsakāriṇāḥ || 2.16 ||  
upāsyaikaṃ gurum pūrvaṃ nānugṛhṇāti māmiti |  
āśrayantyaparān duṣṭāstaddoṣakathanotsukāḥ || 2.17 ||  
\*translating the locative haraṇe as haraṇāḥ in 2.15a

of reality. Verse 2.16 implies that there are also false disciples that make it deeper into the initiation cult and take the *samayas*, but still experience disgust during the rite despite their advanced status. Their disgust with this rite then seems to transfer onto a general sense of disgust with the initiation cult itself and motivates them to become a member of a rival sect.

The passage provides a glimpse at the kind of 'spiritual marketplace' that may have accompanied the rise of tantric initiatory traditions and indicates that it was even possible for people to become deeply involved in an initiatory cult and still eventually make the decision to break their *samaya* and join another group. This contradicts the idea that these traditions were as hermetic and 'secretive' as their own rhetoric might suggest. Anaṅgavajra continues, presenting further evidence that initiates at a rather advanced level might still qualify as unworthy disciples:

Enchanted and obsessed with the *ācārya*  
[Others think], "How can he be ours?" |  
Those who are driven by this alone  
Are not intent upon Buddhahood. || 2.18 ||

Somehow, after gaining gnosis,  
They do not think of the guru as before. |  
They say, "We are the most learned."  
And "no one else is [smarter] than us." || 2.19 ||

And there are others who get angry  
And say, "Take what [I have] offered. |  
I am not your disciple,  
You are not a proper guru." || 2.20 ||

How could they have attainment  
And even happiness in this life? |  
Those despicable people who intend  
To deceive the guru wander aimlessly [through life]. || 2.21 ||

And thus the glorious *vajra* Lord  
Said the kind of beings |  
Who turn their backs on their own welfare



Are all pure vessels. || 2.22 ||<sup>406</sup>

These twelve verses constitute one of the only sections of *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* that actually attacks any particular group of people. The fact that they are directed at false disciples and apostate initiates suggests that Anaṅgavajra, like Padmavajra, considers fidelity to a particular initiation cult as the primary determinant of sectarian identity. Perhaps most importantly, Anaṅgavajra and Padmavajra's verses on the problem of false disciples provide rare data on the social world of medieval Buddhist initiation cults. These verses suggest that these traditions were not as exclusive and secretive as their own rhetoric might suggest. Instead, these verses describe a social world of the initiation cult that, driven by the charismatic power of the guru, was populated by individuals with widely varying degrees of commitment to the guru-disciple relationship. The exclusivist rhetoric in these passages betrays the ultimately fluid and inclusive social world of the tantric initiation cults in which even skeptics, critics, and people who are only driven by conceit and their own self-interest might progress to relatively advanced levels of participation before renouncing their vows and joining a rival cult.

While Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* employs exclusivist rhetoric against false disciples, the text's fourth chapter on "Meditation on Ultimate Reality" (*tattvabhāvanā*) contains reveals a more inclusive strategy in which the author attempts to translate his own

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<sup>406</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 71–72.  
yogitā" cāryasaṃjñā ca kathasmākamastviti |  
etanmātrpravṛttās te buddhatvaṃ prati nārthinaḥ || 2.18 ||  
kathañcit prāpya te jñānaṃ manyante na guruṃ purā |  
jñātāro vayamityāhurmatṭaḥ kecin na cāpare || 2.19 ||  
anye ca kupitāḥ prāhuḥ ḡhānaitat samarpitam |  
ahaṃ na tava śiṣyo'smi na bhavān sāmpratam guruḥ || 2.20 ||  
kutasteṣāṃ bhavet siddhiḥ saukhyaṃ caiveha janamani |  
guruvañcanacittā ye te bhramanti viḍambitāḥ || 2.21 ||  
evaṃvidhāśca ye sattvāḥ svārthasampadbahirmukhāḥ |  
uktāḥ śrīvajranāthena sarve te'pāpabhājanāḥ || 2.22 ||

Buddhist ontology using Śaiva terms and theological concepts.<sup>407</sup> The chapter is strategically placed immediately after the chapter on "The *Bodhicitta* Consecration" (*bodhicittābhīṣeka*) and just before Anaṅgavajra's instructions on the ascetic practices of the *caryā*. Its primary purpose is to outline an analytic meditation practice on the nature of ultimate reality that provides a bridge between the ritualized expression of non-duality during the consecration rite and the performance of this ritualized expression in the ascetic practices of the *caryā*. The following verses provide evidence that Anaṅgavajra may be directing his meditation instructions at an audience that is familiar with basic Śaiva theological concepts and terminology:

The *vajra*-holder said that cyclic existence is the mind  
 Overwhelmed in the darkness of many conceptual imputations, |  
 Pulsing with the crazed lightning of a tempest, and smeared  
 With impurities that are hard to restrain such as passion, etc. || 4.22 ||

[And he] said the highest *nirvāṇa* is clear light  
 That is free from conceptual thought,  
 Not smeared by impurities such as passion, etc., |  
 Without apprehender and apprehended, and the highest reality. || 4.23 ||

And thus there is absolutely no efficient cause  
 Of the entire mass of suffering other than that, |  
 And, seekers of liberation, there is no primary cause  
 Of the production of boundless bliss other than that. || 4.24 ||<sup>408</sup>

<sup>407</sup> Such an attempt might be extended more broadly to all of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, where the term *tattva* signifies the ultimate object of meditation. The use of the term *tattva* (as opposed to the term *tathātā*) which I translate in this context as 'ultimate reality' instead of 'material evolute' may be an attempt to co-opt the term from Sāṃkhya and Śaiva contexts in which one progresses through states of meditative concentration upon the *tattvas*, the material evolutes of primordial matter (*prakṛti*), toward a final state of meditative absorption or mutual identification with the ultimate principle beyond the *tattvas*, be it characterized in the weak theistic (or perhaps existential-personalistic) terms of the Sāṃkhya as *puruṣa* or the stronger theistic terms of the Śaivas.

<sup>408</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 80.

anāpasāṅkalpatamo'bhībhūtaṃ  
 prabhañjanonmattataḍicalaṃ ca |  
 rāgādidurvāramalāvaliptaṃ  
 cittaṃ hi saṃsāramuvāca vajrī || 4.22 ||  
 prabhāsvaraṃ kalpanayā vimuktaṃ  
 prahīṇarāgādimalapralepaṃ |  
 grāhyaṃ na ca grāhakam agrasattvaṃ

The appearance of the plural vocative *mumuksava* in verse 4.24d suggests that the intended audience for this verse was one of the two standard divisions of Śaiva initiates—the *mumuksu*—who seeks liberation over attaining worldly power.<sup>409</sup> A single use of this term does not constitute sufficient grounds for assuming that Anaṅgavajra's instructions for meditating on ultimate reality are directed here at an audience familiar with Śaiva theology. However, there are other terms and concepts employed in these verses that indicate a potential Śaiva (or apostate Śaiva) audience for the text. Anaṅgavajra presents the nature of ultimate reality in terms that reflect the Śaiva conception of the relationship between the supreme godhead Śiva and *mala*, the 'stain' or 'impurity' that, along with *karma*, limits beings to the state of a *paśu* or 'beast-like being' who is bound to material form and rebirth in cyclic existence.<sup>410</sup>

The pairing of *mala* and *karma* in Śaiva traditions is comparable to the Buddhist pairing of *kleśa* and *karma* as the determining factors that perpetuate the round of rebirth. Of course the term *mala* is also quite common in Buddhist literature, and it appears frequently throughout *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in its negative formulation (*nirmala* or *vimala*) to describe the nature of ultimate reality. However, unlike the Śaiva case where *mala* and the other 'bonds' that bind beings to *saṃsāra* are considered substantial manifestations of primordial

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tadeva nirvāṇavaram jagāda || 4.23 ||

ataśca nātaḥ param asti kiñcit

nimittabhūtaṃ bahuduḥkharāśeḥ |

anantasaukhyodayahetubhūtaṃ

mumuksavo nāsti tataḥ paraṃ ca || 4. 24 ||

\*the phrasing for atas param/ tatas param might alternately be taken to mean 'there is nothing higher than that.'

<sup>409</sup> Śaiva traditions distinguish this category of initiate from the *bubhukṣu*, or an individual who seeks mastery over mundane existence (*bhoga*).

<sup>410</sup> Dominic Goodall et. al., "A First Edition and Translation of Bhaṭṭa Rāmakaṇṭha's *Tattvatrayanirṇayavivṛti*, A Treatise on Śiva, Souls and Māyā, with Detailed Treatment of Mala," in *South Asian Classical Studies* no. 3 (2008): 357. Sadyojyoti's verse reads: "The cause for those in *saṃsāra* being connected with the evolutes of primal matter is impurity together with *karman*."

matter, the teleology of obstruction and revelation in Buddhist sources relies upon the thesis that all obscurations are merely the products of mistaken conceptual processes.<sup>411</sup> Because they are merely the result of mistaken conceptual processes, Buddhists do not generally see any need to establish a causal relationship between *kleśa*, the Buddhist equivalent of *mala*, and the ultimate reality that it obscures.<sup>412</sup> Such a relationship does, however, play a part in the basic theodicy of the dualist Śaiva Siddhānta.

In the introduction to his translation and edition of the Śaiva theologian Sadyojyoti's (c. 675–725 CE) *Bhogakārikā*, Borody notes that the subject of mundane experience (*bhoga*)

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<sup>411</sup> This much is clear in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga-Mahāyānottaraśāstra*'s treatment of the relationship between the aggregates, elements, and senses, which are said to be results of both *karma* and *kleśa*. This discussion occurs in verses 1.49–65. See *The Ratnagoṭravibhāga-Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra*, edited by E.H. Johnston (Patna: The Bihar Research Society, 1950), 41–44. Using a teleology based on the mechanics of pervasion, the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* skirts a thin line between the relationship between the '*gotra*' or 'Buddha-element' and the manifestation of cyclic existence due to *karma* and *kleśa*. This relationship depends upon accepting the latter as entirely 'adventitious' (*āgantuka*) yet, somehow, also pervaded by the *gotra* or 'buddha element.' This teleology is rescued from any accusation of resorting to a theistic position by equating *gotra* with the 'nature of mind' (*cittaprakṛti*), which is entirely without physical, substantial basis. In this sense the central teleology of the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* addresses the relationship between its ultimate soteriological principle, the *buddhagoṭra*, and the mistaken appearances of the world of cyclic existence not in terms of a physical material that is overlaid on ultimate reality and in need of being removed, but in terms of mistaken conceptual processes. This may offer some explanation as to why Buddhist sources so frequently use terms such as *nirmala* or *vimala* to describe ultimate reality, but less frequently use the term *mala* as a term denoting the obstruction of ultimate reality.

<sup>412</sup> This Buddhist perspective on *mala* shows up in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the fifteenth chapter of Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*. Here Indrabhūti's reference to the narrative of the first stage of the *abhisambodhikrama* in the *Sarvatathāgatataṭṭsamgraha* indicates a certain equivalence between *kleśa* and *mala* in its outline of the relationship between the 'natural radiance' of the 'image of a moon-disc' (*candramaṇḍalākāra*) that appears to the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi on the eve of his enlightenment and the factors that ordinarily inhibit one's ability to see it:

mahābodhisattva āha- arhanto bhagavantaḥ sarvatathāgatāḥ svahr̥ḍi candramaṇḍalākāraṃ paśyāmi | [sarvatathāgatā āhuḥ- ] prakṛtibhāsvaramidaṃ kulaputra cittaṃ candramaṇḍalavat | candramaṇḍalaṃ prakṛtiprabhāsvaraṃ tadvat jñānam | yathā kramāccandramaṇḍalaṃ sampūrṇaṃ bhavati, tadvat prakṛtiprabhāsvaraṃ cittaratnamapi paripūrṇaṃ bhavati | yathā candramaṇḍalamāgantukakalābhīḥ sūryamaṇḍalaraśmyapagamāt kramāt pūrṇaṃ dṛśyate, tadvat prakṛtipariśuddhaṃ cittaratnamapi sarvakeśamalakalaṅkāpagamakramāt paripūrṇabuddhaguṇaṃ dṛśyate iti |

The great bodhisattva replied, "Oh Arhats, Blessed ones, all you Tathāgatas, I see the image of a moon-disc in my own heart." [All of the tathāgatas replied,] "This natural radiance, son of the lineage, is the mind that is like a moon-disc. Gnosis is just like that naturally luminous moon-disc. Just as the disc of the moon gradually becomes full, so too the natural luminosity that is the jewel of the mind also becomes completely full. Just as the disc of the moon is perceived as full due adventitious lunar phases that depend upon the gradual departure of the sun's rays, so too the jewel of the mind that is completely pure by nature is perceived as the perfectly complete good qualities of a buddha by gradually moving away from the stain of impurities of all of the afflictions. See Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 140.

is introduced to the text through the central Śaiva teleology in which Śiva functions as both the source of bondage and ultimate liberation. Here, as Borody notes, Sadyojyoti justifies composing an entire treatise on the nature of *bhoga* as a necessary complement to his correlated treatise on liberation (*mokṣa*), the *Mokṣakārikā*, by reminding his reader of Śiva's dual-role of binding beings to material existence and granting them liberation. In the opening homage to Śiva in his *Bhogakārikā* Sadyojyoti writes:

I first make obeisance to the unborn and unchanging Śiva who knows all three times and all the events occurring therein. Śiva grants both mundane-experience and release. Mundane-experience occurs when the triadically bound souls are yoked to *kalā*; release arises through the separation from mundane-experience.<sup>413</sup>

Aghoraśiva's (12<sup>th</sup> century CE) commentary to this verse lists the three bonds as *mala*, *karma*, and *māyā*, and notes that those who possess all three are referred to as '*sakalās*' or those who have come into contact 'with *kalā*.'<sup>414</sup> Borody comments that "[b]y stating this at the outset of the *Bhogakārikā*, Sadyojyoti is expressing a basic Saivite theological concern that the soul is not the sole 'cause' or 'means' (*nimitta*) of its soteriological [sic.] station in mundane existence. Ultimately, the Saivite argues, the supreme being, Siva, is the instrumental cause of all of the soul's experiences."<sup>415</sup> He goes on to observe that Sadyojyoti's work directs its emphasis to *mala* as representative of the 'bond' or *pāśa* that is the central "defiling power (*rodhaśakti*) responsible for the soul's predicament in the condition of *bhoga*."<sup>416</sup> Here Borody's own unpacking of Sadyojyoti's introductory verse introduces the notion of *mala* as the result of an instrumental cause (*nimitta*). Śiva, acting in his capacity of concealing (*tirobhāva*), is the instrumental cause for the threefold bond of

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<sup>413</sup> Sadyojyoti, *Bhoga Kārikā of Sadyojyoti with the Commentary of Aghora Śiva*, translated by W.A. Borody (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 2005), 23.

<sup>414</sup> Sadyojyoti, *Bhoga Kārikā*, 23.

<sup>415</sup> Sadyojyoti, *Bhoga Kārikā*, 10.

<sup>416</sup> Sadyojyoti, *Bhoga Kārikā*, 11.

*mala*, *karma*, and *māyā*, and the direct cause, through his activity of grace (*anugraha*), of liberation. The Śaiva position thus relies upon the category of the instrumental or efficient cause to justify a theodicy in which Śiva is said to be responsible for the state of bondage in the material world yet remains entirely separate from it—in which God is ultimately responsible for the existence of *mala*, but is not himself 'stained' by *mala*.

This relationship bears some resemblance to the Buddhist notion, outlined in the buddha-nature theory (*tathāgatagarbha*), that ultimate reality is obscured by the impurities of the afflictions (*kleśa*), but is not itself affected by them. However, from the Buddhist perspective, such obscurations (*āvaraṇa*) are ultimately devoid of any material reality, and the direct perception of their ultimate insubstantiality neutralizes their effect. This is at least one interpretation of the following famous verse from the *Ratnagotravibhāga*:

Thus there is nothing to be removed,  
 There is nothing to be added. |  
 What is present should be seen as present.  
 One who sees what is present is liberated. || 154 ||<sup>417</sup>

As it happens, Anaṅgavajra includes a statement that bears some similarity to this verse in his instructions on meditation on ultimate reality:

And there is absolutely no apprehender there,  
 Nor is there anything that is added, |  
 Nor is there anything to be removed,  
 Nor is any apprehended object found there. || 4.14 ||<sup>418</sup>

Shortly after this verse Anaṅgavajra begins his passage in 4.22–24 with a characteristically Buddhist interpretation of the relationship between deluded and ultimate reality that

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<sup>417</sup> *Ratnagotravibhāga*, 76.

nāpaneyamataḥ kiṃcidupaneyaṃ na kiṃcana |  
 draṣṭavyaṃ bhūtato bhūtaṃ bhūtadarśī vimucyate ||154||

<sup>418</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 79.  
 na cātra grāhakaḥ kaścinna vā kaścit samarpakaḥ |  
 na parihāryamataḥ kiñcid grāhyaṃ naivātra vidyate || 4.14 ||

identifies its cause in habitually mistaken cognitive processes. He then seems to depart from this position and move closer to the Śaiva position on *mala*, referring to it as a kind of substance and employing a metaphor in which *mala* is something that distorts one's perception of reality when it is 'smeared' on the mind. Of course the notion that there is a kind of covering that, when removed, reveals one's actual identity as an enlightened being is by no means foreign to *tathāgatagarbha* theory in the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga*, where some version of this same relationship accounts for the majority of the nine classical examples<sup>419</sup> of buddha-nature.

My comparison of these two systems, however, does present a few problems. It is possible, for instance, to argue that Buddhist *tathāgatagarbha* theory treats impurity as a kind of substance that obscures ultimate reality even though it ultimately rejects the idea that mundane existence bears any substantial nature. It is also possible to argue that the Śaiva position presented in Sadyojyoti's *Tattvatrayanirṇaya* argues for a kind of 'maturation' of *mala*, not a state in which the nature of the soul is 'smeared' or 'not-smeared' by *mala*.<sup>420</sup> It thus must be acknowledged that the Śaiva Siddhānta contains a far more complicated conception of the teleology of *mala* than is indicated in *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi* 4.22–24, and either of these points offer a relevant counter-argument to my suggestion that these verses represent Anaṅgavajra's attempt to present his perspective on the nature of ultimate

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<sup>419</sup> The nine examples of Buddha Nature from the *Ratnagoṭravibhāga* are 1) A Buddha statue covered in a rotten, wilting lotus flower; 2) Honey that is covered by bees; 3) A grain of rice in its husk; 4) Pure gold covered with filth; 5) A poor man with treasure buried in his house; 6) A seed becoming a tree; 7) A valuable Buddha statue wrapped in rags and abandoned; 8) A barren woman pregnant with a cakravartin king; 9) A gold statue covered in clay. For a translation, see Arya Maitreya et al. *Buddha Nature: The Mahayana Uttaratantra Shastra*, translated by Rosemarie Fuchs (Ithica, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 2000), 32.

<sup>420</sup> This comparison is complicated by the treatment of the nature of *mala* in Goodall's recent work on Rāmakaṅṭha's commentary to Sadyojyoti's *Tattvatrayanirṇayavṛti*. This text, which discusses the function of *mala* at length, indicates that the process by which *mala* loses its obscuring quality in Sadyojyoti's dualist Śaiva Siddhānta is described as the complete maturation (*malaparipāka*), and not the removal, of *mala*. See Goodall et. al., "*Tattvanirṇayavivṛti*," 313.

reality in terms that would be familiar to an audience conversant in basic Śaivasiddhānta theology. In response to the first problem, I would argue that allusions to the materiality of the covering that obstructs buddha-nature in the *tathāgatagarbha* theory are metaphoric, while for the Śaivas, *mala* is considered a material substance that is part its system of evolutes (*tattvas*) of primordial matter (*prakṛti*). Thus the sense of materiality that the Buddhist position grants to the forces that obscure buddha-nature provides a strategy for engaging some of the central theological positions of the Śaiva Siddhānta without surrendering the position that all of the obscurations are ultimately devoid of any material reality.

Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary to Sadyojyoti's *Tattvatrayanirṇaya* verses 8cd makes it clear that the materiality of *mala* is the primary reason that individuals are unable to remove impurity on their own and must rely upon the intervention of Śiva via the ritual technology of initiation. Goodall's translation of these verses from Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary reads:

Because it is a substance (*dravyatvāt*), like an impurity in the eye, such as a cataract (*paṭalādeḥ*), it is not the case that the cessation (*nivṛtīḥ*) of this [impurity], which is the cause of nescience (*ajñānahetoḥ*), may come about through knowledge (*jñānāt*), as a result of which[, if it were the case,] (*yena*) men would have power, as they do [have increased power] when mental nescience, which is of the nature of wrong superimposition of notions, such as the notion that something is the soul when it is not the soul (*anātmādāv ātmādhyavasāyātmanah*), ceases... Therefore (*iti*) the cessation of this [impurity may be accomplished] only (*eva*) through an action of the Lord (*īśvaravyāpāreṇaiva*), namely initiation (*dīkṣālakṣaṇena*), just as something like a cataract [can be removed only] by the intervention of an eye-doctor (*caḥsurvaidyavyāpāreṇa*).

This is taught in the venerable *Pauṣkara*:

The soul never attains liberation through his own power.

and also in the venerable *Svāyambhuva*[*sūtrasaṅgraha*, in verse 2:24cd]:

Initiation alone liberates and leads upwards to the glorious level of Śiva



and so there is no fault [in our position].<sup>421</sup>

In this sense *mala* is a substance that must be acted upon in order to be removed, and this substantiality is used to justify the necessity for an omnipotent godhead that is able both to imbue *mala* with the quality of transforming and ultimately facilitate its transformation.

In the classical formulation of *tathāgatagarbha* theory, the insubstantiality and the adventitious (*āgantuka*) characteristic of *kleśa* and the impurity (*mala*) that it represents renders it rather unnecessary to argue for a causal relationship between the ultimate reality of buddha-nature and the factors that keep beings bound to cyclic existence. The theistic position of the Śaiva schools and their conception of *mala* as a substance that requires the physical act of consecration (*dikṣā*) for its removal, however, does require a causal relationship between Śiva and the mundane existence of bound souls. When all of these factors are considered together, Anaṅgavajra's statement in verses 4.22–24 regarding ultimate reality (*tattva*) as concealed or revealed depending on whether or not one's mind is 'smeared' with *mala*, his statement that this ultimate reality is an 'efficient cause' (*nimitta*) of cyclic existence as well as the 'primary cause' (*hetu*) of liberation, and the fact that these statements are directed at a group of *mumukṣus* deviate from the classical notion of *tathāgatagarbha*. This provides strong evidence that these verses are meant to inscribe the basic theodicy of the dualist Śaiva Siddhānta within a non-dualist Buddhist ontological framework.

Like Padmavajra, Anaṅgavajra seems to understand that the *caryā* from the perspective of ultimate reality (*tattvacaryā*) and other ascetic practices like it have non-Buddhist correlates. Directing his statements once again to a group of *mumukṣus*, he begins his instructions on the *tattvacaryā* in chapter five by arguing that the practice is a

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<sup>421</sup> Goodall, "Tattvanirṇayavivṛti," 354.

requirement for all beings who seek liberation:

Without the [*caryā*] that is  
Praised by the *vajra*-bearer [and perfects]  
The highest qualities of all of the perfect buddhas, |  
[The *sādhaka*] does not produce the enjoyment of *siddhi*.  
Seekers of liberation, [even] the buddhas  
Must perform the unequalled *caryā*. || 5.5 ||

The tathāgatas, the trailblazers  
Whose lotus feet are venerated  
By Kṛṣṇa, Śakra, Śiva, Kubera, Brahmā, and the rest, |  
Performed this [*caryā*]  
That quickly destroys sin and then  
An attained supreme state. || 5.6 ||<sup>422</sup>

This passage exhibits the dual validation and subordination characteristic of an inclusivist strategy. The verses that immediately follow this statement then employ this inclusivist strategy in what appears to be Anaṅgavajra's admission that his *tattvacaryā* resembles a practice that is Śaiva:

This authentic practice was actually  
Enumerated by glorious Vajrasattva  
Who benefits beings, |  
But there is another variety that [was taught]  
By he who has dominion over the world  
With all its various disciples. || 5.7 ||

The true *caryā* was actually  
Enumerated by the glorious Vajrasattva  
Who benefits beings, |  
But there is another variety  
That [was taught]  
By the one who has dominion over the world  
[With all of its various] disciples. || 5.7 ||<sup>423</sup>

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<sup>422</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi," 81.  
vinā 'nayā vajradharaprasāstayā  
samastasambuddhaguṇāgrabhūtayā |  
na jāyate siddhirato mumukṣavaḥ  
carantu caryām atulām imāṃ budhāḥ || 5.5 ||  
murāriśakratripurārivittada-  
brahmādikābhyarcitapādapaṅkajāḥ |  
imāṃ caritvā tvaghanāśinīm drutaṃ  
parām avāptāḥ padavīm tathāgatāḥ || 5.6 ||

Anaṅgavajra seems quite aware that there are other versions of the *caryā* than the version that he is about to present. Unsurprisingly, however, he subordinates the ascetic practices of other sects much in the same way that he describes their central deities as ultimately subordinate to the tathāgatas. The fact that he once again refers to the audience for these comments as a group of *mumukṣus* suggests that he is making an argument for the superiority of the Buddhist *caryā* and *vrata* practices over the Śaiva forms of the *vrata* that they so closely resemble. Finally, Anaṅgavajra's reference to an alternate *caryā* that was taught by the one who has dominion over the world with its various disciples (*vineyalokasya vaśena*) indicates that the popularity of the sect to which this alternate form of *caryā* belongs far exceeds that of the Buddhists. In light of Sanderson's argument for the ascendancy of Śaivism from the early medieval period forward and the many Buddhist characterizations of this phenomenon via the mythic trope of the subjugation of Maheśvara,<sup>424</sup> the passage should likely be taken as a reference to specifically Śaiva forms of this mode of ascetic practice.

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<sup>423</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 81–82.

sadbhūtacaryā gaditeyameva  
 śrīvajrasattvena jagaddhitena |  
 anyā vicitrā tu samastanānā-  
 vineyalokasya vaśena yā tu || 5.7 ||  
 siddhiḥ prasiddhyatyakhilā yathoktā  
 vicitracaryābhiranuttarā tu |  
 samantabhadrātulasiddhirāryā  
 saiveti vajrī bhagavān jagāda || 5.8 ||

<sup>424</sup> The Buddhist mythic trope of Vajrapāṇi's subjugation of Maheśvara begins in the seminal *yogatantra* work the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṅgraha* and then exerts a broad influence throughout Buddhist tantric literature in India and Tibet. See Ronald M. Davidson, "Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa skya pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka," *JIAS* 14, no. 2 (1991): 197–236. The notion that Maheśvara and his acolytes had taken over the entire world and thus had to be brought under control runs through many of these myths but is most apparent in the version of the myth from the *Laghuśaṃvara*. For this version and a comprehensive survey of the mythology of Heruka and his subjugation of the major deities of the Hindu pantheon see David B. Gray, *The Cakrasaṃvaratantra (The Discourse of Śrī Heruka) Śrīherukābhīdhāna: A Study and Annotated Translation* (New York: American Institute of Buddhist Studies and Columbia University press, 2007), 35–54.

#### IV. Sect and Sectarian Identity in Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*

Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* is often critical of a number of philosophical positions, ritual theories, and ascetic practices maintained by both Buddhist and non-Buddhist sects. Chapters two through seven of *Jñānasiddhi* focus on a series of refutations of faulty positions on the nature of ultimate reality and the proper object of meditation, and this openly exclusivist and polemical tone resurfaces in a few later chapters. Yet despite these polemical moments, the first chapter of *Jñānasiddhi* opens with the following appeal to cultivating an equanimity that rejects any sense of conceit regarding one's superiority over others:

One should not bear in mind conceit  
Related to attaining good looks and youth, |  
And to the wealth, sovereignty, and power  
That have resulted from the family of one's birth. || 1.6 ||

One should not be attached to  
The thought "I am a wise *paṇḍita*," |  
And, "I am a king who is skilled  
In all of the arts and crafts." || 1.7 ||

An ethical and learned hero  
Endowed with generosity and the like |  
Should not take the self as an object of perception  
For the sake of one's own and others' liberation. || 1.8 ||

Thinking, "Vajrasattva himself pervades  
The minds of all beings [and] abides [in all beings,]" |  
One who is intent upon yoga  
Should not denigrate anyone. || 1.9 ||

There are childish people, foolish and destitute people,  
People with poor ethics, and people afflicted with diseases. |  
One should not think less of people  
Who possess these and other numerous [faults]. || 1.10 ||

A *samaya*-holder who is firm in the vow  
Is adorned with *bodhicitta*,  
Has faith and devotion toward the three jewels, |  
And has compassion toward all sentient beings. || 1.11 ||<sup>425</sup>

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<sup>425</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 93–94.

Indrabhūti does not, however, always seem to take his own advice.

Following the conventions of the genre, the polemical chapters in *Jñānasiddhi* do not explicitly state the identity of their rhetorical opponents. Chapters two through five are particularly vague, most likely because the positions that they refute are not easily narrowed down to a single sect or school of thought. These chapters deal with Indrabhūti's refutation of various misconceptions regarding meditation on the form of a deity, whether or not gnosis is endowed-with or devoid-of mental representations (*ākāra*), and the belief that an ultimate reality that is a mere state of 'non-thought' is soteriologically effective. The arguments presented in Indrabhūti's "Refutation of Stupor Meditation" (*mūḍhabhāvanāniṣeda*) in chapter five bear to some resemblance to positions adopted by Kāmaśīla (713–763 CE) against the Chinese master Hwashang Moheyan (8<sup>th</sup> century CE) in the famous gradualism/subitism debates allegedly held at Bsam yas monastery in eighth-century Tibet. This is of particular interest given the role that the Bsam yas debates continued to play in Tibetan *mahāmudrā* polemical literature, where they were periodically invoked to criticize the *mahāmudrā* schools that trace their lineage to the Kagyū patriarch Gampopa (Sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen, 1079–1153). The polemical chapters in *Jñānasiddhi* still offer some perspective on Indrabhūti's conception of his own sectarian identity via their rejection of a

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rūpayauvanasampatterbhogaiśvaryaśalasya ca |  
janmagotravṛttasya na citte mānamudvahet || 1.6 ||  
matimān paṇḍito'smīti sarvaśilpakalāsu ca |  
kuśalah pārthivaścāhamiti citte na yojayet || 1.7 ||  
śilavān śrutavān vīro dānādyairapi saṃyutaḥ |  
svamukteḥ paramukteśca nātmānamupalambhayet || 1.8 ||  
sarvasattvamanovyāpī vajrasattvaḥ svayaṃ sthitaḥ |  
iti saṃcintya yogātmā na kañcidavakalpayet || 1.9 ||  
bālā mūrkhā daridrāśca duḥśilā rogaṇḍitāḥ |  
evamādyairanekaiśca saṃyuktān nāvamānayet || 1.10 ||  
bhakto ratnatraye śrāddho bodhicittavibhūṣitaḥ |  
sarvasattvānukampī ca samayī saṃvare sthitaḥ || 1.11 ||

number of positions regarding the nature of gnosis or ultimate reality. Barring only a few exceptions, however, they do not contain enough information to identify which sects Indrabhūti might be refuting with any satisfactory level of accuracy.

One exception to this problem may lie in *Jñānasiddhi* chapter six on "The Refutation of [the View that] Ultimate Reality is Inhalation and Exhalation" (*āśvāsapraśvāsatattvapraṭiṣedha*). This brief chapter of eight verses is reproduced here in full:

It is not possible for inhalation  
Nor exhalation to be ultimate reality, |  
Nor is [ultimate reality] present in the middle of those two.  
How could wind be ultimate reality? || 6.1 ||

There is nothing in the middle [of inhalation and exhalation].  
How could this be the ultimate reality? |  
If wind is the ultimate reality,  
It would exist in a bellows. || 6.2 ||

Wind is set in motion and  
Likewise driven out by a bellows. |  
[Some believe] the mind is blown into the body  
Just as [wind] might blow into a bellows. || 6.3 ||

[Yet in both examples] there is no blower, nor is  
Anything that causes the wind to blow [established] |  
By [the argument for] an agent that moves the bodily wind  
[That is like] the agent that moves the wind of a bellows. || 6.4 ||

[In this way,] yogins who see the ultimate reality  
Perceive no difference between the two: |  
By a man or by the mind, it is the same  
With respect to the action of being a blower. || 6.5 ||

If the wind of a bellows is the same as  
The wind of inhalation and exhalation,  
Since [you say] the bodily wind is ultimate reality,  
The air in a bellows is [ultimate reality] as well. || 6.6 ||

[But] when the bodily wind [you say] is ultimate reality  
Is completely expelled through the doors [of the body], |  
It is not logical to call it ultimate reality  
Because the subject [of your argument is just] a gust of wind. || 6.7 ||

[This] incorrect explanation of ultimate reality  
Belongs to complete fools who follow a path to ruin. |  
They do not take birth in a good realm.  
[Their] only destination is that of a hell being. || 6.8 ||<sup>426</sup>

Here Indrabhūti presents an argument associated with the Vaiśeṣika school, and more specifically with Praśastapāda's (c. 500 CE) *Padārthadharmasamgraha*. Kapstein characterizes this doctrine and others like it as a form of personal vitalism, or the belief "that an animate organism lives in virtue of something other than its inanimate parts and their interaction alone... that the organism is in possession of some special element upon whose presence its animate condition depends."<sup>427</sup> As Kapstein notes, a variety of positions on the notion of personal vitalism were in circulation in Indian thought by the time of some of the earliest *Upaniṣads*, and well before the advent of Buddhism. The primary notion that most theories of personal vitalism seek to avoid, a purely mechanistic view of animate life, is clearly at play in Indrabhūti's treatment of the bellows (*bhastrā*) metaphor in his refutation of the equation of inhalation and exhalation with ultimate reality.

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<sup>426</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 116.

nāśvāsaṃ nāpi praśvāsaṃ tattvaṃ bhavitum arhati |  
tayormadhye bhavannāpi vāyus tattvaṃ kathaṃ bhavet || 6.1 ||  
madhye na kiñcidapyasti kathaṃ tattvaṃ bhaviṣyati |  
vāyuryadi bhavettattvaṃ bhastrāyāṃ ca bhaviṣyati || 6.2 ||  
preraṇe bhastrayā vāyostathaiva kṣepaṇe'pi ca |  
yathā kaścīd dhamed bhastrāṃ tadvad dehaṃ dhamenmanaḥ || 6.3 ||  
na vāyudhamakaḥ kaścanna vāyudhmāma(pa)kastathā |  
kāyasya dhamakeneva bhastrāyā dhamakena ca || 6.4 ||  
na viśeṣastayordrṣṭo yogibhistattvadarśibhiḥ |  
nareṇa manasā tulyaṃ dhamakatvakriyāṃ prati || 6.5 ||  
bhastrāyā vāyunā tulyaṃ śvāsapraśvāsavāyunā |  
bhastrāvātaṃ yathā tattvaṃ dehavāyustathā bhavet || 6.6 ||  
dehavāyuryadā tattvaṃ sarvaṃ dvāravinirgatam |  
na tattvaṃ yujyate vaktuṃ viśayatvāt prabhāñjanaḥ || 6.7 ||  
bhraṣṭamārgātimūḍhānāṃ mithyātattvaprabhāvinām |  
na teṣāṃ sugatau janma gatirekaiva nārakī || 6.8 ||

<sup>427</sup> Matthew T. Kapstein, *Reason's Traces: Identity and Interpretation in Indian and Tibetan Buddhist Thought* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2001), 162.

The logic of personal vitalism is notably circular in its most basic formulation. As Kapstein shows, the point of the argument as it is presented in the Vaiśeṣika school is that the body's animation provides the basis for inferring the existence of a self (*ātman*) because the physical body must have some relationship with a self in order to be animate and alive.<sup>428</sup> This line of argumentation essentially requires one to accept the central thesis of personal vitalism in order to point to animate life as a proof of personal vitalism. A doctrine of personal vitalism held by the '*tīrthika*' interlocutors in the Buddhist work *Nairātmyaparipṛcchā* or *A Dialogue on Identitylessness* provides a broader sense of the bodily functions that his school of thought used to infer the existence of the *ātman*. The opening dialogue of the *Nairātmyaparipṛcchā* reads:

Those *tīrthikas* who upheld the doctrinal view of recognition (*upalambhadṛṣṭayaḥ*) who were doubtful, who were uncertain, approached a follower the great vehicle with the palms of their hands together out of respect and asked a question regarding identitylessness— “Oh son of the lineage, the omniscient one said, ‘the body is identityless.’ If the body is devoid of self, the supreme self is [also] not found [in the body, then] why is it that, due to the presence [of some object, emotive responses] such as laughing, weeping, play, anger, conceit, jealousy, wickedness, and the like arise? May the Bhagavān liberate this doubt of ours—is there a supreme self in the body or is there not?”<sup>429</sup>

This question opens a dialogical narrative in the *Nairātmyaparipṛcchā* that contains a Buddhist refutation of the doctrinal view of recognition (*upalambhadṛṣṭi*) and its thesis that the presence of the supreme self (*parātman*) can be inferred through the observation of a number of involuntary emotional and physical processes in the body. In their response, the Buddhist

<sup>428</sup> Kapstein, *Reason's Traces*, 165.

<sup>429</sup> P.L. Vaidya ed. *Buddhist Sanskrit Texts 17: Mahāyānasūtrasaṅgraha Part 1* (Darbhanga: The Mithila Institute, 1961), 174.

atha te tīrthikā upalambhadṛṣṭayaḥ savikalpāḥ savitarkā mahāyānikamupasṛtya sādarakṛtāñjalipuṭā nairātmyapraśnaṃ paripṛcchanti sma- nairātmakaṃ śarīramiti kulputra sarvajñena nirdiśyate | yadi śarīraṃ nairātmakaṃ, paramātmā na vidyate | tatkasmātsakāśādete hasitaruditakrīḍitakrodhamānersyāpaiśunyādayaḥ samutpadyante? tadasmākaṃ saṃdehaṃ mocayitumarhati bhagavān- kimasti śarīre paramātmā, kiṃ vā nāsti?



adherents of the great vehicle (*mahāyānikā*) argue for the ultimate absence of any perceptual basis (*ālambhana*) that underlies the various manifestations of animate life while affirming the perception of such signs of animate life as 'like a dream, an illusion, or Indra's net' (*svapnamāyendrajālasadṛśā*). The text then uses this refutation as a platform for discussing the nature of the two truths, the characteristics of awakened mind (*bodhicitta*), and the merits of meditating on the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*).

The view of recognition (*upalabhadṛṣṭi*) maintained by the *Nairātmyaparipṛcchā's* *tīrthikas* appears in both the *Nyāyasūtra* (c. 1<sup>st</sup> century CE) and Kaṇāda's *Vaiśeṣikasūtra*. Gautama's *Nyāyasūtra* I.I.10 contains a short list of phenomena that are taken as indications of the existence of the *ātman* that includes desire, hatred, effort, pleasure, pain, and knowledge.<sup>430</sup> Kapstein compares this early Nyāya formulation of the doctrine of personal vitalism to a similar position that appears in *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* 3.2.4, which adds qualities such as inhalation and exhalation (*prāṇāpāna*), blinking (*nimeṣonmeṣa*), life (*jīvana*), and sensory changes (*manogatīndriyavikārā*) to the qualities of *ātman* in the *Nyāyasūtra*'s list.<sup>431</sup> The *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* presents the more developed argument that the involuntary functions in the body are signs of the existence of the *ātman*. Here, as Kapstein notes, the Vaiśeṣika formulation of this proof of the existence of *ātman* attributes a stronger sense of direct connection between the various signs of the self (*ātmaliṅga*) and the fact that the *ātman* is the primary cause that grants life to the material, elemental constituents of the physical body. The example of the bellows (*bhastrā*) is employed in Praśastapāda's commentary on

<sup>430</sup> Kapstein, *Reason's Traces*, 165–66.

<sup>431</sup> Kapstein, *Reason's Traces*, 166. Also see Kaṇāda and Candrānanda, *Vaiśeṣikasūtra of Kaṇāda with the Commentary of Candrānanda*, edited by Muni Śrī Jambuvijayaji (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1961), 28. The verse reads:

prāṇāpānanimeṣonmeṣajīvanamanogatīndriyāntaravikārāḥ sukhaduḥkhe icchādveṣau  
prayatnaścetyātmaliṅgāni | 3 | 2 | 4 |

*Vaiśeṣikasūtra* 3.2.4 in his *Padārthadharmasamgraha*, where he clarifies the meaning of *prāṇāpāna* or 'inhalation and exhalation' as a marker for the existence of the *ātman*.

Kapstein's translation of the verse reads

[The existence of the self is inferred] "by inhalation, etc.," so it is said. How so? Because, when the vital wind (*vāyu*) is conjoined with the body, changing activity is seen, as when a bellows is pumped...<sup>432</sup>

Kapstein also points to a passage from *The Questions of King Milinda (Milindapañha)* in which the monk Nāgasena refutes a similar position by arguing for a strictly mechanistic conception of the act of breathing. Here, like Indrabhūti, Nāgasena and Milinda's dialogue concludes that inhalation and exhalation are merely bodily activities.<sup>433</sup> It is thus possible to extract two opposing positions regarding whether or not involuntary functions of the body might indicate the existence of a vital force that is itself the nature of ultimate reality— 1) the Buddhists, who reduce involuntary bodily function to a mere mechanistic view of the body, and 2) the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika, for whom the involuntary functions of the body are the primary empirical phenomena from which one infers the necessary existence of the *ātman*.

Indrabhūti's presentation of the personal vitalism argument differs somewhat from the Nyāya-Vaiśeṣika argument that the involuntary functions of the body signal the presence of a unifying personal identity (*ātman*). The target of Indrabhūti's refutation, like the *tīrthika* proponents of the doctrinal view of recognition (*upalabhadṛṣṭi*) in the *Nairātmyaparipṛcchā*, have taken the position on personal vitalism one step further and made the connection between the existence of the *ātman* and this *ātman*'s identity with ultimate reality. In response, Indrabhūti takes up the same example of the bellows or *bhastrā* that appears in

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<sup>432</sup> Kapstein, *Reason's Traces*, 166. Kapstein notes that the passage in question appears in *Praśāstapādabhāṣya*, edited by Durgādhara Jhā (Varanasi: Sampurnanad Sanskrit Vishvavidyalaya, 1977), 199–200.

<sup>433</sup> Kapstein, *Reason's Traces*, 170.

Praśastapāda's commentary to the *Vaiśeṣikasūtra* to argue for a mechanistic view of the involuntary and emotive responses of the body. Echoes of Nāgasena's argument in *Milindapañha* appear here as well. For example, Indrabhūti's closing argument that when the breath is completely expelled out of the body it is obvious that it is just a gust of wind is very close to Nāgasena's argument to King Milinda that the breath does not re-enter the body when someone blows a horn, a conch, or a bamboo flute, yet they do not die.<sup>434</sup>

These are some tantalizing leads on the identity of the target of Indrabhūti's "Refutation [of the View that] Inhalation and Exhalation is Ultimate Reality," but they still fall short of identifying the specific sectarian affiliation of this opponent with any real degree of certainty. This is largely due to the fact that the *Nyāya-* and *Vaiśeṣikasūtras'* presentations are just one of a number of formulations of the doctrine of personal vitalism that make an explicit connection between the breath and *ātman*. To make matters more complicated, this view was so widespread throughout the ancient and classical world that it is difficult to even limit it to a South Asian context. The task of narrowing down this broad field of potential targets for Indrabhūti's refutation is aided in part by his specific reference to the example of the bellows.

Further leads on the identity of Indrabhūti's target might be derived from Aghoraśiva's commentary to Sadyojyoti's *Bhogakārikā*, which contains a similar refutation of

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<sup>434</sup> Kapstein, *Reason's Traces*, 170. Kapstein's source is I.B. Horner trans., *Milinda's Questions I* (London: Luzac & Company, 1963), 41. Horner's translation of the verses reads: "Reverend sir, whatever is the inner mobile principle, the life- principle that enters and issues forth, I think that is 'Nāgasena.'" "But if this breath has issued forth and does not enter (again) or has entered but does not issue forth (again), could that man live?" "O no, reverend sir." "But when those who are conch-blowers blow on a conch, does their breath enter (again)?" "No, reverend sir." "Or when those who are blowers on bamboo pipes blow on a bamboo pipe, does their breath enter (again)?" "O no, reverend sir." "Or when those who are horn-blowers blow on a horn, does their breath enter (again)?" "No, reverend sir." "Then why do they not die?" "I am not competent to converse on this assertion with you. It were good, reverend sir, if you uttered the meaning." "This is not the life-principle; in-breathing and out-breathing are bodily activities."

the view that *vāyu* is the 'internal organ' responsible for *prāṇa* or the movement and installation of the 'life force' in the body. The topic is addressed in Aghoraśiva's commentary to Sadyojyoti's presentation of the intellect (*buddhi*), ego (*ahaṃkāra*), and mind (*manas*) as the constituents of the internal organ (*antaḥkaraṇa*) in the Śaiva system of *tattvas*. The relevant sections of Sadyojyoti's *Bhogakārikā* and Aghoraśiva's commentary read:

(30A) Others establish the "life-force" (*prāṇa*) as the internal organ and as that which manifests consciousness.

"Others" refers to one school of the materialists who claim that the internal organ is simply "air" (*vāyu*) designated by the term "life-force". This life-force manifests consciousness as a property which is a result of the transformation of the elements (*bhūta-parināma-viśeṣa*); the life-force is the cause of sentient existence etc. through the functions of "taking up" etc. He points out the falsity of this view:

(30B) Without volitional activities [*prayatna*], there is no life-force. But then what is the organ of the volitional activities?

Behavioral activity (*pravṛtti*) is indeed seen to be preceded by volitional activity (*prayatna*) on account of the intermittence of the air that is of the nature of the life-force. It is said: how can there be the drawing out of activity (*preraṇākaraṣa*) without the volitional activity of air? The internal organ is consequently established in response to the question: in the establishment of volitional activity, which is of the nature of "active effort", how should the organ be conceived? Moreover, if it is claimed that the production of consciousness as well arises from this air, another organ ought to be brought forward to account for this production:

(31) The task of manifesting consciousness is attributed to this life-force. However, describe its internal organ! As well, belonging to the life-force, consciousness can never become manifest, because air is like the external wind.

It is not correct to argue that the manifestation of consciousness can belong to something unconscious (*jaḍa*), as this would result in the claim that the manifestation of consciousness can belong to everything. Consciousness does not belong to this air [qua life-force], because air is like the air that is external [to the body].

Writing in eighth century Kashmir, likely within both temporal and spatial proximity to the Indrabhūti who authored *Jñānasiddhi*, Sadyojyoti arrives at a similar thesis in his critique that the 'air' that some equate to the life-force is no different than the 'external wind.'

The twelfth century Śaiva exegete Aghoraśiva's commentary to this work argues that the identity of the sect that supports this school of thought is a certain school of materialists (*lokāyataikadeśā*).<sup>435</sup> Although the term 'materialist' is most often attributed to the Cārvākas, that universally reviled punching-bag of the South Asian polemicist, it would not be reasonable to assume that the Cārvāka are the target for Indrabhūti or Sadyojyoti because a true materialist would most likely have absolutely no problem with admitting that the 'air' that animates the body via the breath bears no particularly unique property that might distinguish it from the 'external air' or a 'gust of wind.' Given his own allegiance to the theistic Śaiva formulation of the system of *tattvas*, it is possible that the *lokāyatas* Aghoraśiva refers to were simply individuals who do not subscribe to the views of the theistic brahmanical movements. Bronkhorst, for instance, has suggested that the *lokāyata* were those brahmins who adhered closest to the religion of the Veda, rejecting the doctrine of *karma*, the soul, and rebirth that exerted increasing influence over brahmanical religion as it came into increasing greater contact with the cultural region of Magadha.<sup>436</sup> Thus for Bronkhorst, the *lokāyata* who were known by the name Cārvāka were in fact orthodox brahmins who resisted the effects that the doctrines of *karma*, rebirth, and personal vitalism were having on the religion of the Veda.

The accusation of being a 'materialist,' however, had undergone a dramatic shift by the time that Aghoraśiva wrote his commentary to the *Bhogakārikā* with the theistic neo-

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<sup>435</sup> Sadyojyoti. *Bhoga Kārika*, 120.

<sup>436</sup> Bronkhorst, *Greater Magadha*, 171–72.

brahmanical schools' rise to dominance beginning in the early centuries CE. In the eyes of a twelfth century Śaiva exegete writing at the height of South Asian theistic neo-brahmanical scholasticism, the Vaiśeṣika school (or any other school that subscribed to a relatively non-theistic interpretation of the system of *tattvas*) could have qualified as a kind of 'materialist' doctrine. Unfortunately, even with this correspondence between Indrabhūti and Sadyojyoti/Aghoraśiva's treatment of the argument that wind or *vāyu* constitutes the body's life force, the variety of schools of thought that may have subscribed to this or any similar doctrine in South Asia are too numerous, and the refutations themselves are too vague, to allow for an absolutely certain identification of the opponent in either case. The data indicate that the Vaiśeṣika school is a likely candidate, but there may be others as well.

Although the refutation chapters in *Jñānasiddhi* do not openly identify the particular schools that Indrabhūti targets, there are some instances later in the text that provide more specific data on the various religious sects with which Indrabhūti may have had contact and against whom he constructed a sense of his own sectarian identity. One instance occurs in chapter nine of *Jñānasiddhi* on Indrabhūti's "Instruction on Analyzing the Production and Destruction of Sin and Merit" (*pāpapuṇyotpādavināśaparijñānanirdeśa*). The foregoing discussion of the role that *mala* plays in Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi* has already given us opportunity to explore the different perspectives that Buddhists and Śaivas held on the nature of impurity. Here we should remember that from the Śaiva perspective, *mala* has a substantial material reality that both allows it to obstruct the true nature of reality and requires physical action in the form of consecrations, rituals, and ascetic practices to be removed. In contrast, the Buddhist notion of *kleśa*, in many ways the analog to the Śaiva *mala*, describes a range of mental phenomena that are wholly immaterial and whose ability to

obstruct ultimate reality can be logically negated and finally removed through the application of that logic in during meditation. Thus the Śaiva position relies upon a materialist argument that *mala* must be removed through physical action while the Buddhist position relies upon an idealist argument that all obscurations to ultimate reality are pure mental fabrications that are negated through a meditative analysis that reveals their ontic insubstantiality. The Śaiva and Buddhist positions on the purification of sin thus fall on opposite sides of a materialist-idealist dialectic.

The first issue that is raised in the opening of Indrabhūti's chapter on sin and merit introduces the question of how a mental activity such as confession (*deśanā*) can destroy sin while sympathetic joy (*anumodhanā*) cultivates merit. The very fact that Indrabhūti sees the need to address this issue, which would be obvious to any Buddhist audience, suggests that his intended audience may not in fact be Buddhist or, perhaps, is an audience that is nominally Buddhist but subscribes in some way to a more physical conception of *mala*. A second issue is then immediately raised regarding the prescription of the transgressive *samayas*. The opening of *Jñānasiddhi* chapter nine reads:

How is it that a dreadful misdeed  
Is destroyed by confession? |  
Likewise how does one nourish  
Merit by sympathetic joy? || 9.1 ||

In one place [in the *tantras*] it says one  
Should kill living beings, etc., |  
And in one place in the *tantras* it says not to.  
How can that not be a contradiction? || 9.2 ||

Everything such as the five *amṛtas*, etc.,  
Is likewise not suitable to be eaten, |  
Yet there are many [verses on] such unpleasant things—  
How can they generate virtue? || 9.3 ||

I shall explain these [issues] systematically,

So that slow-witted people may understand |  
What was taught in this and that tantra  
By all of the buddhas, by the wise ones. || 9.4 ||<sup>437</sup>

The verses that follow in *Jñānasiddhi* 9.5–19 largely focus on the first issue and argue that all actions of body and speech originate with the mind, and thus the mental intention at the root of any confession or generation of sympathetic joy is the primary factor in the destruction of *pāpa* and the cultivation or *puṇya*. Readers familiar with the broader Mahāyāna literature on confession and the accumulation of merit will likely recognize a degree of similarity between Indrabhūti's arguments and the works of Śāntideva (c. 8<sup>th</sup> century). Indrabhūti then pivots in *Jñānasiddhi* 9.20 from presenting his own argument for the primacy of mental intention to an argument against the positions on expiation held by a handful of rival sects:

Some exceedingly foolish, childish people  
Who do not correctly understand logic and scripture |  
Say, “Sin is just a conceptual thought,”  
And bring ruin upon themselves. || 9.20 ||

[They believe] if a *yogin* is free from conceptual  
Thought he is not smeared by sins, |  
But it is not logical that [this belief brings a]  
Transformation in the cause of the arising of anger. || 9.21 ||

[This position] is nothing other than  
Abandoning worldly behavior. |  
There is one that walks around with a skull,  
Likewise the one that eats stones. || 9.22 ||

[The practice of] being tormented

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<sup>437</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 122.

kathaṃ deśanayā pāpaṃ kṣayaṃ gacchet sudāruṇam |  
anumodanayā puṇyaṃ kathaṃ saṃbhujyate tathā || 9.1 ||  
prāṇātipātakādīni kartavyaṃ kvacid abravīt |  
kvacinneti ca tantreṣu kathaṃ tan na virudhyate || 9.2 ||  
pañcāmṛtādikaṃ sarvaṃ abhakṣyaṃ gamyate tathā |  
apriyādīnyanekāni kathaṃ taistu śubhodayaḥ || 9.3 ||  
yathākramaṃ bravīmyeṣāṃ tantre tantre nidarśitam |  
mandadhījanabodhārthaṃ sarvabuddhaiḥ suvedibhiḥ || 9.4 ||



By cold, wind, and thirst is not logical, |  
And one does not remove affliction  
By suffering injuries such as verbal abuse and the like. || 9.23 ||<sup>438</sup>

The 'one that walks around with a skull' (*śirasā gamanaṃ yuktaṃ*) mentioned in verse 9.22c could potentially refer to either the orthodox brahmanical performance of a *kāpālavrata* or any number of permutations that this ascetic mode takes on in its Śaiva contexts. Establish the identity of the ascetics that 'eat stones' (*pāṣāṇabhakṣaṇa*), however, is a bit more challenging. I have located only one reference to this particular *vrata* practice in an unpublished Sanskrit manuscript of a Buddhist text that was catalogued with the title *Expiation via Observance Rites (vratavidhiprāyaścitta)* in the microfilm collection of the Institute for the Advance Study of World Religions.<sup>439</sup> The microfilm card for the text indicates that its genre is '*tantra*,' but it contains a wide range of material related to the expiation of sins or misdeeds and the purification of lower rebirths (*durgatisodhana*) that is likely common to a number of exoteric traditions. The reference to an expiatory rite in which one eats stones occurs in the text's fifth chapter on "Consequences" (*sākarma*), which covers a range of consequences for committing various crimes. The opening material of the chapter addresses the punishments, observances, and expiatory rites for 'killing a member of the four

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<sup>438</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 123–24.

kecinmūḍhatarā bālā yuktyāgamam apaśyakāḥ |  
kalpanaiva bhavet pāpamityāhuḥ svātmanāśakāḥ || 9.20 ||  
kalpanārahito yogī yadi pāpairna lipyate |  
dveṣādyutpādahetau tu vikāritvaṃ na yujyate || 9.21 ||  
vihāya laukikīṃ vṛttimanyathā tu bhavenna kim |  
śirasā gamanaṃ yuktaṃ tathā pāṣāṇabhakṣaṇam || 9.22 ||  
śītavātapipāsādibādhā tasya na yujyate |  
ākrośādyapakāraiśca na khedamupasamharet || 9.23 ||

<sup>439</sup> The actual title of the text as it appears in the chapter colophons of the work is *Buddhoktasamsārāmaya* or *The Illness of Saṃsāra as Taught by the Buddha*. See *Vratavidhiprāyaścitta*, Institute for the Advanced Study of World Religions Microfilm Project, Buddhist Sanskrit Manuscripts, film no. WGS-23, [Bikram] Saṃvāt 1670 (1613 CE). The colophon to the work reads:  
itiśrībuddhoktasamsārāmaye vratavidhiprāyaścīta ekādaśadhyāya(caturdaśadhyāya)samāpta || ||  
śubh[am] || || samvat १६७० sālajyeṣṭhāśudi 14

castes' (*caturvarṇādivadham*), the consequences for killing various animals, and the appropriate punishments for killing or harming a pregnant woman (*gurviṇīvadha*). It is here that we find the following reference to a *vrata* that entails 'eating stones':

In the case where one catches a person  
That is going to kill [or] harm a pregnant woman, |  
They should likewise be imprisoned in a diseased place  
And [one should cut off] one foot. || 5.15 ||

And, at a distance of one *yojana*, they should also  
Perform the *vrata* of being deprived of a foot. |  
They should be instructed in the doctrine of *karma*  
That relates to willingly performing misdeeds. || 5.16 ||

[During the *vrata* one] eats stones, bathes,  
Adorns oneself with a bell as an ornament, |  
Plunges into the rapids of a stream,  
[Or] is struck by lightning. || 5.17 ||

And they should perform the one-footed  
[*Vrata*] wherever death is present [such as] |  
A place where a wild beast has eaten its prey or  
In a forest or a house where there has been a fire. || 5.18 ||<sup>440</sup>

The performance of the *vrata* in which one 'eats stones' (*pāṣāne bhojane*) seems to describe a mode of expiatory observance that is related to Indrabhūti's *pāṣānabhakṣaṇa*. This example focuses on the performance of a *vrata* as part of a legal retribution for committing a crime, but as my analysis of the *caryā* and *vrata* instructions in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* has shown, it would not be out of character for this expiatory observance to be repurposed as a more generalized ascetic practice for purifying sin. In either case, Indrabhūti's argument

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<sup>440</sup> *Vratavidhiprāyaścitta*, 7r.1–5. My insertions are noted by brackets and my suggested corrections to the manuscript are noted in parentheses:

| tatraiva maraṇaṃ gachat prāpnoti gurviṇīvadhaṃ |  
| roge ca pādāṃ ekaṃ ca bandhane vodhaya[h] tathā || 5.15 ||  
| yojane pādahīnaṅca vrataṃ cāpi samācāret |  
| kāmatakṛtapāpasya eṣaṃ karma prasas(śās)yate || 5.16 ||  
| pāṣāne bhojane snehe ghaṇṭābharaṇabhūṣaṇe |  
| jaloghe karddane magne vidyutā sanighāṭane || 5.17 ||  
| patite svāpade bhakte gr̥he dāhe vanepi vā |  
| yatra yatra vipartti(vipatti) ca pādān(m) ekaṃ samācāret || 5.18 ||

against the belief that the physical and verbal components of expiatory practices are ineffective on their own still applies. As Indrabhūti argues, *vratas* that entail enduring various types of hardships do not actually free one from sin on their own. Instead, Indrabhūti argues that all forms of sin and all means of expiation originate solely with the mind. By this argument, the physical components of a *vrata* that are considered necessary to remove the physical substance of impurity that one takes on by performing a sinful act are rendered entirely ineffective.

The other target of Indrabhūti's critique, those who might believe that their 'distress' (*kheda*) is relinquished 'by suffering injuries such as verbal abuse, etc.' (*ākrośādyapakāra*) bears a strong resemblance to the second stage of the Pāśupata *sādhana* in which the initiate intentionally courts disfavor and abuse by engaging in unacceptable behaviors in public. As Acharya's work on the potential precursors to this Pāśupata practice show, Buddhists were aware of the ritual mechanics assumed in this stage of the Pāśupata *sādhana* from at least the time of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya* and the *Lalitavistara*, or from roughly the fourth century C.E.<sup>441</sup> In his more recent work, Acharya examines the Buddhist *pramāṇika* Dharmakīrti's following critique of the Śaiva rite of initiation:

The rite [of initiation], which is validated by the example of a seed and the like, is not sufficient for the absence of [future] births of embodied souls, because [if that is allowed] there would be the undesired consequence that liberation by means of oil massage, burning oneself in fire, and the like [too, is validated]. That a man who weighed heavier before becomes lighter [after initiation] does not mean that his sin is removed. Let it even be the case that he has no weight at all; but sin cannot be heavy because it is not embodied.<sup>442</sup>

Acharya goes on to note that this critique is made in reference to the Śaiva *mantramārga* practice of weighing initiates before and after the initiation rite to prove that they had become

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<sup>441</sup> Acharya, "How to Behave Like a Bull," 103.

<sup>442</sup> Acharya, "On the Śaiva Concept of Innate Impurity," 15.

lighter due to the removal of *pāpa* or *mala*, a practice that he notes is attested in the *Niśvāsamūlasūtra*.<sup>443</sup> For the *atimārga* Pāśupata system, however, it was not initiation alone but initiation followed by the performance of the *vrata* that resulted in the final removal of *pāpa*. Interestingly, Acharya identifies a Vedic precursor to the notion that an initiate's sin might be shed via others speaking ill of him in the following passage from the

*Matrāyanīsamhitā*:

They divide the sin of that man who undergoes initiation into three portions: he who eats his food [receives] one third [of it], he who speaks ill of him [receives] another third, and those ants which bite him [receive] the other one third. Therefore, surely, the food of that man is uneatable. Therefore, one should not speak ill of [an initiated man]. Therefore, one should not procure the clothing of an initiated man, for, there are those ants which bite him.<sup>444</sup>

Indrabhūti's critique of those who believe that their sins can be removed by carrying around a skull and suffering censure and insult from others is likely a reference either to the classical brahmanical *vrata* rites or to the Śaiva *vrata* rites that trace their origins back to the Pāśupatas.

Indrabhūti then criticizes the belief that God holds the ultimate power to absolve sin in a series of verses directed at theistic brahmanical movements like the Śaivas and Bhāgavatas. In this passage, he addresses one of the central questions of theodicy—why it is that an all-powerful, benevolent being would even allow something like *pāpa* or *mala* to exist in the first place:

If one believes that  
 “God himself’ does it all,” |  
 [Then God] should do so before it arises!  
 How is he not powerful [enough to do that]? || 9.26 ||

[The argument that] "God himself does it"  
 Is a mistaken belief |

<sup>443</sup> Acharya, "On the Śaiva Concept of Innate Impurity," 16.

<sup>444</sup> Acharya, "On the Śaiva Concept of Innate Impurity," 19.

Because [God should have] the desire to perform this  
Action for those who are overcome by [such things as] greed. || 9.27 ||<sup>445</sup>

Indrabhūti thus attacks a theistic position on expiation, arguing that this belief bears the consequence of positing a God that could prevent sin from arising in the first place and has, for some reason, chosen not to do so.

Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary to verse twelve of Sadyojyoti's *Tattvatrayanirṇaya* takes aim at a similar position. Sadyojyoti's root text notes in verse eleven that the two primary factors that bind beings in *samsāra* to "the evolutes of primal matter" are *mala* and *karma*, noting that *mala* or impurity is individual to each soul and keeps the capacity of each soul concealed.<sup>446</sup> Sadyojyoti then goes on in verse twelve to argue for one of the central theses of his work, that *mala* ripens for certain individual souls at certain times depending on its particular degree of maturity.<sup>447</sup> This constitutes one of the primary responses from the dualist Śaiva Siddhānta to the same issue of theodicy that Indrabhūti raises in *Jñānasiddhi*. From the Śaiva Siddhānta perspective, Śiva alone is not directly responsible for the 'ripening' of *mala*, but *mala* itself possesses the ability to ripen at the appropriate time through the grace of Śiva that is granted during consecration. Rāmakaṇṭha opens his dialogue on this topic with the following observation in his commentary to verse 12 of Sadyojyoti's text:

Those who maintain that the [grace-giving] descent of [the Lord's] power  
must depend on nothing else [than the Lord's will]  
(*svatantraśaktipātavādīnaḥ*) will say (*iti*): 'And what if (*atha*), in order to  
avoid this unwanted corollary, it is the Lord Himself who is the cause [of  
putting an end to the occlusion by impurity of a given soul's powers]? In that

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<sup>445</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 124.

devataiveti cet sarvaṃ karotīti prakalpyate |  
utpādāt pūrvamevāsau kārayen na kathaṃ bhṛṣam || 9.26 ||  
devataiva karotīti mithyeyaṃ parikalpanā |  
yasmāllobhābhībūtānāṃ kriyeyaṃ kartum icchatām || 9.27 ||

<sup>446</sup> Goodall, "Tattvatrayanirṇayavivṛti," 358.

<sup>447</sup> Goodall, "Tattvatrayanirṇayavivṛti," 359.

case (*tat*), why postulate that impurity's essential nature is to transform or that it has as a quality [a certain degree of] ripeness?<sup>448</sup>

Then, in response to this *svatantraśaktapātavādin* opponent, Rāmakaṇṭha's commentary reads as follows:

The particular degree of success, in other words, liberation, that was alluded to (*pratipāditaḥ* = *paridṛṣṭaḥ*) earlier with the expression 'at a certain moment... and in a certain particular manner' [and that is attained] by souls through the means called initiation comes about (*ghaṭate*) through so-called 'time', in other words the above-mentioned ['time'] that is impurity's self-transformatory [*sic.*] nature (*pariṇatisvabhāvātmakāt*), and because of the quality, [i.e.] the particular [degree of] ripeness [of a given individual's impurity]. It does not come about otherwise, [i.e.] through [the intervention of] the Lord alone. As for Him, since he is without any difference in being equally independent [in his actions towards all souls] and since he cannot have affection, hatred or other such [bias], the same unwanted corollary [stated in the introduction to verse 12] would remain unchanged (*tavavasthaḥ*) [if we were to adopt the position of the *svatantraśaktipātavādin*].<sup>449</sup>

Unfortunately Rāmakaṇṭha's refutation of the position of his *svatantraśaktipātavādin* also does not provide a specific name for the religious sect he is refuting. In this way, both Indrabhūti and Rāmakaṇṭha's arguments may be designed to refute the notion of a theodicy in which God alone is responsible for the removal of sin and impurity in a manner that is perhaps broad enough to function as a refutation for any number of theistic traditions, Śaiva or otherwise, that hold such a view of divine grace.

The second question posited in the opening of chapter nine regarding the prescription of seemingly non-virtuous actions in the tantras is addressed at the end of the chapter and then continues into both chapters ten and eleven. Aside from one occurrence in *Jñānasiddhi* 1.14 in which the transgressive *samayās* are actually prescribed,<sup>450</sup> the text tends to proscribe

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<sup>448</sup> Goodall, "Tattvatrayanirṇayavivṛti," 360.

<sup>449</sup> Goodall, "Tattvatrayanirṇayavivṛti," 361.

<sup>450</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 94.

ghāṭayet tribhavotpattiṃ paravittāni hārayet |  
kāmayet paradārān vai mṛṣāvādamudīrayet || 1.14 ||

the actions associated with the transgressive *samayas*. For instance, in direct contradiction to *Jñānasiddhi* 1.14, chapter eight on "The Method of Accomplishing the Accumulation of Merit and Wisdom," (*punyajñānasambhāraprāptyupāya*) explicitly forbids killing, stealing, adultery, and lying.<sup>451</sup> Such apparent incongruences in the text may be the reason that at least one Tibetan exegete felt it proper to divide *Jñānasiddhi* into sections using the standard Buddhist scheme of disciples who are of lower, middling, and greater capacity.<sup>452</sup> Indrabhūti's concluding verses to chapter nine address a general theory of relativist ethics in which beings who possess higher levels of realization are considered to inevitably act with compassion, regardless of whether or not their actions are in fact virtuous or non-virtuous.

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One should kill one born in the three realms

One should steal another's wealth, |

One should desire other's wives,

And one should utter false speech. || 1.14 ||

<sup>451</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 119.

prāṇinaśca na te ghātyā adattaṃ naiva cāharet |

nācaret kāmamithyā vā mṛṣāṃ naiva hi bhāṣayet || 8.19 ||

One should not kill living beings.

One should not take what has not been given.. |

One should not act upon improper desire.

One should never speak falsehood. || 8.19 ||

<sup>452</sup> This is the position that is taken in the introductory material to the *Grub pa sde bdun* in the first volume of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* ('Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo). The enormous and ongoing project of compiling *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* is believed to have been inaugurated by the patriarch Kun dga' rin chen (1475–1527), who may in fact be the author and commentator on the *Grub pa sde bdun* in the first volume of the collection. This attribution has been suggested by the current head of the 'Bri gung school Che tshang rin po che (b. 1946) as noted in Klaus-Dieter Mathes, "A Summary and Topical Outline of the Sekanirdeśapañjika by 'Bum la 'bar," in *The Sekanirdeśa of Maitreyañātha (Advayavajra) with the Sekanirdeśapañjika of Rāmapāla: Critical Edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts with English Translation and Reproduction of the MSS, Serie Orientale Roma Vol. CVII*. Harunaga Isaacson and Francesco Sferra ed. (Napoli: Università Degli Studi Di Napoli 'L'Orientale' 2014), 367. Kun dga' rin chen's presentation can be found in A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," in 'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo (Lhasa: [s.n], 2004), 42r.2–3. The relevant passage follows:

slob dpon in+tra bu ti bar mas mdzad pa'i ye shes grub pa la don gsum te/ glad dang / gzhung dang mjung go/ klad la gnyis te/ mchod par brjod cing bshad par dam bca' ba dang / dgos pa'i don bstan pa'o// gzhung gnyis te/ dbang po rab kyis don dang / 'bring dang / tha ma'i don do//

*The Siddhi of Gnosis* composed by the middle Indrabhūti has three sections: 1) the introduction, 2) the body of the text, and 3) the conclusion. The introduction has two parts: 1) the homage and promise to teach [the text], and 2) the teaching on why the topic is important. The body of the text has two parts: 1) the section for those of the highest capacity and for those of middling capacity, and 2) the section for those of lesser capacity.

The passage evokes a classical Mahāyāna argument in which the prohibitions (*niṣedhya*) and permissions (*anujñāta*) that dictate the parameters of ethical behavior are dependent upon the degree to which one's mind is motivated by love for all beings.<sup>453</sup>

Indrabhūti turns to the issue of consuming the *samaya* substances that he raised in *Jñānasiddhi* 9.3 in chapter ten on being "Free from Concepts of Pure and Impure" (*śucyaśucyakalpanāvivikta*). This treatment of the purity-impurity dialectic reads as follows:

[Some say] the body is not pure since  
It is of the nature of being full of all kinds [of impurity] |  
[And wonder] is there anything that someone  
Who eats its oozing excretions does not eat? || 10.3 ||

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<sup>453</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 124–25.

prāṇihimsādi yat karma lobhādyāviṣṭacetasaḥ |  
kuśalaṃ na bhavet sarvaṃ puṇyaṃ tu karuṇotthitam || 9.30 ||  
parahitāya yat karma kriyate tu kṛpātmakaiḥ |  
tat sarvaṃ puṇyamityāhurjagadāśāprapūrakāḥ || 9.31 ||  
niṣedhyam apyanujñātaṃ kṛpayā dṛḍhacetasām |  
na tu svārthābhībhūtānāṃ karuṇāhīnadehinām || 9.32 ||  
kṛte punye'pyanarthāya kasyacid dviṣ yato janam |  
pāpam eva bhavet tasya pravadanti jinottamāḥ || 9.33 ||  
uktaṃ ca-  
kalpāntād bodhisattvānāṃ śubhaṃ vā yadi vā 'śubham |  
sarvaṃ kalyāṇatām eti teṣāṃ vaśyaṃ yato manaḥ ||  
"An action such as killing a living being, etc.,  
That has an intention motivated by greed, etc., |  
Is entirely non-virtuous.  
Merit is generated from compassion. || 9.30 ||  
But an action that is for the benefit of others  
Done by those who possess compassion, |  
Is entirely meritorious," thus spoke  
The ones who fulfill the wishes of all beings. || 9.31 ||  
[An action] can be prohibited or permitted  
For those who definitely motivated out of love, |  
But not for embodied beings who lack compassion  
And are overcome by self-interest. || 9.32 ||  
[This is why] the supreme victors said,  
"When a meritorious deed is performed for no reason |  
And then someone incurs a person's hostility,  
One still incurs a sin." || 9.33 ||  
And it is said:  
After an eon, all of the virtue  
And non-virtue of the bodhisattvas |  
Becomes benevolence because  
The mind is under their control. ||



It is indeed the case that all embodied beings possess  
All manner of things such as 'milk,' and the like, |  
[But that] does not actually prove the purity  
Of things that are designated as edible or inedible. || 10.4 ||

[For example, according to some]  
All edible things are considered impure, |  
Because it is apparent that their growth  
Their growth in this [world] depends upon water. || 10.5 ||

The rain washes everything vile  
With an abundance of water, |  
Ripens all the crops, and then  
Flows into the ocean, etc. || 10.6 ||

Water is evaporated by the *nāgas*,  
Who are born from it and endowed with impurities, |  
And that rain's return likewise causes  
All crops to ripen and the waters to rise. || 10.7 ||

It is also the case that all types of washing  
Of all kind of things [is done] in a pond, etc. |  
Thus in this sense [even water] is not  
Understood as entirely pure or impure, etc. || 10.8 ||<sup>454</sup>

The initial position that the various bodily excretions are impure is so widely accepted that it would be impossible to identify a specific religious sect or group that is intended as Indrabhūti's target. The second position that all vegetarian fare and water itself might also be considered impure could constitute one of the potential justifications for the Jain practice of

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<sup>454</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 126.

sarvasampūrṇabhūtatvāt kāyas tāvat śucir nahi |  
tatsrāvabhakṣakaḥ kaścit sarvaṃ bhuktaṃ na tena kim || 10.3 ||  
kṣīrādikaṃ tathā sarvaṃ sarveṣāṃ eva dehinām |  
bhakṣyābhakṣyaprasiddhānām śucitvaṃ naiva siddhyati || 10.4 ||  
bhakṣyavastūni sarvaṇi aśucīni prabuddhyate |  
yasmājjalena sambhūtiḥ teṣāṃ iha pradṛśyate || 10.5 ||  
vṛṣṭir jalasamūhena sarvaṃ prakṣālya kutsitam |  
sarvasasyāni niṣpādyā samudrādīn viśet tataḥ || 10.6 ||  
tājajrasūcibhir yuktair nāgairutthāpitaṃ jalam |  
punarvṛṣṭestathā sarvasasyaṃ sampādayejjalam || 10.7 ||  
puṣkariṇyādike tadvat sarveṣāṃ sarvakṣālanam |  
śucyaśucyādikaṃ tasmāt sarvaṃ naivātra vidyate || 10.8 ||

fasting until death (*sallekhana*) or for the more general importance of fasting as a purification practice, but I have yet to identify another specific textual source that makes this argument.

Indrabhūti's chapter on his "Instruction on the Characteristics of the Guru," (*gurulakṣaṇanirdeśa*) and his chapter on "The Rite of the *Vajra* Gnosis Consecration" (*vajrajñānābhiṣekavidhi*) both contain accusations leveled against unspecified targets whom the author accuses of being either proponents of 'māra's view' (*mārapakṣā*) or 'bound by māra's noose' (*mārapāśanibaddhā*). The chapter on the proper characteristics of a guru is clearly aware of the fact that there are other gurus to whom a potential initiate might have access that belong to other religious sects. The verses that provide a list of desirable qualities one should seek out in a guru are thus buffered on both sides by warnings to the reader to avoid false gurus who take on disciples and lack a proper understanding of ultimate reality. The first set of verses provide a general warning about gurus who lack such a realization:

The extremely deluded people of this world  
Are fixated upon the self to attain liberation. |  
One who is encouraged [in this fixation]  
Falls into the abyss like rain. || 13.1 ||

Such behavior is seen  
Among many embodied beings. |  
They abandon the path to a good rebirth  
And follow another path. || 13.2 ||

That type of person is someone  
Who teaches another path. |  
An inquisitive person should not ask them  
How one realizes ultimate reality. || 13.3 ||

If someone who does not see it points out  
The path based on [his own] ignorance, |  
It is of no benefit for that traveler  
Who proceeds along that path. || 13.4 ||

How can one who does not see the path himself,  
Effectively guide someone else? |

Even if the two should proceed [on the path together]  
Both will suffer, of this there is no doubt. || 13.5 ||

Like the action of one who is blind  
From birth who has gone into the forest, |  
How could someone like that lead one  
To the village a second time? || 13.6 ||

So too those who are blind from birth  
Do not see the perfect gnosis. |  
They lack the ability to attain that state.  
How can such a person cause another to attain [it]? || 13.7 ||

Therefore the supreme victors  
Said that students who have devotion |  
Should practice reverence toward gurus  
After having thoroughly examined them. || 13.8 ||<sup>455</sup>

The only potential indication of a specific target of the critique in these verses might be read in verse 13.1, which warns that fixating upon the self in order to attain liberation (*mokṣārtham ātmaniścayam*) is precisely the same type of habitual behavior that binds beings to cyclical existence. A guru who encourages (*pracoditaḥ*) such habits in effect leads the disciple upon the wrong path. But once again, these comments are too generalized to identify any specific religious sect that might function as his target. After outlining the characteristics

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<sup>455</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 130.

eṣa mūḍhataro loko mokṣārtham ātmaniścayam |  
prapāte 'pi kṣipatyeva parjanyaena pracoditaḥ || 13.1 ||  
īdṛṣī dṛśyate ceṣṭā bahūnām api dehinām |  
santyaīya sugatau yānamanyanmārgaṃ samāśritāḥ || 13.2 ||  
tadvidho manujaḥ kaścīn mārgam anyat(nyaṃ) pradarśayet |  
pṛcchako 'pi na taṃ pṛcched yena tattvaṃ prabuddhyate || 13.3 ||  
yadi mohavaśānmārgaṃ darśayet tamapaśyakaḥ |  
na śivaṃ labhate gantustanmārgenaiva yāyinaḥ || 13.4 ||  
svayamapaśyako mārgaṃ katham anyāṃ nayed bhṛśam |  
dvāveva yadi gacchetāṃ tayorduḥkhaṃ na saṃśayaḥ || 13.5 ||  
aṭavyāṃ saṃpraviṣṭasya jātyandhasya yathā kriyā |  
dvitīyaṃ tādr̥śaṃ kaścīn katham grāmaṃ praveśayet || 13.6 ||  
evaṃ jātyandhabhūtāste samyagjñānamapaśyakāḥ |  
aśaktāstatpadaṃ prāptuṃ kathamanyāṃ tu prāpayet || 13.7 ||  
tasmāt parīkṣya kartavyaṃ gurūṇāṃ paryupāsanam |  
śiṣyairbhaktisamāyuktaiḥ pravadanti jinottamāḥ || 13.8 ||

one should look for in a proper guru from *JS* 13.8–12, Indrabhūti provides a brief yet somewhat more specific characterization of the type of guru one should avoid.

There are others who are called gurus  
That are conceited and have an incorrect understanding, |  
Who carry out the supreme instruction  
Of the doctrine out of greed, etc., || 13.13 ||

And there are sinful spiritual friends,  
Who are consecrated when a being is killed, |  
Who belong to a lineage that upholds *māra*'s view,  
Who destroy themselves and others. || 13.14 ||

Those sentient beings should be avoided.  
One should neither revere them |  
Nor express anger toward them.  
[Such a guru] is [not] the best object of worship. || 13.15 ||

Just as the tathāgatas do not approve  
Of living together with *śrāvakas*, |  
So too cohabitating with such people  
Does not enhance [one's own practice]. || 13.16 ||<sup>456</sup>

Again, Indrabhūti does not provide very much evidence to allow us to infer the identities of his gurus who perform animal sacrifice as part of the consecration rite, and his criticism is perhaps intentionally generalized in order to cover a number of contemporary initiatory cults that engaged in such practices. Verse 13.16 is particularly interesting in that it contains a prohibition against cohabitation (*saṃvāsa*) with such people that compares this proscription to the common Vajrayāna proscription against living among followers of the *śrāvaka* vehicle. Of course, as in all cases, we should consider that such prohibitions were necessary precisely

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<sup>456</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 131.

anye ye guravaḥ khyātā mithyājñānābhimāninaḥ |  
lobhādyarthaṃ prakurvanti dharmasya deśanāṃ parāṃ || 13.13 ||  
pāpamitrāśca te bālāḥ sattvanāśe pratiṣṭhitāḥ |  
mārapākṣikagoṭrāste 'parātmāno vināśakāḥ || 13.14 ||  
varjanīyāśca te sattvā na teṣāṃ paryupāsanam |  
na teṣāṃ pratighaṃ kuryānna te(sa) puḥyataro bhavet || 13.15 ||  
śrāvakaiḥ sahaḥ saṃvāso yathā neṣṭaṃ(ṣṭo) tathāgataiḥ |  
tathaivaivaṃvidhaiḥ sārddhaṃ na saṃvāso viśiṣyate || 13.16 ||

because Vajrayāna initiates did at times cohabit not only with Buddhists who adhered to the *śrāvaka* vehicle but also with the members of other initiatory cults who were not even Buddhist.

Chapter seventeen may provide some indication of the potential target of Indrabhūti's criticism in *Jñānasiddhi* chapter thirteen. At the conclusion of Indrabhūti's liturgy for the guru's command (*anujñā*) that is imparted upon a newly initiated disciple, Indrabhūti provides the following statement:

Those who conduct themselves according to  
False doctrines bring disgrace to the world. || 17.26 ||

Do not maintain a relationship with them.  
They are the opponents of the true dharma. |  
They are fools who lack the dharma  
Whose minds swell with selfish joy. || 17.27 ||

They have no merit, have wicked conduct,  
[And] will not attain supreme awakening. |  
They wander here and there in cyclic  
Existence, in the six realms, || 17.28 ||

And their ethics is worldly delusion.  
They are enemies of the true dharma. |  
There are many [people] of that sort  
Who take refuge in a mistaken doctrine. || 17.29 ||

They are not born in a good realm of rebirth, [and]  
Buddhahood also [becomes] difficult to attain. |  
My intelligent one, you must  
Always protect [yourself] from them. || 17.30 ||

The leaders of the ritual precepts of the  
Supreme being are bound by *māra*'s noose. |  
Now, overlord of all of the buddhas, you  
Yourself must work for the benefit of beings! || 17.31 ||<sup>457</sup>

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<sup>457</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 150–51.

mithyādharmasamācārā ye tu lokaviḍambakā || 17.26 ||  
na teṣu sambhavaṃ kuryāt saddharmapratipakṣakāḥ |  
mūḍhā dharmavihīnās te svasukhodayamānasāḥ || 17.27 ||  
puṇyahīnāḥ parāṃ bodhiṃ naiva prāpsyanti durṇayāḥ |

It is worth pointing out that these are liturgical verses. They are meant to be recited at the conclusion of the consecration rite, and as such represent an attempt to formally embed a sense of disdain for other initiatory traditions in the consecration liturgy itself. The best indication of the target of Indrabhūti's criticism appears in *Jñānasiddhi* 17.31ab, where he references 'leaders of the ritual precepts of the supreme being' (*parātmavidhināyakā*) who are 'bound by *māra's* noose' (*mārapāśanibaddhā*). This provides some indication that the initiatory cults being criticized here belong to some sort of theistic brahmanical tradition. As in the case of other instances in the text that criticize the practices of rival sects, Indrabhūti's decision not to provide a specific indication of just who he is targeting in his critique has the benefit of making his critique broadly applicable to any number of theistic initiatory cults.

Finally, Indrabhūti concludes his criticism of other initiatory cults in the final verses of his consecration chapter by including the following statement assuring the disciple there is no higher consecration, and that he should not seek one out:

My intelligent one, now you must not  
 Receive the consecration again. |  
 Wise one, the consecration you have received  
 Is the perfect supreme dharma |  
 Honored throughout the three realms.  
 There is none higher than this." || 17.33 ||<sup>458</sup>

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itastataśca śaṃsāre te bhramanti hi ṣaḍgatau || 17.28 ||  
 lokamohanaśīlāśca saddharmapratipakṣakāḥ |  
 evaṃvidhā aneke ca bhramadharmasamāśrayāḥ || 17.29 ||  
 na teṣāṃ sugatau janma buddhatvamapi durlabham |  
 etebhyastvaṃ sadā rakṣyo bhavitavyo 'si mahāmate || 17.30 ||  
 mārapāśanibaddhās te parātmavidhināyakāḥ |  
 kuru sattvārtham adhunā sarvabuddhādhipa svayam || 17.31 ||  
<sup>458</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 151.  
 nābhiṣekaṃ punargrāhyaṃ tvayedānīṃ mahāmate |  
 samyag dharmaparo vidvān traidhātukanamaskṛtaḥ |  
 abhiṣekaṃ tvayā prāptaṃ vidyate nahyataḥ param || 17.33 ||

Again, these verses are part of the liturgy, not simply something that would be read and contemplated in private. These verses would thus be recited, and in being recited they would serve the function of providing a public (or semi-public) statement on the inferiority of other initiatory cults with which Indrabhūti's *vajrajñānābhīṣeka* was in competition. Indrabhūti's inclusion of this proscription against receiving any further consecration should be read in the context of the command to avoid associating with non-Buddhist initiatory cults that, at least in one instance, he identifies with one or more of the theistic traditions that were his contemporaries. This proscription against seeking out further consecrations also indicates that it may in fact have been a common occurrence. Indrabhūti thus directs the guru reciting the *vajrajñānābhīṣeka* liturgy to tell newly consecrated disciples that "there is none higher," (*nahyataḥ param*) in a final effort to prevent a newly consecrated disciple from shopping around for any additional consecrations in the future. Given his encomium against non-Buddhist initiatory cults, we might speculate that these final verses are not simply the standard proscription against participating in the Buddhist *maṇḍala* consecration rituals of the *kriyā*- and *caryātantra* systems that we find in works like Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, although this proscription may apply here as well. Instead, when taken in context, the verses can also be understood as an order to the disciple to not participate in any non-Buddhist initiations by assuring him that no further consecrations are necessary.

*Jñānasiddhi*'s final indication of a strong sense of polemics against non-Buddhist initiatory cults appears in the *maṇḍala* visualization instructions provided in chapter eighteen on "Performing the Rite for those with the Highest Capacities" (*adhimātrendriyavidhāna*). Indrabhūti's instructions for advanced practitioners are derived from verses 6.97–108 and 5.82–91 of the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinījālaśaṃvara*, though his rendering of the verses

in *Jñānasiddhi* omit certain material and contain a number of readings that differ from the preliminary edition of the Sanskrit text that was provided to me by Péter-Dániel Szánto. Both witnesses are consistent, however, in their presentation of a Vajrasattva visualization in which the yogin ritually performs a kind of world conquest (*digvijaya*) in which he overpowers and subjugates the four primary deities of the theistic brahmanic pantheon and takes their respective consorts as his own:

Trampling the Supreme Lord underfoot,  
The powerful one is victorious, |  
Attracts the Umādevī, and  
Indulges in her with sensual pleasures. || 18.15 ||

Trampling Nārāyaṇa underfoot,  
The powerful is victorious, |  
Attracts Rūpiṇī, and  
Indulges in her with sensual pleasures. || 18.16 ||

Trampling Prajāpati underfoot,  
The powerful is victorious, |  
Obtains Praśāntadevī, and  
Indulges in her with sensual pleasures. || 18.17 ||

Trampling Kāmadeva underfoot,  
The powerful one is victorious, |  
Tramples upon the lord of the two daughters, and  
Indulges in Rati and Prīti [them with pleasures]. || 18.18 ||<sup>459</sup>

The verses that precede these instructions also come from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*<sup>460</sup> and describe Vajrasattva as a royal prince or king who, as part of his performance of the deeds of

<sup>459</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi" 153–54.

parameśaṃ samākramya prasahya balavānadhah |  
umādevīm samākṛṣya copabhogairbhunaktyasau || 18.15 || [SBSY 5.87]  
nārāyaṇaṃ samākramya prasahya balavānadhah |  
rūpiṇīm tu samākṛṣya upabhogairbhunaktyasau || 18.16 || [SBSY 5.88]  
prajāpatiṃ samākramya prasahya balavānadhah |  
praśāntadevīm āsādy copabhogair bhunaktyasau || 18.17 || [SBSY 5.89]  
kāmadevaṃ samākramya prasahya balavānadhah<sup>459</sup> |  
ratiprītīdhrītyaiśvaryaṃ samākramya<sup>459</sup> bhunaktyasau<sup>459</sup> || 18.18 || [SBSY 5.90]

<sup>460</sup> There are a number of variants between Indrabhūti's version of these instructions and the verses as they appear in the *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*, but their implications are beyond the scope of this study.



a Buddha, must subjugate and tame an insane world using violent means if necessary. These introductory verses move between the kind of cosmology of an all-pervading Vajrasattva and a mimesis of the classical deeds of a Buddha, a number of which can be interpreted to fall within the range of exhibiting the characteristics of a powerful ruler:

Everywhere, in every direction, completely,  
In every way, at all times, spontaneously |  
The one who is all things is present  
In the world like an all [accomplishing] jewel, etc. || 18.1 ||

While pursuing the *nirvāṇa* of a buddha  
In all of the buddha-fields, |  
You must display the acts of a buddha  
Using the illusory appearance of a buddha-emanation. || 18.2 ||

With the natures of the threefold universal body  
Of the buddhas and *vajra*-holders and the like, |  
Oh great prince of the three realms,  
You must display all of the actions. || 18.3 ||

The kingdom, with its alliances, quarrels,  
And conflict, is an illusory emanation. |  
Oh great king of the three realms,  
You must prevent [these things] by violent means. || 18.4 ||

This world is completely insane.  
You must teach it with the manifold dances, |  
The supreme and endless [emanations], etc., that are  
Equal to and not equal to the expanse of phenomena, || 18.5 ||

With [emanations] extending as far as space,  
Entirely encompassing the cosmos,  
That are all individual objects in space.  
The Tathāgata Śrī Vajrasattva || 18.6 ||

Plays by means of various  
Glorious, passionate, and playful manifestations. |  
In every way, by means of various types of discipline,  
He subjugates the realm of beings. || 18.7 ||<sup>461</sup>

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<sup>461</sup> Indrabhūti, "Jñānasiddhi," 152–53.  
sarvatra sarvataḥ sarvaṃ sarvathā sarvadā svayam |  
sarvaratnādivaloke sarvabhāvān(bhāvo) bhavatyasau || 18.1 || [SBSY 6.97]  
buddhakṣetreṣu sarveṣu buddhanirvāṇamāvahan |

The version of these verses that appears here in *Jñānasiddhi* notes that a certain degree of violence is required to bring order to the world and treat this wrathful activity as an aspect of the universal dance (*viśvanartita*) or play (*krīḍā*) of Vajrasattva that subjugates a violent world through violent means. When this is taken together with the visualized subjugation of the deities of the theistic brahmanical pantheon in verses 18.15–18, this advanced practice appears as ritual method for the violent suppression and elimination of the rival theistic traditions that were in conflict with Buddhists and that were responsible for the gradual destruction of Buddhist institutions across subcontinent.

**V. Sect and Sectarian Identity in Lakṣmīṅkarā's *Advayasiddhi*, Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi*, and Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa***

The remaining works in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* contain far less indication of their authors' sense of sectarian identity than we find in *Guhyasiddhi*, *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, and *Jñānasiddhi*. For this reason, and because it is also integral to my discussion of the theme of cosmogonic inclusivism that can be found across many of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in chapter eight, I have chosen to include material from Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa* here as well even though this work is not one of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. It is, however, one of the works that Tibetan traditions count among *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po*

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darśaya buddhakāryāṇi buddhanirmāṇamāyayā || 18.2 || [SBSY 6.99]  
 buddhavajradharādīnāṃ viśvarūpatridhātmaikāḥ |  
 traidhātukamahārāja sarvakāryāṇi darśaya || 18.3 || [SBSY 6.101]  
 sandhivigrahayuddhaṃ hi rājyaṃ māyāvīkurvitam |  
 traidhātukamahārāja avaṣṭambhaya sāhasaiḥ || 18.4 || [SBSY 6.102]  
 pramādo 'yaṃ jagat sarvaṃ viśvanartita darśaya |  
 evamādyairanantāgraiḥ dharmadhātusamāsamaiḥ || 18.5 || [SBSY 6.103]  
 ākāśadhātuparyantaiḥ sarvato viśvasaṃvaraiḥ |  
 sarvākāśāvākāśaiḥ śrīvajrasattvastathāgataḥ || 18.6 || [SBSY 6.104]  
 vikrīḍati vicitraiḥ śrīratikrīḍāvīkurvitaiḥ |  
 sarvato viśvavinayaiḥ sattvadhātuṃ prasādhayet || 18.7 || [SBSY 6.105]

*skor drug*), a second corpus of Indian *mahāmudrā* that usually accompanies *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Thus while it is not a member of the primary corpus at the center of this study, it is also clearly not entirely unrelated, at least in the eyes of those Nepali and Tibetan scholars who consider these corpora to be part of the same practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works.

*Advayasiddhi* contains a single reference related to the topic of sectarian identity that proscribes the very kind of harsh criticism toward other sects that is on such prominent display throughout much of *Jñānasiddhi*.<sup>462</sup> Lakṣmīnkarā writes:

The *mantrin*, with his eyes fully opened  
[And] face always smiling, |  
Should fix [his] mind upon complete enlightenment  
And meditate on the ocean of gnosis. || 9 ||

As long as there are animate and inanimate things  
Here in the abode of the three realms, |  
The *vajra*-holder should view them all  
As in union with ultimate reality. || 10 ||

And those who are emanations  
Of Vajrasattva should not |  
Think less of the proponents of other [doctrines]  
Who are established by the different marks [of their sects]. || 11 ||

Having made all things that emerge  
Out of identitylessness into the same taste, |  
A *mantrin* should continually meditate on  
The body as stainless by nature. || 12 ||<sup>463</sup>

<sup>462</sup> The proscription against disparaging members of other sects expressed in Lakṣmīnkarā's work also appears in *Jñānasiddhi*, as demonstrated in the discussion of *Jñānasiddhi* 1.6–11 above.

<sup>463</sup> Aside from a slight variation in its second *pada*, *Advayasiddhi* verse 9 seems to correspond directly to *Guhyasiddhiḥ* 6.68cd–69ab, Padmavajra's chapter on the performance of the *guhyacaryā*.

Lakṣmīnkarā, "Advayasiddhi," 162.

protpullanayano mantrī nityaṃ prahasitānanaḥ |  
cittamāropya saṃbodhau bhāvayejjñānasāgaram || 9 ||  
yāvatsthiracalā bhāvā santyatra tribhavālaye |  
sarve te tattvayogena draṣṭavyā vajradhṛg yathā || 10 ||  
paravādinaśca ye kecil liṅgabhedairvyavasthitāḥ |  
te 'pyatra nāvamantavyā vajrasattvavikurvitaḥ || 11 ||  
sarvān samarasīkṛtya bhāvān nairātmyaniḥsṛtān |

From the perspective of the union of ultimate reality (*tattvayogena*), Lakṣmīnkarā points to the logical impossibility of justifying harsh treatment or criticism of the proponents of other doctrines (*paravādinah*) who bear different sectarian marks (*liṅgabhediar vyavasthitāḥ*) by arguing that all animate and inanimate things are arisen out of the same source and are pervaded by Vajrasattva. *Advayasiddhi* is a *caryā* text, and Lakṣmīnkarā's proscription against denigrating members of rival sects should likely not be taken as a definitive statement on her rejection of sectarian identity but as a strategy that is specifically prescribed for a *yogin* performing the *caryā* and *vrata* practices that, as we have seen in chapter six, would have placed him in direct contact with members of rival sects. It is possible, therefore, to argue that the logic of Lakṣmīnkarā's non-dual ultimate reality works against the idea of maintaining sectarian bias, but it is also possible to argue that her instructions to refrain from denigrating members of other sects would have constituted a practical survival strategy for a Buddhist *yogin* engaging in any of the dissimulative ascetic practices associated with the *caryā* and *vrata*.

Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi* contains two brief indications of the author's conception of sectarian identity and inter-sectarian relations. First, in a rather cryptic verse stating that the *Hevajratāntra* (from which *Sahajasiddhi* draws a large amount of its material) is either heard or not heard by various beings, Ḍombīheruka provides some indication of one particular clan (*kula*) that is misled by a false doctrine. The passage appears in *Sahajasiddhi* chapter two in Ḍombīheruka's "Instruction on the Ultimate Reality of *Samaya*" (*samayattvanirdeśa*) immediately following a series of verses describing the divisions of

five clans of the Tathāgatas Akṣobhya, Amitābha, Ratnasambhu, Vairocana, and

Amogha[siddhi]:

Akṣobhya, Amitābha,  
Ratnasambhu, Virocana, |  
And Amogha as well are taught  
So that beings may attain *siddhi*. || 2.6 ||

Akṣobhya is said to be the '*vajra*' [clan],  
Amitābha is the lotus [clan], |  
Ratnasambhu is the jewel [clan],  
Vairocana is the *tathāgata* [clan], and || 2.7 ||

Amogha is called the 'action' [clan]:  
These are the clans described in brief. |  
One attains *siddhi* by serving [a particular] family,  
As was taught by the perfect complete Buddha. || 2.8 ||

But one does not delight in terrifying the world,  
[As do] the clans associated with the letter *ha* and others. |  
Theirs is the teaching of foolish beings  
For the purpose of anger, not peace. || 2.9 ||<sup>464</sup>

Ḍombīheruka's mention in *Sahajasiddhi* of the clans associated with the letter ha and others (*hakārādikulāni*) is cryptic, but the fact that his criticism of these clans follows his outline of the five-fold Buddhist system of initiatory clans along with his characterization of these groups as following the teaching of foolish beings (*mūrkhāṇām upadeśaḥ*) indicates that this is a veiled reference to a number of non-Buddhist initiatory cults.

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<sup>464</sup> Ḍombīheruka, "Sahajasiddhi," 188–89.  
akṣobhyaścāmitābhaśca ratnasambhova(mbhurvi)rocanaḥ |  
amoghaśca tathā proktā[h] sattvānām siddhihetunā || 2.6 ||  
akṣobhyo vajramityuktamamitābha[h] padmeva ca |  
ratnasambho(mbhur)bhāvaratno vairocanata(sta)thāgataḥ || 2.7 ||  
amogha[h] karma ityuktaṃ kulānyetāni saṃkṣipet |  
kulasevā(vayā) bhavet siddhiḥ samyak sambuddhabhāṣitam || 8 ||  
trāse na rocate loka hakārādikulāni tu |  
mūrkhāṇām upadeśo hi prakopāya na sā(śā)ntaye || 2.9 ||

The second point at which Ḍombīheruka offers some sense of his own sectarian identity appears in chapter three on "The Conclusive Instruction on the *Samaya Siddhi*" (*samayasiddhikirṇayanirdeśa*) in the context of his brief discussion of the *caryā*:

If one has a student, and the student's  
Conduct is a brahmanic purification practice, |  
[Let him] continue to do the purification practice.  
Don't cause [him] mental torment. || 3.2 ||

The nature of the object self-reflexive awareness  
Is not liberated by any [type of] purity other than |  
Through the purification of merit and gnosis  
And the bliss that is the object of self-reflexive awareness. || 3.3 ||

But [still, some believe that] the *caryā*  
Is taught through the use of medicinal herbs, |  
And consider the practice of the *sevakas* that is  
Based on veneration the '*caryā*.' || 3.4 ||

If he does not salute the guru respectfully,  
Even a disciple who has attained *siddhi* |  
Shall instantly fall into the hells such as Avīci, etc.,  
By violating the word of the guru. || 3.5 ||

[Some say] one should meditate on the entire world,  
[Some that] one should not meditate on it mentally. |  
[Some say] meditation that is perfect knowledge  
Of all phenomena is not even meditation || 3.6 ||

[Some say one should meditate on] animate and  
Inanimate things such as vines, bushes, and grass, etc. |  
[And some say] one should meditate upon the supreme  
Ultimate reality whose inherent nature is present in oneself. || 3.7 ||

Those [meditations] don't have the supreme,  
Self-reflexive awareness that is great bliss. |  
*Siddhi* is self-reflexive awareness because  
Meditation [on that] is self-reflexive awareness. || 3.8 ||<sup>465</sup>

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<sup>465</sup> Ḍombīheruka, "Sahajasiddhi," 190–91.

chātraḥ syācchātracaryaḥ syād brāhmaṇo(ṇaḥ) śucireva ca |  
sadā[']śucicaryā kartavyā na kārya(ryaṃ) cittabādhanam || 3.2 ||  
puṇyajñānena śaucena svasaṃvedyasukhena vā (ca) |  
svasaṃvedyātmikā śuddhirnānyaśuddhyā vimucyate || 3.3 ||  
vaidyausadhipravṛtṭyā tu caryā seti nidarśitā |

In typical fashion, these verses criticize number of positions on the nature of the *caryā* and the meditation practice that renders it soteriologically effective without giving any indication of what specific sects are being critiqued. The one exception to this is in verse 3.2, where Ḍombīheruka cautions against prescribing the *caryā* for a student who maintains brahmanic purity (*brāhmaṇo śuci*), presumably because the practices included in the performance of the *caryā* are so at odds with brahmanic notions of purity that to perform such a practice would potentially only the student mental torment (*cittabāadhanam*). While we can only speculate as to the identities of the other sects Ḍombīheruka criticizes here, the verses do make it clear that he distinguishes his own system based on the fact that it takes self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedya*) as the proper object of meditation. The contrast that Ḍombīheruka sets up between an epistemologically sophisticated view of the proper object of meditation and the seemingly less sophisticated notion of meditating on vines, bushes, and grass (*latāgulmatṛṇa*) adds a derogatory flavor to his discussion of these other, presumably non-Buddhist sects. Interestingly, Ḍombīheruka also criticizes taking the supreme reality whose inherent nature is present in oneself (*paraṃ tattvaṃ ātmabhāvasvarūpakam*) as an object of meditation despite the fact that this object bears some similarities to the meditation instructions that we find in other works in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.<sup>466</sup> The term *tattva*, however, is widely applicable to

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sevyā sevakānāṃ tu caraṇo(ṇaṃ) caryeti smṛtaḥ(tā) || 3.4 ||  
siddhilabdho'pi yaḥ śiṣyo guruvandena(ruṃ naivā)bhivandayet |  
avicyādiviśo'pi syāt kṣaṇād gurūktilaṅghanāt || 3.5 ||  
bhāvyate hi jagat sarvaṃ manasā yanna bhāvyate |  
sarvadharmaparijñānabhāvanā naiva bhāvanā || 3.6 ||  
sthiracalāśca ye bhāvā latāgulmatṛṇādayaḥ |  
bhāvayed vai paraṃ tattvaṃ ātmabhāvasvarūpakam || 3.7 ||  
teṣāmeva paraṃ nātra svasaṃvedyaṃ mahāsukham |  
svasaṃvedyā bhavet siddhiḥ svasaṃvedyā hi bhāvanā || 3.8 ||

<sup>466</sup> See sections of chapter three on locating ultimate reality in the body, as well as sections in chapter eight that speak to the location of ultimate reality in the body and its expansion outward as part of a yogic cosmography.

all systems that bear any degree of influence or permutations of the Sāṃkhya doctrine of material evolutes of primordial matter (*prakṛti*), and this particular statement could also be a reference to any number of them. In contrast, the texts within *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that contain similar statements ground identify *tattva* itself in as the nature of self-reflexive awareness or one of its synonyms.

Finally, Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa* also contains a handful of passages that indicate the author's construction of his own sectarian identity. First, in a brief statement following his description of meditation on the spontaneous, self-arising *maṇḍala*, Kuddālapāda argues that in order for an object of meditation to be properly Buddhist it must not be conceived in terms of existence (*bhāvaṃ*) or inherent existence (*svabhāvaṃ*):

A *mantrin* should not meditate on existence,  
Nor should he meditate on inherent existence. |  
What more can one say? A Buddha  
Is not Śiva, and is free from Viṣṇu. || 44 ||<sup>467</sup>

The verse is somewhat problematic, and the editors of the Sarnath edition appear to have amended *svabhāvaṃ* to *abhāvaṃ* here based on the Tibetan translation, which does in fact read the verse as a refutation of both the extreme of existence (*dn̄gos po*) and non-existence (*dn̄gos med*).<sup>468</sup> The Sanskrit manuscript sources, however, consistently read *bhāvaṃ* and *svabhāvaṃ* here,<sup>469</sup> and the fact that both terms are intended to be referents for theistic brahmanical traditions related to Śiva and Viṣṇu, neither of which argue that God is

<sup>467</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 199.

bhāvaṃ na bhāvayenmantrī sva(a)bhāvaṃ naiva bhāvayet |  
kiṃ tasya bhāṇyate buddho na śivo viṣṇurahitaḥ || 44 ||

<sup>468</sup> Slob dpon rtog rse zhabs, "Sems gyi mi khyab pa'i rim pa'i man ngag," 294.

/sngags pas dn̄gos po bsgom bya min/  
/dn̄gos med nyid kyang bsgom bya min/  
/sangs rgyas nyid<sup>468</sup> kyang 'grub 'gyur na/  
/zhi ba khyab 'jug sogs ci smos/\_44\_/

<sup>469</sup> Kuddālapāda, *Advayakramopadeśaḥ*, IASWR reel no. MBB I-394, 4v.4–5. Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśaḥ," in *Sahajasiddhitattvasiddhiḥ* NGMCP A 117/5. 15v.3; Kuddālapāda, "Acintyākramopadeśaḥ," in *Guhyasiddhyādināgārjunapādādi*, NGMCP A 134/2 and A 915/3. 45a.7.



fundamentally non-existent (*abhāvam*), indicates that the Tibetan and the Sarnath edition have introduced an error to the text.

Kuddālapāda's work also contains several verses that mention his own guru, the *mahāsiddha* Bhadrapāda. He notes that he has received the lineage transmission of Bhadrapāda (*bhadrapādakramāgatam*) on four separate occasions in the text<sup>470</sup> and repeatedly mentions Bhadrapāda's own guru Dharmapāda.<sup>471</sup> The fact that the *mahāsiddha* Bhadrapāda is remembered by the tradition to have been a pure brahmin prior to taking a Vajrayāna guru may account for the heavily inclusivist trend throughout Kuddālapāda's text. This inclusivism is demonstrated numerous occasions throughout *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*, and its relationship to Bhadrapāda and his predecessors appears in the text in the following rare instance in which one of our authors actually provides an account of his own lineage. The following lineage is provided immediately before the text switches into a *yoginītantra* visualization that culminates in a set of subtle body completion stage yoga instructions:

It was taught by Bhadrapāda  
From ear to ear, from mouth to mouth. |  
Through numerous yoga methods  
Due to Bhadrapāda's kindness. || 87 ||

Buddhahood is permanently attained  
By the inconceivable yoga of meditation. |  
Paramāśva, Vīṇāpāda, Indrabhūti  
Together with Lakṣmī[ṅkarā], || 88 ||

Vilāsavajra, Padmācārya, [and] Mahākṛpa—  
They are the ones who gradually |  
Transmitted the system of Dharmapāda

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<sup>470</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa" 194; 196; 204; 206.

<sup>471</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 197.

kathitaṃ bhadrapādena dharmapādakramāgatam |  
ekalolīsvabhāvena jagadākāranirmitam || 19 ||

The lineage transmission of Dharmapāda

Taught by Bhadrapāda [states that] |

The world is manifested as an image

Based on a nature that is only transient. || 19 ||

To Bhadrāpāda . || 89 ||<sup>472</sup>

This important set of verses partially confirm the lineage that is included in two related works, Indrabhūti's *Sahajasiddhi* and its commentary by Lakṣmīnkarā, *Sahajasiddhipaddhati*, that are considered by certain Tibetan exegetes to be addenda to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The correspondences between lineage lists in these two works, provide some verification of the Oḍiyāna *mahāmudrā* lineage that is allegedly reflected in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Kuddālapāda thus claims to have inherited the instruction lineage of three readily identified authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, with Vilāsavajra, alternate name for Yoginī Cintā, as a possible fourth.<sup>473</sup>

## VI. Conclusion

The authors whose works are examined in this chapter demonstrate a range of exclusivist and inclusivist approaches to the construction of sectarian identity. Padmavajra adopts a relatively exclusivist position on the superiority of his *Guhyasamāja* instruction lineage over

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<sup>472</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 204.

bhadrāpādena kathitaṃ karṇāt karṇaṃ mukhānmukham |  
anekopāyayogena bhadrāpādaprasādataḥ || 87 ||  
bhāvanācintyayogena buddhyate (ddhatvaṃ) prāpyate dhruvam |  
paramāśv[o] vīṇāpāda indrabhūtiḥ salakṣmibhiḥ || 88 ||  
vilāsavajra(jro) guṇḍarī padmācārya(ryo) mahākṛpaḥ |  
dharmapādasya kramato bhadrāpādakramāgatāḥ || 89 ||

<sup>473</sup> The Tibetan version of *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* found in the seventh Karmapa Chos grags rgya mtsho's *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* notes in its colophon that the text was composed by Ācārya Vilāsavajra (Slob dpon bi la sya badzra). The Dpal dpungs edition and the canonical editions of the text are practically identical, however, and it is altogether possible that Vilāsavajra is an alternate name for Yoginī Cintā. I proceed with caution here and must admit that Kuddālapāda's lineage list clearly does not place the name Vilāsavajra in the feminine, so it is also entirely possible that the canonical attribution of *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* to Yoginī Cintā is misguided. However, Tāranātha's work on the seven instruction lineages of his guru Buddhaguptanātha seems to confirm my suspicions that the Vilāsavajra who appears in this lineage is indeed an alternate name for Yoginī Cintā. See Jo Nang Tāranātha, *The Seven Instruction Lineages* (Tāranātha's work on the seven instruction lineages of his guru Buddhaguptanātha, *Bka' babs bdun ldan gyi brgyud pa'i rnam thar ngo mtshar rmad du byung ba rin po che'i lta bu'i rgyan*) translated and edited by David Templeman (Dharamsala: Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 1983), 30–31.

all other Buddhist and non-Buddhist sects. At the heart of this approach is the initiation lineage and the specific realization of the nature of ultimate reality that is passed on to initiates by the guru through the consecration ritual. The importance of fidelity to one's initiation lineage is further emphasized by his verses on the characteristics of various types of false disciples. Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīscayasiddhi* follows this trend and contains an even more detailed discussion of the various characteristics of false disciples. Some of the most critical moments in both of these works appear in this context, which signals the particularly high value that both authors place on initiation into a particular instruction lineage as the primary determinant of sectarian identity.

At the same time, both Padmavajra and Anaṅgavajra also adopt more inclusivist strategies to acknowledge that the *caryā* and *vrata* practices they prescribe have identifiable analogues among sects that are not Buddhist. While Padmavajra tends to simply argue that these practices are ineffective if they are not performed by a *sādhaka* who has realized the nature of ultimate reality, Anaṅgavajra attempts to describe this perspective on ultimate reality using terms that might be familiar to an audience that was aware of some of the basic theological positions of the dualist Śaiva Siddhānta. In these instances both authors' strategies demonstrate a classically inclusivist pattern that validates the form of the *vrata* as it is practiced by members of other sects while subordinating the theoretical approach of these other sects to the perspective on the nature of ultimate reality that is employed in the Vajrayāna textual traditions.

*Guhyasiddhi* contains the only passage among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that openly prescribes sectarian violence, but Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* is still arguably the most exclusivist work in the corpus. The sectarian identity that Indrabhūti constructs in his

*Jñānasiddhi* emerges out of a number of polemical attacks on the positions of other Buddhist and non-Buddhist sects. Indrabhūti also argues that other sects' expiatory *vrata* practices are ultimately ineffective, but the context for these arguments is quite different from the context for Padmavajra and Anaṅgavajra's inclusivist approach to sectarian identity and the outer form of the *vrata*. Indrabhūti presents his argument for the superiority of the consecration rite in *Jñānasiddhi* by degrading the consecration rites of other sects and advising the newly initiated disciple not to seek any further consecrations elsewhere. The most advanced deity-*maṇḍala* visualization presented in this text, which derives from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra*, expressed the author's relative hostility toward non-Buddhist sects in a ritualized re-enactment of the theme of Buddhist tantric deities subjugating deities of the Hindu pantheon that is introduced in the *yogatantra* Maheśvara subjugation mythology and is prominently featured in the iconography of the *yoginītantras*.

Of the remaining works in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* contains echoes of the kind of prohibition against denigrating members of other sects that also appears in the first chapter of *Jñānasiddhi* (even if Indrabhūti does not seem to take his own advice in the text itself). Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi* contains one passage that denounces the practices of a particular clan (*kula*), but the specific identity of this group is stated in relatively vague terms. Later in the text, Ḍombīheruka outlines his own sense of sectarian identity through arguing for the superiority of his own traditions' adoption of self-reflexive awareness (*svasaṃvedya*) as the proper object of meditation over the objects of meditation that are taken up by other traditions. Finally, Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa* contains one passage that distinguishes this author's sectarian identity by distinguishing its view of the nature of ultimate reality from the theistic Śaiva and

Vaiṣṇava positions on the nature of God. Although it is not considered part of the same *mahāmudrā* corpus, Kuddālapāda provides a positive description of his own sectarian identity by supplying a lineage list that includes several of the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.

## Chapter 8:

### Inclusivism and *Mahāmudrā* Yogic Cosmography

#### I. Introduction

The final topic in Part II of this dissertation on conceptions of sect and sectarian identity in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* addresses a theme that is common to a number of works in the corpus. This topic, characterized here by the phrase '*mahāmudrā* yogic cosmography' emerges out of a correlation in these texts between yogic epistemology and inclusivist strategies for constructing sectarian identity. The term 'yogic cosmography' describes the expansive, cosmogonic aspect of the generation stage yoga in which generating one's body as the deity-*maṇḍala* results in the yogin attaining an expansive and all-pervasive form, one of a handful of connotations that the term *mahāmudrā* is meant to convey. The cosmographies presented in these works are 'yogic' in the sense that they present their own version of a kind of retraction and expansion that accords with certain elements found in the classical yogic system of Patāñjali and a number of systems of *śaḍāṅgayoga*.<sup>474</sup> The movement from meditative absorption to the spontaneous expansion of the entire cosmos described here establishes the yogin in perfect union with the deity-*maṇḍala*, which when recognized as the nature of the entire cosmos constitutes union with the *mahāmudrā*. The 'tantric' component of this yoga can be found in the methods that are employed to allow the yogin to recognize this *mahāmudrā* as innately established in the *yogin's* body and in all externally perceived forms. These methods include, but of course are not limited to, sexual yoga practices that require a physical consort (*karmamudrā*) and other means by which the yogin recognizes the sublime

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<sup>474</sup> For a helpful chart comparing a number of works that contain enumerations of various yogic 'auxiliary' (*aṅga*) systems, see James Mallinson and Mark Singleton, *Roots of Yoga* (New York: Penguin Classics, 2017) 8–9.

bliss (*mahāsukha*) that is non-dual gnosis. This yogic cosmogony's sequence of retraction, recognition of self-reflexive awareness, and expansion, mirrors the twofold inclusivist motion of subordination and validation<sup>475</sup> as they account for the presence of rival sects and philosophical systems within a unified vision of the singular nature and manifold expression of all things.

There are two related strategies at work throughout *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that demonstrate this particular inclusivist construction of sectarian identity. The first is a function of those yogic techniques associated with a retraction from external sensory phenomena combined with meditative analysis that, by allowing the yogin to enter into meditative absorption in self-reflexive awareness, result in the realization of the nature of ultimate reality. In such contexts the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* apply a kind of reductionist logic in their inclusivism, arguing that this ultimate reality is the source and true identity of all phenomena (be it described using the term *tattva*, *sahaja*, or *mahāmudrā*), to which the divergent views of religious sects are subordinate. But neither the authors of our texts nor the traditions that they represent were content with a purely ontological inclusivism. The second strategy shows the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* accounting for the diversity of religious sects in a more specific manner in order to situate them within the yogic cosmography of the cosmos-as-deity-*maṇḍala*. The need to provide an account for all things, even rival sects, emerges as a function of the self-magnifying, expansive process of

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<sup>475</sup> This is also essentially how these traditions resolve the epistemological problem that is posited by the Buddhist doctrine of emptiness (*śūnyatā*) and the two truths. In this case, yogic retraction from the senses allows the meditator to focus on self-reflexive awareness, after which all things are seen as having the nature of self-reflexive awareness as the yogin's recognition of this fundamental nature of reality expands outward to the entire cosmos. In this way the sensory data associated with discrete subjects, objects, and the knowledge they produce through contact (in other words, the entire system of representationalist epistemology) is first recognized as ultimately flawed and subordinated to the nature of self-reflexive awareness through the inward motion of yogic retraction and then subsequently granted a new sense of ultimate validity through the outward expansion of self-reflexive awareness as the ultimate nature of all epistemological data.

generating the body as the deity-*maṇḍala* that is the central feature of the generation stage yoga. All of the cases of this phenomenon that we find in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* describe a motion from singularity to pervaded-plurality, and thus from an ontological to an epistemological account for the manifestation of various religious sects in the world.

The fact that the *vajradhātumaṇḍala* and its variants (such as its reformulation in the *maṇḍala* generation practices of the *Guhyasamājatantra*) maintain such a strong presence in the generation stage yogas presented by the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* gives us some indication of the corpus' heavy reliance upon the Buddhist *yogatantras*. Some works such as *Jñānasiddhi* contain proto-*yoginītantra* material from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra* while other works such as Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi* and Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa* are clearly concerned with the generation and completion stage yogas of the *yoginītantra*. But while the textual lineages of our authors vary, they tend to agree on the importance of meditation on self-reflexive awareness (rendered either as *pratyātmavedya* or *svasaṃvedya*) as the point at which a yogin recognizes the nature of ultimate reality and from which he experiences the spontaneous emergence of the deity-*maṇḍala* at the culmination of the generation stage yoga.

The relationship between self-reflexive awareness and the emergence of the deity-*maṇḍala* can be traced to the *pañcābhisambodhikrama*, the sequential yogic practice introduced in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha* that culminates in the complete manifestation of a yogic cosmography in the form of the *vajradhātumaṇḍala*.<sup>476</sup> The final

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<sup>476</sup> Steven Weinberger, "The Significance of Yoga Tantra and the Compendium of Principles (Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra) within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet" (PhD diss., University of Virginia, 2003), 76–77. Weinberger writes, "The Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala comes at the beginning of the first section of the Compendium of Principles. It is the first maṇḍala described in the tantra, and its rites are also the first rites described. As such, it is the primary maṇḍala of the Compendium of Principles. It serves as the template for almost all subsequent maṇḍalas that appear in the Compendium of Principles...The



generation of the *vajradhātumaṇḍala* following the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi's awakening in the opening narrative in this work provides what Davidson refers to as the emergence of an imperial metaphor in Buddhist ritual iconography and practice that reflects a re-imagination of becoming a ruler or overlord (*rajādhirāja*) as the goal of the Buddhist *yogin*.<sup>477</sup> But the importance of this new *yoga* is not limited to the social implications of Davidson's esoteric Buddhist *realpolitik* thesis. For the subjects who actually engaged in these practices, the powers over which a *yogin* seeks control through perfecting union with a deity-*maṇḍala* such as the *vajradhātumaṇḍala* and its derivatives are elemental and cosmological, not just political. The five female and male *tathāgata* layout of the *vajradhātumaṇḍala* is thus a homologous system that is designed, ideally, as a cosmography or representation of the cosmos in its entirety.

In their attempts to elaborate upon this conception of the *maṇḍala* as all-encompassing cosmography, both Kuddālapāda and several authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* find themselves in the position of having to account for the existence of rival religious sects and philosophical systems. The rival religious sects of the Jains, Śaivas, Vaiṣṇavas, and Vaidika Brāhmins are, after all, a part of the world in which the Buddhist *yogin* found himself, and their presence must be accounted for by any cosmographic enumeration of the various manifestations of ultimate reality. The subordinating component of this yogic cosmogony is introduced in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṅgraha*'s narrative the subjugation of Maheśvara that immediately follows the text's introduction of the *vajradhātumaṇḍala*. As

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Vajradhātu Maṇḍala appears in several other texts included in the Yoga Tantra corpus (as well as in several tantras of the Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism classified as Mahāyoga and even one Anuyoga tantra). Thus, the importance of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala cannot be overestimated... With its five Buddha-family structure, it serves as the primary maṇḍala of the Yoga Tantra class as a whole, and its influence persists in subsequent developments such as tantras of the Mahāyoga system."

<sup>477</sup> Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 114.

mentioned in chapter seven, Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* reproduces a visualization practice from the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra* that ritualizes this theme as the yogin takes on the form of Vajrasattva and proceeds to trample and subjugate four of the primary deities of the Hindu pantheon. These subjugation narratives and their correlative visualization practices represent the subordinating mode of the yogic cosmography of the Buddhist deity-*maṇḍala* in which the model of embodying an all-encompassing, all-pervading form requires one to account for the presence of the deities and representatives of rival sects. They preserve a notably violent mode of subordination in which the deities of rival sects are converted by force and rendered subordinate to the deities of the tantric Buddhist pantheon. The examples that follow from *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and from Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa* represent notably more inclusivist attempts to account for the existence of rival religious sects than the examples presented in the Maheśvara subjugation narrative in the *Sarvatathāgatatattvasaṃgraha* and in the *sādhana* iconography from *Jñānasiddhi* and the *Sarvabuddhasamāyogatantra*. These authors present this inclusivity within the framework of a yogic system that posits an ultimate reality that is non-dual, that constitutes the only true origin of all phenomena, and that pervades all things. Realization of this ultimate reality is accessed through meditation on self-reflexive awareness and is identified with the term *mahāmudrā*.

## **II. Inclusivism in the Singularity and Plurality of *Mahāmudrā***

The richest data on this inclusivist yogic cosmography is found in those texts that contain extensive explanations of the practices related to the generation stage yogas. The two works that provide the most extensive data on the employment of the kind of yogic retraction and

expansion associated with the generation stage are Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* and Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*. Other works among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are briefly noted here for their author's particular presentation of the yogic dynamics of retraction and expansion and its relationship to the general yogic epistemology of pervasion at the heart of such practices, even if these authors do not explicitly direct their descriptions of these practices toward accounting for the proliferation of rival religious sects in the world.

With one important exception in its fourth chapter, many of the instructions on the dynamics underlying the yogic cosmography of the generation stage yogas in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* are seemingly unconcerned with accounting for the existence of rival religious sects. When Padmavajra first introduces the generation stage yoga's movement from a singular ontological reality to a plurality of its expressions in the world in verses 1.29–30, he seems to find it sufficient to connect this movement to the existence of various Buddhist schools of thought. Here Padmavajra presents a yogic argument for the single vehicle (*ekayāna*) thesis by stating that the various textual traditions of the *kriyā* and *caryātantras* as well as the *sūtras* are all simply various expressions of the same ultimate reality that is concealed among the psycho-physical aggregates and revealed in a variety of teachings that accord with beings' various dispositions (*sattvāśayānubheda*).<sup>478</sup>

Padmavajra expands upon the dynamics of pervasion and the general theme of a movement from a singular ultimate reality to a plurality of its expressions in the second chapter of *Guhyasiddhi*, which contains his exposition on the introductory verse (*nidānavyākhyā*) of the *Guhyasamājatantra*. In many ways, the very same logic underlying

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<sup>478</sup> *Guhyasiddhi* 1.29 appears in chapter seven's discussion of Padmavajra's tendency to place greater emphasis on his allegiance to the system of the *Guhyasamājatantra* in his construction of a sectarian identity over allegiance to the broader Buddhist systems of *sūtra*, and *kriyā*- and *caryātantras*. *Guhyasiddhi* 1.30–35, which locates ultimate reality (*tattva*) in the body, "concealed among the aggregates," are translated in full in chapter three.

the yogic movement from singularity to pervasion that leads our authors to provide an account for all phenomena within the yogic cosmographies of the generation stage *maṇḍala* is also at work in the exegetical convention of the *nidānavyākhyā*. Following this exegetical convention, an author locates the fundamental truth that a *tantra* expresses in its initial two syllables (usually the syllables *evaṃ* or *athaḥ*) and then expands this strategy to show that the initial verse acts as a mnemonic, coded signifier for the entire work. Padmavajra his second chapter with an account of Vajrasattva's instructions on the fully blossomed *bodhicitta* (*bodhicittavijṛmbhita*) to the buddhas of the assembly who have fallen into a swoon upon witnessing unified sameness of all phenomena (*sarvadharmasamaikatvā*). The passage introduces the notion of supreme joy (*paramānanda*) that results from the sexual yoga of engagement of the *vajra* with the lotus (*padmavajraprayoga*) as a form representing the full manifestation of *bodhicitta* or ultimate reality. Padmavajra's account of Vajrasattva's monologue then moves to the issue of central concern in the chapter, an explanation of the opening verse of the *Guhyasamājatantra* that equates the letters 'e' and 'vam' respectively with the female and male sexual organs and their combination in the term '*evaṃ*' with the union of the male and female sexual organs that constitutes the foundational practice for the production of the 'great bliss' (*mahāsukha*). He then uses Vajrasattva's monologue to locate the term '*evaṃ*' and all that it symbolizes as the essential nature and origin point for all things in the following passage:

"There is no pure state of phenomena other than  
 The letter that is the source of phenomena |  
 In which the buddhas are arisen [and]  
 Established in the awakening of a buddha." || 2.27 ||

Do not be afraid, for there  
 The *vajra*-woman is present in the pure, |  
 Non-abiding ultimate reality, in the quiescent state,

In the letter that is the source of all phenomena. || 2.28 ||

The entire world with all its animals, etc.,  
Is arisen from that, |  
Not to mention you Victors  
Who have all become afraid!" || 2.29 ||<sup>479</sup>

As Davidson notes, the verses quoted here in *Guhyasiddhi* provide a polemical critique of the more moderate Mahāyāna tradition that admits to the potentially offensive and shocking nature of the new esoteric revelation of the Vajrayāna for which Padmavajra, unlike other commentators, is unapologetic.<sup>480</sup> The verses also lead to Padmavajra's explanation of the importance of recognizing the physical consort (*karmamudrā*) as the source of gnosis of the threefold *vajra* in conventional form (*saṃvṛtirūpeṇa trivajrajñānasambhavā*). The bliss that arises during the practice of sexual yoga and the physical consort herself are identified with the ultimate reality and source of all phenomena, the starting point from which the pervasion of that ultimate reality extends throughout the cosmos.

This description of the *karmamudrā* in the second chapter of *Guhyasiddhi* is eventually transferred to the *mahāmudrā* in Padmavajra's discussion of the generation stage yoga in chapter three. Here, Padmavajra indicates that once a beginner has attained a certain level of realization via the *karmamudrā* reliance on a physical consort should be abandoned altogether. This passage contains some of the most frequently quoted verses from Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* (particularly verse 3.34) and directly equates self-referential awareness (*svasaṃvedya*) with *mahāmudrā*:

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<sup>479</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 14.  
nānyad dharmapadaṃ śuddhaṃ muktvā dharmodayākṣaram |  
yatra buddhāḥ samutpannā buddhabodhipratiṣṭhitāḥ || 2.27 ||  
ta[tra] trāsa(saṃ) mā kurudhvaṃ śuddhe tattve nirālaye |  
dharmodayākṣare śānte vajrayoṣid vyavasthitāḥ(tā) || 2.28 ||  
tat(taḥ) sarvaṃ samutpannaṃ tiryagādyakhilaṃ jagat |  
tatkimārthaṃ jinā bhūyo yūyamuttrāsamāgatāḥ || 2.29 ||

<sup>480</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, 255–57.

The *karmamudrā* is deceitful and cruel,  
And so too is the *jñānamudrā*. |  
Having abandoned the multitude of conceptual constructs,  
One should meditate on the *mahāmudrā*. || 3.34 ||

One should abandon the human *mudrā*,  
Who is the source of all manner of distraction, |  
And worship the *mahāmudrā*  
That is unified with method in one's own body. || 3.35 ||

The *vidyā*<sup>481</sup> that is self-reflexive awareness  
Is the supremely auspicious *mahāmudrā* |  
Located in the innate abode of the body  
And invisible to those with little insight. || 3.36 ||<sup>482</sup>

These verses are important for the direct correlation they draw between *mahāmudrā* and *svasamvedya*, which essentially moves the process of identifying the source of phenomena from the external practice of sexual yoga into a more classical yogic practice of retraction from the senses and cultivation of a direct perception of ultimate reality via self-reflexive awareness. It is within the context of this discussion of *mahāmudrā* that Padmavajra begins to elaborate upon the pervasive nature of ultimate reality, moving the reader from an account of its singularity to its pervasion into a plurality.

This process initiates a movement toward the kind of yogic cosmography that will eventually require Padmavajra to account for the existence of rival religious sects. Verses 3.49–50 reiterate the common hermeneutic in Buddhist literature that doctrinal pluralities are dependent upon the various dispositions of beings. Padmavajra begins the process of

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<sup>481</sup> The term *vidyā* is left in the Sanskrit here because it bears a dual significance as both 'knowledge' and the feminine manifestation of knowledge as the *vidyā*, another term for a female consort that traces back to the use of this term for a class of female mantra-beings or goddesses.

<sup>482</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 23.

karmamudrā śaṭhāṃ krūrāṃ jñānamudrāṃ tathaiva ca |  
vikalpabahulāṃ tyaktvā mahāmudrāṃ vibhāvayet || 3.34 ||  
vihāya mānuṣiṃ mudrāṃ sarvavikṣepasambhavām |  
mahāmudrāṃ niṣeveta svadehopāyasamyutām || 3.35 ||  
svasamvedyā hi sā vidyā mahāmudrā parā śubhā |  
nijadehāśrayasthāpi svalpaprajñairna dṛśyate || 3.36 ||

expanding his yogic cosmography beyond the scope of the Buddhist teachings by employing this hermeneutic in the following passage:

Everything that has arisen there,  
Some of which is designated as a material substance, |  
Is wholly and completely grounded in the  
Delightful state of the threefold world. || 3.53 ||

It is the seed of all things and  
The ultimate state of the *siddhis*, |  
The supreme abode of the buddhas,  
And the expression of Sukhāvati. || 3.54 ||

Thus, all of the gods, demons,  
And humans have issued forth from that. |  
The entire threefold world,  
Is completely established there. || 3.55 ||<sup>483</sup>

Finally, as Padmavajra's yogic cosmography expands to encompass the world of human beings, he is compelled to account for the fact that there are human beings who teach doctrines that are in fact at odds with the ontology proposed in his own system of the *Guhyasamājatantra*:

All of the incalculable tens of millions  
Of human beings issue forth from that, |  
Some of whom [maintain] trustworthy doctrines,  
That teach an authentic system. || 3.58 ||<sup>484</sup>

But while these verses seem to uphold a critical, exclusivist distinction between those doctrines that are trustworthy (*āptāgama*) and those that are not, a passage that appears in Padmavajra's expanded instructions on the generation stage yoga in chapter four of

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<sup>483</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 24–25.

tatra sarvaṃ samutpanaṃ yatkiñcid dravyasaṃjñitam |  
traidhātukapade ramye samantāt samavasthitam || 3.53 ||  
tad bījaṃ sarvavastūnāṃ siddhīnāṃ ca paraṃ padam |  
buddhānāṃ tatparaṃ sthānaṃ sukhāvatyā(tya)bhīdhānakam || 3.54 ||  
tasmād viniṣṛtāḥ sarve surā daityāḥ samānuṣāḥ |  
tatra vyavasthitam sarvaṃ traidhātukamaśeṣataḥ || 3.55 ||

<sup>484</sup> Padmavajra, "Guhyasiddhi," 25.

tasmād viniṣṛtāḥ sarve asaṃkhyā manukoṭayaḥ |  
āptāgamāśca ye kecit sadbhūtakramadeśakāḥ || 3.58 ||

*Guhyasiddhi* applies the same underlying logic to arrive at a more inclusive perspective.

These verses only survive in the Tibetan translation of the text:

4.81 [Everything] proceeds and comes from it,  
But there are no migrating beings at all in it.  
Ultimately there is no meditation,  
Meditator, and object of meditation.

4.82 Ultimate reality, the unique  
Supreme state, is known as '*bodhicitta*.'  
Its various divisions are inconceivable,  
Spreading into the tens of millions.

4.83 The sublime purity of all beings  
Is not established by just one verbal expression, [but]  
Due to the different types of dispositions of sentient beings,  
[Its many expressions] pervade the entire three realms.

4.84 It is labeled [according to] so many systems of classification  
Such as the Śaivas [who call it] the supreme principle,  
The exponents of the Veda who call it Brahmā,  
The Buddhists who call it supreme awakening,

4.85 The Jains who call it the soul, [and]  
The Sāṃkhya scholars who call it consciousness, etc.  
How can one articulate them all?  
Having proliferated into a multiplicity,

4.86 One is not able to articulate  
These essences in their various modes of expression.  
The sublime state is established following its division, [so]  
[Beings] explain the perfect ultimate state in many ways.<sup>485</sup>

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<sup>485</sup> Padmavajra, "Gsang ba grub pa," Tib. 57–58.

/de nyid mchog gyur gcig pu nyid/  
/byang chub sems zhes rab tu brjod/  
/dbye ba sna tshogs bsam mi khyab/  
/bye ba snyed du rab rgyas pa/ 4.82 /  
/bzang po kun 'gro rnam dag ste/  
/ming gcig nyid kyis gnas pa min/  
/sems can bsam pa'i bye brag gis/  
/khams gsum kun du rab tu khyab/ 4.83 /  
/zhi ba rnams kyis de nyid mchog  
/rig byed smra ba tshangs pa zer/  
/sangs rgyas pa rnams byang chub mchog  
/god med pa rnams srog ces zer/ 4.84 /  
/grangs can rig pa rnams la sogs/  
/dbye ba gang zhig rnam brtags pa/



These verses contain the only explicit example of Padmavajra's conception of a set of philosophical systems (*darśanas*) and their relationship to the ultimate reality. The equalizing factor between the various schools of the Śaivas, Vaidikas, Jains, Sāṃkhya, and Buddhists lies in their common reliance upon language to express something that is ultimately beyond linguistic expression. A more radically inclusivist reading of these verses that borders on a kind of pluralism is possible as well, and results from the mechanics of pervasion that underlie Padmavajra's presentation of an ultimate reality that is both the singular source from which all things proliferate and simultaneously pervades all things.

Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* contains one passage in which the author seeks to justify the existence of various schools of thought as manifestations of the same ultimate reality. The reference occurs in the text's fourth chapter, Anaṅgavajra's explanation of "Meditation on Ultimate Reality" or *tattvabhāvanā*:

This is the ultimate *bodhicitta*  
 That is said to be non-dual, [that is] |  
 The *vajra* and Śrī Vajrasattva,  
 The completely awakened one and awakening. || 4.17 ||

And this is the perfection of insight,  
 That is composed of all of the perfections, |  
 And this is the sameness that is called the highest  
 Meditation of all the buddhas. || 4.18 ||

The entire world with its animate  
 And inanimate nature is born right here. |  
 And [so are] endless bodhisattvas,  
 Perfect buddhas, *śrāvakas*, etc. || 4.19 ||<sup>486</sup>

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/de dag brjod par ga la nus/  
 /sna tshogs nyid la khyab gnas nas/ 4.85 /  
 /rnam pa sna tshogs ngo bo rnams/  
 /des ni smra bar nus ma yin/  
 /bzang po'i dbye bas gang gnas pa/  
 /yang dag mtha' nyid du mar bstan/ 4.86 /

<sup>486</sup> Anaṅgavajra, "Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi," 79.  
 etad advayam ityuktaṃ bodhicittam idaṃ param |

The passage is notable for its unabashed equivalence between ultimate reality as it is defined in the esoteric tradition and ultimate reality as it is defined according to the exoteric system of the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*). It also contains an attempt to account for this ultimate reality as the origin point from which all manner of awakened beings are born.

Anaṅgavajra does limit his account of the proliferation of various religious doctrines to that of the perfections (*pāramitās*), associated with the buddhas and bodhisattvas, and that of the *śrāvakas*. However, it is possible, given his proclivity for tailoring his text toward the adherents of theistic brahmanical traditions already demonstrated in chapter seven, that the compound *śrāvakādaya* in line 4.19d might be read as inclusive with respect to the vehicles of *śrāvakas* and all other sects, not simply an ellipsis for the inclusion of the vehicle of *śrāvakas*, *pratyekabuddhas*, and *bodhisattvas*. This reading is strengthened by Anaṅgavajra's statements regarding the importance of performing the advanced ascetic practices of the *caryā* and *vrata* in verse 5.6, where he establishes a continuity between Buddhist and non-Buddhist schools of thought by stating that the tathāgatas, all of whom performed the *caryā*, are worshipped by the highest deities of the brahmanical pantheon.

### III. Spontaneous *Maṅḍala* Generation and an Inclusive Yogic Cosmogony in

#### **Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa***

Other works among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* such as Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* and Yoginī

Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* contain examples of the same kind of movement

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vajraṃ śrīvajasattvaṃ ca sambuddho bodhireva ca || 4.17 ||  
prajñāpāramitā caiṣā sarvapāramitāmayī |  
samatā ceyamevoktā sarvabuddhāgrabhāvanā || 4.18 ||  
atraiva sarvam utpannaṃ jagat sthiracalātmakam |  
anantā bodhisattvāśca sambuddhāḥ śrāvakādayaḥ || 4.19 ||



and the topic is reiterated nine times in this short work of one hundred and twenty three Sanskrit verses. Like the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Kuddālapāda presents a kind of yogic representationalist epistemology that describes the origin point for the spontaneously arising deity-*maṇḍala* as an non-dual image (*advayākāra*), the image of the same taste [of phenomena] (*samarasākāra*), a non-conceptual object (*nirvikalpārtha*), a naturally luminous image (*prakṛtiprabhāsvarākāram*), and an infinite image (*anantākāra*).<sup>489</sup> This mental image, the product of *samādhi* that is brought on by meditative analysis in the opening phase of the generation stage yoga, is eventually listed as another term for *mahāmudrā* in the following verses:

Non-dual gnosis, the great bliss  
That is beyond form, sound, and taste, |  
That is free from smell, touch, and the like  
Arises at that point. || 30 ||

Composed of the *dharmadhātu*, pure,  
The ultimate non-dual gnosis is |  
Free from all conceptual imputations [and]  
Devoid of apprehended and apprehender. || 31 ||

An abode that is naturally pure,  
The non-dual ultimate truth |  
Is not destroyed, is not produced,  
Is unchanging, and is non-abiding. || 32 ||

This *mahāmudrā* is the endless  
Supreme non-dual gnosis |  
That is called the mind, the substratum  
Of the [bodily] humors and the qualities. || 33 ||

In it, gnosis, supreme omnipresence,  
Is naturally without waves. |  
Gnosis is arisen on its own.  
One should not meditate on anything. || 34 ||<sup>490</sup>

<sup>489</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 195; 196; 199; 201.

<sup>490</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvatakrāmopadeśa," 198.

tasmin niṣpadyate jñānam advayaṃ tu mahāsukham |  
rūpaśabdarasātītaṃ gandhasparśādivarjitam || 30 ||

Kuddālapāda then takes the reader from the opening section of his text in which he outlines the various synonyms and terms used to describe *mahāmudrā* or the non-dual image of gnosis into the sequence (*krama*) by which the deity-*maṇḍala* spontaneously unfolds:

Due to the lack of conceptual constructs,  
Everything is seen as the source of glorious bliss. |  
The form of the numerous deities,  
The body of Vajrasattva and the others, || 36 ||

And the buddha image,  
The entire circle of the *yoginī* horde |  
Or the assembly of wrathful kings  
As well as the *Vidyā*-goddess, || 37 ||

And the divine *maṇḍala* circle,  
A stainless, luminous image, |  
The collection of *sūtras* together with the *vinaya*,  
As well as the system of the perfections, || 38 ||

So too the mantras and *mudrās* as well as the *vidyās*  
[That one] invites into the heart [of the *maṇḍala*],  
The entire mantra doctrine |  
With its *maṇḍala*, *homa* rite, || 39 ||

And ritual of mantra recitation offering

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dharmadhātumayaṃ śuddha[madvayam] jñānam uttamam |  
sarvasaṅkalpam nirmuktaṃ grāhyagrāhakavarjitam || 31 ||  
svabhāvasuddhaṃ nilayam advayaṃ pāramāthikam |  
avināśam anutpattim anakṣaram anālayam || 32 ||  
mahāmudreyam atyantam advayaṃ jñānam uttamam |  
doṣāṇāṃ ca guṇāṇāṃ ca cittam ārādha(dhāra)m ucyate || 33 ||  
tasmin vyāptiparaṃ jñānaṃ nistaraṅgaṃ svabhāvataḥ |  
svayam utpadyate jñānaṃ na kiñcidapi bhāvayet || 34 ||

I have decided to accept the correction to verse 33 offered by the Sarnath editors, who have changed the reading *ārādham ucyate* to *ādhāram ucyate*. The edition provides a correct account of the variants in the three available manuscripts of the text, so I will not rehearse them here. The Tibetan translation for this line suggests the reading *cittākāram ucyate* (*sems kyi rnam par brjod pa*) and reads:

/gnyis su med pa'i ye shes mchog  
/'di ni phyag rgya chen po nyid/  
/yon tan rnam dang skyon rnam ni/  
/sems kyi rnam par brjod pa ste/\_33\_/

33. This supreme non-dual gnosis

Is the *mahāmudrā*,  
The qualities and humors  
Expressed as a mental image.

For the Tibetan see Slob dpon tog rtse, "Sems gyis mi khyab pa'i rim pa'i man ngag," Tib. 292.

Arises on its own in succession. |  
And the philosophical systems, the Śaiva and  
Saura, likewise Arhant and Vaiṣṇava || 40 ||

And [those who hold] the ultimate authority of the Veda  
Ultimately arise on their own. |  
This union with the omniscient state  
Is inconceivable and without conceptual thought. || 41 ||

The divine state called *samantabhadra* that is  
Like a wish-fulfilling jewel, is non-dual. |  
The subterranean [*siddhi*], the sword, pill,  
Yakṣiṇī, shoe, [and] vase [*siddhis*], || 42 ||

Alchemy, collyrium, and the divine [*siddhis*]  
Are accomplished on their own and not in any other way. |  
Due to [this yoga's] non-conceptual orientation,  
It all arises on its own. || 43 ||<sup>491</sup>

Here Kuddālapāda takes his reader through a progressive expansion of the deity-*maṇḍala* as its various expressions emerge from the inconceivable non-dual image of *mahāmudrā*. He recounts what is roughly a movement from the center to the periphery of the *maṇḍala*, though, perhaps intentionally, he does not provide an adequate level of detail to identify the specific *maṇḍala* system with which he is working. In the process of describing the spontaneous unfolding of this yogic cosmography, Kuddālapāda seems compelled in verses

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<sup>491</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 198–99.  
avikalpena sarvaṃ vai dṛśyate śrīśukhodāyam |  
anekadevatārūpaṃ vajrasattvādivigrahaṃ || 36 ||  
buddhabimbaṃ ca sakalaṃ yoginīgaṇamaṇḍalam |  
krodharājasamastaṃ vā vidyādevī tathaiva ca || 37 ||  
divyamaṇḍalacakraṃ tu ālokākāranirmalam |  
sūtrānta(ṇṭaṃ) vinayopetaṃ tathā pāramitānāyam || 38 ||  
mantramudrās tathā vidyā hṛdaye codanaṃ tathā |  
mantravādam aśeṣaṃ vai maṇḍalaṃ homakarma[am] ca || 39 ||  
japapūjāvīdhānaṃ ca svayam utpadyate kramāt |  
darśanaṃ śaivaṃ sauraṃ ca arhantaṃ vaiṣṇavaṃ tathā || 40 ||  
vedapramāṇavākyaṃ ca svayam utpadyate param |  
sarvajñapadayogo 'yam acintyaṃ nirvikalpam || 41 ||  
divyaṃ samantabhadrākhyāṃ cintāmanirivādvayam |  
pātālakhaḍgaguṭikāyakṣiṇīpādusaṃghaṭam || 42 ||  
rasāñjanaṃ ca divyaṃ ca svayaṃ siddhyanti nānyathā |  
avikalpādhimokṣeṇa sarvaṃ upadyate svayam || 43 ||

38–41 to account for a variety of modes of religious thought and expression, both Buddhist and non-Buddhist. As he does so, he provides a glimpse of the variety of non-Buddhist philosophical systems with which he was familiar, listing the Śaiva, Saura, Jain, Vaiṣṇava, and Vaidika brahmins by name.

Kuddālapāda follows this passage with a preface to his instructions on *mahāyoga* in which the sense faculties and sense perceptions are sublimated into the yogin's perception of gnosis. This leads to a somewhat cryptic instruction on the performance of sexual yoga in verse 71 that is explained as the primary focus of *mahāyoga* in verse 72. The text then moves into an internal yogic cosmography that lists the homologous relationships between five psycho-physical aggregates, the five types of gnosis, and the five buddhas of the *pañcatathāgata* schema aligned at the centers within the subtle body during such practices. This internalized *mahāyoga* visualization practice prompts Kuddālapāda once again to provide some justification for the existence of rival religious sects within his yogic cosmography:

Conceptual constructs that are the nature of conceptual thought  
[Are understood as] the self-arisen, single non-duality |  
By [gnosis that is] mirror[-like], equanimity, accomplishing,  
Discriminating, and [equal to] the expanse of phenomena. || 76 ||

[It appears manifold] due to the proliferation of philosophical  
Systems [that accord with] the dispositions of beings, |  
But the omniscient one, be he Śaiva, etc.,  
Vaiṣṇava, or Brahmā, is non-dual. || 77 ||

It is devoid of the defect of the eye, etc.,  
[And] its scope is beyond the mind. |  
The ultimate truth is called non-duality,  
But [its] verbal elaboration is a relative truth. || 78 ||

At the point from which the ultimate truth is divided and descends  
There is no buddha, nor is there non-duality, |  
But the proliferation of [its] verbal expression is explained

By the union of conceptual thought and space. || 79 ||<sup>492</sup>

Then, after taking a few verses to list the many different terms by which ultimate reality is enumerated in Buddhist treatises in order to argue for their ultimate inability to actually express it, Kuddālapāda expands his yogic cosmography beyond its expressions across various religious sects to the animate and inanimate matter that makes up the entire threefold world:

Since everything in all of the three realms  
Has the cause of arising and abiding, |  
All living beings arise  
Out of non-dual gnosis. || 83 ||

The oceans, mountains, trees,  
Grass, bushes, and vines, |  
Issue forth from non-dual gnosis,  
There is no doubt in this. || 84 ||<sup>493</sup>

He then moves into an account of the instruction lineage that he received from Bhadrāpāda, interweaving his own lineage into this yogic cosmography by describing the process by which the singular, non-dual ultimate reality proliferates and pervades all phenomena. These verses are not simply an account of Kuddālapāda's instruction lineage, they describe the way in which he himself gained access to the instructions on the true nature of ultimate reality in terms of the cosmographic proliferation of its various expressions. His motivation for

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<sup>492</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 202–3.  
ādarśasamatākṛtyānuṣṭhānapratyavekṣādharmadhātubhiḥ |  
vikalpāḥ kalpanārūpāḥ svayambhūr ekam advayaḥ || 76 ||  
darśanāder vibhāvena sattvāśayavase(śe) na tu |  
śaivādivaiṣṇavā brahmā sarvajña eko 'dvayaḥ || 77 ||  
caḥsurādiraikalyaṃ manasātītāgocaram |  
paramārtho 'dvayo nāma vākprapañcastu samvṛti || 78 ||  
paramārthāvasthabhede[na] na buddho nāpi vādvayaḥ |  
kalpanākāśayogena vākprapañcas tu kathyate || 79 ||

<sup>493</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 203.  
traidhātukeṣu sarveṣu utpattisthitihetubhiḥ |  
tatsarvam advayajñānaudbhūtāḥ sarvajantavaḥ || 83 ||  
sāgarāḥ parvatā vṛkṣās tṛṇagulmalatāśca ye |  
viniḥṣṛtā advayajñāna[ād] bhrāntir atra na vidyate || 84 ||



providing an account of his own lineage is as cosmographic as it is historical, and is meant to situate his own instructions among the divergent systems of a number of philosophical systems and religious sects. This is evident in the fact that he transitions from describing his own instruction lineage to a number of religious sects, each of which teach the same non-dual ultimate reality according to their own particular conventions:

They all had one goal—  
Ultimate, non-dual gnosis. |  
[This is also the goal of] the entire mantra doctrine  
As well as the system of the perfections. || 90 ||

In this sense there is one non-dual great bliss [taught]  
Among the compendia of the sūtra collection, etc. |  
The Arhant, Saura, Śaiva etc.,  
And even the Somasiddhānta, || 91 ||

Vaiṣṇava, and the dharma of Manu  
Are taught based on non-duality. |  
Since there is no language for non-duality,  
There are gods, demigods, humans, and lower beings. || 92 ||

But everything one sees according to its  
Particular appearance is non-dual gnosis. |  
One who has non-duality along with compassion,  
Who is endowed with insight and method, || 93 ||

Who has analyzed emptiness in detail,  
Who is composed entirely of buddhas, the guru |  
Is the supreme ocean of gnosis  
According to Bhadrupāda's understanding. || 94 ||<sup>494</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 204.  
eko 'bhiprāyaḥ sarveṣāṃ advayajñānam uttamam |  
mantravādam aśeṣam ca tathā pāramitānayaḥ || 90 ||  
sūtrāntapīṭakādibhyo 'traikādvayamahāsukham |  
arhantasauraśaivādyāḥ somasiddhānta eva ca || 91 ||  
vaiṣṇavo mānava dharmo advayena tu deśitāḥ |  
nāsti cādvayavāk tena devāsuranarādhamāḥ || 92 ||  
sarvaṃ tu cādvayajñānaṃ dṛśyate pratibhāṣa(sa)taḥ |  
advayaṃ(yaḥ) karuṇāmiśraḥ prajñopāyasamanvitaḥ || 93 ||  
śūnyatābhedabhinnastu sarvabuddhamayo guruḥ |  
bhadrapādamataṃ hyetaj jñānasāgaram uttamam || 94 ||

These verses convey a sense of the inclusivist view that Kuddālapāda takes up in response to the implications of the yogic cosmography he outlines as he moves from a description of non-dual ultimate reality to the proliferation of its expressions in both the material world of forms and in the variety of expressions one finds in that world among various religious sects. The verses provide a greater sense of the various sects with which Kuddālapāda was familiar. Verses 93cd–94 appear to indicate precisely what distinguishes his own instruction lineage from others, and he makes this distinction despite the fact that the doctrines held by all religious sects are in fact based in the same non-duality. As is fitting for an initiatory cult, Kuddālapāda ends here by elevating the guru as the most reliable source for the teachings on non-dual gnosis, providing some grounds on which to argue that the emergence of guru-centric initiatory cults constitutes a response to an expansive and potentially misleading plurality of religious doctrines.

Kuddālapāda concludes his *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa* with a sequence of completion stage yoga instructions that begin with a *yoginīmaṇḍala* visualization and move into a subtle body yoga instruction employing the *purāṇic* cosmogony of the churning of the ocean of milk as the initial phase of the visualization. Here, as in Yoginī Cintā's reference to the same cosmogonic myth,<sup>495</sup> the notions of 'churning' and the production of *amṛta* must be taken as a metaphor for the performance of sexual yoga:

Every image [that arose] from churning  
The ocean of milk arises as the supreme state. |

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<sup>495</sup> Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* contains instructions on the preparation of the *piṇḍā* or 'pill' containing the ejaculate and menstrual fluid of both participants in the sexual yoga that compares the action of stirring this combination of fluids until it solidifies into a 'pill' form to the *purāṇic* cosmogony of the gods and *asuras* churning the *kṣīroda* or ocean of milk. Here I believe Kuddālapāda's use of this *purāṇic* 'churning' image is meant as an allegory for the performance of sexual yoga itself. We do not find any instructions on the external preparation of a *piṇḍā* here. Instead, the text moves from its invocation of the *purāṇic* cosmogony of the *kṣīroda* into a description of an internal, subtle-body yoga practice that indicates that consumption of the *amṛta* produced by the 'churning' of sexual yoga may be treated as an entirely internalized process in Kuddālapāda's completion stage yoga instructions.

And those things that were praised by Brahmā,  
Viṣṇu, Maheśvara and Buddha, etc., || 95 ||

[Such as] the sun, moon, and stars  
Arise from the ocean of gnosis |  
[As do] Lakṣmī, Sarasvatī, [and]  
The supreme elixir of the *amṛta*. || 96 ||

All of them, human beings together with  
The gods and *asuras*, are arisen from *amṛta*. |  
And [so too does] the so-called thirteen-fold ground,  
Who is the lovely Vajradharī. || 97 ||<sup>496</sup>

This version of the myth is adapted for Kuddālapāda's purposes as an allegory for the emergence of the entire cosmos out of the bliss of non-duality that is generated through the sexual union of *mahāyoga* as he repositions the *amṛta*, a term frequently used to describe the products of a yogic couple's sexual union, at the font of his cosmography. As in the classic *purāṇic* versions of this cosmogonic myth, the churning of sexual union that produces the *amṛta* is posited as the source of all phenomena, including all manner of various gods and goddesses, be they Buddhist or non-Buddhist.

#### IV. Conclusion

The yogic epistemology and *mahāmudrā* cosmogony outlined in these works tells us something about their authors' own conceptions of sectarian identity. The chapters that have preceded this discussion of sect and sectarian identity in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* have all in some way indicated that these identities remained relatively fluid and inclusive despite the

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<sup>496</sup> Kuddālapāda, "Acintyādvayakramopadeśa," 204–5.  
kṣīrodamathanākāraṃ sarvaṃ utpadyate param |  
brahmā(hma)viṣṇumaheśvarabuddhādyā ye ca kīrtitāḥ || 95 ||  
somasūryasatārāśca jñānasāgarasambhavāḥ |  
lakṣmīḥ sarasvatī caiva amṛtaṃ rasam uttamam || 96 ||  
amṛtād utthitaṃ sarvaṃ sadevāsura mānuṣam |  
trayodaśī ca vikhyātā bhūmir vajradharī śubhā || 97 ||

exclusive rhetoric of the initiatory traditions in which they are outlined. Chapter six provided examples of Buddhist yogins adopting the outer appearance of rival sects as part of the clandestine activity of Padmavajra's *guhya*caryā. Chapter seven demonstrated a range of inclusivist and exclusivist approaches to the formulation of sectarian identity in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. This chapter has demonstrated that the central practice of deity-*maṇḍala* generation in these works was employed as a hermeneutic for the simultaneous sameness and difference of sectarian identities as expressions of a fundamentally non-dual ultimate reality. In many instances, the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* offer a number of examples that push back against the kind of reified sense of discrete sectarian identities for which Alexis Sanderson's 'borrowing model' has been criticized.

At the same time, there is also evidence throughout *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that the formulation of discrete sectarian identities was a historical reality, and the authors of these works are forced to account for this historical reality in some way in their work. It would be rather shortsighted to entirely neglect these data by doing away with the role of discrete sectarian identities in the 'borrowing model' altogether. Much in the same way that Ruegg's 'substratum model' was shown to be a valid approach to interpreting the ritual and ascetic world of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* by adopting a demonological paradigm, the conception of a reified and exclusive sense of sectarian identity that underlies Sanderson's 'borrowing model' also has its constructive applications. In short, these two scholars and the positions that they propose have been placed in somewhat of a false dialectic. There is no need to adopt one approach at the expense of the other. Ruegg is correct to introduce the idea of a shared pan-Indic religious substratum, and that substratum can be identified among popular religious movements and their formalized expression in the Āyurvedic literature on demonology.

Sanderson is correct to identify the phenomenon of direct appropriation and exchange between members of discrete and rival sects, and several authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* openly admit to this phenomenon in their need to justify why exactly the external form of the ascetic practices they prescribe so closely resemble the practices of other sects. Both approaches are thus equally valid and illuminating hermeneutics, and one need not adopt one of them at the expense of the other.

They also both speak to the central argument for Part II of this dissertation—that the initiatory traditions function based on the logic that identity is a fluid phenomenon. This fluid conception of identity appeared earlier in Part I as well, where the notion of membership to a particular family or religious order provided the first indication that one of the central themes in South Asian renunciatory traditions was the exchange of one identity for another. It also appeared in the discussion in Part I of the existential condition of the person as viewed through the demonological paradigm. In this analysis the behavioral determinants of demonic possession account for a complete shift in identity in their negative formulation and an ascetic adoption of an alternate identity in their positive formulation during the Vajrayāna generation and completion stage yogas. Part II of this dissertation has shown that sectarian identity itself implies its own fluidity, and this fluidity—the ability to adopt and entirely different sectarian identity—is the fundamental logic that underlies all initiatory traditions, regardless of any rhetorical stance they might take to the contrary. Of course the logic of fluidity that underlies the ritual mechanics of consecration is by no means exempt from the consequences of its own implied dialectic between discrete and fluid conceptions of sectarian identity. In this sense there is also no justifiable reason to discount Sanderson's adoption of a more reified sense of sectarian identity, for undoubtedly there were those among the

historical agents that participated in the medieval South Asian world of tantric initiation cults that both adopted and promoted just such an approach. However, etic historiographers must accept the responsibility of avoiding any tendency to adopt this approach at the expense of recognizing the broader logic of fluidity that justifies the ritual process of consecration and initiation.

**Part III:**  
*The Seven Siddhi Texts as*  
***Mahāmudrā* Practical Canon**

**Chapter 9:**  
**Analysis of Sanskrit Manuscript Sources**  
**for *The Seven Siddhi Texts***

**I. Introduction**

In the preface to his 1925 edition of the *Sādhanamālā* Vol. I, Benoytosh Bhattacharya identified Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* and Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* as two of the most important works among the Sanskrit editions that were currently being prepared for publication in *Gaekwad's Oriental Series*.<sup>497</sup> Bhattacharya relied heavily upon these two works as well as Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* in his introduction to the second volume of his edition of the *Sādhanamālā*, where they played an integral role in his theorization of the origins of Vajrayāna Buddhist esoteric literature. Drawing upon Scheifner's work on Tāranātha's *History of Buddhism in India (Rgya gar chos 'byung)*, Sarat Chandra Das's edition of Sumpa Khenpo Yéshé Peljor's (Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor, 1704–1788) *Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree (Dpag bsam ljon bzang)*, and Palmyr Cordier's *Catalogue du Fonds Tibétain*,<sup>498</sup> Bhattacharya's introduction to the *Sādhanamālā Vol II* reconstructs a largely Tibetan vision of the development of the Vajrayāna in India that identifies *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and their authors as the progenitors of the movement.

Bhattacharya's introduction to the second volume of the *Sādhanamālā* takes the *Guhyasamājjatantra* as a textual marker for the origin of the Vajrayāna and then quickly

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<sup>497</sup> Benoytosh Bhattacharya, *Sādhanamālā* Vol. I (Baroda: Oriental Institute, first ed. 1925, reprint 1968), vi.

<sup>498</sup> Jo nang Tāranātha, *Geschichte des Buddhismus in Indien*, translated by Anton Schiefner (St. Petersburg: Keiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1869); Sum pa mkhan po ye shes dpal 'byor, *Pag sam jon zang (Dpag bsam ljon bzang)*: History of the Rise, Progress, and Downfall of Buddhism in India, edited by Sarat Chandra Das (Calcutta: The Presidency Jail Press, 1908); Palmyr Cordier, *Catalogue du Fonds Tibétain de la Bibliothèque Nationale* (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1915).



draws out the connection between this text and Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. It then moves to matters of geographical location, discussing the four *pīthas* of Kāmākhyā, Sirihatṭa, Pūrṇagiri, and Oḍiyāna,<sup>499</sup> referred to here as the "sacred spots of the Vajrayānists."<sup>500</sup> As he triangulates between Sumpa Khenpo's *Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree*, Cordier's *Tenjur* catalogue, and the Sanskrit manuscripts of a number of works belonging to the corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, he eventually settles on Oḍiyāna as the likely point of origin for the Vajrayāna, leaving its precise location unresolved but suggesting Bengal as a likely candidate.<sup>501</sup> He then presents his "Chronology of Vajrayāna," which he bases on two lineages, the first from Cordier's *Catalogue du fonds Tibetain* and the second from Sumpa Khenpo's *Auspicious Wish-Fulfilling Tree*. The former features all seven authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, adding an eighth, Līlavajra, between Lakṣmīnkarā and Dārikapāda.<sup>502</sup> Bhattacharya goes so far as to speculate on the time period in which the members of his lineage lists lived and provides dates from the seventh to the eighth century for the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Finally, he devotes some time to the doctrinal developments of the

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<sup>499</sup> Bhattacharya uses the spelling Uḍḍiyāna. I have adopted the spelling Oḍiyāna throughout this study because this is the spelling that appears in the Sanskrit colophons to a number of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.

<sup>500</sup> Benoytosh Bhattacharya, *Sādhnamālā* Vol II (Baroda: Oriental Institute, first ed. 1925, reprint 1968) xxxvii.

<sup>501</sup> Bhattacharya's decision to locate Oḍiyāna in Bengal stands as another example of a notable trend among scholars to locate this important *pītha* in close proximity to one's own area of research and expertise. As I have remarked elsewhere (Hirschberg, 2016), scholars who work on tantric traditions that privilege Oḍiyāna as an important point of origin tend to locate Oḍiyāna in the geographical location that grants maximal relevance to their own areas of expertise. This is not to say that there are no data to back up these positions, but given that the data at our disposal still has not truly resolved the problem of locating Oḍiyāna in medieval South Asia, there appears to be an implicit bias at work in many scholars' eventual decision to settle on one location over the other. Bhattacharya, a Bengali scholar, is no exception to this trend. The tradition's own normative rhetoric around Oḍiyāna as the quintessential source of the Vajrayāna appears in such cases to have made its way into the modern academic discourse on the history of these movements, whose authors appear to have felt it necessary to locate Oḍiyāna as close to the subjects they study as possible in order to garner some implicit sense of legitimacy for their own areas of expertise.

<sup>502</sup> Bhattacharya, *Sādhnamālā* Vol II, xl–xli.

Vajrayāna through the voices of these authors in brief synopses of *Guhyasiddhi*, *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, and *Jñānasiddhi*.<sup>503</sup>

It is likely that Benoytosh Bhattacharya was not fully aware that the narrative he presented on the origins and development of Vajrayāna Buddhism was in part a product of an older narrative preserved within particular sects in Tibet that considered *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to be the earliest treatises on the system of mantras (*mantranaya*) and their authors to be the progenitors of this tradition. Nor does it appear that Bhattacharya was aware that this argument was contested among Tibetan scholars.<sup>504</sup> Despite the fact that he does not seem to have been aware of their role in Tibetan historiography, he does appear to favor this account of the origins of the Vajrayāna. There are two likely reasons for this. First, Bhattacharya was at the time working on Sanskrit editions of Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* and Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* for publication in *Gaekwad's Oriental Series*, a project that came to fruition in 1929 with the publication of his *Two Vajrayāna Works*.<sup>505</sup> The introduction to *Two Vajrayāna Works* marks a continuation of the historical narrative outlined in the second volume of his edition of the *Sāadhanamālā*, rehearsing what have now become a number of rather well-known narrative tropes in his formulation of the Vajrayāna's role in Buddhism's decline in India.<sup>506</sup> The second reason, already alluded to above, is that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and their authors were indeed considered by some Tibetans to represent an important early tantric lineage from Oḍiyāna. Although Bhattacharya was not aware that three of the works upon which he drew in the introduction to his edition of the *Sāadhanamālā* are

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<sup>503</sup> Bhattacharya, *Sāadhanamālā* Vol II, xlviii–liii.

<sup>504</sup> Jo nang Tāranātha, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, translated by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya and edited by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1970), 344–45. Tāranātha goes on at some length here arguing against the notion *The Seven Siddhi Texts* represent the very first teachings of the *mantra* teachings.

<sup>505</sup> Benoytosh Bhattacharya ed., *Two Vajrayāna Works* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1929).

<sup>506</sup> See Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, 17–104.

considered part of a broader corpus of Indian *mahāmudrā* works or that the lineage list for the Oḍiyāna *siddhas* on which he based his argument for the origin of Vajrayāna Buddhism was closely related to this corpus, he still managed to parrot certain Tibetan etiological narratives that were invested in *The Seven Siddhi Texts'* claim to authority. This coincidence is likely a function of the role that Oḍiyāna plays in certain Indian and Tibetan accounts of the revelation of Buddhist esoteric literature<sup>507</sup> and the fact that the extant Sanskrit manuscripts for a number of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, at least one of which Bhattacharya certainly had in his possession, explicitly claim Oḍiyāna as the locus of activity for their authors.<sup>508</sup>

This influence from certain Tibetan factions regarding the origin of the Vajrayāna combined with his own exposure to seemingly early esoteric works like *Jñānasiddhi* that provided Sanskrit textual witnesses to their authors' geographical location in Oḍiyāna undoubtedly influenced Bhattacharya's own historical narrative. Perhaps it was also a bit of wishful thinking on his part that led him to emphasize the Oḍiyāna narrative, which conveniently located the authors of the two Sanskrit editions he was currently working on at the center of the emergence of the Vajrayāna. This certainly would have constituted an effective strategy to argue for the broad relevance his *Two Vajrayāna Works* might hold for opening up a field of study in what was then a relatively undervalued and poorly understood

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<sup>507</sup> For an excellent discussion of this topic, see Ronald M. Davidson, "Hidden Realms and Pure Abodes: Central Asian Buddhism as Frontier Religion in the Literature of India, Nepal, and Tibet," *Pacific World: Journal of the Institute of Buddhist Studies* 3 (2002): 153–81.

<sup>508</sup> Four of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* claim Oḍiyāna as their origin in their colophon or title information. Three of these are found in extant Sanskrit manuscripts for *Jñānasiddhi*, *Advayasiddhi*, and *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi*, while the fourth, Dārīka's *De kho na nyid gyi man ngag*, informs its reader that it is part of an Oḍiyāna lineage transmission in its extended title, *Dpal o rgyan nas byung ba gsang ba'i chen po de kho na nyid kyi man ngag* (\*Śrīoḍiyānanirgatayaguhyamahāguhyatattvopadeśa [sic.]). It is likely that Bhattacharya had copies of Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* and Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* in his possession if he had access to the Sanskrit manuscripts for *Guhyasiddhi*, *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, and *Jñānasiddhi* from the royal library in Nepal.

textual tradition. It is certainly the case that a great deal of important information on early Vajrayāna philosophy, ritual, and ascetic practices can be gathered from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, but it cannot be said that these texts offer anything in the way of a definitive data set for understanding Buddhist tantric literature. This literature is too vast and its authors often too committed to their own creative projects, to argue that any one Buddhist tantric work or corpus might provide definitive perspective on Vajrayāna Buddhism on the whole.

After Bhattacharya, Malati J. Shendge is the only other twentieth-century scholar to devote a significant amount of attention to any of the works contained among *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Shendge also seems to have been the first non-Tibetan scholar working with these materials in the modern period to realize that the Tibetan tradition considered them to be part of a unified corpus. She was also the first to speculate about this corpus' potential precursors among some of the Sanskrit multiple-text manuscripts preserved in Nepal. The introduction to her 1964 publication of Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* includes the following statement on this point:

The present work is included in a photographic collection of Buddhist Tantric manuscripts preserved in the library of the Oriental Institute, Baroda, along with some other relevant works, like *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, *Jñānasiddhi*, *Guhyasiddhi* etc. These texts seem to form a collection, as in the Tib. Trans. also they are found collected together in a series. This fact can be explained by a reference in the Blue Annals Vol II, p. 856 where a collection of seven *siddhis*, *grub pa sde bdun*, is mentioned which forms an important part of the teachings of *Vajrayāna*.<sup>509</sup>

Shendge would go on to publish an edition and translation of another short work contained among *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi*.<sup>510</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> Malati J. Shendge ed., *Advayasiddhi* (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1964), 5.

<sup>510</sup> Malati J. Shendge, ed., "Śrīśahasiddhi," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 10, no. 2/3 (1967): 126–49. Shendge also has included an edition and translation of Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhiḥ* in her 2004 publication of the *Ṣaṭsāhasrikāhevajraṭīkā*. See Malati J. Shendge ed., *Ṣaṭsāhasrikā-Hevajra-ṭīkā: A Critical Edition* (Delhi: Pratibha Prakashan, 2004), 289–309.

An important development had taken place between Bhattacharya's publication of his *Two Vajrayāna Works* and Shendge's editions and translations of *Advayasiddhi* and *Sahajasiddhi* that allowed her to make this connection—the publication in 1949 of George Roerich's translation of the Tibetan scholar Gö Lotsawa Zhön nu Pel's (Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal 1392–1481) *The Blue Annals (Deb ther sngon po)*.<sup>511</sup> Shendge's 1964 publication of *Advayasiddhi* follows the above comments with an excerpt from the most detailed account in *The Blue Annals* on the Indian paṇḍita Vajrapāṇi's (Rgya gar phyag na, c. 11<sup>th</sup> century CE) transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to Tibet. The incredible influence that Roerich's translation of *The Blue Annals* has had on the study of the history of Buddhism in Tibet cannot be underestimated. This is particularly true of the extensive information that this work contains on the period of concern here, that of the 'later spreading' (*phyi dar*) of the Buddhist dharma in Tibet from roughly the mid–eleventh century to the visit of the so-called 'last paṇḍita' Vanaratna (14<sup>th</sup>–15<sup>th</sup> century CE) in the first half of the fifteenth century. As chapter eleven demonstrates, the account of Vajrapāṇi's teaching of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* is not the only example of this corpus' transmission to Tibet that is recorded in *The Blue Annals*, it is simply the most obvious one. Shendge's observations highlight that Roerich's translation of *The Blue Annals* has been critical to identifying the historical significance of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and its two Indian *mahāmudrā* corpora, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence (Snying po skor drug)* and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement (Yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor)*. However, Roerich's translation also created some barriers to fully exploring the transmission of this lineage by misidentifying these corpora in a number of locations throughout Gö Lotsawa's *Blue Annals*.

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<sup>511</sup> Gos lo tsā ba gzhon nu dpal, *The Blue Annals (Deb ther sngon po)*, translated by George N. Roerich (Calcutta: Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949).

Bhattacharya and Shendge's early work on several of the works contained among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* demonstrates their progressive recognition as part of a unified corpus. Toward the end of the twentieth-century, The Central Institute for Higher Tibetan Studies published a new edition of the Sanskrit and Tibetan texts for six of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a part of its Rare Buddhist Text Project. This diplomatic edition has been an invaluable resource for the current study. However, the editors and translators of this edition also appear either to have overlooked their primary significance among the Kagyü schools of Tibetan Buddhism as a corpus of Indian *mahāmudrā* works. In this way all of these sources, perhaps following Bhattacharya's lead, have considered these important works for understanding the history of Vajrayāna Buddhism *broadly conceived* and neglected to acknowledge their importance as a *mahāmudrā* corpus in Tibet and, quite possibly, South Asia.

This problem might be attributed to the mistranslation of a particular Tibetan contracted compound that is used throughout *The Blue Annals* and elsewhere to denote the entire set of early *mahāmudrā* corpora, a grouping that Roger Jackson has convincingly argued constitutes the oldest strata of the Indian *mahāmudrā* canon.<sup>512</sup> The Tibetan titles *Drup pa Dédün* (*Grub pa sde bdun*) and *Nyingpo Kordruk* (*Snying po skor drug*) are frequently referred to in Tibetan sources with the collapsed compounds *Drupnying* (*Grub snying*), *Drupnying Kor* (*Grub snying skor*), or *Drupnying gi Kor* (*Grub snying gi skor*). This shortened title is universally mistranslated in both academic and non-academic writing as something along the lines of "*The Essence of Attainment*," and is often taken as shorthand for Saraha's *dohā* trilogy.

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<sup>512</sup> Roger R. Jackson, "The Indian Mahāmudrā 'Canon(s)': A Preliminary Sketch," in *The Indian International Journal of Buddhist Studies* 9 (2008): 151–84.

Non-Tibetan authors and translators are not the only ones to conflate the *Nyingpo Kordruk* and the *Nyingpo Korsum*. The recently discovered copy of *The Great Treasury of Drikung Kagyü Teachings* ('Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo),<sup>513</sup> for example, makes precisely this mistake on its original, hand-written title page (see figure 5).

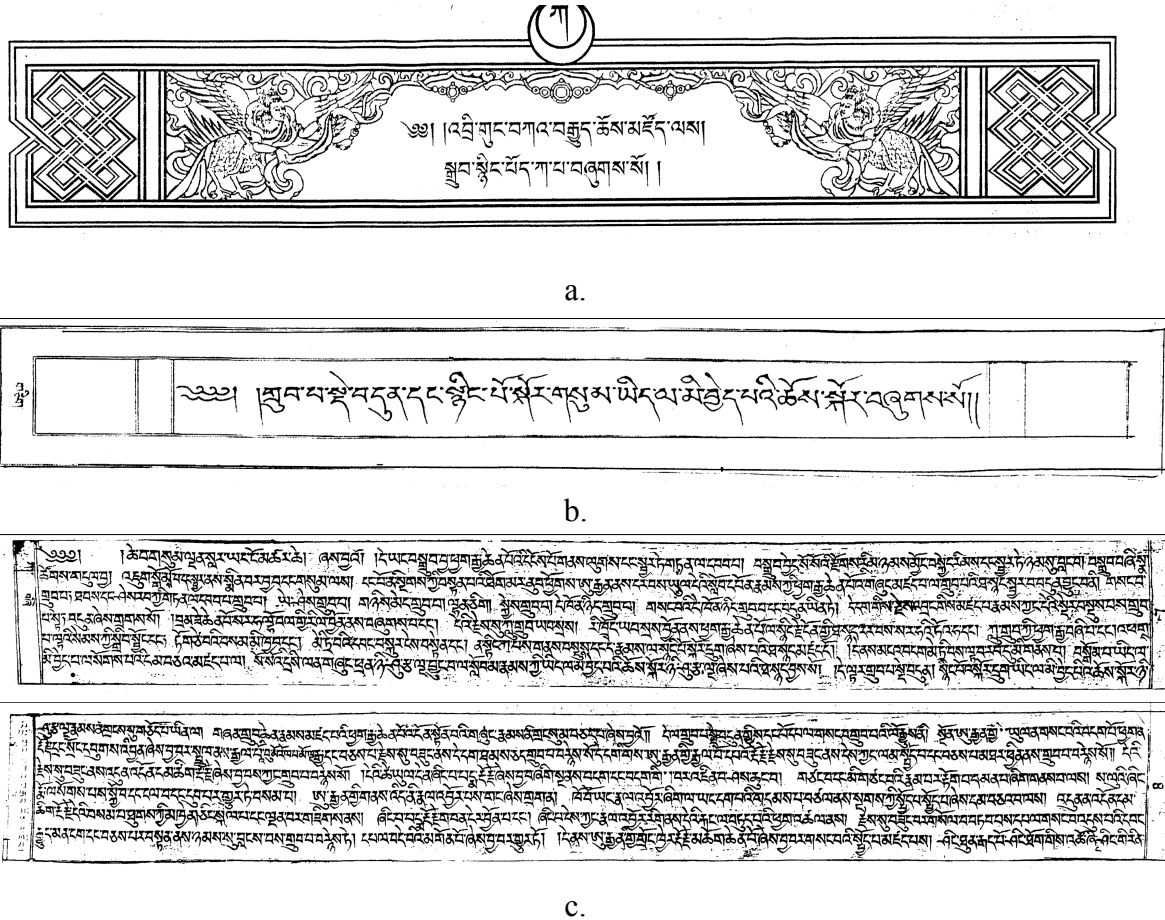


Figure 5:  
 a. The modern, computer generated title page for the first volume of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* bearing the title "Volume Ka: The Drupnying" (*Sgrub snying pod ka pa bzhugs so*)  
 b. The hand-written title page to the manuscript of volume one of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*  
 c. Folios 4r.2–4r.5 of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*, clearly list the contents of the volume as *The Seven Siddhi Texts* (*Grub pa sde bdun*), *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po skor drug*) and Maitrīpa's *Twenty-five works on Mental Non-Engagement* (*Yid la mi byed pa nyi shu rtsa lnga*).

<sup>513</sup> Sørensen and Dolma argue that this massive set of texts may have been printed in Xining, while Mathes has reported comments from the current 'Bri gung khyab dgon che tshang rin po che that the seventeenth abbot of 'Bri gung kun dga' rin chen (1475–1527) was likely responsible for inaugurating the project. See Per K. Sørensen and Sonam Dolma, *Rare Texts from Tibet: Seven Sources for the Ecclesiastical History of Medieval Tibet*, Publications of the Lumbini International Research Institute, Reichert Verlag (Lumbini, Nepal: Wiesbaden-Lumbini International Research Institute, Bharahawa, 2007), 9. And also Klaus-Dieter Mathes. "A Summary and Topical Outline of the *Sekanirdeśapañjika*," 367.

This original title page notes that the contents of the volume are *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, *Threefold Corpus on the Essence*, and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-engagement* (*grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*) when in fact the first volume contains *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Advayavajra/Maitrīpa's works on *Mental Non-Engagement*, and their attendant corpus, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po skor drug*). *The Threefold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po skor gsum*) that the scribe for this volume has mistakenly included on its cover page is actually the alternate title for Saraha's *dohā* trilogy. Figure 5c demonstrates that this is clearly not the subject of the first volume in *The Great Treasury of Drikung Kagyü Teachings*, indicating that the Tibetan scribe (or perhaps subsequent generations of scribes and redactors) committed the very same error that is so common among modern authors and translators of identifying the shortened compound *Drupnying Kor* (*Grub snying skor*) and its derivatives with the cycle of Saraha's three *dohā*.<sup>514</sup>

When the erroneous attribution on its title page is corrected to match the content of the volume, *The Great Treasury of Drikung Kagyü Teachings* provides a clear example of the proper interpretation and translation of the compounded title *Drupnying* and its derivatives, and it is through this document that I first came to suspect that this compound has been widely misunderstood and mistranslated. Roerich's translation of *The Blue Annals* consistently mistakes the various formulations of this compound as an alternate name for Saraha's *dohā*. This confusion likely stems from the fact that Saraha's *King*, *Queen*, and *People's Dohā* are sometimes also considered a short Indian *mahāmudrā* corpus in their own right referred to as the *Nyingpo Korsum* (*Snying po skor gsum*) or *Threefold Corpus on the*

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<sup>514</sup> A mgon rin po che ed. "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor," in *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo* vol. 1; ka no. 1 (Lhasa: S.N. 2004) 1r; 4r.2–4v.1.



*Essence*. To complicate things further, the first work in the *Nyingpo Kordruk* is often listed as Saraha's *Dohākoṣagīti*, making it even easier to confuse the term '*Nying*' as a stand-in for Saraha's *dohā* trilogy when one reads or translates the compounds *Drupnying*, *Drupnying Kor* or *Drubnying gi Kor*. The identification of the compound with Saraha's *dohā* works is thus not entirely inaccurate, but it neglects the fact that various formulations of the compound *Drubnying gi Kor* actually signify a more diverse set of texts.<sup>515</sup>

*The Seven Siddhi Texts* are believed to only have taken shape as a known corpus when they were transmitted to Tibet. In this chapter, I begin to challenge this position by examining the material evidence for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of a known corpus in South Asian Sanskrit sources. Through a philological analysis of a number of extant Sanskrit witnesses to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, I offer data in support of Shendge's hypothesis that there is in fact evidence for a known set of seven works bearing the titles '*siddhi*' that appear together along with a number of other works in the extant Sanskrit multiple-text manuscripts<sup>516</sup> from Nepal.

## II. Philological Evidence for Nepali Precursors to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*

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<sup>515</sup> There is some reason to believe that the identification of the *Drupnying* (etc.) with Sarāha's three *dohā* was itself a convention among the Geluk (*dge lugs*) school. The list of works contained in this collection that is found in fourth Panchen Lama Chökyi Gyeltsen's (Blo gsang Pan chen chos kyi rgyal mtshan 1570–1662) works on *mahāmudrā* identify the '*Nying*' in the title *Drupnying* and its derivatives with Sarāha's *dohā*. His listing of the *Drup pa Dédün* is included in figure 11 in chapter eleven of this dissertation. If this was a convention among the Geluk *mahāmudrā* tradition, it is surprising that it made its way into Roerich's translation of *The Blue Annals*, which was done with a great deal of input from the twentieth-century Geluk scholar Gendün Chöpel (Dge 'dun chos dpal, 1903–1951).

<sup>516</sup> Florinda De Simini has recently published an article on the consideration of Nepali 'multiple text manuscripts' as potentially reflective of a Nepali manuscript culture that was concerned with the generation and dissemination of short, accessible, yet comprehensive corpora of works. De Simini's comments to this effect are posited in reference to the multiple-text manuscripts of the *Śivadharmasāstra* and *Śivadharmottara* in Nepal. See Florinda De Simini, *Śivadharmā Manuscripts from Nepal and the Making of a Śaiva Corpus* (Napoli: Istituto Universitario Orientale Napoli, 2016).

The Sanskrit manuscript sources for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* used in this study have been gathered from the Nepal National Archive in Kathmandu and the Shantarakshita Library at the Central University for Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India. The staff at the Shantarakshita Library also kindly provided electronic copies of the relevant manuscripts from the International Association for the Study of World Religions' (henceforth IASWR) Buddhist Sanskrit Texts microfilming project. I have unfortunately not yet obtained copies of the manuscripts indicated in Bhattacharya and Shendge's work that are held at the archives in Baroda and Calcutta. However, judging from remarks made by these authors regarding the manuscripts at their disposal, it appears that their sources preserved the same general pattern to which the Nepali manuscripts bear witness and, in some cases, may have even been copies of the very same multiple-text manuscripts housed in Nepal. The following analysis of Sanskrit multiple-text manuscripts containing works included among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* begins with those currently held in the Nepal National Archive. My contact with these sources has been through microfilm and electronic copies of microfilm, and I have not yet had the opportunity to examine the original copies in person. As a result, much of the material data presented here has been derived from the Nepali-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (henceforth NGMCP) database. The Nepali manuscripts are analyzed in the order in which their reel numbers occur in the NGMCP database, unless, as is the case with one witness, I have found that the same manuscript has been microfilmed and catalogued a second time under a different NGMCP reel number. This analysis is followed by a brief consideration of the IASWR manuscripts of *Guhyasiddhi*, *Jñānasiddhi*, and *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*.

The first manuscript to appear in the NGMCP microfilm reel series, NGMCP A 117/5, is catalogued under the title *Sahajasiddhitattvasiddhi*, but the actual title page for the work contains three layers of notation. The first layer can be identified because it is an orthographic match for the scribal hand for the manuscript itself as well as the shorthand title listed on each of the manuscript's folios. This original layer bears the abbreviated title "Śrīḥ Bu Prā Tam." This appears to be the manuscript that Shendge used from the Bir Library in Nepal for her edition of Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi*, where she speculates that the title may be shorthand for the terms "Bauddha prācinā tantra." Shendge's record of the markings "Bu tam" and "guru" appearing alongside the folio numbers on the upper left and lower right side on the recto side of each folio also matches NGMCP A 117/5, making it almost certain that this is the manuscript that she used.<sup>517</sup> The other two titles recorded on this manuscript's cover page both read "*Sahajasiddhi*" and are recorded once in a roughly penned modern Devanāgarī written above the original scribe's title and once on a cataloguing strip at the bottom of the page bearing a version of the work's old National Archive Kathmandu (henceforth NAK) accession number 3/755, recorded here both in Devanāgarī as त्र/755 and with its corresponding romanized alpha-numerical C/755. The NGMCP database records the dimensions of the manuscript as 30x12 cm, notes a total count of 18 folios, and has catalogued the text under the subject matter "Bauddhadarsana." The contents of this multiple-text manuscript are as follows:

1. *Sahajasiddhiḥ* Ḍombīheruka folios 1r.1– 2v.1
2. *Vyaktabhāvānugatatattvasiddhiḥ* folios 2v.1–6r.1
3. *Śrītattvasiddhināmaprakāraṇampravṛtatantra* folios 6r.1–14r.9
4. *Acintyādvayakramopadeśaḥ* folios 14r.9–18r.10

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<sup>517</sup> Shendge, "Śrīśahajasiddhi," 126.

The verso side of the manuscript's final folio records the date that this copy was produced as "Śrī sam[vat] 1971," corresponding to the year 1914 CE. At one point the pagination on this copy of the manuscript skips from folio 17r to folio 18r, but no actual content is missing.

The second multiple-text manuscript, NGMCP A 134/2, is catalogued with the title *Guhyasiddhyādināgārjunapādādi*. The dimensions of the manuscript are recorded at 31x12.5 cm and the work is noted as containing a total of 48 folios, though the folio count provided on the manuscript itself ends at folio 49r. The materials for the manuscript are not specified, the work is written in Devanāgarī, it is classified under the subject heading 'Bauddha (*vividha*)' or 'various Buddhist [works],' and it bears the NAK accession number 5/45. The folio numeration is recorded in the upper left and lower right of each recto folio side, along with the word '*rāmaḥ*' written in the lower right. The manuscript contains a table of contents listing the following ten works, for which I have provided more precise folio numeration:

1. *Guhyasiddhiḥ* folios 2–14v.1
2. *Advayasiddhiḥ* folios 14v.1–15r.12
3. *Jñānasiddhiḥ* Indrabhūtipāda iti folios 15r.12–29r.5
4. *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhiḥ* Anaṅgavajra folios 29r.5–33v.2
5. *Sahajasiddhiḥ* Herukapāda iti folios 33v.2–34v.4
6. *Tattvasiddhiḥ* folios 34v.4–37r.10
7. *Tattvasiddhiḥ* Śāntarakṣitaḥ folios 37r.10–44r.8
8. *Advayakramopadeśaḥ* Kuddālapādaḥ folios 44r.8–47r.3
9. *Samayamudrā* Nāgārjunaḥ folios 47r.3–48r.10
10. *Sekanirṇayaḥ* Advayavajraḥ folios 48r.10–49r.9

The manuscript is missing its entire first folio covering the opening verses of *Guhyasiddhi* corresponding in the Sarnath edition to *Guhyasiddhi* 1.1–40ab. The sixth text in the above list that is given the title *Tattvasiddhi* corresponds to Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi*. The work labeled *Samayamudrā* by Nāgārjunapāda derives its title from the section colophon as it appears in the manuscript

(*samayamudrāpurūṣakāraphalanirdeśaḥ*).<sup>518</sup> This corresponds to the sixth work in Shastri's 1927 *Advayavajrasaṃgraha* and the eighth work in the Taisho edition of the same group of manuscripts, to which both assign the title *Caturmudrā*.<sup>519</sup> Shastri, correctly identifying the title *Samayamudrāpurūṣakāraphalanirdeśa* as the title for only the fourth section in the discussion the four *mudrā* in this work (and not the title of the text itself) seems to have initiated the convention of referring to this work as the *Caturmudrā*. He justified this decision based on his reported possession of another manuscript copy of the work bearing the title *Caturmudropadeśa* that is attributed to Nāgārjuna. Unfortunately Shastri does not provide a citation for his source, and also appears to have conflated this work with the Tibetan translation of the *Chakgya Shi Mengak* (*Phyag rgya bzhi'i man ngag*, \**Caturmudropadeśa*) included among Advayavajra's *Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement* (*Yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor*) in the *Tenjyur*. This work is not, however, the same work by Advayavajra that appears among the *Tenjyur* under the title *Chakgya Shi Mengak*, and the problem with Shastri's analysis here might cast further doubt on his alleged possession of a Sanskrit manuscript of a *Caturmudropadeśa* that is explicitly attributed to Nāgārjuna.<sup>520</sup>

This particular multiple-text manuscript was microfilmed and catalogued twice by the NGMCP staff. Its second copy appears in the NGMCP microfilm database under the reel numbers A 915/3 with the title *Paramārtha(...)**tantrasadbhāvaguhyasiddhi* and the title

<sup>518</sup> Nāgārjuna, "Samayamudrā," in *Guhyasiddhyādināgārjunapādādi*, NGMCP A 134/2 (Kathmandu: Nepal National Archive, 1914), 48r.10; and Nāgārjuna, "Samayamudra," in *Tattvasiddhisekanirṇaya*, NGMCP 915/3 (Kathmandu: Nepal National Archive, 1914), 48r.10.

<sup>519</sup> Advayavajra, *Advayavajrasaṃgraha*, edited by Hariprasad Shastri (Baroda: Oriental Institute, 1927), 32–35; and Advayavarja, "Advayavajrasaṃgraha—New Critical Edition with Japanese Translation," *Annual of the Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism Taisho University* No. 11, edited by Mikkyō Seiten Kenyūkai (Tokyo: The Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University, March 1989), 253–39.

<sup>520</sup> Advayavajra (Shastri ed.), *Advayavajrasaṃgraha*, ix–x.

*Tattvasiddhisekanirṇaya* on its NGMCP microfilm catalogue card. The fact that this is indeed a duplicate photo-representation of the same manuscript and that the duplication process occurred over the course of the NGMCP microfilming project is clearly the case given that both copies share the same original NAK accession number (NAK 5/45). NGMCP A 915/3 appears to have been microfilmed second, as this microfilm copy contains some additional notation in the upper left of its table of contents page that is not visible in NGMCP A 134/2. The information card for the second cataloguing provides a bit more data on the manuscript, noting the materials used as light brown and yellow loose-leaf Nepali paper (likely describing the color on the recto and verso of each folio) and that the manuscript was procured for microfilming from the private collection at the Royal Manuscript Library (*rastrīya abhilekhālaya*). It also provides a microfilming date of July 30, 1984.

The next two manuscripts have separate NGMCP catalogue numbers but are actually part of a single multiple-text manuscript. The first, NGMCP A 137/4 is listed as *Guhyasiddhyāḍijñānasiddhi[sāadhanopāyikā]* in the NGMCP database, but the NGMCP microfilm information card simply titles the work *Guhyasiddhi*. The actual text of Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, however, does not appear in this section of the manuscript. Instead, the microfilm for A 137/4 begins on folio 20v with a verse corresponding to *Advayasiddhi* 18b in the Sarnath edition. The recto of each folio is marked with a folio numeration in the upper-left and lower-right corner with the words '*guhya*' and '*siddhi*' above each number respectively. No table of contents is provided, but the titles and folio numbers for each work are as follows:

1. *Advayasiddhiḥ* folios 20v.1–21r.4 (fragment, beginning with *AS* 18.b)
2. *Jñānasiddhiḥ* folios 21r.4–41r.6 (folio numeration skips 40v)
3. *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhiḥ* folios 41r.6–41r.10 (four-line fragment)

The manuscript appears to skip folio 40v in its numeration, but no actual material is missing.

The next manuscript was procured from the Shantarakshita Library at CUTS where it is catalogued under the title *Guhyasiddhi* and bears the NGMCP reel number A 1012/5. This NGMCP number no longer appears to be valid, and is the current reel number for a manuscript of the *Varāhapurāṇa* bearing the NAK accession number 6/882. The manuscript's NGMCP microfilm information card does indeed record the reel number as A 1012/5, with the title *Guhyasiddhādijñānasiddhi* [sic.] and the NAK accession number of 4/71. This NAK accession number matches NGMCP A 137/4, and this manuscript should in fact be collated with NGMCP A 137/4 as it matches this witness in both its orthography and content. Figures #### and #### below demonstrate the orthographic match between these two manuscripts and show that folio 20r of NGMCP A 1012/5 breaks at precisely the same verse of *Advayasiddhi* that picks up again in NGMCP A 137/4.

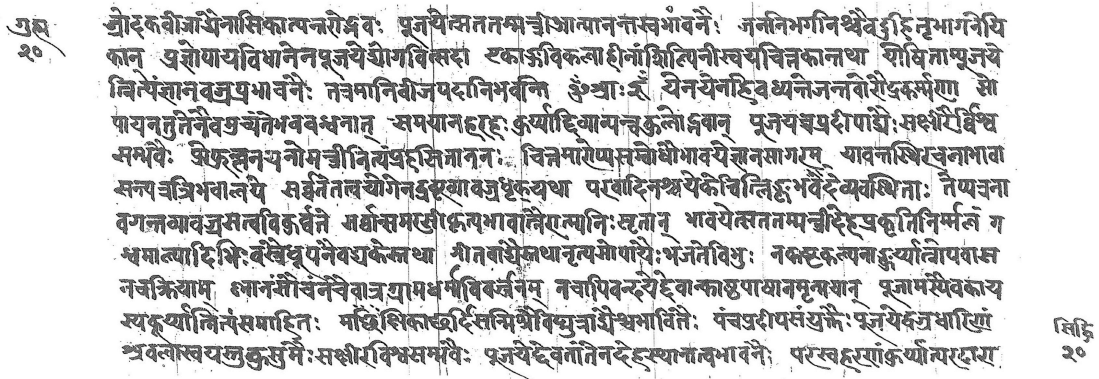


Figure 6: final folio 20r of NGMCP A 1012/5 reading *parasvaharaṇam kuryāt paradārā* (courtesy of the Shantarakshita Library at CUTS, Sarnath)

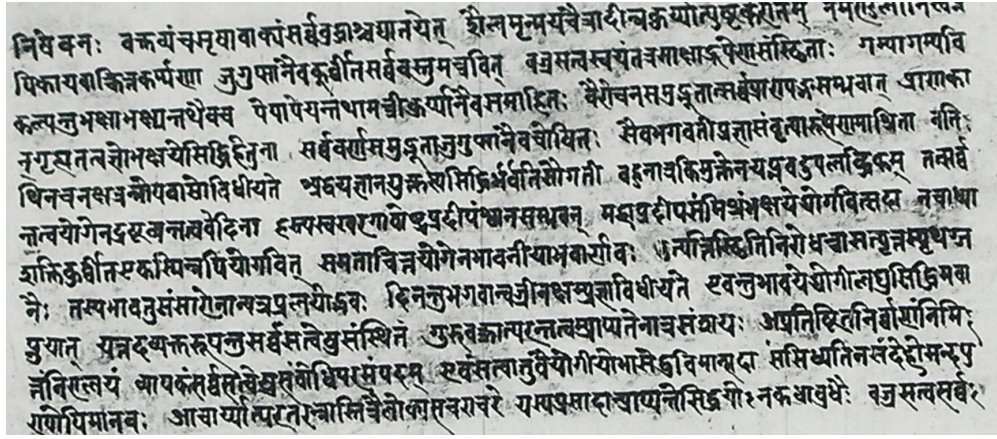


Figure 7: first folio 20v of NGMCP A 137/4 reading *niṣevanaḥ* | (photo courtesy of the Nepal National Archive, Kathmandu)

By combining the two folios depicted in figures 6 and 7, we get the verse *parasvahanam kuryāt paradārāniṣevanaḥ* | Translated as "One should steal the property of others, One should have sex with others' wives, |" which corresponds to *Advayasiddhiḥ* 18ab in the Sarnath edition.

This set of microfilm contains the opening twenty folios for NAK 4/71 which bear witness to the following texts:

1. *Guhyasiddhiḥ* folios 2r.1–19v.9
2. *Advayasiddhiḥ* folios 19v.9–20r.11 (fragment picks up again in A 137/4)

This copy of *Guhyasiddhi* is also missing its first folio, and begins at precisely the same spot as the copy of *Guhyasiddhi* preserved in NGMCP A 134/2 (also NGMCP A 915/3)

corresponding to *Guhyasiddhi* 1.1–40ab in the Sarnath edition. Unlike NGMCP A 134/2 which begins with folio 2r, this manuscript begins with folio 2v, indicating that the missing material here may have included a title page with the missing material constituting the first forty verses of *Guhyasiddhi* taking up folio 1v–2r. It is telling that exactly the same material is omitted in both NGMCP A 134/2 and NGMCP A 1012/5. Both versions of the text start at exactly the same location, in the middle of the compound '[*vañcanā*]baddhacetasa'

corresponding to the final five syllables of *Guhyasiddhi* 40b in the Sarnath edition. One potential explanation is that the manuscripts derive from the same stemma, which itself was already missing the opening material of *Guhyasiddhi* when it was copied. However if this were the case, why would the folio numbers not match as well? Moreover, how is it possible



that the microfilm technicians could have had NGMCP A 1012/5 folio 2v in their possession and *not* folio 2r? These questions cannot currently be answered with the materials at hand. What is clear is that NGMCP A 1012/5 provides the missing opening material to NGMCP A 137/4, and that the collated manuscript is in likely some way related to NGMCP A 134/2. If this is a direct relationship, we can speculate that the collated manuscript NGMCP A 1012/5-A 137/4 is itself still incomplete, which is already indicated by the fact that it concludes with a four-line fragment of the opening verse of Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīscayasiddhi*. When we combine these manuscripts, the order in which the texts appear in NGMCP A 1012/5 and A 137/4 matches the order in which they appear in NGMCP A 134/2, from which we can assume that the combined manuscripts of NGMCP A 1012/5 and A 137/4 could also constitute another multiple-text manuscript containing the entire grouping of ten works witnessed in NGMCP A 134/2. If future research on these manuscripts is able to justify this argument, that means that NGMCP A 1012/5-A 137/4 provides the second witness to a multiple-text manuscript containing nearly all of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.

The final multiple-text manuscript is catalogued as NGMCP E 1474/4 and does not have a corresponding NAK accession number, likely because the manuscript was sourced from the private library of M.V. Vajrācārya and was only microfilmed as part of the NGMCP project. It is catalogued under the subject 'B [i.e. Bauddha] tantra' and contains a total of sixty-three folios on 27.7x9.9 cm loose leaf Nepali paper. The manuscript is written in Newāri script and its NGMCP microfilm information card bears the title *Jñānasiddhi*. It is catalogued in the NGMCP online database, however, under the titles of the eight different works that it contains, perhaps due to the fact that the folios in the microfilm scan of the

manuscript are jumbled and completely out of order. The first folio of the manuscript, which for some reason has been given the numeration folio 1r (most likely by the microfilm technicians) actually begins with the conclusion to *Jñānasiddhi* chapter sixteen. Fortunately, the NGMCP microfilm technicians did provide the following list of titles, no doubt derived from the colophon material that one finds scattered throughout the manuscript:

1. *Jñānasiddhiḥ*
2. *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhiḥ*
3. *Sahajasiddhiḥ*
4. *Mantranītiśāstraparamarahasya*
5. *Tattvasiddhināmaprakaraṇam*
6. *Acintyādvayakramopadeśaḥ*
7. *Samayamudrāpuruṣakārāphalanirdeśaḥ Nāgārjunapāda*
8. *Śekanirnaya*
9. Folio 1 (?) A: *Jñānasiddhau upāyaniddeśanaparichedaḥ śidaśamaḥ* [sic]

Here the microfilm technicians catalogued Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* under the alternate title from its Sanskrit colophon, *Mantranītiśāstraparamarahasya*, whereas above in NGMCP A 134/2 the same work is listed with the title *Tattvasiddhi*. All of these works are jumbled out of order and the entire microfilm of the manuscript needs to be re-organized. However, if the order of works listed above by the microfilm technicians is in fact correct, it appears that this manuscript may preserve yet another witness to the same multiple-text manuscript group as NGMCP A 134/2 and NGMP A 1012/5-A 137/4 that is missing only the opening two works *Guhyasiddhi* and *Advayasiddhi*.

The correspondences between all of the various manuscript sources analyzed above are made evident here in figure 8.

	A 117/5	A 134/2	A 137/4	A 915/3	A 1012/5	E 1474/4
<i>Guhyasiddhi</i>		X		X	X	
<i>Advayasiddhi</i>		X	X	X	X	
<i>Jñānasiddhi</i>		X	X	X		X
<i>Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi</i>		X	X	X		X

<i>Sahajasiddhi</i>	X	X		X		X
<i>Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi</i>	X	X		X		X
<i>Tattvasiddhi</i> of Śāntaraksita	X	X		X		X
<i>Acintyādvayakramopadeśa</i>	X	X		X		X
<i>Samayamudrā</i> of Nāgārjuna		X		X		X
<i>Sekanirṇaya</i> of Advayavajra		X		X		X

Figure 8: Chart of multiple-text manuscripts held in the Nepal National Archives containing works from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*

This analysis of the manuscript sources currently available to me from the Nepal National Archive confirms Shendge's suspicion that there was a known set of seven texts bearing the title '*siddhi*' that correspond almost exactly to the set of seven works listed in Gö Lotsawa's account in *The Blue Annals of The Seven Siddhi Texts* that were transmitted by Advayavajra/Maitrīpa's disciple Vajrapāṇi. The one intact witness to this collection preserved in NGMCP A 134/2 (also NGMCP A 915/3) supplies an ordering of ten works that is repeated throughout the other available multiple-text manuscripts, albeit in fragmentary form. Thus if this ordering is applied to NGMCP A 117/5, the collated NGMCP A 1012/5-A 137/4, and NGMCP E 1474/4, it appears possible that these constitute three additional witnesses to a multiple-text manuscript containing an identical grouping of texts.

A final piece of evidence for this grouping of '*siddhi*' texts, although less substantial than those presented above, can be found among the IASWR manuscripts of *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi* (IASWR MBB 7-3), *Jñānasiddhi* (IASWR MBB 7-4), and *Guhyasiddhi* (IASWR MBB 7-5).<sup>521</sup> These three manuscripts appear to constitute a set of works that are likely copies of Nepali originals. All three are written by the same hand in modern Devanāgarī and formatted according to a western bound-book style, with material

<sup>521</sup> The IASWR microfilm project contains two other manuscripts related to this project, but not related to this group of three manuscripts. These are IASWR MBB 7-8, which is catalogued under the title *Sahajasiddhisamgraha* and corresponds to the Newāri manuscript NGMCP E 1474/4 where it is catalogued under the title *Jñānasiddhyādi/Jñānasiddhi*. Unfortunately the folios in both microfilm versions are also out of order. The second is IASWR MBB II-236, a Newāri manuscript of Kuḍḍālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*. This manuscript is also catalogued in the NGMCP database for the Nepal National Archive as E 1515/11.

distributed on the left and right side instead of the recto and verso of each folio. IASWR MBB 7–5 is of particular interest in that it preserves the only complete version of Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* of which I am aware, supplying the verses corresponding to *Guhyasiddhi* 1.1–40ab in the Sarnath edition that are missing in all of the other extant microfilm copies of *Guhyasiddhi* currently housed in the Nepal National Archive. The microfilming for the IASWR project was conducted more than a decade prior to the NGMCP microfilming project. This means that if the one complete copy of *Guhyasiddhi* that survives in the IASWR collection is in fact from Nepali source, either identical to or derived from the same stemma as the witnesses attested above, the copyist for the IASWR project had access to these sources before the opening verses of *Guhyasiddhi* were either lost, for reasons unknown to us, were removed from the manuscripts received by the NGMCP microfilm technicians. If they share the same stemma, this means that the front material for *Guhyasiddhi* in those multiple-text manuscripts that currently begin with the fragmentary verse 40b could have been intact perhaps only a little over a decade before the fragmented versions were microfilmed and catalogued by the NGMCP.

These three works are clearly part of a set, but at first glance it seems that the ordering of the texts as they appear in the IASWR catalogue contradicts the ordering of this collection in the Nepali sources that seem to follow the standard that appears in NGMCP A 134/2. However, figure 9 reveals that the final folio of *Guhyasiddhi* in IASWR MBB 7-5 offers a piece of evidence that may indicate otherwise.

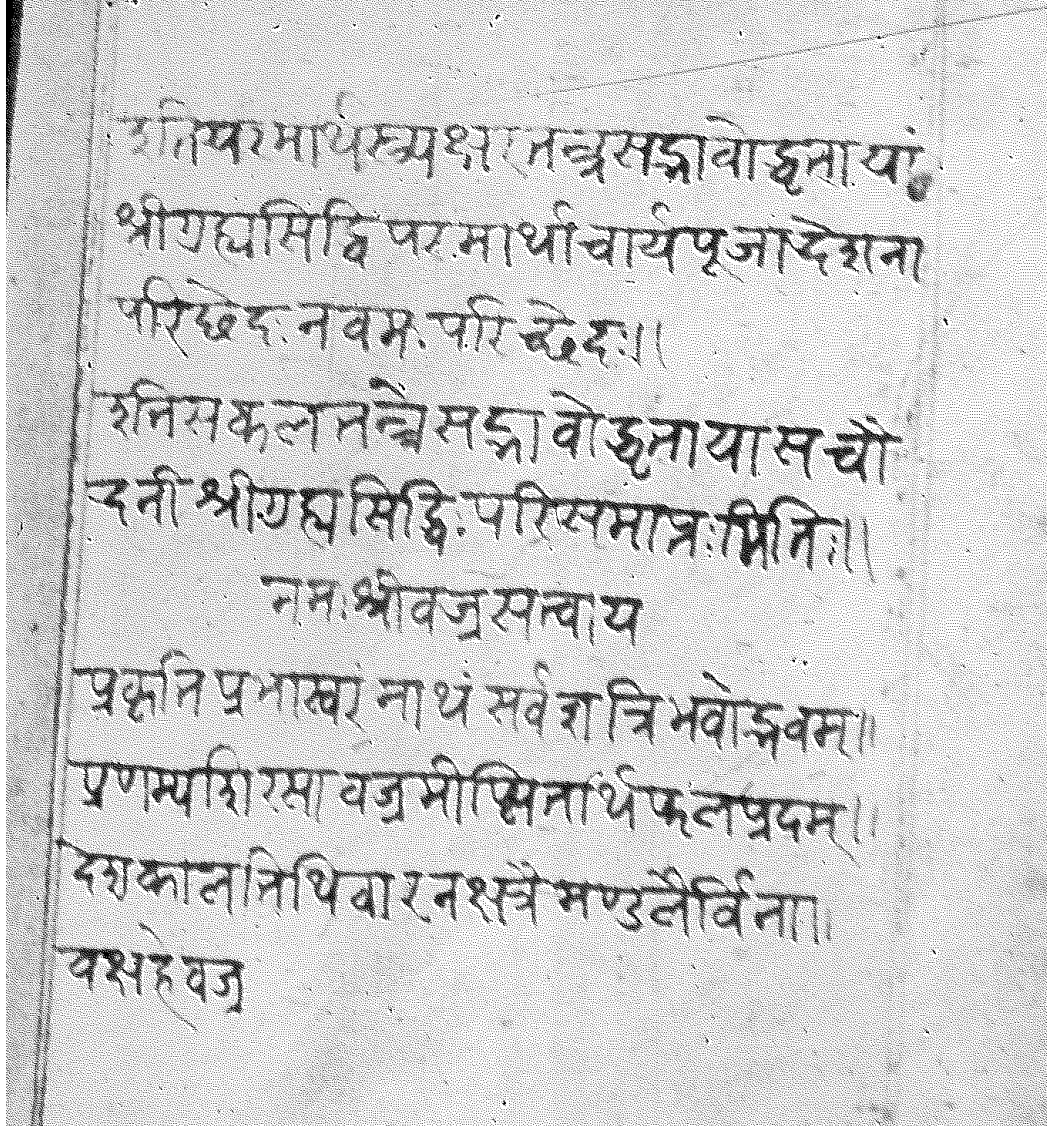


Figure 9: final folio of IASWR MBB 7-5 *Guhyasiddhih*, courtesy of the Shantarakshita Library at The Central University for Tibetan Studies in Sarnath, India

This folio shows us the final verse of *Guhyasiddhi* chapter nine followed by the text's colophon material, but the copyist appears to have continued on to a work that immediately followed the colophon to *Guhyasiddhi* in the original source. As it happens, the fragment of text added on the final folio of IASWR MBB 7-5 corresponds to the opening verses of Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* 1–2a in the Sarnath edition. We can infer, then, that the copyist for IASWR MBB 7-5, being the same copyist for MBB 7-3 and MBB 7-4, had in their possession a source text in which Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* was immediately followed by

Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi* and, perhaps in haste, mistakenly continued on to the next text in the original manuscript before realizing the error. The multiple-text manuscripts preserved in the Nepal National Archive testify to an ordering that places *Guhyasiddhi* as the first work in a series of seven '*siddhi*' texts followed by Lakṣmīnkarā's *Advayasiddhi*. Thus we might make the tentative case that the ordering of these three texts in the IASWR catalogue is arbitrary, and that they may have been copied from a collection of manuscripts that followed the ordering preserved across the Nepali multiple-text manuscript witnesses. If this is the case, then one of the collections of '*siddhi*' texts contained in the Nepali manuscript sources for which I have argued above, albeit in a more complete form than we receive them today, could easily have served as the source text for the copies preserved in the IASWR microfilm collection.

To conclude, analysis of the extant manuscripts from the Nepal National Archive available to me that contain works included among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* confirms that there was a known set of seven works bearing the title '*siddhi*' that survives in multiple Sanskrit works in Nepal. The ordering and titles of this group of seven '*siddhi*' works, following the one intact witness to the collection preserved in NGMCP A 134/2, is as follows:

1. *Guhyasiddhiḥ* of Padmavajra
2. *Advayasiddhiḥ* of Lakṣmīnkarā
3. *Jñānasiddhiḥ* of Indrabhūti
4. *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhiḥ* of Anaṅgavajra
5. *Shajasiddhiḥ* of Dombīheruka
6. [*Vyaktabhāvānugata*]*tattvasiddhiḥ* of Yoginī Cintā
7. *Tattvasiddhiprakaraṇaḥ* of Śāntarakṣitaḥ

The ordering of these seven texts does not exactly correspond to their ordering in Tibetan sources. Also, one of these works, Śāntarakṣita's *Tattvasiddhiprakaraṇa*, does not make it

into any of the Tibetan lists of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* of which I am aware. However, it does replace a text by a similar title, Dārikapāda's *Dekhona Nyigyī Mengak* (*De kho na nyid gyi man ngag*, \**Tattvasiddhyopadeśa*), that constitutes the seventh work among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the standard Tibetan canonical list of the corpus. The fact that six of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* appear here as a group, and the fact that they appear among a collection containing at least three more texts that Tibetan traditions include among corpora related to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, namely Kuddālapāda *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*, Nāgārjuna's *Caturmudrā* (both counted among *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*), and the *Sekanirṇaya* of Advayavajra (part of *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement*) strengthens the argument for a collection of seven '*siddhi*' texts among the Sanskrit witnesses in Nepal and suggests that this Nepali grouping may even demonstrate some level of awareness of the relationship between these '*siddhi*' and the two other corpora that constitute the early Indian *mahāmudrā* canon in the Tibetan tradition.

### III. Conclusion

The fact that a corpus such as this demonstrates a certain degree of fluidity in the ordering of its texts and the inclusion or exclusion of various works can be accounted for by analyzing these works in light of the phenomenon of practical canonicity. The next chapter turns to this topic and its implications for the employment of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, a work that was never translated into Tibetan but that provides a window onto a potential South Asian *mahāmudrā* practical canon, and that may in fact qualify as an 'Indian *mahāmudrā* work' in its own right. This is followed in chapter eleven by a detailed analysis of the colophon data and various accounts of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*'

transmission to Tibet. When taken together with the material evidence in this chapter, it becomes quite possible that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were also a known corpus at least among the Vajrayāna Buddhist institutions of the Kathmandu Valley.



## Chapter 10:

### Practical Canonicity and the Indian *Mahāmudrā* Canon

#### I. Introduction: Practical Canonicity in Buddhist Traditions

Anne Blackburn is largely credited for introducing the formal/practical canon distinction to the field of Buddhist Studies in her early work on *vinaya* literature in Sri Lanka.<sup>522</sup> Blackburn observed that the *vinaya* actually in use among monastic communities in her twelfth through thirteenth and eighteenth century sources was in no way representative of the Pāli *Vinayaṭṭakā* in its full form, noting that until monks became elders (*theras*) few of them directly encountered the full collection of the *Vinayaṭṭakā*. Instead, the texts that were widely in use and through which monks were introduced to the *vinaya* included only a few canonical works that were augmented with commentaries and later vernacular works on monastic discipline. Based on these and similar observations by a handful of scholars working with Theravāda traditions, Blackburn proposed conceiving of canonicity in Theravāda Buddhism as twofold, formal and practical, in which the formal canon, the 'ideal' canon or the canon-as-concept, acts as the ultimate locus of interpretive authority and the practical canon exhibits a far more open-ended structure incorporating material drawn from

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<sup>522</sup> Justin Thomas McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words: Histories of Buddhist Monastic Education in Laos and Thailand* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2008), 192. McDaniel writes, "The term *practical canon*, inspired by the work of Collins, was coined by Anne Blackburn in her 1996 dissertation on the *Sāratthadīpanī* from Sri Lanka and shows how the choice of texts to copy, translate, teach, and preserve, both canonical and non-canonical, Pali and vernacular, in any given community actually must be seen as defining the particular canon of that region and time period." I have not been able to secure a copy of Anne Blackburn's dissertation for this study, and take McDaniel at his word. Blackburn herself notes in a 1999 publication that Steven Collins also used the term *practical canon* in a work published in 1998. See Anne Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*: Monastic Discipline in the Practical Canons of the Theravāda," *JIAS* 22, no. 2 (1999): 284. Given the fact that Blackburn's dissertation predates this work from Collins, I am willing to concede to McDaniel's statement that she coined this term. It seems evident, however, that a number of scholars of Theravāda traditions may have been moving toward developing this terminology, and Blackburn herself notes this trend. However, it is undoubtedly the case that Blackburn was the first to develop the kind of nuanced and specific formulation of the formal/practical canon distinction that this study takes up in its analysis of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.

the formal canon that is then augmented with further commentaries and works that may or may not themselves also be considered canonical in the formal sense.<sup>523</sup>

Blackburn's comments on the methodological issues at stake in the formal/practical canon distinction are worth considering more closely. Observing the disconnect between notions of canonicity as it is conceived among Buddhologists and the canon as it may have been conceived and functioned for Theravāda monastic Buddhist communities in pre-modern Sri Lanka, Blackburn frames the central problem addressed by the formal/practical canon distinction as follows:

Today, caught up in the important work of editing, translating and analyzing canonical Pali texts and their commentaries, we have only begun to notice that the assimilation of and reflection on Buddhist ideas has in most times and places not occurred through exposure to the Pali *tipiṭaka* in its entirety.<sup>524</sup>

Here Blackburn builds on comments from Charles Hallisey, Steven Collins, and Charles Keyes on the various problems that arise as a result of compiling a comprehensive, formal canon. Hallisey<sup>525</sup> and Collins<sup>526</sup> both note that the size and complexity of the *vinaya* literature becomes an obstacle to direct engagement with the canon. Keyes, writing a number of years prior to Hallisey and Collins, is quoted at length in Blackburn's presentation of her formal/practical canon distinction, and the passage she has selected to highlight the ongoing issue of how scholars of Buddhist traditions conceive of canonization is worth reproducing here in full. Keyes writes:

The relevance of texts to religious dogma in the worldview of any people cannot be assumed simply because some set of texts has been recognized as belonging to a particular religious tradition... There is no single integrated textual tradition based on a "canon" to the exclusion of all other texts... The

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<sup>523</sup> Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*," 281–310.

<sup>524</sup> Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*," 282.

<sup>525</sup> Charles Hallisey, "Apropos the Pali Vinaya as a Historical Document," *The Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990): 197–208.

<sup>526</sup> Steven Collins, "On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon," *Journal of the Pali Text Society* 15 (1990): 89–126.

very size and complexity of a canon leads those who use it to give differential emphasis to its component texts. Moreover, even those for whom a defined set of scriptures exist will employ as sources of religious ideas many texts which do not belong to a canon... Moreover, for any particular temple monastery in Thailand or Laos, the collection of texts available to the people in the associated community are not exactly the same as those found in another temple monastery.<sup>527</sup>

Blackburn then notes Collins' suggested terminology of the 'ritual canon'<sup>528</sup> to describe the works that are actually in use in among any given Buddhist community, noting that Collins also made use of the term practical canon to denote such collections of works.<sup>529</sup> Blackburn's formulation of the formal/practical canon dichotomy is thus developed in response to the same essential methodological problem around Buddhologist's conceptions of canonicity that a number of other scholars have observed. This problem is a product of long-standing prejudices in the field that have granted precedent to studying the formal canon of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* while neglecting those works that have a more practical and immediate applicability to Buddhist communities themselves. A practical canon is in this sense a category describing those compendia of texts that held canonical authority at specific periods in history, in specific geographic locations, and among groups with specific institutional affiliations.

Blackburn argues for three potential benefits that the formal/practical canon distinction might have for the practice of scholarship of Buddhist traditions. First, she argues that this distinction lends itself to micro-historical analyses that focus on the particular type of Buddhism in practice in specific locations, times, and institutions. Second, she argues that these considerations might allow for greater understanding of the shifts in Buddhist practice

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<sup>527</sup> Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*," 283. Here Blackburn quotes Charles F. Keyes, "Merit-Transference in the Kammic Theory of Popular Theravāda Buddhism," in *Karma*, edited by Charles F. Keyes and E. Valentine Daniel (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 273.

<sup>528</sup> Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*," 283. Quoting here Collins, "On the Very Idea of the Pali Canon," 104.

<sup>529</sup> Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*," 284. Quoting here Steven Collins, *Nirvana and Other Buddhist Felicities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 78.

in these same locations through observing which texts seem to move in and out of practical utility. Third, she argues that the practical/formal canon distinction may allow scholars to examine new ways in which Buddhists themselves articulate textual authority. Here Blackburn suggests that examining actual groups of texts used in a particular time, at a particular place, and among particular Buddhist communities along with the specific ways in which these practical canons are linked through commentary to the formal canon might allow scholars to "identify a set of textual strategies through which the formal canon is made relevant to textual production."<sup>530</sup> She concludes her introduction to the formal/practical canon distinction with the hope that this analytic paradigm might also be of use to scholars who work in other Buddhist traditions.

Phillip Stanley takes Blackburn's suggestion and applies the notion of a practical/formal canon dichotomy across Buddhist traditions. Stanley also introduces an important component—sectarian identity—into the dynamics of practical canon formation. Drawing from scholars of Judeo-Christian traditions who point to the creation of a 'canon-within-the-canon' as a fundamental step in the construction of orthodoxy, Stanley notes that the construction of a practical canon is particularly important when the primary or 'formal' canon contains diverse and contradictory material.<sup>531</sup> Following Blackburn, Stanley defines the practical canon as a collection composed of "the texts actively used in a specific tradition, which typically include a select canon-within-the-canon among the texts in the formal canons," noting that "different sectarian groups within a broader tradition thus have different practical canons that emphasize different portions of the formal canons and different treatises

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<sup>530</sup> Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*," 284–85.

<sup>531</sup> David Phillip Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons of Tibetan Buddhism in the Context of a Pan-Asian Paradigm: Utilizing a New Methodology for Analyzing Canonical Collections" (PhD. diss., University of Virginia, 2009), 4–5.

that are outside the formal canon."<sup>532</sup> According to Stanley, the practical canon may be considered a response to the unwieldy nature of the formal canon and, in instances where the formal canon is relatively heterogeneous and inclusive, a response to the problem of the formal canon's inclusion of contradictory material. In the latter case, the formulation of a practical canon represents a process by which contradictory material in the formal canon may be accounted for or suppressed in the service of constructing a more exclusive orthodoxy. In contexts in which the formal canon is extremely inclusive and preserves a wide variety of material, some of which inevitably stands in contradiction to other sections of the canon, the impulse to construct orthodoxy through generating a selective 'canon-within-the-canon' functions as an important strategy for grounding sectarian identity in textual, canonical authority. When these conditions are present, as they certainly are in the case of the Tibetan canonical *Translations of the Scriptures* (*Bka' 'gyur*, henceforth *Kanjyur*) and *Translations of the Treatises* (*Bstan 'gyur*, henceforth *Tenkyur*), the orthodoxy of the practical canon can then provide the basis for an orthopraxy that is related to specific institutional and sectarian identities.<sup>533</sup>

Stanley's formulation of the formal/practical canon distinction contains an important observation regarding the locus of canonical authority in Buddhist traditions and its distinct character from the authority-granting structures at the core of Judeo-Christian traditions.

Here he writes:

... Christian traditions have practical "canons" and inclusive "canons," but their canonicity is understood to be far more derivative, i.e., stemming solely from the formal canon of scriptures. Buddhist treatises outside their respective formal canons are also understood as being rooted in the treatises and scriptures of the formal canons and, in the end, as being rooted specifically in the scriptures of the sūtras and tantras. However, the great Buddhist masters

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<sup>532</sup> Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons," 7-8.

<sup>533</sup> Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons," 28.

are understood as sharing to varying degrees in the wisdom, compassion, skillful means, and even enlightenment of the Buddha. Their works thus can be direct expressions of such enlightened qualities rather than merely being indirect reflections of the scriptures of the formal canon. The practical and inclusive canons of Buddhists thus have a stronger sense of canonicity in their own right while they have a more indirect or "borrowed" sense of canonicity in the Christian traditions since their concept of a "canon" is typically restricted to their formal canon.<sup>534</sup>

This is arguably the mechanism by which Tibetan *Tenjyur* eventually acquired a sense of canonical authority that matched that of the canonical *Kanjyur*. As Stanley notes, the Tibetan canonical *Tenjyur* is itself a kind of secondary canon to the *Kanjyur*,<sup>535</sup> yet it is through this common tendency toward innovation-over-derivation in Buddhist conceptions of canonical authority, a function of the tradition's own soteriological structure, that a 'secondary' canon such as the *Tenjyur* can exercise an equal or even greater degree of canonical authority than those scriptural sources believed to have been taught by the Buddha himself.<sup>536</sup> Through this observation, Stanley concludes that "the restricted Christian usage of the term 'canon' is not appropriate in discussions of the Buddhist traditions and that the broader understanding of 'canonicity' expressed in such concepts as the 'practical canon' and 'inclusive canon' is in accord with the emic sense of canonicity in Buddhism."<sup>537</sup> In other words, Stanley appears to be willing to do away with the notion of formal canonicity as a useful category for Buddhist traditions, at least to the extent that it is constructed based on a conception of the formal

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<sup>534</sup> Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons," 12.

<sup>535</sup> Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons," 3–4.

<sup>536</sup> Stanley notes in Chapter 5 of his dissertation that the open, inclusive approach to the incorporation of treatises alongside scripture in the schemata for organizing Buddhist literature has deep roots in the Indic traditions, pointing to the perhaps the earliest example of this kind of inclusivity in the incorporation of the Abhidharma in the three-basket doxography. See Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons," 316–458. Of course the reasons that certain Buddhist *śāstras* gain an equal or even greater degree of authority over the scriptural works of the *sūtras* and *tantras* are far more varied than this. Still, Stanley is right to note that this is a prominent feature of the Buddhist approach to canonicity. For our purposes here, this elevation of the 'secondary' canon of the *Tenjyur* presents a pattern of textual authority that we also find in more sect/institution-specific practical canons in Tibet.

<sup>537</sup> Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons," 12–13.

canon as static, exclusive, and essentially closed. In place of a more closed and exclusive conception of formal canonicity he proposes that Buddhist formal canons "are not exclusionary collections, but are rather symbolic collections that implicitly affirm the canonicity of the entire canonical continuum."<sup>538</sup>

Anne Blackburn and Justin McDaniel move the discussion of practical canonicity toward its implications as a function of curriculum development in their respective 2001 and 2008 monographs.<sup>539</sup> In her work in *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice*, Blackburn directs her original formulation of a formal/practical canon distinction in Buddhist traditions toward the 'textual communities' that both define the parameters of orthodoxy and perform the orthopraxy of the practical canon. She locates the origins of the idea of textual communities in Brian Stock's study of rising literacy rates in twelfth and thirteenth century Europe and the emergence of vernacular language in textual media. Here Stock uses data on these phenomena to argue for the emergence of a text-based rationality that "affected the way that men and women understood their own experience as individuals and as members of social groups," and argues that the emergence of textual communities coincided with the emergence of "new religious groups distinguished by their dismissal of beliefs and practices not legitimized through texts."<sup>540</sup> Blackburn then offers her own definition of textual communities as "a group of individuals who think of themselves[...] to at least some degree as a collective, who understand the world and their appropriate place within it in terms significantly influenced by their encounter with a shared set of written texts or oral teachings

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<sup>538</sup> Stanley, "The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons," 13.

<sup>539</sup> Anne M. Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practice in Eighteenth Century Lankan Monastic Culture* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001); McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words*.

<sup>540</sup> Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning*, 10. See Brian Stock, *The Implications of Literacy: Written Language and Models of Interpretation in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983).

based on written texts, and who grant special social status to literate interpreters of authoritative written texts."<sup>541</sup> Quoting Martin Irvine's work,<sup>542</sup> Blackburn adds that a textual community emerges out of a received canon and an interpretive commentarial tradition that "accompan[ies] the texts and institute[s] their authority"<sup>543</sup> Blackburn's 2001 *Buddhist Learning and Textual Practices* represents a natural progression of the theory and methodology implied in her original designation of the formal/practical canon dichotomy. At its core, this work invites scholars of Buddhist traditions to move beyond universalized claims to authority as the assumed property of the formal canon and challenges them instead to study canonical authority as constructed by specific Buddhist textual communities. Blackburn's study focuses only on eighteenth century Theravāda monastics in Sri Lanka, but her observations are undoubtedly relevant to the study of Buddhist textual cultures more broadly.

Justin McDaniel's *Gathering Leaves and Lifting Words* focuses on the practice of *yog sab*, the Lao and Northern Thai commentarial method of 'lifting words,' in which a commentator or teacher provides extensive vernacular commentary on classical Pāli terms as a method for developing curriculum for both lay and monastic Buddhists. McDaniel grants refreshing priority to the idea of examining "how Buddhists teach Buddhists to be Buddhists"<sup>544</sup> throughout this work, pointing to the importance of curricula in the study of localized constructions of Buddhist identity. Analyzing the particular terms that are 'lifted' out of scripture and embedded in textual commentaries, the practice of *yog sab* is posited as a method for exploring the variety of Buddhist textual communities in Laos and Northern

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<sup>541</sup> Blackburn, *Buddhist Learning*, 12.

<sup>542</sup> Martin Irvine, *The making of Textual Culture: 'Grammatica' and Literary Theory 350–1100* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

<sup>543</sup> *Ibid*, 12.

<sup>544</sup> McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves*, 7.



Thailand and their varied and particular constructions of Buddhist identity from the sixteenth century to the present. In broader consideration of the idea of textual communities, McDaniel argues that "[t]exts... are polyvalent parts of a curriculum, rather than simply parts of a canon, liturgy, library, or reference collection, and they exist in a context of relationships between orality and textuality, temporality and timeless authority, lay life and monastic life, the local and the translocal."<sup>545</sup> Taking the commentarial genres of *nissaya*, *vihāra*, and *nāmasadda* as case studies in the practice of *yog sab* or 'lifting words,' McDaniel comments that such works "[...] must be seen as particular moments in a history of articulations of Buddhism," that "evinced the ways local agents were reaching back and reaching toward Buddhism."<sup>546</sup> McDaniel's work draws our attention to the potential for expanding the notion of Buddhist practical canons and their textual communities to account for curriculum, and to the implications that this analytic approach might have for cultivating a methodology in Buddhist Studies that attends to localized and institution-specific histories of the various ways in which Buddhists have constructed their own identities.

## **II. Some Issues with the Formal/Practical Canon Distinction**

Blackburn's original characterization of formal canonicity may overreach a bit in its idealism. Is it possible to say that a formal canon is ever, as Blackburn defines it, merely a 'canon-as-concept?' At the same time, Stanley's characterization of Buddhist conceptions of canon as essentially inclusive may also be too quick to do away with the applicability of the notion of a closed, formal canon. There is a sense in Tibetan traditions that the *Kanjyur* and *Tenkyur*

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<sup>545</sup> McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves*, 8.

<sup>546</sup> McDaniel, *Gathering Leaves*, 120.

eventually came to represent a closed, formal canon of some sort.<sup>547</sup> By Stanley's own argument, there is also reason to believe that this was the case in India, where it is evinced through the struggle among various proponents of the Mahāyāna to develop strategies to integrate their literature into the structure of an already-established formal canon.<sup>548</sup> If the notion of formal canonicity was as abstract and idealized as Blackburn suggests, or if notions of formal canonicity were largely irrelevant to the Buddhist conception of canon as Stanley suggests, there would be no need for this kind of tension. The fact that this is not the case—that canonicity is inevitably tied to actual textual works that, in turn, are claimed to preserve the specific views and proprietary knowledge through which institutions and their participants cultivate a sense of identity and mutual belonging—is precisely the reason why canonical status can be and has repeatedly been a matter of contention among Buddhists.

The elasticity that Buddhists tend to demonstrate around the notion of canon might speak to a generally open and inclusive notion of canonicity, but the diachronic perspective on Buddhist notions of canon, which demonstrate a tendency toward inclusivity over time, should not lead us to conclude that the formal canon remained a mere idea or abstraction for Buddhists themselves. Such a conclusion would neglect the material reality of the formal canon in deference to a wholly idealistic notion of formal canonical authority. This perspective also neglects the empirical reality that the formal canon is not simply a symbolic collection, it is in many cases an actual collection of physically tangible works often found

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<sup>547</sup> This statement is at variance with one trend among Tibetologists, expressed clearly in Stanley's work, that the Tibetan canon was and remains 'open.' While it is the case that the Tibetan *Kanjyur* and *Tenjur* demonstrate a certain inclusivity and openness over time, I argue here that their conception within the tradition as-canon does indeed preserve a notion of a closed, fixed canon.

<sup>548</sup> Stanley provides an analysis of divergent strategies for the inclusion of Mahāyāna literature in the extant Buddhist canon by Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga. See Stanley, *The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons*, 422. Here Stanley is following an analysis of these materials from Joseph Walser, *Nāgārjuna in Context: Mahāyāna Buddhism and Early Indian Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 266–70 and 121–22.

installed in Buddhist institutions, though its content and the degree of comprehensive representation of Buddhist literature might vary. This is particularly the case in Tibetan Buddhist traditions. Broadly speaking, and allowing for variation in the form in which canons might be preserved from one Buddhist institution to the next, the 'canon' is in most cases represented by an actual collection of works that do not remain purely symbolic but can be directly encountered through reading the volumes it contains.

The hardline-materialist response to this problem is to assert that in fact no canon, formal or practical, is simply an idea. Canons are physical collections of works, and as physical collections of works they are inevitably limited and exclusive. This is the case even for traditions that preserve an open, inclusive conception of formal canonicity. In any given time or place, even an inclusive canon is bound by its own physicality and, as a result, necessarily exclusive. Thus the idea that canonicity implies a kind of closed and exclusive body of works need not be traced, as Stanley argues, to the presuppositions scholars bring to the study of canon from its connotations in the Judeo-Christian traditions. Limitation and exclusivity is actually a function of any canon's physicality or its location in a given place, at a given time, and within a given institutional setting. This consideration becomes clear when one adopts the formal canon not as a locus for the 'idea' of canonical authority, but as a physical set of reference works for its derivative canons.

The authority that a formal canon grants is also not implicit. It is quite explicit, and a formal canon's ability to lend authority to any number of practical canons rests on its explicit expression as they appear in the works that constitute any practical canon. The development of a practical canon is largely contingent upon the ability to directly invoke the words that are

physically written-down in the actual, physical volumes of the formal canon.<sup>549</sup> This authority is, in theory if not always in practice, able to be verified by subsequent generations of readers through their ability to have direct, physical contact with the formal canon. This is how the authority of a formal canon is inscribed, and re-inscribed, within new, practical contexts.<sup>550</sup> It is thus possible to say that the notion of canonicity carries a certain degree of fluidity in Buddhist traditions that can be demonstrated from the perspective of diachronic analysis, but to argue that Buddhists have held a fundamentally open notion of canon at all discrete points in time seems to neglect some of the material and institutional realities behind the historical processes at work in the formulation of both Buddhist formal and practical canons. Another way of putting this is to say that canonicity in Buddhist traditions exhibits a certain degree of fluidity, inclusivity, and openness when analyzed diachronically, while a synchronic analysis of the same phenomenon reveals a more closed and classically formal conception of canon.

In order to return a bit of materialist *formality* to the notion of the formal canon in Buddhist traditions, I argue that such collections are fluid and open in some sense, particularly when undergoing the actual process of canon-formation, yet unavoidably exclusive and closed once this process has come to completion. Although some degree of fluidity and openness may remain even after the construction of a formal canon in Buddhist

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<sup>549</sup> This statement might appear to some to neglect the function of orality in preserving canonical authority. This is not the case. I consider orally preserved canons to be just as physical and tangible a phenomenon as a written canon. Although they lack a physical representation in the form of written, bound, and preserved manuscripts, an orally preserved canon can also be empirically encountered and is not simply an 'idea' or a 'canon-as-concept' in the sense that Blackburn and Stanley propose. In any case, in the current context we are largely concerned with actual written materials, although it is clearly the case that the esoteric Buddhist lineages of *mahāmudrā*, particularly among the Kagyü, prioritize and grant a great deal of authority to the notion of an orally and aurally-transmitted canon.

<sup>550</sup> To Blackburn's point stated above, the transfer of authority is also reciprocal, with the formal canon's ability to be inscribed within any number of subsequent practical canons granting a renewed sense of relevance and practicality to the formal canon itself.

traditions, there is good reason to leave room for Buddhist conceptions of a closed, exclusive formal canonicity. There is a sense of inclusivity in Buddhist constructions of formal canonicity when they are analyzed over time, but when analyzed at any given point along that same temporal continuum one will undoubtedly find evidence to support a sense of an exclusive, closed canon of Buddhist works. There is thus a certain degree of fluidity and openness that is evident in the construction of the practical canons one encounters across the various spatial and temporal landscapes of Buddhism. To some extent this greater fluidity is a function of the fact that while the practical canon remains in use by a given community, it may itself be undergoing a process of formal canonization. During this period in their development practical canons remain fluid in order to perform their primary function—to facilitate the construction of orthodoxy in service of orthopraxy, or to the practical application of those works considered authoritative and representative of a given sect or tradition's construction of its own Buddhist identity.

The material evidence of formal canonicity can be located among those collections of Buddhist scriptures and treatises that fall within a number of organizational schema<sup>551</sup> and are presented as a comprehensive collection of received textual tradition within a specific textual community. The material evidence for practical canonicity can be located in the curricula developed by individual textual communities that seek to inscribe and re-inscribe canonical authority within the community's own orthodoxy through direct appeals to the formal canon. In the process these textual communities bring their own practical canons into increasingly greater focus. Thus in order to make a case for the practicality of any given collection of works, one must find data to support its actual use as curriculum. Simply

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<sup>551</sup> Stanley argues for a fourfold schema for the organization of the Mahāyāna canon that made its way in various phases from India to China and Tibet. See Stanley, *The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons*, Chapter 5.

locating citations of texts is not a sufficient proof of their practicality. In order to show that it actually has had some form of practical application, the particular text in which a work or set of works is cited must itself have some kind of demonstrable didactic, curricular application. When a work or set of works is cited in a text that has a demonstrably curricular function, this constitutes a 'practical' use of that source, and thus the work cited might correctly be characterized as part of a practical canon. In this way, the works that we find cited in curricular texts provide a means by which scholars of Buddhist traditions might reverse-engineer the practical canon of a specific Buddhist textual community.

This kind of inference is unfortunately the only means of exploring the practical application of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in Indic sources. Tibetan sources, however, are another matter. In the latter, there is clear evidence of the actual compilation and publication of two practical canons that understand *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and their ancillary works to constitute small Indian *mahāmudrā* canon, and these published practical canons can be shown to have informed polemical writing in the Kagyü lineages in the generation immediately following their publication. The formulation of these practical canons and their implementation in Kagyü polemical and curricular works is taken up in chapters eleven and twelve. Before moving on to the Tibetan context, the balance of the current chapter presents data from one work that provides a potential Indic example of the implementation of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of a known practical of *mahāmudrā* works.

### **III. Reading the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* as a *Mahāmudrā* Work**

There is strong evidence to suggest that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* formed part of an early core set of works that became integrated into two practical canons of Indian *mahāmudrā* works in

Tibet. The evidence for their employment as a practical canon in Indic sources is less obvious. The works contained in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are quoted in Indic sources, but I have yet to find any explicit example of a reference to the corpus as a known set of *mahāmudrā* works in any Indic source. The title *\*Saptasiddhisamgraha*, one potential back-translation of the Tibetan *Drup pa Dédiin*, does not appear in any Indic source of which I am aware. In contrast, a search on the Buddhist Digital Resource Center's database for the Tibetan title for the corpus (*Grub pa sde bdun*) conducted during my research in the spring of 2016 turned up at least sixty references to the corpus sourced from thirty-one different authors across forty-seven different texts spanning from the eleventh to the twentieth century.<sup>552</sup> Among these references, direct evidence that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* had a practical, curricular application may be located in at least one Tibetan source that refers to the corpus as belonging to the literary genre of supplemental works (*zur 'debs*).<sup>553</sup>

There is however one Indic source, the anonymously authored *Compendium of Eloquent Statements (Subhāṣitasamgraha)*, rendered in diplomatic edition more than a century ago by Cecil Bendall, that may contain evidence of the employment of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in a didactic work intended as a kind of curriculum that is specifically oriented toward a comprehensive introduction to the doctrine of *mahāmudrā*. The *Subhāṣitasamgraha* is relatively well known owing to Bendall's edition, which was published at a remarkably early period in the development of the field of Buddhist Studies. Bendall's edition has more recently become rather infamous as a clear example of scholarly bias against the study of

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<sup>552</sup> These numbers might very well have increased since the original search was conducted given the ever-expanding scope of the TBRC/BDRC database.

<sup>553</sup> 'Brug chen padma dkar po notes in the opening folios of his *Victor's Treasury (Rgyal ba'i gan mdzod)* that this designation was given to the *Grub pa sde bdun* perhaps as early as the twelfth century by Chökyi Tsanpa Gyarépa (Chos kyi btsang pa rgya ras pa 1161–1211). This account of the early codification of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a practical canon in Tibet is discussed in greater detail below. 'Brug chen pad ma dkar po, "Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag gi bshad sbyar rgyal ba'i gan mdzod," in *'Brug lugs chos mdzod chen mo* 41, no. 1 (Kathmandu: Drukpa Kagyu Heritage Project, 200?), 4r.

tantric Buddhism in the field. Borrowing from an overly doctrinally driven narrative of the decline of Buddhism in India that scapegoated the Buddhist *tantras*, Bendall's edition preserves a now entirely outdated view of this literature as a wholly corrupt form of Buddhism. Bendall makes little effort to conceal his own sense of disgust with the subject matter of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* in the following passage from his introduction to the edition:

Though a considerable portion of the contents of the present book will be distasteful and even sometimes repulsive to modern readers, its publication seems necessary and at the present time specially appropriate for the due understanding of the history of Buddhism in India.<sup>554</sup>

Later, in the introduction to the 'second half' of his edition, Bendall includes the following comments in a footnote on the phrase "Tantrik teachings:"

I have printed text, and even, where extant, also commentary on this extraordinary phase of soi-distant Buddhism, thinking it well that scholars at least should know the worst. To me it all reads like an obscene caricature of the teachings both of earlier Buddhism and of the legitimate Yoga. We are not, I take it, in a position to solve the doubt very properly suggested by M Barth (*Bulletin*, III Bouddhisme [1900], p.9), as to whether such teachings were officially received. One would be only too glad to discover a contemporary denunciation of them. In any case, it seems to me, they have their historical importance in suggesting how Buddhism came to be discredited in India, and finally disappeared.<sup>555</sup>

The highly problematic nature of the scholarly milieu in which Bendall found it entirely reasonable to characterize tantric Buddhist literature as 'soi-distant Buddhism' and the persistence of this kind of narrative is covered extensively in Wedemeyer's work, and need not be rehearsed again here.<sup>556</sup> Needless to say, this particular take on the narrative of

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<sup>554</sup> *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, 2.

<sup>555</sup> *Subhāṣitasamgrahaḥ*, 29.

<sup>556</sup> Christian Wedemeyer's *Making Sense of Tantric Buddhism* contains a comprehensive critique of the early and highly problematic narratives of the role that esoteric Buddhism played in the tradition's decline in India. See Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, Chapters 1 and 2.



Buddhism's decline in India is largely to blame for the relative paucity of scholarship on Buddhist tantric material until the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>557</sup>

Bendall's statements on 'Tantrik' teachings above are made at the introduction to the 'second part' of his edition of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*. The purpose for his arbitrary division of the text is clear in the subtitle to his edition, which refers to the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* as "An Anthology of Extracts from Buddhist Works Compiled by an Unknown Author, to Illustrate Doctrines of Scholastic and Mystic (Tāntrik) Buddhism."<sup>558</sup> Bendall superimposes an entirely arbitrary scholastic/mystic dichotomy onto this text that seems in some sense to be concerned with reinforcing the difference between the largely exoteric material referenced in the 'first half' of his edition and the primarily esoteric material referenced in its 'second half.' When Bendall's arbitrary division is done away with, however, it becomes clear that the entire point of the work may in fact be to ground the later esoteric material in the text in its exoteric counterparts. In addition, as I will show, it appears that this is done in service of an explication of the doctrine of *mahāmudrā*. Bendall's apparent self-loathing and disgust for the subject matter of his own chosen topic of study in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* is symptomatic of a broader pattern of neglect in the first century of Buddhist Studies of a vast amount of tantric literature composed over at least half a millennium of Buddhist history. It is also very likely to blame for the fact that the actual structure and content of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* has, as far as I am aware, not received the attention that it deserves to date.<sup>559</sup>

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<sup>557</sup> There are other important factors at work here too, not the least of which is the exile of a number of highly trained Tibetan Vajrayāna gurus following the 1959 Chinese invasion of Tibet and the final collapse of the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa.

<sup>558</sup> *Subhāṣitasamgrahaḥ*, 1.

<sup>559</sup> A new edition, complete translation, and study of the work is a desideratum. This is a project that I hope to be able to initiate in the coming years. I have had a problem locating the manuscript that Bendall used, but have located another manuscript of the text in the Nepal National Archive (NGMCP A 1057/20) that is missing roughly the first two folios of material. Once again, much like the copies of compendia containing Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* mentioned above, we have a mysterious loss of the front matter to

My engagement with the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* thus far has led me to believe that the topic central concern of this work is in fact a presentation of the doctrine of *mahāmudrā* according to *sūtric*, *tantric*, and *śāstric* sources. When we eliminate Bendall's arbitrary two-part division of the text, it becomes apparent that *mahāmudrā* constitutes a consistent topic of discussion throughout the work. The anonymous author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* introduces the topic of *mahāmudrā* after a lengthy opening section of quotations from a variety of works, among them some of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, that address the importance of the guru. This presentation, conducted through citations of both scripture and treatises, evolves out of the author's own opening homage to the deity Hevajra, signaling that the entire work is in fact in conversation with the initiation cults of the *yogatantra* and *yoginītantra* despite the fact that it also contains a large amount of material quoted from the exoteric *sūtra* and *śāstra* literature. The author introduces the topic of *mahāmudrā* following these opening passages on the importance of the guru, and provides a direct connection to the *Prajñāpāramitā* literature and Asaṅga's *Yogācārabhūmi* that suggests this literature constitutes an appropriate avenue through which a beginner might be introduced to the doctrine of *mahāmudrā*:

Thus [the importance of the guru has not been discussed] at length.<sup>560</sup> ||

And in [*The Aṣṭasahasrikaprajñāpāramitā*] it says:

Bringing about the benefit of others is considered  
 The preeminent result<sup>561</sup> of the Buddhas. |  
 But other in addition [terms such as] buddhahood, etc.,  
 It is also proper that [the perfection of wisdom] is called the result. ||

That [verse] and this entire [text] also [states] that the supreme result is brought about by meditation on the non-dual union of *mahāmudrā*. |

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an important manuscript housed in the Nepal archive. See *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, NGMCP A 1057/20 (Kathmandu: Nepal National Archive).

<sup>560</sup> My translation follows NGMCP A 1057/20 3r.5 which reads *vistaraḥ*, not *vistaraiḥ*.

<sup>561</sup> I am reading *mukhyataram phalam* here instead of *mukhyatatam phalam*.

Just as it is mentioned in the *Āryaprajñāpāramitā*, | *Śrāvakabhūmi* too [it indicates that] one who is interested in studying this [i.e. a beginner or *śikṣitukāmaḥ*] should study the *Prajñāpāramitā* since this yoga can be found right here in the *Prajñāpāramitā*. | Likewise [this yoga can be found] in the *Pratyekabuddhabhūmi* and it is also [discussed] at length in the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*. |

The Bhagavati *Prajñāpāramitā* bears the unrivaled name *mahāmudrā*. Due to being the nature of non-dual gnosis, she possesses the Bhagavān who is the nature of the *dharmakāya* and the true nature of the vajra of bodhicitta, | which [is what it means when the text] says | "*Prajñāpāramitā* is non-dual gnosis. She is a *tathāgat[ā]*." ||<sup>562</sup>

The passage then transitions to discussing the issue of why it is the case that there is a division of various vehicles (*yāna*) that bear the same result. The argument that the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*) is the equivalent of *mahāmudrā*, and that the non-dual union of *mahāmudrā* (*mahāmudrādvayayoga*) can be found in the *Śrāvaka-*, *Pratyeka-*, and *Bodhisattvabhūmis* is meant to justify the author's argument that a beginner can gain some understanding of *mahāmudrā* through studying the exoteric textual tradition. This, in turn, justifies the author's own decision to draw upon the eloquent statements (*subhāṣita*) from a broad range of exoteric works and place them in dialogue with the esoteric doctrine of *mahāmudrā*.

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<sup>562</sup> Bendall's edition follows the phrase 'yathoktam āryaprajñāpāramitāyām' with a note directing the reader to the *Aṣṭasahasrikaprajñāparamitā* Chapter 1 (printed text, 6, 12). I have not taken the time to locate this verse myself.

*Subhāṣitasamgraha*, 14.

ityādi vistaraḥ || āha cātra |  
parārthasamṣpad buddhānām phalam mukhyatataṃ ma[taṃ] |  
buddhatvādi tadanyat tu tādarthyāt phalam ucyate ||

taccaitat sakalam api phalaṃ mahāmudrādvayayogabhāvanayaiva paraṃ sampadyate |  
yathoktam āryaprajñāpāramitāyām | śrāvakabhūmāvapi śikṣitukāmeneyam eva prajñāpāramitā śrotavyā  
... yāvad ... ihaiva prajñāpāramitāyām yogam āptavyaṃ | tathā pratyekabuddhabhūmāvapi ... yāvad ...  
bodhisattvabhūmāvapītyādi vistaraḥ |

prajñāpāramitāiva 'bhagavati [sic?] mahāmudrā' paranāmnī tasyā advayajñānasvabhāvatvād  
bhagavan api dharmakāyātmā bodhicittavajrastatsvabhāva eva | yad āha | prajñāpāramitā jñānam  
advayam, sā tathāgata iti |

The author tells us that *mahāmudrā* is the primary topic of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* again in his comments to a set of excerpts from the ninth chapter of Śāntideva's *Bodhicāryāvatāra*, notably another exoteric text:

The definitive meaning [of emptiness] is different than that (*taditarā*), but it is said that interpretable meaning is an effective means of introducing [someone] to emptiness. Thus the Bhagavān taught a meditation instruction in mental proliferations in order introduce meditation on the non-dual union of *mahāmudrā* without mental proliferations.<sup>563</sup>

The material quoted here indicates that the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* considered it entirely appropriate to introduce beginners to the ultimate realization of the *mahāmudrā-siddhi*, a term describing a characteristically tantric formulation of the highest soteriological realization, via the instructions contained in exoteric literature. Here the author draws a parallel between the argument for introducing a beginner to the doctrine of emptiness via its interpretable meaning (*neyārtha*) so that they may gradually realize its definitive meaning (*nītārtha*) and the fact that the 'lower,' more conceptually-based meditation practices provide a means for eventually realizing the non-dual union of *mahāmudrā*. This statement and the passages that follow it bear some fascinating resonances with those traditions established among the Kagyü lineages in Tibet that argue for the possibility of teaching *mahāmudrā* outside of a tantric context. The debate around this topic would ignite in the thirteenth century between the Kagyü and Sakya sects, and is one of the polemical contexts in which both sides evoke material from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Since the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* is a verifiably Indic work that was never actually translated into Tibetan, possibly originating in

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<sup>563</sup> *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, 23.

nītārthā taditarā tu śūnyatāvatāraṇārthaṃ neyārtheti | tasmāt prapañcabhāvanopadeśo 'pi bhagavatā niṣprapañcamahāmudrādvayayoga bhāvanāvatāraṇārtha eva deśitaḥ | I believe that Bendall has misidentified the phrase " niṣprapañcamahāmudrādvayayoga bhāvanāvatāraṇārtha' as a text in his edition, which explains why it is the case, as he notes, that he was not able to find any Tibetan (or Indic) work bearing this title.

Bengal,<sup>564</sup> this reading indicates an Indic correlate to the non-tantric *mahāmudrā* instruction supported among various factions of the Kagyü.

As enticing as these passages might be for making a case for an Indic precedent for the Kagyü '*sūtra-mahāmudrā*' traditions, my point in highlighting these passages is not to identify the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* as a potential Indic '*sūtra-mahāmudrā*' work but to highlight that *mahāmudrā* constitutes the primary topic of the entirety of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*. But in order to argue that the works cited in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* constitute an Indic *mahāmudrā* practical canon, we must make a case for the curricular nature of the text. To identify it as such is to pinpoint the text's practical application, and thus make the case that the variety of works from which it draws constituted a kind of practical canon. The two excerpts noted above have already given some indication of the curricular orientation of the text, and both of these passages demonstrate the text's intention to relate a broad range of exoteric and esoteric works to the doctrine of *mahāmudrā*. One of these examples even mentions the beginner (*śikṣitukāma*, lit. 'one who is eager to learn') as the intended subject for the author's statements on the ability to use exoteric material as a first introduction to the non-dual union of *mahāmudrā*. The fact that both passages are in the author's own voice is also worth noting. Instances in which the author speaks in his own voice are relatively rare in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, and the fact that there are two substantial passages here that both show the author directing the reader to the topic of *mahāmudrā* is further indication of its importance to the text's broader purpose.

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<sup>564</sup> Bendall notes in his introduction that the manuscript from which his edition is derived was written in "an archaic form of Bengali writing probably from the XVth century." See *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, 1. If this is indeed the case, and if we can assume that a scribe writing in an 'archaic form of Bengali' was likely based out of Bengal and not Kathmandu, then Bendall's observations of his manuscript's orthography provide some indication that this source is properly 'Indic' in origin.

The strongest piece of evidence that the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* is a didactic work, and that the works from which it draws thus constitute a practical canon for a *mahāmudrā* curriculum, appears in the text's colophon. Here the author writes:

They say that "Systematically attending to all objects/topics (*viṣaya*) brings about the *mahāmudrā-siddhi*," thus one shall come to understand [ultimate reality that is taught] through the guru's verbal instruction by using a compendium of eloquent statements. This concludes the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*.<sup>565</sup>

True to its commitment to a distinctly Vajrayāna orthopraxy, the colophon to the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* holds the guru's instruction (*guruvaktra*) as the critical factor in a disciple's attainment of awakening. However, the fact that this instruction is also said to be accompanied by "the aide of a compendium of eloquent sayings" (*subhāṣitasamgrahadvāreṇa*), a reference both the title of the work and its literary genre, tells us about the specifically curricular purpose of the text as a supplement the instructions one receives from one's own guru. To identify the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* as a fundamentally curricular work implies that the works it cites might be now be identified as part of a practical canon. This might even suggest a broader argument that the way in which the term *subhāṣita* is employed in this text to indicate a distinctly pedagogical genre of literature that can offer a window into the dynamics of practical canon formation.<sup>566</sup> Here, rather than a

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<sup>565</sup> *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, 70.

anena krameṇāśeṣaviṣayasevayā mahāmudrāsiddhir bhavatīti subhāṣitasamgrahadvāreṇa guruvaktrato bodhavyaṃ || iti subhāṣitasamgrahaḥ samāptaḥ ||

It appears that there was additional colophon material that Bendall, for some unknown reason, chose to leave out of his edition. He does include the following comment on this content: "The colophon of the original Ms. is reproduced by our copyist stating that that Ms. was copied by Vidyāpatidatta at Vaḍagrāma, *svaparāthahetoḥ*. A second colophon related how the Ms. was copied (for me) in N.S. 1019 by the Vajrācārya Kuveraratna, a worshipper of Vajradevī." This is yet another reason why finding the original manuscript Bendall's copyist used is a desideratum.

<sup>566</sup> For a recent discussion of the *subhāṣita* genre in Buddhist literature, see José Cabezón's appendix to his translation of Mipham, *The Just King*, 243–68. Professor Cabezón has noted in response to my argument here that *subhāṣita* were "more popular than pedagogical." I do not see any hard distinction between these two points. The more 'popular' compendia of *subhāṣita* are still composed of aphorisms that are themselves often pedagogical. The designation of a verse as *subhāṣita* is tied to its ability to

collection of stand-alone verses, the term *subhāṣita* describes references that are drawn from specific textual sources. This results in a collection of eloquent statements (*subhāṣitasamgraha*) that is essentially a reference work similar to the medieval European reference genre of the *florilegium*, which were essentially compendia of important citations of other works designed to compensate for the scarcity of textual resources.<sup>567</sup> Unfortunately in this case we know far too little about the origin of this work, and even less about its author, to have any sense of the particular institution and textual community that developed and implemented the *mahāmudrā* curriculum outlined in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*.

#### **IV. The Seven Siddhi Texts in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha***

The fact that all seven works contained in the Tibetan canonical grouping of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are quoted in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, often at great length, suggests that these works were part of the practical canon in use among the particular textual community for

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convey some moral or ethical paradigm, and in that sense these verses remain pedagogical even if they are 'popular,' or located in a more popular than institutional field of pedagogical discourse. I do agree with Ingalls' observations, quoted in Professor Cabezón's work on Mipham, that "Not only should a *subhāṣita* carry mood [*rāsa*] and suggestion [*dvani*]; it should carry them even when torn from its context. The requirement of mood and suggestion rules out didactic and narrative verse, of which Sanskrit contains a vast amount." Here Cabezón is quoting Daniel H. H. Ingalls, *An Anthology of Sanskrit Court Poetry: Vidyākara's "Subhāṣitaratnakoṣa"* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965), 88. But Ingalls' statements address the lack of didactic and narrative *style* in *subhāṣita*, not their lack of any *allusion* to an external didactic or narrative literature. Even though they are crafted as stand-alone verses, *subhāṣita*, like any other discursive product, contain allusions to broader didactic and narrative contexts. In this sense they are pedagogical—they contain specific aphorisms that are meant to teach a particular perspective that the author has distilled from a broader literary and cultural discourse. Also, in the same way that I am advocating for reverse-engineering a practical canon out of the 'eloquent' verses of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, one might use references to the broader didactic and narrative literature embedded in *subhāṣita* verses to reverse-engineer a broader practical canon with which the author (and presumably the audience) are familiar.

<sup>567</sup> See Ann M. Blair, *Too Much to Know: Managing Scholarly Information before the Modern Age* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2010), 35. Here Blair writes, "The other genre that served to palliate the scarcity of books in the early Middle Ages was the florilegium, which, rather than summarizing, selected the best passages of 'flowers' from authoritative sources. The term 'florilegium' (from *flores* or flowers and *legere* in the sense of 'selec') dates from the early modern period, likely first used by Aldus Manutius for a Latin translation of a collection of Greek epigrams, but the practice of gathering the memorable elements of a text or a disputation certainly existed in antiquity."

whom this 'compendium of eloquent statements' would have been implemented as a curriculum. The table in figure 10 provides a list of all instances in which works from *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are quoted in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*. The chart also includes instances in which some of the ancillary works that end up being incorporated into the Tibetan practical canons of Indian *mahāmudrā* works are referenced, such as Keralipa's *Śrītattvasiddhi*, and all of the passages quoted from Kuddālapāda's *Acintyādvayakramopadeśa*.<sup>568</sup>

Title of Work Cited and Author	Verse(s) Cited (pg # in Bendall's edition)
<i>Guhyasiddhi</i> of Padmavajra	v.3.1, 8.35cd–36, 8.37ced–38ab, last verse unidentified [Uses the title <i>Guṇavratānirdeśaḥ</i> <sup>569</sup> for <i>GS</i> Chapter 8] (44–45); v.6.45cd–49ab (60–61); 6.13, 6.33–35 (48)
<i>Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi</i> of Anaṅgavajra	v.2.5a–28, 2.34(5–8); 1.16–18, 1.25–26 (32 quoted from Padmavajra's <i>Advayavivaraṇa-prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi</i> ); 4.5–8, 5.42, 4.12, 5.11, 5.30, 5.32–33; 5.38–41, 5.45, 5.48 (41–44)
<i>Jñānasiddhi</i> of Indrabhūti	v.1.24 (9); 1.47 (45)
<i>Advayasiddhi (Mahalakṣmīsādhana)</i> of Lakṣmīnkarā	v.30, 33 (8–9); 4, 10–11, 15, [lacuna in edition], 17–18 (40–41);
<i>Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi</i> of Yoginī Cintā	[misattributed to Saraha?] Ch 1 [Sarnath edition p 171], 4.7, 5.8 + extensive commentary (46–47); 8.9, 8.17 + one verse not attested in Sarnath edition (48) <sup>570</sup>
<i>Sahajasiddhi</i> of Ḍombīheruka	v.1.13 (45)
<i>Śrīguhyamahāguhyatattvopadeśa</i> of Dārikapāda (Skt. fragment. Text only survives in Tibetan)	Tib. v.19–20 (48)
<i>Śrītattvasiddhi</i> of Keralipa (Skt. fragment. Text only survives in Tibetan)	Tib. v.1.23d–24c (49)

<sup>568</sup> I have not taken the time to identify all of the works by Saraha that are quoted in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, and there is one reference to a '*Dohakośa*' on p 36 of Bendall's edition. There is thus a good chance that the material attributed to Saraha may match the *Dohakośa* attributed to Saraha that constitutes the first text in *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*.

<sup>569</sup> This should read *gaṇavratānirdeśaḥ*. See *Subhāṣitasamgrahaḥ* NGMCP A 1057/20 (Kathmandu: Nepal National Archive), 15v.3.

<sup>570</sup> The fact that Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* alternates between verse and prose makes it difficult to provide the exact verses that are quoted from the text in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, so I have included the page numbers to the Sanskrit for the text in the Sarnath edition.



<i>Acintyādvayakramopadeśa</i> of Kuddālapāda (One of the <i>Snying po skor drug</i> )	1st verse unidentified, v.33cd–34ab, 42cd–43ab, 53cd–54ab, 56cd–57ab, 59cd, 60cd?, 65, 88cd–90ab (lineage verse), 97cd–99ab, 114cd (51–52);
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Figure 10: Passages in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* quoting *The Seven Siddhi Texts*

Another '*siddhi*' text that is not included in any Tibetan list simply because it has not yet been translated into Tibetan, Padmavajra's *Advayavivaraṇaprajñopāyasiddhi*, is quoted extensively in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* as well. This work is included in the Sarnath edition of the *Guhyādi-aṣṭasiddhisamgraha* along with the six of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* for which there are extant Sanskrit witnesses.

In many instances, the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* rearranges material from *The Seven Siddhi Texts* by rendering verses that occur in different sections of a particular work as a single concatenated passage. These and other deviations from its source texts range from instances in which the author skips over a few verses within the same chapter to instances in which material from different chapters is presented as if it were arranged in sequence in the original text. This is likely not a result of the author relying upon fragmented copies of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* or versions of these texts that attest to alternate arrangements of material, because the same phenomenon can be observed in the author's inclusion of well-known exoteric works such as Nāgārjuna's *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*.<sup>571</sup> The fact that the author does this with such a well-known exoteric work has a number of possible implications for the way that this particular textual community approached the relationship between the formal canon and its own practical canon. It might imply that the anticipated audience was aware of the original, formal canonical versions of these works and simply did not see anything wrong with rearranging material from its source texts. It also could imply that the intended audience

<sup>571</sup> The *Subhāṣitasamgraha* quotes in sequence, for example, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā* 15.6, 5.7, and 15.5. See *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, 24.

prioritized the authority of its own practical canon to such an extent as to not even consider verifying references to canonical material in its own curriculum. Finally the author may have done this because they were aware that the audience for the text would not have access to the formal canonical versions of the text, and would thus not even have the ability to verify any citations in their original contexts. Other options are of course possible, but these few considerations provide sufficient grounds to argue that the way in which the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* treats the texts source material for the text indicates a general tendency toward re-packaging sources to best suit the work's own curricular agenda. The text thus grants greater priority to the practical application of these sources for a particular community of readers than to preserving the structure and content of these sources as they appear in their formal canonical versions. The author's purpose in quoting canonical material is less to impart an entirely accurate and uncorrupted reading of the source texts onto the reader than to find a practical application of the source texts, re-arranging their content if necessary, toward conveying a particular point. It appears that the reader of a work like the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* would have encountered its source texts through the author's own interpretive framework, and in such scenarios it is entirely possible that the fragmented and re-arranged presentation of a source text may in fact become the primary form in which the reader accesses the source text's content.<sup>572</sup> This is the point at which we can see a textual community's practical canon, as a function of its curriculum, takes precedent over its broader formal canon.

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<sup>572</sup> Unless the reader then goes on to check each reference in a work like the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, there is little to no way that they might even notice that some of the source material has been rearranged to conform to the author's particular agenda. The same phenomenon can be observed, as will be noted in chapter 12, in an important textual reference from the *Hevajratantra* in Görampa's commentary to Sakya Paṇḍita's *Differentiating the Three Vows* (*Sdom gsum rab dbye*).

After recognizing the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* as a curricular text, it becomes possible to reverse-engineer the practical canon that its author and related textual community relied upon. The *Subhāṣitasamgraha* is a curricular work, its practical application is as a supplementary work to the guru's instructions, and it is oriented toward explaining the nature of *mahāmudrā* in both exoteric and esoteric terms. This opens up the possibility that the textual community that produced the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* knew of the works contained among *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as *mahāmudrā* works. Still, the conclusions presented here on the employment of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of a practical canon for the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* must remain somewhat speculative in the absence of a few factors that would be necessary to truly determine the nature of the textual community it may have served. The lack of information on the author's name and institutional affiliation limits our ability to locate the text in a specific time and place. As for the author's use of all seven of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, the absence of any specific reference to these works as a known corpus also means that we should exercise caution in speculating the extent to which the author conceived of these texts as a comprehensive corpus, though the fact that all seven are quoted here is an enticing indication that this may have been the case. The same issue is observed with respect to Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*. The *Subhāṣitasamgraha* quotes four out of five of the works commonly associated with Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*, the *Sarvasuddhivīsuddhikrama* of Śākyamitra,<sup>573</sup> Nāgārjuna's *Svādhiṣṭānakrama*,

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<sup>573</sup> There is some controversy over whether or not this work is actually supposed to be included among Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama* given that it was written by Śākyamitra. The work that has been suggested as the proper second text in the fivefold sequence of Nāgārjuna's instructions on the generation and completion stages is the Nāgārjuna's *Piṇḍikṛta-sādhana*, which is alternately referred to as the *Piṇḍikrama-sādhana*. For more on this issue see *Pañcakrama: Sanskrit and Tibetan Texts Critically Edited with Verse Index and Facsimile Edition of the Sanskrit Manuscripts*, edited by Katsumi Mimaki and Toru Tomabechi (Tokyo: Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies for UNESCO, 1994), ix-x; Āryadeva, *Āryadeva's Lamp*, 50. For a thorough treatment of this topic as it relates to the *Piṇḍikṛta/krama-sādhana* see Wright, *The Guhyasamāja Piṇḍikṛta-sādhana*, 51. The *Subhāṣitasamgraha* does not actually refer to Śākyamitra's

*Abhisambodhikrama*, and *Yuganaddhakrama*, yet it addresses these works by their individual names and not by the title used to describe them as part of a comprehensive corpus of five works.<sup>574</sup> It is possible in this case that the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* was entirely unaware of the fact that these four works belonged to a known corpus of five '*krama*' texts. However, it would be irresponsible to completely rule out the possibility that the author was familiar with the *Pañcakrama* as a corpus, *despite the fact that they are not referred to as part of a unified corpus of works in the text itself*. In the same way while there is no irrefutable evidence that the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* was aware of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a known corpus, it would be irresponsible to completely rule out this possibility given the fact that the author is clearly familiar with all seven works and draws upon some of them extensively. When the philological data discussed in section II of this chapter above regarding the evidence for a known set of seven '*siddhi*' texts in the surviving Sanskrit sources is taken into account, it seems even more plausible that the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* contains evidence of an Indic author who was aware of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of a known corpus.

## V. Conclusion

This chapter has argued that at least one Sanskrit work, the anonymously authored *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, provides evidence of the employment of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of a broader practical canon that supported a *mahāmudrā* curriculum. However, without any

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work the title that appears in the *Pañcakrama*, but is referred to by its alternate title as the *Anuttarasamdhī*. However, the commentarial tradition that preserves this as a work belonging to the *Pañcakrama* of Nāgārjuna is significant enough to treat this as potential evidence that the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* may have been aware of this work's inclusion in this set of five works, particularly when reference to Śākyamirṭa's *Anuttarasamdhī* appears in a work that also references three other works from Nāgārjuna's *Pañcakrama*.

<sup>574</sup> *Subhāṣitasamgraha*, 9; 12; 33; 64. The first of the *Pañcakrama*, the *Vajrajāpakrama*, does not seem to be mentioned by name in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*.

further information on the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* it is currently not possible to determine the particular institution for which this work may have served as part of a broader curriculum. Also, because each of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are referenced using their individual titles instead of the title granted to the corpus itself, it is not possible to state with complete certainty that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were known as a unified corpus to the author of the *Subhāṣitasamgraha*. However, there is enough evidence in this work alone to suggest that their identification as a known *mahāmudrā* corpus in the Sanskrit Vajrayāna literary tradition cannot be entirely ruled out either.

The data from the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* allow us to speculate that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were part of *mahāmudrā* practical canon, but they cannot support any claim to their widespread or acknowledgement throughout South Asia as a known corpus of Indian *mahāmudrā* works. Practical canons and the curricula they generate are localized, institution or lineage-specific phenomena, and one cannot always expect to find evidence for their application on a broader, trans-local scale. Still, the recognition that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were part of the *mahāmudrā* practical canon employed in the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* provides some support for Tibetan claims that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were part a known corpus of Indian *mahāmudrā* works before they were translated into Tibetan in the eleventh century. With these points in mind, the next chapter of this dissertation turns to an analysis of Tibetan sources on the emergence of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works from a period covering their original translation into Tibetan up to the year 1478, when Gö Lotsawa completed *The Blue Annals*.

## Chapter 11:

### The Transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*

#### I. Introduction: The Indian *Mahāmudrā* Canon Takes Shape

The data that support recognition of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a corpus of related texts that is part of a practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works are far less ambiguous in Tibetan materials. It is in fact possible to say that the Tibetan tradition, and particularly the lineages of the Kagyü, is primarily responsible for the fact that these works are remembered as a practical canon of *mahāmudrā* instructions. This is not to say that the Tibetan tradition is entirely responsible for organizing these works in a single corpus and identifying them as *mahāmudrā* treatises. The data presented in chapters nine and ten have shown that the formulation of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a *mahāmudrā* practical canon in South Asia does have some supporting evidence outside of Tibetan sources, and surely some room must be left for this possibility. Still, it is undeniably in Tibet where these texts enter fully into Vajrayāna Buddhist literature *as a corpus*.

The early Tibetan data on the formulation of the Indian *mahāmudrā* canon has already been discussed by Roger Jackson, who locates the earliest evidence for the association of at least four corpora of Indian works in translation with the doctrine of *mahāmudrā* in the writings of Butön.<sup>575</sup> Jackson also notes that a sixteenth-century source, Pema Karpo's ('Brug chen padma dkar po 1527–1592) *The Victor's Mahāmudrā Treasury* (*Phyag chen rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*), points to Chökyi Tsangpa (Chos kyi gtsang pa rgya ras pa 1161–1211) as the first to include *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in his threefold rubric of

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<sup>575</sup> Jackson, "The Indian Mahāmudrā 'Canon(s)," 153.

*mahāmudrā* corpora.<sup>576</sup> By the early sixteenth century *The Seven Siddhi Texts* came to be prominently featured in at least two Tibetan practical canons, the Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso (Chos grags rgya mtsho, 1454–1506) three volume *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* (*Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*)<sup>577</sup> and *The Great Treasury of Drikung Kagyü Teachings* ('*Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo*)<sup>578</sup> believed to have been initially compiled by the Drikung patriarch Künga Rinchen (Kun dga' rin chen, 1475–1527).<sup>579</sup>

There exists an additional Tibetan practical canon of *mahāmudrā* works with the title *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* (*Phyag chen rgya gzhung*) that survives in a single manuscript from the monastic seat of the Drikung Kagyü at Drikung Thil. This collection consists of a single volume of roughly 819 folios in hand-written headless (*dbu med*) script. Its contents are, as noted in the publisher's comments in the volume's opening pages, a record of the *mahāmudrā* tradition of the Marpa Kagyü, and a quick look at the table of contents provided

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<sup>576</sup> Jackson, "The Indian Mahāmudrā 'Canon(s)," 154. This section of Pema Karpo's *The Victor's Treasury* is discussed in greater detail in chapter twelve.

<sup>577</sup> Zhwa dmar mi pham chos kyi blo gros ed., *Nges don phyag rgya chen po khrid mdzod* (New Delhi: Rnam par rgyal ba dpal zhwa dmar ba'i chos sde, 1997). The fourteenth Zhwa dmar rin po che compiled and published this thirteen volume collection of Indian *mahāmudrā* works of which the first three volumes are photo reproductions of the nineteenth century Pelpung (Dpal spungs) xylograph set of the original *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* (*Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung*) compiled by the Seventh Karmapa and later edited and restored by 'Jam dgon Kong sprul blo gros mtha' yas and Karma bkra shis chos dpal. Details on the compilation and restoration of these volumes at Dpal spungs can be found in the contents and topical description (*dkar chag*) at the beginning of volume three (*hūṃ*) of the reproduction of the Pelpung xylograph in Zhwa dmar rin po che's 1997 publication, and an English summary of this material can be found in Klaus-Dieter Mathes, "The Collection of 'Indian Mahāmudrā Works' (Tib. Phyag Chen Rgya Gzhung) Compiled by the Seventh Karma Pa Chos Grags Rgya Mtsho," in *Mahāmudrā and the Bka'-brgyud Tradition: PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006*, edited by Roger R. Jackson and Matthew T. Kapstein (ITTBS, GmbH 2011), 90–93.

<sup>578</sup> Jackson did not count the *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* as a Tibetan *mahāmudrā* canon when in his 2009 article. It is my opinion that this collection should be considered a *mahāmudrā* practical canon, particularly in its early volumes, because it begins with the core group of three *mahāmudrā* corpora that can be found across multiple lists of Indian *mahāmudrā* works.

<sup>579</sup> The current Che tshang rin po che (b. 1946) has recently stated that the '*Bri gung chos mdzod chen mo* was likely compiled by the 'Bri gung patriarch Kun dga' rin chen (1475–1527), which would mean that the 'Bri gung practical canon took shape at roughly the same time as that the Karmapa compiled his *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* or shortly thereafter. Che tshang rin po che's statement appears in Mathes, "A Summary and Topical Outline," 367.

by the publisher reveals that the volume is primarily concerned with texts that represent the transmission of special instructions from the *mahāsiddha* Tilopa through Nāropa, and on to Marpa and his immediate disciples. This collection thus appears to be concerned with the *mahāmudrā* instructions associated with the standard professed line of transmission for the Kagyü, and not the kind of broad textual heritage that is reflected in the Seventh Karmapa and Künga Rinchen's collections.<sup>580</sup> *The Seven Siddhi Texts* constitute the better part of the first volume in both of the latter collections, where they are augmented by a number of ancillary materials and additional works that also have the term '*siddhi*' in the title. The combination of material data from the multiple-text manuscripts examined in chapter nine, the supporting data from chapter ten on the *Subhāṣitasamgraha* as a *mahāmudrā* work that references all of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* some of the works from *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, and the historical data from the Tibetan colophons to these works as well as accounts of their transmission in *The Blue Annals* examined in this chapter indicate that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* may have undergone three phases in the course of their incorporation into these Kagyü practical canons. The first phase likely occurred in India and then Nepal under the direction of Maitrīpa and his direct disciples, the second phase occurred in the initial transmission of these works to Tibet, and the third and final phase is marked by their incorporation into the Seventh Karmapa and Künga Rinchen's *mahāmudrā* practical canons in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

Data from Sanskrit sources on *The Seven Siddhi Texts*' first phase of formulation into a unified corpus has already been presented in chapters nine and ten. Further data on this

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<sup>580</sup> *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* (Kangra: D. Tsondu Senghe, 1985). It may in fact be dubious to simply accept this collection's assigned title of *Phyag chen rgya gzhung* as a reflection of the original title of the work. The title does not in fact appear in the manuscript itself, but was likely given to this volume at a later date after it was discovered, catalogued, and re-published in the 1980s.



early stage in the corpus' development can be found in *The Great Treasury of Drikung Kagyü Teachings* as well as in the Tibetan translation of Lakṣmīnkarā's *Sahajasiddhipaddhati* (*Lhan cig skyes grub kyi gzhung 'grel*).<sup>581</sup> The latter work is undoubtedly related to the historical material appended to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*. It is also a work that is incorporated into both of the primary Kagyü *mahāmudrā* practical canons produced in the sixteenth century. The gradual development of a Tibetan historical narrative around *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and the *mahāmudrā* lineage from Oḍiyāna is best understood as part of a broader project eventually came to support the Kagyü institutional florescence of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, when it played an important part in the development of a practical canon and curriculum that would inform the works of some of the most influential Kagyü authors whose literary careers immediately followed the publication of these volumes. This topic is explored at length in chapter twelve.

The table in figure 11 provides an overview of various organizational schema for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* from a range of Tibetan sources and authors. The first grouping on the chart is derived from what is referred to here as the standard canonical grouping of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, or the contents of the corpus as it appears in the various formal canonical formulations of the *Tenkyur*. The second grouping reflects the corpus' contents in the two primary practical canons in which it is included, the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*. These compilations augment the standard list from the *Tenkyur* with additional '*siddhi*' texts and, in the case of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*, exegetical and historical data on each

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<sup>581</sup> Lha lcam rje btsun dpal mo, "Lhan cig skyes grub gzhung 'grel," in *Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i khrid mdzod* 1, edited by Zhwa dmar mi pham chos kyi blo gros (New Delhi: Rnam par rgyal ba'i dpa zhwa dmar ba'i chos sde, 1997), 222–79.

individual work. The final grouping of texts included in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* is taken from a number of Tibetan authors who list the contents of the corpus in their own various works.

	Canonical Lists		Lists in Practical Canons		Lists from Individual Authors							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L
<i>Guhyasiddhi</i> (Padmavajra/ Saroruhavajra/ Mahāsukhanātha)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Jñānasiddhi</i> (Indrabhūti)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Prajñopāyavinīścaya-</i> <i>siddhi</i> (Anāṅgavajra)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Advayasiddhi</i> (Lakṣmīṅkarā)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Gsang ba chen po de</i> <i>kho na nyid kyi</i> <i>man ngag</i> (Dārikapāda)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
<i>Sahajasiddhi</i> (Ḍombī Heruka)	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
<i>Vyaktabhāvānugata-</i> <i>tattvasiddhi</i> (Yoginī Cintā/Cinto/ Vilāsavajra)	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X <sup>582</sup>
<i>Lhan cig skyes pa'i</i> <i>grub pa</i> (Indrabhūti)			X	X					X			X
<i>Lhan cig skyes pa'i</i> <i>grub pa gzhung 'grel</i> (Lakṣmīṅkarā)			X	X					X			X
<i>Dpal de kho na nyid</i> <i>grub pa</i> (Keralipa)			X						X			
<i>Thabs dang shes rab</i> <i>rnam par gtan la dbab</i> <i>pa'i grub pa bsdus pa</i> (Ācārya Camari)				X					X			

<sup>582</sup> Karma Tashi Chöpel (Karma bkra shis chos dpal, 19<sup>th</sup> century CE) mentions the text by Vilāsavajra and Yoginī Cintā as separate works when this is not in fact the case. The text attributed to Vilāsavajra in the Pelpung edition of the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* is almost identical, with a few minor grammatical variants, to the canonical text attributed to Yoginī Cintā. This has led me to believe that Vilāsavajra might be taken as a feminine Vilāsavajā, which the Tibetan transliteration of the Sanskrit name does not capture.

<i>Dpal 'khor lo sdom pa'i snying po de kho na nyid grub pa</i> (Ācārya Jalandra)					X								
<i>'Chi med grub pa</i> (Virwapa)							X						
<i>Bdag byin gyis brlabs pa grub pa</i> (Saraha)							X						

Figure 11: Tibetan canonical and extra canonical lists of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*

**Chart Key:**

- A. Snar thang/Pe cing/Gser 'bris ma *Tenjyur* (Rgyud 'grel; mi)
- B. Sde dge/Co ne *Tenjyur* (Rgyud; wi)
- C. *Phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung* (7<sup>th</sup> Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso ed.)
- D. *'Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo* (\*Künga Rinchen ed.)<sup>583</sup>
- E. Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*<sup>584</sup>
- F. Gorampa, *Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa bsal ba*<sup>585</sup>
- G. Dönyö Drup pa, (Dge slong don yod grub pa, 15<sup>th</sup> century) *Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i TI ka bstan pa'i sgron me las so thar sdom pa'i rnam bshad*<sup>586</sup>
- H. Künga Rinchen, *Gsan yig byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i dpal 'bar*<sup>587</sup>
- I. Pema Karpo, *Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag gi bshad sbyar rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*<sup>588</sup>
- J. Panchen Chökyi Gyeltsen (Blo gsang pan chen chos kyi rgyal mtshan, 1570–1662) *Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i bka' srol phyag rgya chen po'i rtsa ba rgyas par bshad pa yang gsal sgron me*<sup>589</sup>
- K. Könchok Tenpé Drönmé (Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me, 1762–1823) *Phyag chen khrid kyi zin bris zhal lung bdud rtsi'i tshigs phreng*<sup>590</sup>
- L. Karma Tashi Chöpel's (Karma bkra shis chos dpal, 19<sup>th</sup> century) *Phyag chen rgya gzhung glegs bam gsum pa'i dkar chag yi ge'i 'byung gnas su ji ltar bkod pa'i dkar chag bzhugs byang mdor bsodus la shog grangs*<sup>591</sup>

These lists of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* exhibit varying degrees of divergence in both the order in which texts appear and the particular texts that they include. The most widely divergent

<sup>583</sup> The texts that I have marked here as the collection of *siddhi* works from *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* is representative of this core list of seven and the additional *siddhi* texts that are included in this volume. *The Great Treasury* also adds Padmavajra's *Epistle on Prajñā* (*Shes rab gyi phrin yig*), which I have not included here because it is not a '*siddhi*' text, even though its inclusion clearly indicates its association with this extended corpus of '*siddhi*' texts.

<sup>584</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 856–58.

<sup>585</sup> Go rams pa, "Sdom gsum rnam bshad," 158r.

<sup>586</sup> Dge slong don yog grub pa, "Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i TI ka bstan pa'i sgron me las so thar sdom pa'i rnam bshad," in *Sngon byin sa ska pa'i mkhas pa rnam kyis gzhung 'grel skor* 9 (Kathmandu: Sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2007), 84v.5–85r.2.

<sup>587</sup> 'Bri gung kun dga' rin chen, "Gsan yig byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i dpal 'bar," in *Gsung 'bum/ Kun dga' rin chen* 5 (Delhi: Driyung Kargyu Publications, 2003), 70r.5–77r.6.

<sup>588</sup> Padma dkar po, "Rgyal ba'i gan mdzod," 4r.6–4v.3.

<sup>589</sup> Blo gsang Pan chen chos kyi rgyal mtshan, "Dge ldan bka' brgyud rin po che'i bka' srol phyag rgya chen po'i rtsa ba rgyas par bshad pa yang gsal sgron me," in *Gdams ngag mdzod* 4, edited by 'Jam mgon kong sprul, (Kathmandu: Shechen Publications, 1998), 5v.1–5.

<sup>590</sup> Dkon mchog bstan pa'i sgron me, "Phyag chen khrid kyi zin bris zhal lung bdud rtsi'i tshigs phreng," in *Gung thang bstan pa'i sgron me'i gsung 'bum* 4 (Pe cing, Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2003), 12.

<sup>591</sup> Karma bkra shis chos dpal, "Phyag chen rgya gzhung glegs bam gsum yi ge'i 'byung gnas su ji ltar bkod pa'i dkar chag bzhugs byang mdor bsodus la shog grangs," in *Nges don phyag rgya chen po'i khrid mdzod* 3, edited by Zhwa dmar mi pham chos kyi blo gros, 1–83 (New Delhi: Rnam par rgyal ba'i dpa zhwa dmar ba'i chos sde, 1997), 21v.6–22v.1.

list comes from the Sakya polemicist Dönyö Drup pa (Dge slong don yod grub pa, 15<sup>th</sup> century), whose substitution of Virwapa's *Attainment of the Deathless State* ('*Chi med grub pa*) for either Dārikapāda's *Instructions on Ultimate Reality* (*De kho na nyid kyi man ngag*) or Yoginī Cintā's *Vyaktabhāvānugatattvasiddhi* indicates this author's decision to manipulate the contents of the corpus to reflect a particular sectarian allegiance, in this case including the *siddha* author who is the source of the Sakya *lamdré* (*lam 'bras*) tradition in the list of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The list in fact comes from this author's *mahāmudrā* polemical work, *A Commentary on Distinguishing the Three Vows: A Lamp for the Teachings* (*Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i TI ka bstan pa'i sgron me*), discussed in greater detail in chapter twelve.

The lists of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the Tibetan *Tenjyur* are uniform, where they appear alongside works belonging to *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (excluding Āryadeva's *Cittaviśuddhaprakaraṇa*)<sup>592</sup> and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement*. This suggests that these three corpora's collective status as a *mahāmudrā* practical canon was important enough to have a measurable impact on Butön's organization of the formal canon of the *Tenjyur*. For example, it was considered more important to keep Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* in its proper order in relation to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* than to group it together with other works by the same author or place it in close proximity to other

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<sup>592</sup> The *Drup pa Dédün* are actually followed by only five of the *Nyingpo Kordruk* in the various *Tenjyur*. The text that is omitted in all cases is Āryadeva's *Cittāvaraṇaviśodha-nāma-prakaraṇa* (*Sems kyi sgrub pa rnam par sbyong ba zhes bya ba'i rab tu byed pa*), which is grouped in with the works of the Ārya Guhyasamāja school elsewhere in both the *Snar thang/ Gser bris ma* and *Sde dge/ Co ne* stemma of the *Tenjyur*. Nāgārjuna's *Caturmudrāniścaya* (*phyag rgya bzhi gtan la dbab pa*), however, does take its rightful place among the *Drup Nying Kor*, presumably because this work is less a commentary on the *Guhyasamājantra* and more a general instruction on the nature and function of the four types of consort (*caturmudrā*) in consecration rites and sexual yoga. It may be the case that the imperative to locate Āryadeva's *Cittaviśodhaprakaraṇa* among the works of the Ārya school was greater in this case than the need to preserve the standard listing of the *Nyingpo Kordruk* in this case. Aside from this omission, all three corpora of the alleged early Indian *mahāmudrā* canon are listed in order as a group in all witnesses of the *Tenjyur*.

commentaries on the *Guhyasamāja* textual tradition for which it is such an important supplementary work. This carries some implications for the relationship between a practical and formal canon. First, it indicates that practical canons can provide ready-made organizational structures for the construction or expansion of a tradition's formal canon. Second, the preservation of these micro-canons within the *Tenjyur* runs counter to the assumption that a formal canon necessarily precedes a practical canon's formulation or supersedes it as an ultimate locus of interpretive authority.<sup>593</sup> The grouping of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the *Tenjyur* together with the other two known corpora of Indian *mahāmudrā* works might suggest an alternate model in which the formal canon is in part derivative or a conglomerate of a number of practical canons.

*The Seven Siddhi Texts* and its two related corpora of the early Indian *mahāmudrā* canon were thus a known set of works prior to their incorporation within the larger structure of the Tibetan formal canon. This is not to say, however, that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and the other early *mahāmudrā* corpora did not also eventually come to enjoy a strong degree of derivative authority from the formal canon itself. At a certain point in Tibetan history, capitalizing on the derivative authority these works held as authentically Indian sources that are *widely recognized as worthy of inclusion in the formal canon* was undoubtedly what made their employment in Sakya and Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical and curricular writing so appealing. Had they only retained their status as part of an institution-specific, sect-specific, localized practical canon, they would likely not have been able to be employed in polemical literature with nearly as great affect.

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<sup>593</sup> Blackburn defines the formal canon as "the ultimate locus of interpretive authority," and it is to this point that I believe the data available for the development and employment of an Indian *mahāmudrā* canon challenges the potential assumptions that this definition supports regarding the directionality of authority in the formal/practical canon distinction. See Blackburn, "Looking for the *Vinaya*," 283.

## II. Two Early References to the Corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*

Some of the earliest data on *The Seven Siddhi Texts* come from the patriarchs of the two schools of Tibetan Buddhism (the Sakya and the Kagyü) that would eventually generate a volley of *mahāmudrā* polemical literature through the seventeenth century and that has shaped the curriculum of both schools to this day. Tibetan textual witnesses from the two figures at the root of the Sakya-Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical debates, Gampopa and Sakya Paṇḍita, testify to the presence of a corpus by the name of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The earliest reference appears in *The Dialogues with Dūsum Khyenpa* (*Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan*) in Gampopa's *Collected Works* (*Gsung 'bum/ Bsod nams rin chen*). Here the recorded dialogue between Gampopa and his disciple Dūsum Khyenpa (Dus gsum mkhyen pa, 1110–1193), recognized retroactively as the first in the Karmapa incarnation lineage, contains the following reference to the corpus:

As for the method for determining the view, [guru Mila] said [the practices of] *nāḍī*, *vāyu*, and *cakra* are said to be the most important. He said it was necessary for one to teach [the view] from all of the dharma teachings based on [one's own] meditative experience. When it is perceived based on internal meditative experiences, no tenet system can capture it. It is not captured at all by the position that is the self-luminous mind of the mind-only school, the absence of arising of the middle-way, or the emptiness of the mantra [system]. But when it is verbally expressed according to an external perspective [by someone who has directly experienced it], it does not contradict *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that were spoken by the *siddhas* and the *tantras* that were spoken by Vajradhara.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>594</sup> Sgam po pa bsod nams rin chen, "Dus gsum mkhyen pa'i zhus lan," in *Gsung 'bum/ Bsod nams rin chen* vol. e, no. tha (Dge dge: Sde dge par khang chen mo, 1998?), 21v.3. Tibetan: lta ba gtan la dbab thabs ni/ rtsa rlung 'khor lo rtsis su che gsung / chos thams cad nang nas nyams thog nas smra ba zhig dgos gsung / nang nyams thog nas bltas na grub mtha' gang gis kyang ma phog /sems tsam pa rang rig rang gsal du 'dod pa dang / dbu ma pa'i skye med dang / sngags kyi stong pa nyid kyis kyang ma phog /phyi nas bltas nas ngag tu brjod na/ grub thob kyis gsungs pa'i grub pa sde bdun dang / rdo rje 'chang gis gsungs pa'i rgyud dang mi 'gal ba yin/

Here Gampopa tells his disciple Dūsum Khyenpa that the tantric subtle-body yogas that work with the channels, winds, and *cakras* of the body are essential for obtaining a direct experience of the proper view of ultimate reality, and that one must have this direct experiential realization. This, we are told, is the only way that one can teach the view without contradicting works such as *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and the *tantras* themselves, all of which propound a doctrine of internal, direct, experiential realization while upholding a rhetoric of ineffability with respect to ultimate reality.<sup>595</sup> As will be made clear in the translator colophons and references to the corpus from *The Blue Annals* analyzed below, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were translated and appear to have been disseminated rather rapidly in Tibet in the eleventh century. *The Dialogues of Dūsum Khyenpa* remains the earliest Tibetan textual reference to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a known corpus of which I am currently aware. The fact that this is the case should not be taken lightly given that it is among the various lineages of the Kagyū descending from Gampopa that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* would be officially integrated into the practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works and, as a result, come to constitute a prominent feature in Kagyū *mahāmudrā* curricula.

The second early reference to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a unified corpus appears in Sakya paṇḍita's famous work, *A Treatise that Clarifies the Sage's Intent (Thub pa'i dgongs pa rab tu bsal ba'i bstan bcos)*. This reference is worth noting because it provides an explicit indication that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were also part of early Sakya curriculum and may have been part of the broader Sakya practical canon in the thirteenth century:

The secret mantra, however, requires that one study *The Three Commentaries of the Bodhisattva*, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* composed by the *mahāsiddhas*, and the treatises that were composed by the Ācārya and Lord of Yoga Virwapa, King Indrabhūti, and Vajraghaṇṭapa etc., all of which are of

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<sup>595</sup> For my recent work on this topic as it pertains to the issue of Tantric epistemology in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, see Krug, "Tantric Epistemology," 149–84.

authentic origin. In brief, the Buddha taught, the compilers compiled, the siddhas meditated, the *paṇḍitas* explain, the *lotsāwas* translate, [and all of them] must be called the wise ones. One must study, explain, meditate, and attain *siddhi* by means of what was taught by the Buddha. If there is a single dharma that contradicts these, no matter how profound it may seem, since it is not the Buddha's teaching it is not fit to be studied, explained, meditated upon, and accomplished. There are also skillful imitations among the *tīrthikas* and others [who practice a] false dharma. Because these are not the Buddha's teaching, one should throw them away.<sup>596</sup>

This passage provides a clear indication that Sakya Paṇḍita understood *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as part of the practical canon that was used to support the Sakya curriculum for studying and practicing the Vajrayāna. Like the previous passage from Gampopa's *Dialogues with Düsum Khyenpa*, however, it does not provide any indication that Sakya Paṇḍita considered *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to be one corpus among a known Indian *mahāmudrā* practical canon.

### III. The Transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in *The Blue Annals*

Although its historical data must be taken in light of its author's own sectarian affiliations and biases, there is still a great deal of value to the accounts of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*' transmission to Tibet and its dissemination among various Tibetan figures in Gö Lotsawa's *The Blue Annals*. A close reading of these references supports a potential Nepali origin for their status as a known corpus that was included among short canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works. The core narrative of the transmission of these works revolves around an account of

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<sup>596</sup> Sa skya paṇḍita kun dga' rgyal mtshan. "Thub pa'i dgongs pa rab tu gsal ba," in *Sa skya bka' 'bum* 10, no.1 (Kathmandu: Sachen International, 2006), 5r.5–5v.2. Tibetan: gsang sngags yin na yang byang chub sems dpa'i 'grel pa gsum mam/ grub thob rnams kyi mdzad pa'i grub pa sde bdun nam/ slob dpon rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug bir+wa pa dang /\_rgyal po in+d+ra b+hU ti dang / rdo rje dril bu pa la dogs pas mdzad pa'i bstan bcos khungs nas byung ba mnyan dgos te/ mdor na sangs rgyas kyi gsungs/ sdud pa pos bsdus/ grub thob kyi bsgoms/ paN+Ti tas bshad/ lo tsA bas bsgyur/ mkhas pa rnams la grags pa cig sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa yin pas de la nyan bshad sgom sgrub byed dgos so/ /de rnams las bzlog pa'i chos gcig byung na zab zab 'dra yang sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa ma yin pas nyan bshad bsgom bsgrub byar mi nyan no/ /legs legs 'dra ba mu stegs dang chos log gzhan la'ang bdug ste sangs rgyas kyi bstan pa ma yin pas dor la bzhag go /



Maitrīpa's disciple Vajrapāṇi teaching *The Seven Siddhi Texts* along with its two ancillary *mahāmudrā* corpora and a number of other works to a figure referred to as Drok José (*'Brog jo sras*). This account is referred to here as the primary narrative of the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a known *mahāmudrā* corpus. The remaining references to the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in *The Blue Annals* have largely gone unnoticed owing to the widespread mistranslation of the compounds *Drupnying Kor* (*Grub snying skor*), *Drupnying Gikor* (*Grub snying gi skor*), or simply *Drubnying* (*Grub snying*). As noted in chapter ten, these compounds most often describe a grouping of two corpora: *The Seven Siddhi Texts* (*Grub pa sde bdun*) and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* (*Snying po skor drug*). This identification makes it possible to locate a number of additional accounts of Tibetans receiving the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* outside of the primary narrative of Vajrapāṇi's *mahāmudrā* transmission that have previously gone unnoticed. It also means that some of the scholarship on the transmission and reception of Saraha's *dohā* in Tibet should be corrected to reflect the fact that instances in *The Blue Annals* that record the transmission of the *Drupnying Kor* are not speaking exclusively about the *dohā* but refer instead to an early set of at least two corpora that some considered to be the earliest exempla of *mahāmudrā* literature to be composed in India. In light of this discovery, the reader should know that my own presentation of the data on the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* from *The Blue Annals* assumes that this text's references to the *Drubnying Kor* and variants of this compound includes the corpus of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. I do this in full recognition that these passages do not record data solely regarding the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, but the transmission of a larger pair of corpora of which *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were one component. The references analyzed here are also limited to the transmission of these

works in the eleventh century, and exclude at least one reference to their later transmission within the Kagyü.<sup>597</sup>

The first reference to the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in *The Blue Annals* occurs quite early in the text and briefly mentions the primary narrative of Vajrapāṇi teaching "the precepts of the *Grub snying*... to twenty-one great scholars and others in Upper Gtsang" following the death of Drokmi Lotsawa ('Brog mi lo tsā ba, 992/93–1043/72).<sup>598</sup> This is a clear reference to the primary narrative of the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that is described at greater length later in *The Blue Annals*. However, despite privileging this particular narrative, *The Blue Annals* indicates some awareness of the fact that it was not the first transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The fact that this was the case is also borne out in the translator colophon data for the Tibetan translations of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.

Vajrapāṇi is not mentioned as having collaborated with any of the translators who produced the canonical translations of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* preserved in the *Tenjoyur* and the Pelpung xylographs of the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. The compiled list from these sources of Indian Paṇḍitas and Tibetan translators for these works is as follows:

*Guhyasiddhi*—Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita and Naktso Lotsawa (Nag 'tsho lo tsā ba 1011–1064)<sup>599</sup>

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<sup>597</sup> This reference occurs in Gö Lotsawa's account of the life of Sönam Gyatso (Bsod rnam rgya mtsho 1424–1482), which mentions his receiving teachings on the *Drubnying* from the fourth Shamar incarnation Chökyi Drakpa Yeshé Pelzangpo (Zhwa dmar Chos kyi grags pa ye shes dpal bzang po, 1453–1524). The fourth Shamar Rinpoche was active at precisely the same time that the Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso compiled his set of *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*, which this study argues is one of the major practical canons among the Kagyü to include *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The account of Bsod rnam rgya mtsho's life is in Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 831–33.

<sup>598</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 72. For any who may still harbor some reservations as to the direct connection between the *Drupnying* and *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, this passage should offer clear evidence that, at least for Gö Lotsawa, the *Drupnying* is intended as a shortened compound for the *Drup pa Dédün*, *Nyingpo Kordruk*, and possible also the *Yila Mijépe Chökor*.

<sup>599</sup> Slob dpon padma badzra, "Gsang ba grub pa," 107.

Tibetan:

rgya gar gyi mkhan po kṛṣṇa paṇḍita dang / lo tsā ba dge long tshul khriims rgyal bas bsgyur cing zhus te  
gtan la phab pa'o// //

Translation:

*Prajñopāyavinīscayasiddhi*—Śāntibhadra and Gö Lhétsé ('Gos lhas brtsas c. 11<sup>th</sup> century)<sup>600</sup>

*Jñānasiddhi*—Śraddhakaravarma and Rinchen Zangpo (Rin chen bzang po 958–1055); later edited by Nagtso Lotsawa<sup>601</sup>

*Advayasiddhi*—Śraddhakaravarma and Rinchen Zangpo<sup>602</sup>

*Vyaktabhāvānugatatattvasiddhi*—Śāntibhadra and Gö Lhétsé<sup>603</sup>

*Sahajasiddhi*—Tibetan translator colophon not available<sup>604</sup>

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Translated by the Indian Abbot Kṛṣṇapaṇḍita (b. 11<sup>th</sup> CE?) and Lotsawa Gelong Tsultrim (Ngag 'tsho lo tsA ba tshul khrims rgyal ba, 1011–1064).

<sup>600</sup> Slob dpon yan lag med pa'i rdo rje, "Thabs dang shes rab rnam par gtan la dbap pa grub pa," 144.

Tibetan:

thabs dang shes rab rnam per gtan la dbap pa'i sgrub pa slob dpon chen pon yan lag med pa'i rdo rhes mdzad pa rdzogs so// paṇḍita chen po shānti bhadra dang / zhu chen gyi lo tsā ba 'gos lha btsas kyis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o// //

Translation:

This concludes *The Siddhi of Ascertaining Certainty Regarding Method and Insight*, composed by the great Ācārya Anaṅgavajra. Paṇḍita Śāntibhadra and the great editor and translator Lhātsé (*zhu chen lo tsā ba 'gos lha brtsas*, 11<sup>th</sup> century) translated the text, edited it, and then finalized the translation.

<sup>601</sup> Slob dpon Indrabhūti, "Ye shes grub pa," 244.

Tibetan:

dpal u rgyan nas byung ba ye shes grub pa zhes pa'i sgrub thabs slob dpon in+d+ra bhūtis mdzad pa rdzogs so// rgya gar gyi mkhan po shraddha kara warma dang / zhu chen gyi lo tsā ba dge slong rin chen bzang pos bsgyur/ slad kyi nags tshos kyang bcos so// //

Translation:

This concludes the *sādhana* called *The Siddhi of Gnosis*, from Śrī Oḍiyāna composed by Master Indrabhūti. It was translated by the Indian abbot Śraddhakaravarma and the lead editor, Lotsawa Bhikṣu Rinchen Zangpo (958–1055). It was also later edited by Nagtso.

<sup>602</sup> The canonical editions of this text do not include a translator's colophon, but luckily the Pelpung edition of Chödrak Gyatso's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* does. See Lha mo dpal chen mo, "Dngos grub brnyes pa'i lha mo dpal chen mo'i gsung ba gnyis med grub pa," in *Nges don phyag rgya chen po khrid mdzod* 1, edited by Zhwa dmar mi pham chos kyi blo gros (New Delhi: Rnam par rgyal ba'i dpa zhwa dmar ba'i chos sde, 1997), 97r.2–r.4.

Tibetan:

/gnyis med grub pa zhes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs o rgyan zhes bya ba rnal 'byor gyi gnas mchog chen por dngos grub brnyes pa'i lha mo dpal chen mo zhes bya ba mdzad pas rdzogs so// //rgya gar gyi mkhan po shraddhakaravarma dang / lo tā ba rin chen bzang pos bsgyur pa'o// //

Translation:

This concludes the *Sādhana of the Siddhi of Non-duality* that was composed by the great Śrīdevi, who attained *siddhi* at the Yogapīṭha renowned as Oḍiyāna. It was translated by the Indian Abbot Śraddhakaravarma and the Lotsawa Rinchen Zangpo.

<sup>603</sup> Rnal 'byor ma cimta, "De kho na nyid grub pa," 271.

Tibetan:

dngos po gsal ba'i rjes su grub pa de kho na nyid grub pa zhes bya ba/\_lhan cig skyes pa'i rnal 'byor ma tsi tos mdzad pa rdzogs so//\_

dngos po gsal ba'i rjes su grub pa de kho na nyid grub pa zhes bya ba/\_lhan cig skyes pa'i rnal 'byor ma tsi tos mdzad pa rdzogs so//\_ paṇḍita chen po zhi ba bzang po dang /\_zhu chen gyi lo tsā ba 'gos lhas btsas kyis bsgyur cing zhus te gtan la phab pa'o//\_//

Translation:

This concludes *The Siddhi of the Ultimate Reality that Corresponds to the Manifest State*, composed by the Sahaja-yoginī Cito. The great Paṇḍita Śāntibhadra (c. 11<sup>th</sup> century) and the chief editor Lotsāwa Gö Lhétsé translated the text, edited it, and then finalized the translation.

If Vajrapāṇi was solely responsible for transmitting these works to Tibet, he is conspicuously absent from these translator colophons. The exact dates for Gö Lhétsé are currently unknown, but according to some sources on the dates for Drokmi Lotsawa, every other Tibetan translator that appears in the translator colophon material for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* appears to predate Vajrapāṇi's visit to Tibet. As Gö Lotsawa notes, Vajrapāṇi came to teach in Tibet following Drokmi Lotsawa's death and, as we learn in the expanded description of this event in the primary narrative of this transmission below, he was invited to perform Drokmi's funeral rites as well as provide teachings on *mahāmudrā*. The later dates for Drokmi place his death in 1072, which would mean Vajrapāṇi's visit occurred after most if not all of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* had been translated into Tibetan.<sup>606</sup> The fact that Vajrapāṇi features prominently as one of the translators for *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement* combined with the fact that this corpus is considered part of the received *mahāmudrā* lineage from Vajrapāṇi's guru Maitrīpa/Advayavajra and his other core disciples, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were likely translated into Tibetan prior to Vajrapāṇi's arrival and

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<sup>604</sup> The canonical editions of Ḍombīheruka's *Sahajasiddhi* do not include a translator colophon, nor does the edition of the text in the Pelpung edition of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*.

<sup>605</sup> The canonical editions of this text do not include a translator's colophon, but luckily the Pelpung edition of Chödrak Gyatso's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* does. See Dādikapa, "Dpal o rgyan nas byung ba gsang ba'i gsang ba'i chen po de kho na nyid kyi man ngag," in *Nges don phyag rgya chen po khrid mdzod 1*, edited Zhwa dmar mi pham chos kyi blo gros, (New Delhi: Rnam par rgyal ba'i dpa zhwa dmar ba'i chos sde, 1997), 98v.1–2.

Tibetan:

dpal u rgyan nas byung ba gsang ba'i gsang ba chen po de kho na nyid kyi man ngag ces bya ba slob dpon chen po dA di ka pas (smad 'tshod ma'i khyo pho) mdzad rdzogs so// //paṇḍita chen po śāntibhadra dang / lo tsā ba 'gos lhas btsas kyi bsgyur ching zhus te gtan la phab pa'o/

Translation:

This concludes *The Great Secret of Secrets from the Glorious Land of Oḍiyāna: Quintessential Instructions on Ultimate Reality*, composed by the great Ācārya Dārikapa (aka 'the prostitute's husband'). The great paṇḍita Śāntibhadra and Lotsawa Gö Lhétsé translated the text, edited it, and then finalized the translation.

<sup>606</sup> If we accept the earlier date of 1043 for Drokmi's death, this argument may need to be adjusted. However, *The Blue Annals* gives us the date 1066 for Vajrapāṇi's arrival in Yerang (Pāṭan), which favors the latter dates for Drokmi Lotsawa's death.

may have taken on their association with the newly collected works of Maitrīpa/Advayavajra in Tibet and his core students at a later date. This might explain why the compound *Drupnying* appears to only refer to two of the three corpora, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*. It also gives us reason to believe that the arrangement of these two corpora as the *Drupnying* is the oldest configuration of the early Indian *mahāmudrā* canon. Gö Lotsawa, at least, appears to present the works of Maitrīpa and his students contained in *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement* to have been a later addition to this original set of two.

The next reference to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in *The Blue Annals* refers to the corpus using the contracted title *Drupnying* and occurs in Gö Lotsawa's account of an early member of the Khön clan by the name of Chögyel Khönphuwa (Chos rgyal 'Khon phu ba 1069–1144).<sup>607</sup> *The Blue Annals* records Khönphuwa as the brother of Machik Zhama (Ma gcig zha ma 1062–1149) and a disciple and attendant of Machik Zhama's consort, the eleventh-century Tibetan translator Ra Lotsawa (Rma lo tsā ba dge ba'i blo gros, c. 1044–1089). The account of Khönphuwa's life notes that he studied "the exposition of the *Grub snying*" under Marpa Sengdzi (Mar pa seng rdzi, dates unknown) in the region of Latö prior to making his way to Nepal to study with two figures referred to only as Yerangwa (Ye rang ba, dates unknown) and Phamtingpa (Pham thing pa, dates unknown).<sup>608</sup> As Davidson notes in his study of Marpa Lotsawa's (Mar pa lo tsa wa chos kyi blo gros, 1002/12–1097/1100) trips to India and Nepal, the various Nepali teachers known under the name Phamtingpa were likely

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<sup>607</sup> These dates are derived from a modern collection of biographies of major Tibetan figures authored by Minyak Gönpö (Mi nyag mgon po 1923–2008) and a number of other modern Tibetan scholars. See Mi nyag dgon po et. al., "Khon phu ba chos kyi rgyal po'i rnam thar mdor bsdus/ (1069–1144)," in *Gangs can mkhas dbang rim byon gyi rnam thar mdor bsdus*, deb gnyis pa/ vol. 2, (Beijing: Krung go'i bod kyi shes rig dpe skrun khang, 1996–2000), 40–43. The account in this work is nearly identical to the information in Gö Lotsawa's *The Blue Annals*.

<sup>608</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 227–28.

active at the *vihāra* complex in modern Pharping adjacent to the famous Yangleshö cave, where they continued to propagate the teachings of Nāropa after their guru's passing.<sup>609</sup>

It is possible that the names Yerangwa and Phamtingpa do not indicate the names of individual gurus and only give us a general sense of where Khönphuwa studied while in Nepal. This interpretation would indicate two geographical areas, Yerang, which Turrell Wylie has identified with the city of Pāṭan or Lalitpur on the southern side of the Kathmandu valley,<sup>610</sup> and Pharping, a small village in the hills outside of Pāṭan that remains a hotbed of Vajrayāna and Śākta tantric traditions to this day. If the chronology of Gö Lotsawa's account is accurate it would appear that Khönphuwa's introduction to the *Drupnying* in Tibet preceded his trip to Nepal to study among the Vajrayāna enclaves in Pāṭan and the more remote *vihāras* of Pharping. Seeing that the primary narrative in *The Blue Annals of The Seven Siddhi Text's* dissemination traces to Maitrīpa's disciple Vajrapāṇi, whom Gö Lotsawa tells us settled in Yerang in roughly 1066 C.E. when he was fifty years old,<sup>611</sup> it seems reasonable to suggest that the account of Khönphuwa's tutelage under 'Yerangwa' and 'Phamtingpa' indicates his attempt to move closer to the perceived source of the *Drupnying* instruction lineage, whether that be a specific institution or simply the city of Pāṭan and the centers for studying the Vajrayāna in Pharping. This allows us to speculate that Pāṭan and

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<sup>609</sup> Ronald M. Davidson is the first scholar of whom I am aware to locate the Pham thing pa clique at the *vihāra* complex adjoining the famous Yangleshö cave in modern Pharping, Nepal. See Ronald M. Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance: Tantric Buddhism in the Rebirth of Tibetan Culture* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 143–44.

<sup>610</sup> Also referred to as Lalita-pattana, this identification is based on Turrell Wylie's original observation that the Tibetan *ye rang* is a corrupt pronunciation of the Newari name Yala or Yalai for the city and its surrounding territory. I am indebted to Brian Cuevas for directing me to this source for the identification of *Ye rang*. See Turrell V. Wylie, *A Tibetan Religious Geography of Nepal, Serie Orientale Roma XLII* (Rome: Instituto per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1950), 13 note 10. I would also direct the reader to Cuevas' recent translation of the biography of Ra Lotsawa, which identifies *Ye rang* as a city in the Kathmandu valley and provides the name of at least one Vajrayāna enclave where Bharo was active in the eleventh century. See Ra Yeshé Senge, *The All-Pervading Melodious Drumbeat: The Life of Ra Lotsawa*, translated by Brian J. Cuevas (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 11–12.

<sup>611</sup> Gö Lotsawa *The Blue Annals*, 855–57.

Pharping were the specific locations of the Vajrayāna institutions for which the *Drupnying* constituted part of a *mahāmudrā* practical canon in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, where they were part of the *mahāmudrā* curriculum of Nāropa and Maitrīpa's disciples. Shortly after this account of Khönphuwa's life, Gö Lotsawa offers further evidence of the *Drupnying* as an active part of the curriculum in Latö in his account of the life of another figure associated with Ra Lotsawa's lineage, Möntön Jungné Shérap (Mon ston byung gnas shes rab 1075–1160), noting that Möntön studied "the exposition of logic, the *Grub snying*..., the Vārahī, the Dohā ... and other Cycles" while in Latö.<sup>612</sup> This provides some indication of a corresponding Tibetan geographical location, Latö, where future research might reveal the specific institution where the *Drupnying* constituted an active part of the curriculum during the same period.

The most detailed accounts of the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* occur as Gö Lotsawa directs his attention at the history of *mahāmudrā* in the eleventh chapter of *The Blue Annals*. The section begins with a brief synopsis that traces the *mahāmudrā* teachings from Saraha to Śābara, and then from Śābara to Maitrīpa in a basic outline of the lineage that is likely familiar to readers who are aware of the Tibetan and Sanskrit hagiographic sources on the life of Maitrīpa.<sup>613</sup> After outlining a number of historical schema for the *mahāmudrā* transmission to Tibet, Gö Lotsawa provides an account of the *mahāmudrā* lineage of the *Drubnying*, tracing it from Maitrīpa to Atiśa (980–1054), who then taught these works to Dromtön ('Brom ston rgyal ba'i 'byung gnas 1004/1005–1064). Noted as the "early" *mahāmudrā* transmission of the upper translation school (*stod 'gyur*), *The Blue Annals*

<sup>612</sup> Gö Lotsawa *The Blue Annals*, 233.

<sup>613</sup> The historical material in *The Great Treasury of Drikung Kagyü Teachings* discussed in the beginning of Chapter twelve supplies a narrative indicates that it was Śābara's disciples who first began to refer to the *Nyingpo Kordruk* into a corpus and suggests that the two corpora of the *Drubnying* were imparted to Maitrīpa during his tutelage under Śābara.

indicates that this teaching lineage for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* may not have continued after Dromtön. As Gö Lotsawa notes and other sources confirm,<sup>614</sup> Dromtön did not teach these works widely because he was disturbed by the potentially harmful influence that they might have on Tibetans.<sup>615</sup> He is reported to have become concerned with this literature after reading verses from Saraha's *dohā* that rejected standard ritual practices such as offering butter lamps and making offerings to deities. However, given the fact that the literature referred to as the '*dohā*' here is in actuality the two core *mahāmudrā* corpora of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, it is likely that the Tibetan historical sources chose to present a rather benign reason for Dromtön's reservations about this literature, perhaps because the more transgressive practices these works prescribe were

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<sup>614</sup> This incident is often used as an example of a general rhetoric rejecting formal ritual practice among the *mahāsiddhas*. It is my hope that my extensive analysis of proscriptions against ritual practices such as these (and others) in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in light of the demonological paradigm in chapter four of this dissertation can provide greater context to the cultural discourse and context for such statements in the works of the Indian *mahāsiddhas*. A number of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* contain sentiments rejecting the performance of rites associated with the lower *tantras*, the exoteric Mahāyāna, and even some of the earliest ritual strata of the Buddhist traditions such as reciting texts and building stūpas. Given the current conversation in the field surrounding the context for such statements and the possibility that they are in fact only indicative of the advanced yogic asceticism of the tantric *yoga*- and *yoginītantra* systems of *caryā* and *vrata* (and not simply indications that the religious movement of the Buddhist siddhas rejected ritual *tout court*) it is worthwhile here to note that Tibetan historians and perhaps even Dromtön himself found themselves in the middle of a similar debate. One viewpoint, that of the 'conservative' Dromtön, may also have read such statements as categorical rejections of standard forms of ritual conduct in the writings of the siddhas and not simply an anti-ritualistic discourse contextualized within a particular mode of advanced tantric practice. Alternatively, if we can assume that Dromtön was aware of the context in which such anti-ritualistic statements are made in this literature, he may have simply been concerned that Tibetans might read such statements out of context and interpret them as categorical rejections of much of the ritual culture of the exoteric Mahāyāna and lower *tantras*. This would imply that modern scholars in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries were not alone in misunderstanding the rhetoric against formal ritual practices in this literature as a categorical rejection of established, institutional Buddhism among the tantric *siddhas*. It appears that precisely the same misunderstanding of these works troubled Dromtön, either because he himself bought into their anti-institutional rhetoric or because he feared that others might. For a thorough analysis of the various versions of the Dromtön story, see Kurtis R. Schaeffer, *Dreaming the Great Brahmin: Tibetan Traditions of the Buddhist Poet-Saint Saraha* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), esp. 61; 111; 136; 137. The contextualization of the proscription of various ritual actions associated with the lower *tantras* and exoteric Buddhist traditions has been argued in at least two works from Christian Wedemeyer. See Christian K. Wedemeyer, "Locating Tantric Antinomianism," 349–419; and Christian K. Wedemeyer, *Making Sense*, chapter 5.

<sup>615</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 843–44.



deemed inappropriate for reproduction in historical writing.<sup>616</sup> The passage notes that Atiśa taught the *Drupnying Kor* while in Chimpu (Mchims pu), and mentions that at Gö Lotsawa's time there still existed a Tibetan version of Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* that had been translated by Dromtön, despite Dromtön's alleged reservations about teaching these texts.<sup>617</sup>

A reconsideration of Gö Lotsawa's account of *The Seven Siddhi Texts'* transmission from Atiśa in light of the Tibetan translator colophon data for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* indicates that the corpus may in fact have been passed on following this initial transmission. Even if Dromtön did not widely disseminate them out of fear that they would exert a corrupting influence on the Tibetan people, other disciples of Atiśa, notably all three of the primary translators who worked on *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Rinchen Zangpo, Naktso Lotsawa, and Gö Lhétsé, could have continued Atiśa's early transmission of these works. The fact that these translators' work, and not the work of some later figure, resulted in the canonical versions of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* preserved in the *Tenjur* suggests that this may have been the case. Thus despite Dromtön's alleged reservations about *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, it appears that his decision not to teach this material did not prevent these works from entering into the circulation of newly available esoteric Buddhist literature in the early *gsar ma* period.

Gö Lotsawa's next two biographical accounts in his "History of Mahāmudrā" both contain elements indicating that the two Indian figures they discuss, Vairocanarakṣita (c.

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<sup>616</sup> Given the thorough treatment of some of the most transgressive ascetic practices of the Buddhist *yoga-* and *yoginītantras* contained in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, many of which force a *yogin* to take on identifiably non-Buddhist personae and behave in direct contradiction to Buddhist precepts and general social norms, this author finds it surprising that, as the story goes, Dromtön would single out the verse from Saraha's *dohā* on the uselessness of butter lamps as having the potential to corrupt the Tibetan people. The antinomianism of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* goes well beyond simply not lighting butter lamps, and may represent a more likely source for Dromtön's reservations regarding Atiśa's transmission of *mahāmudrā* and higher tantric teachings in Tibet, despite the received Tibetan narrative.

<sup>617</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 844.

11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century?) and Karopa (c. 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century?), may also have studied *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, but the references are in this case a bit too vague to determine this for certain. The account of Vairocanarakṣita mentions a period in which he studied "the a ma na si class, the dohā and other texts, the cycle of *mahāmudrā*, the system of Maitrīpa, the precepts of Hevajra, and the precepts of *rasāyana*" while studying under a yogin named Surapāla in the vicinity of Nālandā for eight years.<sup>618</sup> The account of Karopa's life story emphasizes that he was one of Maitrīpa's disciples, but contains no direct reference to the textual corpora he may have studied with his guru.

Further mention of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* does appear, however, in the curious story of the life of the Tibetan master Korchungwa (Dam pa skor chung ba c. 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century?), named here as one of Karopa's disciples. The narrative of Korchungwa's life story appears to be largely concerned with supplying a narrative account of the way in which consecrations and tantric rites were performed in Nepal and India during the eleventh century. The accuracy of Gö Lotsawa's account is of course up for debate, but its implications are intriguing enough to pause and consider here. The story provides an account of Korchungwa's struggle to find a guru and his gradual progression over a number of years through the series of higher tantric consecrations.<sup>619</sup> Because Korchungwa's life story focuses on a sequential account of the consecrations he received, it provides some indication of the point in a Vajrayāna *yogin's* career at which he might study and feel confident in practicing the instructions from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The corpus is mentioned here after Korchungwa has received the third and fourth empowerments, where Gö Lotsawa writes:

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<sup>618</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 845.

<sup>619</sup> This story provides at least some evidence that the consecration sequence was not always delivered in full and as part of the same liturgy, but represented a series of initiatory consecrations for which the disciple would have to both prove him or herself worthy, and that would have required amassing the resources necessary to pay one's guru the appropriate fee.

After that he studied the entire *Drupnying* cycle, and felt proud at his ability to understand it. Afterwards he was sent into the presence of one who had practiced secret Tantric rites in the suburb of an Indian town, and he proceeded there.<sup>620</sup>

The text then tells us that Korchungwa proceeds to a small chapel where he meets a monk returning from his alms round. At night, the monk removes a painting hanging on the wall revealing a small door. He opens the door and a number of *mudrās* or tantric consorts emerge dressed in full costume for the performance of a *maṇḍala* rite, which the monk proceeds to perform along with the *mudrās*. In the morning the *mudrās* return to their secret chamber, the door is covered with a painting, and the monk tells Korchungwa, "We Indians practice the secret Tantric rites in this manner."<sup>621</sup> The fact that Korchungwa is said to have studied and actually been able to fully understand the *Drupnying* after receiving the *guhyābhiṣeka*, taking a consort, and then receiving both the third and fourth consecrations provides some indication of the point at which Gö Lotsawa, and perhaps other Tibetan scholars like him, considered it efficacious and appropriate to actually put some of the instructions taught in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* into practice. The story of Korchungwa's tutelage with a tantric Buddhist monk on the outskirts of an Indian town in which the *maṇḍala* rite includes a costumed performance with a number of consorts whom he keeps hidden from public view accords with at least one mode of 'clandestine practice' or *guhyacaryā* that is recorded in Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*. It is also reminiscent of one interpretation of the advanced tantric ascetic mode of the practice in which one secretly gives everything up (*kun 'dar gsang ste spyod pa*, \**avadhūtiguhyacaryā*) in the writing of the Sakya scholar Gorampa Sönam

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<sup>620</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 852.

<sup>621</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 853.

Sengé,<sup>622</sup> a contemporary of Gö Lotsawa, that remains one current understanding of performing advanced tantric practice among the Sakya.<sup>623</sup> This mode of advanced yogic ritual may also bear some relation to the Newari practice of *caryānṛtya* that also remains a living tradition to this day.<sup>624</sup> These tantalizing parallels aside, it is at least clear that the story of Korchungwa in *The Blue Annals* locates the point at which a disciple might study *The Seven Siddhi Text* at the moment following the disciple's final advancement through all of the higher consecrations and immediately before proceeding to engage in the post-initiatory stages of advanced tantric ascetic practices.<sup>625</sup> Korchungwa's life story then proceeds to take

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<sup>622</sup> Gorampa discusses this and other various modes of advanced ascetic practices (*caryā, spyod pa*) in his commentary to Sakya paṇḍita's *Sdom gsum rab dbye* where he provides a number of important details on the fifteenth century Sakya pa interpretation of these practices. See Go rams pa bsod nams seng ga, "Sdom gsum gyi rab tu dbyed pa'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba," in *Kun mhkyen go bo rab 'byams pa bsod nams seng ge'i bka'*; 'bum 9, no. 1 (Bir: Dzongsar Institute and Vashodara Publications, 1996), 133v–35v.

<sup>623</sup> This was indicated to me during an audience with the Ngor Sakya scholar Dhuntsang Zhabdrung Rinpoche at the Sanga Chotsang Center and Ngor Gumpa in Rong nek, Gangtok, Sikkim on March 31, 2016. Dhuntsang Rinpoche referred to two of the classifications of *spyod pa* from Go rams pa's works, *gsang ba'i spyod pa* and *kun 'dor spyod pa*, and informed me that the definition of *gsang ba'i spyod pa* that he has received refers to a practice that one does behind closed doors, meaning that it is 'secret' because you take certain precautions so that nobody outside of the ritual space knows what is happening inside. Dhuntsang Rinpoche was emphatic that the *kun 'dor spyod pa* is considered the public performance of the *caryā* while the *gsang ba'i spyod pa* is considered the private performance among the Sakya.

<sup>624</sup> I suggest translating this term as "a dance performing [the *maṇḍala*]," though one could simply retain the Sanskrit and translate it as a *caryā* dance. The tradition seems to me to be in keeping with the definitions of the *guhya* that describe performing the *samaya* ritual behind closed doors and in such a way that one's neighbors are not aware of what one is doing (thus fulfilling one interpretation of the term *guhya* employed in the compound *guhya*). Although there has been some movement toward popularizing these dance traditions, they are still for the most part unstudied and guarded from public view. For one study of this tradition see Syed Jamil Ahmed, "Caryā Nṛtya of Nepal: When 'Becoming the Character' in Asian Performance is Nonduality in 'Quintessence of Void,'" *TDR* 47, no.3 (Autumn 2003): 159–82.

<sup>625</sup> The story does, however, also recall several instances in which Korchungwa disguises himself among the students of Drapa Gönshé (Gra pa mgon shes 1012–1090) while in Tibet and proceeds to give tantric teachings at night after having only received the *kalāsābhīṣeka* or the first and lowest of the four Vajrayāna consecrations. This he does presumably to earn enough money to pay his guru to bestow the remaining consecrations upon him. Although he does engage in a kind of 'clandestine activity' that might correlate to the *guhya* practice here, this stage of Korchungwa's story cannot be said to correspond to the performance of the advanced ascetic practices of the *caryā* and *vrata*. See Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 852.

a bizarre turn when it merges with the story of the Indian siddha Nirūpa via the yogic mechanics of taking over another's body (*parakāyapraveśa*).<sup>626</sup>

The primary narrative of the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in *The Blue Annals*<sup>627</sup> attributes the tradition of this corpus' identification with the doctrine of *mahāmudrā* to the India teacher Maitrīpa by way of his disciple Vajrapāṇi. The transmission from Vajrapāṇi is recorded as having occurred in two phases, the first while he was residing in Pāṭan (Ye rang) in Nepal and the second during a visit to Tibet. This account is the most well known record of the transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* because it mentions *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* by name and provides a full list of the works that they contain. This account is the source for the list of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* recorded from Gö Lotsawa above in the chart in figure 11. The passage also lends greater support to my argument that the compound *Drupnying* should be identified with *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, but the specific mention of these titles was perhaps too far removed from the passage's preceding mention of the *Drupnying* for Roerich and others to make this the connection.

Both phases in this second or "intermediate" transmission of the upper translation school from Maitrīpa's disciple Vajrapāṇi involve a figure by the name of Drok José, who until now has not yet been properly identified. It is suggested here that Drok José is likely a reference to "the son of" (*sras*) Drokmi Lotsawa, though I must admit that I am not aware of

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<sup>626</sup> Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 853–55.

<sup>627</sup> The earliest reference to this account in the secondary literature occurs in Shendge ed., *Advayasiddhi*, 5. It is more recently referenced in Jackson, "The Indian Mahāmudrā 'Canon(s)," 154. It is also referenced in at least two of Klaus-Dieter Mathes's publications, Klaus-Dieter Mathes, "Saraha's *Sahaja* Tradition in the Light of the *Dohākoṣa* Commentary by a Nepalese (?) Advayavajra," in *Sahaja: The Role of the Dohā and Caryāgīti in the Cultural Indo-Tibetan Interface*, edited by Andrea Loseries (Delhi: Buddhist World Press, 2015), 18.; and Klaus-Dieter Mathes, "Mind and its Co-emergent (*sahaja*) Nature in Advayavajra's Commentary on Saraha's *Dohākoṣa*," *Zentralasiatische Studien* 44 (2015): 20.

any other reference to Drokmi having had a son who carried on his activities following his death. This figure may potentially be identified with Drok José Dorjé Bar ('Brog 'jo sras rdo rje 'bar, dates unknown) who is listed among those who received teachings from Vajrapāṇi on *The Seven Siddhi Texts* during his visit to Tibet. It is also possible that the name Drok José is an honorific for any disciple of Drokmi. But the fact that Gö Lotsawa extends the trope of Drokmi Lotsawa as the quintessential 'greedy lama' to Drok José in *The Blue Annals'* account of the second *mahāmudrā* transmission from Vajrapāṇi provides some evidence that the name is in fact related to Drokmi Lotsawa, whether it be read as either a reference to one or more of Drokmi's disciples, to Drokmi's actual son, or perhaps both.<sup>628</sup> This is also corroborated by the fact that the second phase of Vajrapāṇi's transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* occurred in tandem with his performance of the funeral rights for the father of Drok José, which coincides with Gö Lotsawa's account of Vajrapāṇi visiting Tibet following the death of Drokmi already mentioned above.<sup>629</sup>

At least one source discussed again in chapter twelve of this dissertation for the important role it played in shaping the Sakya-Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical debates and curricula, Gorampa's *Clarifying the Intent of the Victor's Teachings: A Complete*

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<sup>628</sup> The employment of Drokmi as the 'greedy lama' occurs in the concluding interchange between Vajrapāṇi and Drok José in *The Blue Annals* that records an incident where Drok José cheats Vajrapāṇi out of nearly half of the payment he was promised for performing Drokmi's funerary rites and imparting his instructions on *mahāmudrā*. The connection between Drokmi and Drok José via the trope of the 'greedy lama' is made explicitly in Gö Lotsawa's account of the story, where he Vajrapāṇi upbraids Drok José saying, "It is improper for 'Brog jo sras to tell me lies! If so, his father also could not be a genuine (teacher), for it is said: '*The father's behavior will be manifested by the son.*'" (my emphasis) See Gö Lotsawa *The Blue Annals*, 858. Gorampa records that Drokmi refused to teach Khön Könchok Gyelpo the related instructions on the tantric transmissions he gave him even after the latter offered him a large payment for the teaching.

<sup>629</sup> Gö Lotsawa *The Blue Annals*, 855–58. This passage should be read against the following reference from *The Blue Annals*: "After the death of 'Brog mi, Rgya gar phyag na came to Tibet. He preached extensively the precepts of the *Grub snying* to twenty-one great scholars and others in Upper Gtsang." See Gö Lotsawa, *The Blue Annals*, 72. Reading these two passages together provides further support for my argument regarding the correct translation and interpretation of the compound *Grub snying*.

*Commentary on Distinguishing the Three Vows (Sdom gsum gyi rab tu dbyed pa'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs pa gsal ba)*, offers evidence of the transmission that Khön Könchok Gyelpo ('Khon dkon mchog rgyal po 1034–1102) received of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.<sup>630</sup> Here Khön Könchok Gyelpo is said to have studied *The Seven Siddhi Texts* under Mel Lotsawa (Mal lo tsā ba blo gros grags pa, 11<sup>th</sup> century), who is also noted as one of Sachen Kūnga Nyingpo's (Sa chen kun dga' snying po's 1092–1158) teachers. The account of this transmission is embedded within the broader narrative of the Khön clan's abandonment of many of the tantric teachings they received during the early dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet in favor of the teachings of the new translations (*gsar 'gyur*). The passage as it appears in Gorampa's work is provided here in full:

At that time, during a great festival in the land of the Dro clan, some of the *mantrins* [emerged] from inside, where many various types of performances take place, wearing masks of the twenty-eight *isvarīs*. They held the symbolic implements in each hand. They had adopted the wrathful expression of the *mamo* with their matted hair. [The people] there were very entertained by the performance of the masked dance and it won over the crowd.

Khön Könchog Gyelpo saw them, and asked his older brother what just happened. [The elder brother replied] "Now the secret mantra is going to be thrown into chaos. There will be no *siddhas*. I shall hide all of our texts, sacred images, and tantric implements as a treasure. I am old, but since you are young, in Mankhar there is a certain Drokmi Lotsāwa who is learned in the profound new translation school of secret mantra. You should study with him. [I] shall conceal all of the old scriptures as treasures." Then he took on the magical display of a dharma protector and threw out a summary and description of the deity Kīla, the two sections on the tormā ritual and the fifteenth rosewood Kīla [works], and the sun and moon Mārīcī tormas that were fashioned based the actual form that Mārīcī herself revealed to Khön Rog Sherab Tsultrim (*'khon rog shes rab tshul khrims*, b. 11<sup>th</sup> century). He destroyed the ceremonial tormas [offered] by [his] ancestors. Then Khön Könchog Gyalpo [went] to the Yarlung charnel ground where there was a disciple of Drokmi's called Khyin Lotsawa (*'Khyin lo tsā ba*, b. 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century). He received *The Two-Part [Hevajratantra]* and then, when [Khyin Lotsawa] was about to die, in his dying words he said [to Khön Könchok

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<sup>630</sup> Gorampa, "Sdom gsum rnam bshad," 4r.6–4v.6.

Gyelpo] "Now you must spread the dharma, so make a request to Drokmi Lotsāwa in Mankhar."

After that [Khön Könchog Gyelpo] went to Mankhar. During his tutelage under Drokmi he received the three *tantras* and the later corpus on the path. Having understood those well, he thought about requesting the ritual procedure of that [system] and the special instructions. He sold all that he had been able to fit in the field of Jagshong in Yarlung. After offering what was left over to the *saṅgha* members that he met along the way, he arrived carrying with him a load that equaled seventeen horses in value and offered it to the guru. He requested the [*lamdré*] oral instructions (*gsung ngag*) but [Drokmi] did not give them [to him]. [Instead,] he gave him all of the textual cycles in their entirety [and] he gave him various special instructions such as the *Acintya* (*bsam mi khyab*) and *The Twenty-four fold Visualization of the Mantra Mothers* (*ngag du ma mo'i dmigs pa nyi shu rtsa bzhi*), etc.

In addition [to his tutelage under Drokmi], he studied the *Samāja* and other works under Gö Khukpa, he studied the fivefold corpus of *Tilaka* and other works under the Oḍiyāna Paṇḍita \*Prajñāguhya (ū rgyan paṇḍi ta shes rab gsang ba, b. 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> century), [and] he studied the *Samvara* root *tantra* and corpora of [*The Seven*] *Siddhi* [*Texts*] and [*The Sixfold Corpus on*] *the Essence* (*grub snying gi skor rnam*) under Mel Lotsawa. He also received many dharma teachings from Bari Lotsawa (Ba ri lo tsā ba, 1040–1112), Lama Kyichuwa (*Bla ma skyi chu ba*, b. 11<sup>th</sup> century), Puhrang Lotsawa (*Pu hrangs lo tsā ba*, b. 11<sup>th</sup> century), the brother/disciple of Namkhupa (*gnam kh'u pa sku mched*, dates unknown), and Kyurakyap (*skyur a skyabs*), etc., and he became a lord of the dharma.<sup>631</sup>

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<sup>631</sup> Gorampa "Sdom gsum rnam bshad," 4r.4–5r.1.

Tibetan:

/de'i dus na 'bro'i lung du ston mo chen po gcig byung ba'i tshe ltad mo'i bye brag mang du byung ba'i nang nas sngags pa 'ga' zhig/\_dbang phyug ma nyi shu rtsa brgyad kyi mgo brnyan rnam gyon/\_phyag mtshan so sor thogs/\_ma mo ral pa dang bcas pa'i rngam stabs dang bcas te/\_'cham byas pas de ga ltad mo che nas/\_des khrom thog chod/\_'khon dkon mchog rgyal pos kyang de dag gzigs nas/\_'gcan la 'di lta bu gda' zhus pas/\_da gsang sngags 'chol ba bya ba byung ba yin/\_grub thob mi 'ong/\_rang re la yod pa'i dpe cha lha rten/\_sngags kyi lag cha kun gter du sba/\_nga ni rgas/\_khyod gzhon pa yin pas/\_mang mkhar na 'brog mi lo tsā ba gsang sngags gsar 'gyur zab mo la mkhas par yod 'dug pas/\_de la slobs zhig gsung rnying ma thams cad gter du sbas so/\_/der chos skyong gi cho 'phrul byung nas/\_phur pa'i mngon rtogs pa bsdu pa gcig dang/\_gtor ma'i cho ga dang/\_seng ldeng gi phur pa bco lnga pa cha gnyis dang/\_dkar mo nyid kyi 'khon rog shes rab tshul khriims la zhal dngos su bstan nas mdzad pa'i dkar mo nyi zla'i gtor ma rnam gcud la'ang gnang/\_gdud brgyud kyi dus gtor ma chag par mdzad do/\_/de nas 'khon dkon mchog rgyal pos/\_g.ya' lung dur khrod na 'brog mi'i slob ma 'khyin lo tsā ba zhes bya ba la/\_brtag gnyis gsan nas tshar la khad pa na/\_de sku gshegs pa'i zhal chems la/\_da khyed kyi chos 'phro de mang mkhar du 'brog mi lo tsā ba la zhus ...shig gsung ngo/\_/de nas mang mkhar du byon/\_ 'brog mi'i drung du/\_rgyud gsum dang/\_lam skor phyi ma rnam gsan/\_mkhas par mkhyen nas de'i rnam gzhang bya ba dang gdams ngag zhu bar dgongs te/\_g.ya' lung 'jag gshong kyi zhing btsangs 'os pa kun btsongs/\_lhag ma dge 'dun 'phrad pa la phul nas/\_rin la rta bcu bdun gyi khal dang bcas mkhyer nas 'ongs te/\_bla chen la phul/\_gsung ngag zhus kyang ma gnang/\_gzhang gi skor thams cad tshang bar mdzad/\_bsam mi khyab dang ngag tu ma mo'i dmigs pa nyi shu rtsa bzhi la sogs pa'i gdams ngag ci rigs pa gnang ngo/\_/gzhang yang 'gos khug pa la/\_'dus pa la sogs pa gsan/\_u rgyan gyi paN+Di ta shes rab gsang ba la thig le skor lnga la sogs pa gsan/\_mal lo tsā ba la/\_bde mchog rtsa brgyud dang/\_grub snying gi skor rnam gsan/\_gzhang



The passage mentions Drokmi's famous refusal to give Khön Könchok Gyelpo the complete oral instructions of the *lamdré* (*gsung ngag*) and serves as a further example of the literary caricature of Drokmi as the quintessential 'greedy lama' collecting exorbitant payments from his would-be disciples while refusing to ever impart the entirety of his teachings upon any one individual.<sup>632</sup> It then goes on to list various instructions that Khön Könchok Gyelpo received from a number of other figures, listing the *Drupnying Kor* among the works that he studied under Mel Lotsawa. It is unfortunately not possible to determine if this means that Drokmi himself was in possession of his own instruction lineage for *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, but the evidence of his son/disciples requesting these instructions from Vajrapāṇi indicates that this was likely not the case.

#### IV. Conclusion

This chapter adds some further data on the South Asian origins of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a known corpus to the philological analysis of Sanskrit multiple-text manuscript sources of these works in chapter nine. The textual references and historical accounts on the transmission of this corpus presented here are thus meant to address the question of whether or not these seven works were conceived of as a comprehensive set of *mahāmudrā* texts prior to the eleventh through thirteenth centuries, when they were translated and disseminated in Tibet. The notion of practical canonicity and Buddhist textual communities outlined in chapter ten of this study has provided the theoretical reference point for the analysis of these data. The idea of the practical canon provides a conceptual framework that might allow us to

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yang ba ri lo tsA ba/\_bla ma sgyi chu ba/\_pu hrangs lo tsA ba/\_gnam kha'u pa sku mched/\_sgyur a skyabs la sogs pa las chos mang du gsan te chod kyi mnga' bdag tu gyur to/

<sup>632</sup> Davidson, *Tibetan Renaissance*, 163.

judge the degree to which these works were considered part of a cohesive corpus prior to their earliest recognition as part of a larger group of corpora associated with *mahāmudrā* appears in the works of Butön.

This chapter has presented materials for identifying *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a practical canon in the formative decades of the Dakpo Kagyü by locating at least one reference to the corpus in the recorded teachings of Gampopa. This effectively pushes the dates for the recognition of these works *as a corpus* back to the eleventh to twelfth centuries. These dates coincide with the period covered in the historical accounts provided in *The Blue Annals*, so it may be assumed that Gö Lotsawa's accounts of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a known corpus in the early period of their transmission to Tibet are likely reliable. Another early reference has been located in Sakya Paṇḍita's *A Treatise that Clarifies the Sage's Intent* that contains an explicit prescription for studying *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in order to understand the mantra system. This provides clear evidence that this corpus was part of the Sakya Vajrayāna curriculum by the early thirteenth century. Both of these early references, however, do not contain an explicit indication that the corpus was identified as part of a broader *mahāmudrā* practical canon.

The evidence on the history and transmission of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* from *The Blue Annals* has been greatly expanded beyond the primary narrative of these works' transmission by recognizing that the compound *Drubnying Kor* is in fact a shortened title describing the two corpora of the early Indian *mahāmudrā* canon, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*. It has been suggested both here and in chapter ten of this study that this compound be expanded to read *Grub pa sde bdun dang Snying po skor drug gi skor*, or '*The Corpora of The Seven Siddhi Texts and The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence.*'

This finding has allowed me to generate a far more robust data set on *The Seven Siddhi Texts'* transmission to Tibet from *The Blue Annals* that provides potential geographical locations for the institutions that taught and disseminated the corpus in eleventh and twelfth century India, Nepal, and Tibet as well as some indication as to the stage at which a disciple might study and put the instructions these works contain into practice.

Gorampa's account of the origins of the 'Khön clan at the opening of his famous commentary to Sakya Paṇḍita's *Distinguishing the Three Vows* indicates that his intention was not simply to produce a commentary to Sakya Paṇḍita's text, but to produce a work that might satisfy the requirements of a more comprehensive curriculum. There is no doubt that Gorampa achieved his goal with this work, which remains an active part of the curriculum among the Sakya lineages to the current day.<sup>633</sup> Part of the task in expanding a single corpus or commentary into a more comprehensive curriculum is providing a full background on the text (or texts) and its author. In this case Gorampa has provided an extensive account of the early Khön lineage that culminates with the life of the Sakya Paṇḍita, effectively carving out a space in which he might generate a sense of continuity between his own work, and the broader Sakya lineage. The point of such an introduction is, as it is with so much Tibetan historical writing, to generate a sense of faith and reverence in the audience toward the author of the text and the lineage to which he or she belongs in order to facilitate a greater appreciation for the work's content and a greater willingness and capacity to seriously engage the subject matter at hand. By providing the historical background for a given text and its

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<sup>633</sup> This was confirmed for me on two occasions, first during a March 31, 2016 audience with Duntsang Shabdrung Rinpoche the Sanga Chotsang Center, Ngor Gumpa in Rong Nek outside of Gangtok, Sikkim, and second by a staff member and khenpo at the Sakya Center in Dehradun. Both informed me that I would be able to find Sakya monks in many places who could assist me in my work with Go rams pa's text. When I pressed a bit further, the latter added the detail that in fact many students do not read the section on the *Domsum Rabyé* and its commentary that treat the Vajrayāna vows because it is considered off limits to them until they take Vajrayāna vows themselves, a level of advancement that is far more rarified among the Sakya pa than among some other schools of Tibetan Buddhism.

author the commentator allows the root text to enter into history and, in the process, generates a sense of historical relevance around the commentary that might allow it to be integrated into a more comprehensive curriculum. This means that, at least in Tibet,<sup>634</sup> historiography played an integral role in the development and legitimization of institution-specific practical canons, and the integration of historical data into a practical canon allowed for a more robust curriculum. This process is also directly related to the formulation of a strong sense of sectarian identity. In this case, because Sakya Paṇḍita's *Distinguishing the Three Vows* played an instrumental role in the formulation of a distinct Sakya doctrinal identity in the thirteenth century, Gorampa goes to great lengths to explain all of the various good qualities that this author exemplified in his life, spending the first forty-three folios of the work on the history of the Khön lineage and Sakya Paṇḍita's life story. Aside from its ability to elicit a sense of devotion in a more advanced scholar, this is not content that one would provide to an audience that was already familiar with the text and its author's lineage. Its inclusion thus makes Gorampa's text a valuable teaching tool for readers at a variety of levels of familiarization with the Sakya lineages. *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* engages in a similar strategy, far surpassing the goal of simply compiling materials together as a practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* texts. This collection along with the roughly contemporary project of the seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* is discussed at length next in chapter twelve, where it shall become clear that these projects and the support they lent to the *mahāmudrā* polemical works composed by the first generation of scholars with access to a newly organized *mahāmudrā* practical canon were directly involved in the emergence of a strong Kagyü sectarian identity.

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<sup>634</sup> My own thinking on this phenomenon is currently that the Tibetan process of practical canon formation and curriculum development contains a historiography (or hagiography, or both) requirement that we do not see to the same extent in Indic sources.

## Chapter 12:

### ***The Seven Siddhi Texts in Two Tibetan Mahāmudrā Practical Canons and Their Role in Sakya-Kagyü Mahāmudrā Polemical Literature***

#### **I. Introduction**

The three primary Indian *mahāmudrā* corpora of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement* occupy the first volumes of both the Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and the sprawling one 151 volume *Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*. Both of these collections follow the standard convention of listing *The Seven Siddhi Texts* first in the series of three corpora. This indicates that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and its two companion corpora carried a significant degree of authority among a large number of *mahāmudrā* works from a range of equally authoritative *mahāsiddha* authors found in the subsequent volumes of these collections. Their location within an already privileged practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works and the fact that they are consistently grouped together may offer evidence that they were recognized as short *mahāmudrā* canon in India before being transmitted to Tibet.

Following the general rule among the Tibetan schools of the latter dissemination (*phyi dar*) of the dharma in Tibet that for a text to be of authentic Indian origin is to carry superior authority over any text that might be shown to have originated in Tibet or China, *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement* may carry an elevated status within these practical canons of Indian *mahāmudrā* works precisely because Tibetans considered their designation as corpora and canon to be Indian in origin. As a result, the authority that both Sakya and Kagyü Tibetan

*mahāmudrā* polemicists from the thirteenth century forward evoke through referencing these works by their collective title rests on the validity of historical claims that *The Seven Siddhi Text's* designation as a *mahāmudrā* corpus is itself originated in India.

This chapter treats the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* as a set of roughly contemporary *mahāmudrā* practical canons that were constructed around this received practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works. It begins with a discussion of the historical context for the Seventh Karmapa's compilation of his *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. It then proceeds to explore the potential relationship between both collections by establishing a connection between the Seventh Karmapa's efforts to revitalize the Kagyü in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and his relationship with his disciple Drikung Künga Rinchen, the sixteenth abbot of Drikung Thil who is believed to have initiated the early stages of compiling *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*. Both collections are presented as practical canons designed to support a more organized and systematic *mahāmudrā* curriculum that could be shared in common between the various lineages of the Kagyü, and that could in turn revitalize these institutions in response to the general state of disrepair into which many of them had fallen as the Geluk school rose to power in the fifteenth century. The chapter concludes with a detailed analysis of the role that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* came to play in Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical literature in the generations immediately following the Seventh Karmapa's publication of his *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. This analysis reveals a clear trajectory that moves from the compilation and propagation of the Kagyü *mahāmudrā* practical canon around the turn of the sixteenth century to its eventual generation of a more systematic Kagyü *mahāmudrā* curriculum that endures to the present day.

## II. The Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*



Figure 12: The Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso. Tibet, 17<sup>th</sup> century bronze. Photo courtesy of Tibet House, New Delhi.<sup>635</sup>

All of the known versions of the Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* that are currently extant derive from a nineteenth century xylograph edition of the collection published at the printing house of Pelpung monastery. The edition contains an

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<sup>635</sup> The photograph of this statue was provided to me by the staff at the Tibet House Museum in New Delhi, who identify it as the Seventh Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso. The picture of this piece on the Himalayan Art Resources website, however, simply lists it as an unidentified Karmapa. See "Teacher (Lama) - Karmapa," *Himalayan Art Resources* item no. 71819 (Collection: Tibet House, New Delhi) <https://www.himalayanart.org/items/71819>.

extensive explanation of its contents (*dkar chag*) at the beginning of its third volume (*hūm*) composed by the project's editor Karma Tashi that contains a basic framework for understanding the Kagyü approach to *mahāmudrā*, an explanation of the Seventh Karmapa's original compilation, the texts contained in each volume and their lineages, the work that went into re-publishing the collection at Pelpung, and a lengthy concluding section that discusses the specific value of taking on such a publication project.

Although extensive in scope, Tashi Chöpel's explanation of this collection's contents contains a surprising dearth of information on the Seventh Karmapa's original publication of his *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. The first sub-topic of the second section of Tashi Chöpel's text on "The One who Compiled [these volumes]" (*gang gis sdud pa'i byed po*) contains only a brief hagiography of the Seventh Karmapa detailing some of the major events in his life. The second section on his "Detailed Explanation" (*bye brag tu smos pa*) of the original compilation of the collection, the texts it contains, their various lineages, and the extensive efforts that went into publishing the Pelpung edition is clearly to provide the reader with a sense of the historical context and continuity of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. Tashi Chöpel's efforts in this section seem to be philological in their method, though of course his is a philology committed to a specific soteriological perspective on its subject matter. This perspective also dictates Tashi Chöpel's discussion of the Seventh Karmapa as "The One who Compiled [these Volumes]." He begins with an account of the previous lives of the Karmapas that grounds the incarnation lineage in a primordial past by identifying it with the deity Lokeśvara who "perfected the conduct of a bodhisattva many eons ago." The passage then generates continuity between this primordial past and the Karmapa's emanations as a number of bodhisattvas, as Padmasambhava (8<sup>th</sup> century) and his close disciple Gyelwa



Chöwang (Rgyal ba mchog dbyangs, 8<sup>th</sup> century), as a number of important Indian figures such as Saraha, Nāgārjunagarbha, and Kāmalaśīla, and then finishes by listing a handful of early Kadampa masters who are also considered previous emanations of the Karmapas.<sup>636</sup>

This narrative of the Karmapa's previous emanations then moves on the first Karmapa Düsum Khyenpa through the sixth Karmapa Thongwa Dönden (Mthong ba don ldan, 1416–1453) before proceeding to describe the exceptional qualities of the Seventh Karmapa.

Passages such as these are a necessary component to the Tibetan hagiographical (*rnam mthar*) genre, and their inclusion here along with a number of other passages directed at the Seventh Karmapa's miraculous qualities supports the overall philological motivation

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<sup>636</sup> Karma bkra shis chos dpal, "Sgrub pa brgyud grub pa'i rna rgyan," 17v.2–18r.2.

spyir dus gsum rgyal ba yongs kyi phrin las par dzamu'i gling na yongs su grags pa dpal ldan karma pa 'di nyid bskal pa mang po'i gong nas byang chub kyi spyod pa mthar phyin te mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas su zin kyang gang 'dul thabs mkhas kyi rol pas rgyal ba nga ro snyan pa zhes bya ba'i spyan sngar phyag dar khrod kyi gos shig phul nas thog mar byang chub mchog tu thugs bskyed pa'i tshul bstan/ byang chub sems dpa' mchog gi blo gros zhes bya bar gyur te sangs rgyas thams cad dang lhan cig tu sangs rgyas kyi zhing yongs su sbyong ba'i mdzad pa la zhugs/ shAkya'i dbang po'i bstan pa 'di nyid la 'phags pa spyan ras gzigs dang / khro rgyal rta mgrin sogs he ru ka dang mkha' 'gro'i gzugs su sprul pa'i sgyu ma mig 'phrul lta bus dus gsum gyi 'gro ba'i don mdzad/ zhing khams gzhan dang gzhan du 'khor los bsgyur ba'i rgyal po dang / paN grub dbang po mtha' yas pa'i sgyu 'phrul bstan cing / zhing 'dir byang sems blo gros rin chen/ drang srong legs par skyes/\_ slob dpon pad+ma 'byung gnas/ slob ma rgyal ba mchog dbyangs/ gzhan yang rgya gar du slob dpon dpa' bo/ bram ze sa ra ha/ grub chen klu'i byang chub/ kA ma d+he nu/ kA ma la shI la/ 'bar ba'i rgyal mtshan/ drang song chen po pu to ba rin chen gsal/ sha ra ba/ par ga sgom chung sogs mkhas grub mtha' yas pa'i sprul pa'i gar du bsgyur te bstan 'gro'i don bsam gyis mi khyab pa mdzad/

In general, this glorious Karmapa, who is well known in Jambudvīpa for carrying out the enlightened activity of all of the victors of the three times, perfected the bodhisattva conduct many eons ago. He attained completely manifest awakening and, with his skillful play that tames those who need to be tamed, he offered a garment from a trash heap to Ngaro Nyanpa (*nga ro snyan pa*) who taught [him] the method of generating the initial supreme intention of awakening. He manifested as the bodhisattva Supreme Intellect (*mchog gi blo gros*) and engaged in the spontaneous creation of a Buddha field. In this particular teaching of the lord of the Śākyas, he benefitted sentient beings of the three times by means of the illusion-like magic of emanating in forms of herukas and dākas such as Avalokiteśvara and the wrathful king Hayagrīva. He displayed the illusory manifestation of the limitless power of a wheel-turning king and a scholar-*siddha* in each and every realm and in this realm [he emanated as] Precious Bodhicitta Intellect (*byang sems blo gros rin chen*), The Well-born Sage (*drang srong legs par skyes*), master Padmasambhava and his disciple Gyelwa Chöwang. Moreover in India [he emanated as] master Vīra, the Brahmin Saraha, mahāsiddha Nāgabodhi, Kāmadhenu, [and] Kāmalaśīla, [while in Tibet he emanated as] Barwé Gyeltsen (*'bar ba'i rgyal mtshan*), the sage Putowa Rinchen Sel (1027–1105), Sharapa (1070–1141), and Kharag Gomchung (b. 11<sup>th</sup> century), etc., and brought inconceivable benefit to the dharma and beings.

behind this section of Tashi Chöpel's summary of the contents of the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* by providing a sense of both legitimacy and awe to support his account of the Karmapa's publishing and teaching career. Yet the section never actually provides a clear statement on the events in Chödrak Gyatso's life that led him to compile and publish his *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. Tashi Chöpel's discussion of the Seventh Karmapa's 'superior qualities' does contain a description of the events that led to the composition of Chödrak Gyatso's famous epistemological work *The Ocean of The Textual Tradition of Logic: A Treatise on Valid Cognition* (*Tshad ma'i bstan bcos rigs pa'i gzhung lugs kyi rgya mtsho*) as well as a brief section listing a number of his other works and commentaries composed by his disciples. But the closest we get to an actual statement on the compilation of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* appears in reference to the Seventh Karmapa's teachings on the *Drupnying* and Saraha's *dohā* in the following passage:

He also appears to have fully preserved the explanations and practices on the topic of the ancient oral instruction lineage (*sngon dus bka' brgyud pa*) such as the [*The Seven*] *Siddhi* [*Texts and Sixfold*] *Corpus on the Essence* (*grub snying skor*) and the exceptionally glorious great Brahmin Saraha's *Threefold Dohā Corpus*. The commentary by Sherab Tharchin Pel Phuwa Lodrö Sengé (Shes rab mthar phyin dpal phu ba blo gros seng ge, b. 12<sup>th</sup> century), who was among the four sons that were accomplished disciples of Glorious Phagmodrupa (Phag mo gru pa, 1110–1170), became the central focus of a flawless stream of lectures that the victorious lord, the Great Seventh Chödrak Gyatso gave numerous times later in his life. As a result, the entire unique textual curriculum and continual stream of instructions in this practice lineage such as the extensive commentary on the three *dohā* called *The Mirror in which One Sees the Mind's Natural Face* composed by the all victorious one Karma Triné (1456–1539), the third *paṇḍita* of Shar Dakpo and a great scholar who was [his] disciple, was guaranteed to remain.<sup>637</sup>

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<sup>637</sup> Karma bkra shis chos dpal, "Sgrub pa brgyud grub pa'i rna rgyan," 20v.6–21r.3.  
 /de bzhin du grub snying gi skor dang / khyad par dpal ldan bram za chen po'i do ha skor gsum sngon dus bka' brgyud pa'i phyogs su bshad pa dang nyams len rgya cher bskyang ba'i tshod du gda' ste dpal phag mo gru pa'i zhal slob mthar phyin gyi bu bzhi'i nang tshan shes rab mthar phyin dpal phu ba blo gros seng ge'i 'grel pa dang / khyad par physis su rgyal dbang bdun pa chen po chos grags rgya mtshos gsung bshad rgyas par lan grangs gnang ba'i zhal gyi rgyun dri ma med pa snying por byas te do ha skor gsum gyi rgyas 'grel zhal slob kyi thu po mkhas pa chen po shar dwags po'i paN+Di ta gsum pa karma

The passage provides some indication that Seventh Karmapa gave instructions on the *Drubnying* in the latter part of his life, and even notes that the Seventh Karmapa's focus on these materials during this period guaranteed that they would be preserved for future generations. If ever there was a point in his narrative of the Seventh Karmapa's life where it would be appropriate for Tashi Chöpel to say something about the compilation and publication of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*, this would be it. Yet he remains silent on the issue and provides no explicit details on when the original three-volume collection was published. Instead, the account here appears to follow a familiar pattern in which a broad scope of works, notably those contained here in the *Drubnying Kor*, are overlooked in favor of emphasizing the Kagyü's preservation of a continual instruction lineage of Saraha's *dohā*. Tashi Chöpel's uncertainty regarding the specifics surrounding the publication of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* should not be interpreted in any way as evidence that the Seventh Karmapa was not responsible for this project. It can, however, be taken as an indication that the historical data on the publication of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* was, even for a scholar such as Tashi Chöpel, relatively thin. In the absence of such data, Tashi Chöpel simply concludes his discussion of the Seventh Karmapa's as 'the one who compiled' the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* with a general statement that the project was motivated by a desire to preserve and provide easy access to the most important Indian *mahāmudrā* works for the Kagyü.<sup>638</sup>

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phrin las phyogs thams cad las rnam par rgyal bas mdzad pa'i sems kyi rang zhal lta ba'i me long zhes bya ba sogs sgrub brgyud 'di la bshad rgyun dang yig cha khyad par can ji snyed bzhugs par nges kyang /  
<sup>638</sup> Karma bkra shis chos dpal, "Sgrub pa brgyud grub pa'i rna rgyan," 21v.1–21v.4.  
gong du smos pa ltar rgyal ba bdun pa chen pos yid la mi byed pa'i chos tshul 'di dag 'chad rtsod rtsom gsum gyis rgya cher spel ba'i khur dngos brgyud nas bzhes shing / don dam snying po'i gdams zab ston pa'i rgya gzhung do ha dang bcas pa'i skor rnams phyogs gcig tu bsdoms par mdzad pa 'di la dgos pa khyad par can med pa ma yin te/ spyir snying po'i don brgyud kyi bstan 'dzin kun gyi spyi nor/ thos bsam sgom pa'i rgyab brten/ sgos sgrub brgyud nges don snying po'i bstan pa'i btsas/ gzhung rin chen dbang gi

Situ Chökyi Jungné's (Si tu paṅ chen Chos kyi 'byung gnas's 1699/1700–1774) biography of the Seventh Karmapa in his voluminous *Moonstone Rosary: A Golden Rosary of Kagyu Biographies* (*Bka' brgyud gser phreng rnam thar zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba*) contains a single passage that records an account of Chödrak Gyatso giving the reading transmission for his *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. The passage follows an account of the events that transpired during the *mönlam* festival in Lhasa in the year 1502. The account of the *mönlam* in Situ Chökyi Jungné's *Golden Rosary* is likely sourced from the biography of the Seventh Karmapa in Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa (Dpa' bo gtsug lag phreng ba's 1504–1564/66) *Feast for Scholars: A History of Buddhism* (*Chos 'byung mkhas pa'i dga' ston*), which it matches nearly verbatim. This was the period at which the Rinpungpa (*rin spung pa*) rulers of Tsang were at the height of their power after finally taking over Lhasa and subduing their rivals among the Phagmodru (*phag mo gru*) clan. Avid supporters of the Kagyü and Sakya orders, the Rinpungpa conquest of Lhasa was accompanied by the suppression of the Geluk school, which experienced its first period of rapid institutional expansion throughout Ü and Tsang, and particularly around Lhasa, throughout the fifteenth century. During the period of Rinpungpa control in Lhasa, the Geluk were banned from participating in the yearly *mönlam*

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rgyal po 'di dag 'thor thabs su gnas pa dkyus gcig tu bsdebs pas btsal sla zhing mi nub pa'i ma rkyen du dgongs te lhan cig tu bsdoms par mdzad do/

As discussed above, the victorious Great Seventh Karmapa accepted the burden, both directly and indirectly, of propagating the doctrines of mental non-engagement far and wide through teaching, debating, and composing. This act of combining the corpora of Indian works that teach the profound instructions of the ultimate essence with the *dohā* in a single collection was not without specific purpose. In general, [this collection represents] the crown jewel of all who uphold the teachings of the lineage of essential meaning, the support of listening, contemplating, and meditating, and the heap (*btsas*)\* of teachings on the essential definitive meaning of our particular practice lineage. These volumes, a powerful king of jewels, are a skillful preservation of scattered works that, having been brought together in a single collection, are now easy to find, and this was his unfailing, unconditional intention. Thus he combined them together [in these volumes].

\*My translation of the term *btsas* here is tentative. I have taken it as a shorthand for the term *la btsas* which is a term for the rock cairns that are often found at the top of mountain passes to honor local deities.

festival and the Seventh Karmapa and the fourth Shamar Chödrak Yéshé (Zwa dmar chos grags ye shes 1453–1524) were given the responsibility of carrying out the festivities. Situ Chökyi Jungné's biography of the Seventh Karmapa departs from Pawo Tsuklak Trengwa's *Feast for Scholars* in several instances, one of which includes the account of the Seventh Karmapa's reading transmission of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* during his visit to the First Karmapa Düsum Khyenpa's meditation cave near Zhüdrü Zhigön (*gzhu'i gru bzhi dgon*) in 1502. The passage reads:

He went to Zhüdrü Zhigön and paid his respects at venerable Dü[sum] Khyen[pa's] meditation cave. He bestowed the consecration that provides a detailed explanation on *The Unique and Unsurpassed Vajra-garland* of the lineage from venerable Rangjung [Dorje], the *One-hundred Sādhanas*, *The Authorization of the Ocean [of Sādhanas]*, *The Authorization of Bari Lotsa[wa]*, and *The Consecration the One Hundred Mitras*, upon Situ Tashi Drakpa Peljor (Si tu bkra shis grags pa dpal 'byor, 1498–1541), the tulkü Tashi Döndrub Namgyel (Bkra shis don grub rnam rgyal, dates unknown), Göshri Tradön (Go'i shri bkra shis rnam rgyal, 1490–1518 ?) and others. He gave the reading transmission of the supreme path, the volumes of *The Indian Mahāmudrā Works* that the victor [Chödrak Gyatso] himself had compiled into a single collection, the reading transmission of the venerable Thongwa Dönden's *Collected Works*, and numerous instructions such as the six dharmas [of Nāropa] that are the profound completion stage to the many groups of local and non-local *saṅghas* [who had gathered there].<sup>639</sup>

Situ Chökyi Jungné's mention of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* agrees with the nineteenth century account from Tashi Chöpel that the Seventh Karmapa propagated this collection in the latter part of his life, and, most importantly, that he was indeed responsible for compiling

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<sup>639</sup> Si tu chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Bka' brgyud gser phreng rnam thar zla ba chu shel gyi phreng ba bar cha* (Sarnath: Vajravidyā Institute Library, 2005), 179–80.

gzhu'i gru bzhi dgon du phebs/ rje dus mkhyen sgrub phug la phyag nas mdzad/ si tu bkra shis grags pa dpal 'byor/ sprul sku bkra shis don grub rnam rgyal/ go'i shri bkra don sogs rnam la/ rje rang byung ba nas brgyud pa'i rdor phreng bla med kho nar bkral ba'i dbang/ sgrub thabs brgya rtsa dang / rgya mtsho'i rjes gnang / ba ri lo tsA'i rjes gnang / mi tra brgya rtsa'i dbang rnam gnang zhing / gzhi byes dge 'dun mang po'i tshogs pa rnam lam mchog phyag rgya chen po'i rgya gzhung gi glegs bam rnam rgyal ba nyid kyis phyogs gcig tu bsgrigs pa'i rgya gzhung chen mo'i lung dang / rje mthong ba don ldan pa'i bka' 'bum gyi lung dang / zab mo'i rdzogs rim phyag chen chos drug sogs khrid ka mang po gnang zhing / der rgya nag yul nas gong ma hung ji rgyal po'i lung gis bsngags pa'i/ ta'i go'i shri chos rje skyabs/\_kwan ting go'i shri rdza dge/ gyog yi sangs rgyas bsang po du khang bzang po rgyal mtshan rnam kyis thog drangs rgya mi khag gsum gyis sleb/

the collection of *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*. It is worth noting that the twentieth century Tibetan historian Dungkar Lozang Trinlé (Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, 1927–1997) also lists the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* among the list of works composed by the Seventh Karmapa. Dungkar Lozang Trinlé lists five works other that are attributed to the Seventh Karmapa, and counts his total textual output at around eight volumes.<sup>640</sup>

Situ Chökyi Jungné confirms that the Seventh Karmapa was responsible for compiling the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*, but like the other sources surveyed for this study, his account of Chödrak Gyatso's remains relatively vague regarding the process that went into the collection's compilation, the year that it was originally compiled, and the Seventh Karmapa's motivation for taking on this project. The issue of the specific process that went into compiling the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and the precise dates for its publication must, unfortunately, remain unanswered for the time being. None of the sources surveyed for this study have offered any answers to these questions, and given the fact that Tashi Chöpel appears to have been unable to locate any answer to these questions for his account of the contents of the Pelpung edition, it is likely the case that this information was not available even to Tibetan scholars working in the pre-1959 era. It is possible, however, to propose a probable motivation behind the Seventh Karmapa's compilation of his *Indian Mahāmudrā*

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<sup>640</sup> Dung dkar blo bzang 'phrin las, *Mkhas dbang dung dkar blo bsang 'phrin las mchog gis mdzad pa'i bod rig pa'i tshig mdzod chen mo shes bya ba rab gsal* (Beijing: Krung go'i bod rig pa dpe skrun khang, 2002), 36–37. gsung rtsom skor <<phar phyin mngon rtogs rgyan gyi 'grel pa 'jig rten gsum gyi sgron me>> dang / <<tshad ma sde bdun gyi rgyas 'grel rigs gzhung rgya mtsho>> <<dbu ma'i lha khrid>> <<phyag chen rgya gzhung gi khrid yig chen mo>> <<dbu tshad chos 'byung chen mo>> sogs khyan bsdoms pod chen brgyad tsam yod/

The corpus of his teachings and compositions [includes] *A Lamp for the Three-fold World: A Commentary on the Perfections and Abhisamayālaṅkāra*, *The Ocean of the Textual Tradition: An Extensive Commentary on [Dharmakīrti's] Seven Treatises on Valid Cognition*, *Divine Instructions of The Middle Way*, *The Great Guide Book of the Indian Mahāmudrā Texts*, *The Great History of Madhyamaka and Prāmaṇa*, etc., which altogether comprised about eight volumes.

*Works* by considering the broader historical context of the status of the Kagyü school in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.

As Situ Chökyi Jungné's account notes, the Seventh Karmapa gave a reading transmission of his *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* in 1502 after presiding over the annual *mönlam* festival in Lhasa. The *mönlam* festival, celebrated to mark the lunar new year with a number of religious festivities and the recitation of aspiration prayers (*smon lam*, *prañidhāna*), was inaugurated in 1409 by Tsongkhapa (Tsong kha pa blo bzang grags pa 1357–1419), the founder of the Geluk sect.<sup>641</sup> Tsongkhapa founded the first Geluk monastery, Ganden, that very same year about thirty-five miles up-river from Lhasa. A flurry of monastery construction quickly followed, with a total of five major Geluk monastic institutions being founded as the seats of Tsongkhapa's closest disciples. Four of the five were located in Ü, with just one, Tashi Lhünpo (Bkra shis lhun po), located in the vicinity of the fortress at Shigatse in Tsang. As Wylie notes, the four major Geluk monastic seats that were established in Ü, three of which were built close to the capital Lhasa, were built with the patronage of officials that had been appointed by the fifth Phagmodru ruler Gongma Drakpa Gyeltsen (Gong ma grags pa rgyal mtshan, 1374–1432), who was an avid patron of Tsongkhapa and his disciples.<sup>642</sup> These early Geluk institutions became the proving grounds for Tsongkhapa's monastic and scholastic reform movement, which was in many ways an open critique of the various institutions and lineages associated with the Kagyü and Nyingma schools. As the early leaders of the Geluk's reform movement gained momentum, they not only launched a number of critiques of their rivals among the Nyingma, Sakya, and Kagyü,

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<sup>641</sup> Turrel V. Wylie, "Monastic Patronage in 15<sup>th</sup>-Century Tibet," in *The History of Tibet Vol 2: The Medieval Period c. 850–1895 The Development of Buddhist Paramountcy*, edited by Alex McKay (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), 483.

<sup>642</sup> Wylie, "Monastic Patronage in 15<sup>th</sup>-Century Tibet," 483–84.

the institutions that they founded with the support of their Phagmodru patrons began to occupy some prime real estate throughout Ü and Tsang. In addition to the initial five institutions founded on behalf of Tsongkhapa's closest disciples, DiValerio adds the tantric colleges of Gyümé (*Rgyud smad*) and Gyütö (*Rgyu stod*), founded in 1433 and 1474, along with thirteen new Geluk monasteries, three new Geluk nunneries, and at least ten institutions that were converted to from other schools in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. In total, DiValerio notes at least thirty-six Geluk institutions had been founded within a fifty-mile radius of Lhasa by the early sixteenth century.<sup>643</sup>

By the end of the fifteenth century the leaders of the Karma Kagyü school and their patrons among the Rinpungpa rulers of Tsang began to found a number of monasteries in and around Lhasa in reaction to this institutional expansion. And, in the case of the monastery of Yangpachen (*yangs pa can*) built by the Rinpungpa ruler Dönyö Dorjé (Don yod rdo rje, 1463/63–1512) and the Fourth Shamar Chödrak Yéshé (Zhwa dmar chos grags ye shes, 1453–1524) in 1490, in strategic locations from which they could control the major routes in and out of Lhasa. Less than a decade after building Yangpachen, having secured both the northern and southern routes between Lhasa and Shigatse by also capturing the major fortification in Gyantse, the Rinpungpa ruler Dönyö Dorjé successfully took Lhasa in 1498 with the help of the fourth Shamar Rinpoche. Together, the Rinpungpa and Karma Kagyü forces would control Lhasa for nearly two decades until 1517. During this period the Geluk institutions of Séra (Se ra) and Drépfung ('Bras spungs) were banned from participating in the *mönlam* festival that their own school's founder had initiated.<sup>644</sup>

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<sup>643</sup> David DiValerio, *The Holy Madmen of Tibet* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 124.

<sup>644</sup> Wylie, "Monastic Patronage," 485–88.



The Geluk school's rapid rise to power in the fifteenth century stands as a testament both to the popularity of Tsongkhapa's reform movement and to the power that the new sect's patrons among the Phagmodru wielded throughout central Tibet. It also presented a new model for institutional hegemony that emerged through the formulation of a highly organized curricula that, owing to its relatively recent and systematic formulation around Tsongkhapa's unique take on Buddhist doctrine, was relatively homogenous in comparison to the Geluk's major rivals among the Nyingma, Kagyü, and Sakya. DiValerio 's following observations on this point are extremely useful:

The religious system formulated by Tsongkhapa was easily institutionalizable and inherently institutionalizing. The Geluk was doctrinally more systematic and streamlined than other sects operating in fifteenth-century Tibet. Whereas the other sects had accreted disparate texts and interpretations over long periods of time, the Geluk curriculum was formulated relatively quickly, based on writings by Tsongkhapa and his direct disciples, and their interpretations of classical Indian and Tibetan treatises. Because the Geluk system prioritized formal study over meditation or spiritual charisma passed on through familial or guru-initiate relationships, it was less dependent on the charisma of a certain place or individual (living or dead) for its spiritual vitality.<sup>645</sup>

DiValerio rightfully identifies the presence of an organized curriculum as a critical factor in the rapid institutional expansion of the Geluk during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. And like the Geluk's institutional expansion, the power that such an organized curriculum exercised in creating a homogenous sectarian identity most likely also did not go unnoticed by the Geluk's rivals. Projects like the Seventh Karmapa's collection of *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* might be considered the yogic reflex to the Geluk call to 'reform.' This collection constitutes a direct appeal to the authoritative Indian treatises on *mahāmudrā* and an inscription of these treatises in a specifically Kagyü sectarian identity. Such a compilation also provided a curricular component to the institutional expansion that the Kagyü initiated

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<sup>645</sup> DiValerio, *The Holy Madmen of Tibet*, 125.

around the turn of the sixteenth century during the brief period in which they had managed to slow the rapid expansion of the Geluk sect.

DiValerio concludes his presentation of Kagyü-Geluk sectarian competition in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries by arguing that Tsangnyön Heruka's (Gtsang smyon he ru ka, 1452–1507) promotion of the 'crazy' asceticism of the *nyönpa* (*smyon pa*) movement and his efforts to publish and widely disseminate hagiographic works on the patriarchs of the Kagyü was part of a broader process of generating a coherent Kagyü identity. This reinvigorated, unified front among the Kagyü juxtaposed its vision of the 'mad yogin' against the groundswell of Geluk institutional monasticism and, in turn, gained enough inter-institutional cohesion among the independent orders of the Kagyü to push back against the momentum that the Geluk had so quickly gained in the fifteenth century.<sup>646</sup> Like Tsangnyön Heruka, the Seventh Karmapa was at the center of the political and sectarian turbulence of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and his decision to publish a comprehensive set of *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* must be viewed in this historical context. The Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* thus represents an attempt at formulating a unified sectarian identity among the various lineages of the Kagyü through promoting a 'reform' of its own that entailed a return to the treatises of the Indian *mahāsiddhas* that played such an integral role in the formulation of the Kagyü approach to its highest and most prestigious meditation tradition of the 'Great Seal' or *mahāmudrā*.

Evidence of the Seventh Karmapa's efforts to revitalize and strengthen the Kagyü lineages appears in the Situ Chökyi Jungné's biographical account of Chödrak Gyatso's visit to Drikung Thil, the primary seat of Drikung Kagyü, some time in the last quarter of the

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<sup>646</sup> DiValerio, *The Holy Madmen of Tibet*, 148–51.

fifteenth century.<sup>647</sup> In general, the Seventh Karmapa's biography contains numerous examples of his founding new meditation schools (*sgrub sde*). One of these examples, which records his founding a meditation school at Déchen Khyungdar (*bde chen khyung dar*), precedes the account of his invitation to Drikung Thil and tells us precisely why the Seventh Karmapa was invited. Here Künga Rinchen's uncle Wang Rinchen Chögyel (Dbang rin chen chos rgyal 1448–1504) is credited with inviting the Seventh Karmapa, and the latter's acceptance of the invitation prompted Wang Rinpoche to make repairs to the main temple at Drikung Thil. The account of the visit follows:

At this time there wasn't any doctrine of the explanation along with the dharma of profound intention, nor were there any manuscripts [related to these instructions] housed at Drikung. Because at that time [they] had been wounded and weakened, [the Karmapa] saw the need to reinvigorate the [Drikung] teachings. [He gave] an explanation of the essence of the teachings that was tailored to a general audience and [he taught] the appropriate systems of the profound dharma and instructions on the six-dharma *mahāmudrā* to the uncle and his nephew. For Wang Rinpoche specifically, he brought about the sequenced-drops of the Kagyü *mahāmudrā* tutelary deity. He founded a meditation school. He also taught the monastic laws on food and drink [pertaining to] those who were appointed as monastic preceptors, etc., and thus repaired the foundations of the Drikung teachings. Thereafter [Wang Rinpoche and his nephews] always saw him [as equivalent to] the venerable Jikten Gönpö ('Jig rten gsum mgon, 1143–1217) and the other [early patriarchs of the Drikung].<sup>648</sup>

This account is notable for several reasons. First, it is a clear example of the Seventh Karmapa's efforts to revitalize what was at the time the largest lineage of the Kagyü outside of his own Karma Kagyü school. The Drikung Kagyü, like the Karma Kagyü, had lost a

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<sup>647</sup> Unfortunately, the eighth Si tu paṅ chen's biography does not record any specific dates for the events that took place in the Seventh Karmapa's life between 1477 and the record of the Seventh Karmapa's participation in the *smon lam* festival in 1502.

<sup>648</sup> Si tu chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Bka' brgyud gser phreng*, 158.

'di skabs 'bri khung na bstan dgongs zab chos dang bcas pa'i chos dang phyag dpe'ang mi bzhugs shing nyams rmas pa'i skabs yin pas bstan pa gso dgos par dgongs/ tshogs chos su bstan snying gi bshad pa dang / rin po che khu dbon la zab chos ci rigs dang phyag chen chos drug gi khrid/ khyad par dbang rin po cher phyag chen gyi thugs dam bka' brgyud kyi grwal zil pa skyed par mdzad/ sgrub sde'i sa bon btob/ mkhan po'i bsko bzhag sogs bca' ba chos khrims kyang mdzad de 'bri khung pa'i bstan pa gzhi nas gsos pa lta bur mdzad/ der rje 'jig rten dgon po sogs rtag par gzigs/

number of its monasteries to the Geluk during the fifteenth century. As the order's own historians note, the fifteenth century saw many Drikung institutions adopting the Geluk approach and neglecting their own tradition to the point that its own meditation traditions were in danger of dying out, even at Drikung Thil.<sup>649</sup>

Situ Chökyi Jungné's account verifies this narrative. It also tells us that the library at Drikung Thil no longer held any texts that could support the kind of reinvigoration of the Kagyü tradition that the Seventh Karmapa had been invited to facilitate. These two elements—the recognition that the Kagyü teachings had gone into decline at one of the school's most famous institutions and the revelation that this decline had been accompanied by a near eradication of the textual resources necessary to restore and sustain Drikung Thil as a Kagyü institution—must have had a profound effect on the visiting Karmapa. It is easy to imagine how a visit like this might have prompted a figure like Chödrak Gyatso, who was heavily invested in recovering the many losses that the Kagyü had suffered since the early fifteenth century due to the Geluk expansion, to seek a more tangible and lasting option for reinvigorating the most important teachings in his lineage. One of these options appears to have taken the form of an organized practical canon of *mahāmudrā* works that could be claimed as part of the common lineage of all sub sects of the Kagyü.

Situ Chökyi Jungné's account of Chödrak Gyatso's visit to Drikung Thil mentions one more important piece of information. Here we learn that Chödrak Gyatso visited Drikung Thil at the request of Wang Rinpoche and his nephews.<sup>650</sup> The identities of all of the three

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<sup>649</sup> DiValerio, *The Holy Madmen of Tibet*, 127.

<sup>650</sup> Si tu chos kyi 'byung gnas, *Bka' brgyud gser phreng*, 157.

'bri khung dbang rin po che dang dbon sku mched gsum sogs kyis rgyang ring nas mdun bsus 'bri khung thel du phebs/

Then Drikung Wang Rinpoche and the three brothers who were his nephews sent him an invitation and he proceeded to Drikung Thil.

brothers who were [Wang Rinpoche's] nephews (*dbon sku mched gsum*) is unclear, but it is relatively certain that one of these nephews was Drikung Künga Rinchen, who would become a close disciple of the Seventh Karmapa and eventually succeed his father as the head of Drikung Thil. Fortunately, although Situ Chökyi Jungné's biography of the Seventh Karmapa is unclear on the dates for this visit, Sönam Gyatso's (Bsod nam rgya mtsho, c. 16<sup>th</sup> century) biography of Künga Rinchen, completed in 1528 one year after Künga Rinchen passed away, tells us that he met the Seventh Karmapa in 1487 when he was twelve years old and again in 1489 when he was fourteen.<sup>651</sup> The events recorded in Sönam Gyatso's biography of Künga Rinchen can be corroborated to some extent in Künga Rinchen's *Glorious Blaze Illuminating the Ocean of Blessings and Received Teachings* (*Gsan yig byin rlabs rgya mtsho'i dpal 'bar*), which contains an account of a short list of texts on the Drikung patriarch Jikten Gönpö that he received from the Seventh Karmapa.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>651</sup> Bsod nam rgya mtsho, "Kun dga' rin chen gyi rnam thar phan bde'i 'byung gnas bsam 'phel dbang gi rgyal po/ (ka)," in *Gsung 'bum/ kun dga' rin chen/* (Delhi: Drigung Kargyu Publications, 2003), 7r.5–7v.3. dgung lo bcu bsum la slar yang dbang rin chen chos kyi rgyal po nyid 'bri gung pa'i chos skor ji snyed pa bka' rdzogs lung rdzogs dang / gzhan yang 'phags yul grub pa'i gzhung lugs kyi rgya gzhung tshad ldan rnams dang bcas pa mtha' chod par thugs su chud par mdzad do/ /dgung lo bcu bzhi pa'i dus slar yang rgyal ba'i dbang po chos grags rgya mtsho nyid la mjal ba dang chos lung sogs kyis thugs dgongs gcig pa'i sgrub brgyud kyi bstan pa tshul bzhin du 'dzin pa'i bgro ba mdzad do/

When he was twelve years old, he met the glorious Karmapa Chödrak Gyatso and happily participated in a festival celebrating the two traditions. Some time after he had reached the age of thirteen, [his uncle] Wang Rinpoche Chökyi Gyalpo, caused him to fully understand and embrace the complete teachings and complete scriptures of all of the cycles of Drikung teachings that there were along with the authentic Indian works of the textual tradition of the siddhas of Āryavarta. When he had reached the age of fourteen, he met the supreme conqueror Chödrak Gyatso and they discussed the correct understanding of the teachings of the practice lineage of the single heart-intention using the dharma texts [related to the subject].

<sup>652</sup> Kun dga' rin chen, "Gsan yig rgya mtsho," 36r.1–2.

// sangs rgyas drug pa seng ge sgra yi rnam 'phrul zhwa nag gi cod pan 'dzin pa chos grags rgya mtsho'i drung du rgyal ba gnyis pa 'bri gung pa'i dam pa'i chos theg chen bstan pa'i snying po thob pa'i chos tshan gyi rim pa ni/ thog mar rje 'jig rten gsum gyi mgon po'i rnam thar/ dge ba'i bshes gnyen bal bu gong pa'i rnam thar/ sa bcad de'i gzhung / 'grel pa/ gtam rgyud rnams cha lag dang bcas te/

The following section is a record of the teachings that I received on the essence of the teaching of the great vehicle of the holy dharma of the second victor, the Drikung ['Jig rten mgon po] from Chödrak Gyatso, the magical emanation of the lion's roar of the sixth Buddha who wears the black-hat crown. First is *The Biography of the Venerable Protector of the Three Worlds, The Biography of Kālyanamitra Bal bu*

The relationship between these two figures is significant given the fact that the current Chetsang Rinpoche (b. 1947) has identified Kūnga Rinchen as the figure most likely responsible for initiating the compilation of the practical canon of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyu Teachings* ('Bri gung bka' brgyud chos mdzod chen mo).<sup>653</sup> The early volumes of this collection are notable for their close resemblance to the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*, with both collections basing their initial organizational schema on the sequence of three early Indian *mahāmudrā* corpora—*The Seven Siddhi Texts*, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement*. If Kūnga Rinchen is indeed responsible for initiating this project,<sup>654</sup> it would imply that the Drikung *mahāmudrā* practical canon began to take shape at the same time that the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* took shape, at around the turn of the sixteenth century. Given the fact that Kūnga Rinchen's account of received teachings (*gsan yig*) mentions having received the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* from his uncle Wang Rinpoche, who in turn received it himself from Chödrak Gyatso, it is entirely possible that his early compilation of works for *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* could have taken its inspiration from the Seventh Karmapa's newly collected and published *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*.<sup>655</sup>

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*gong pa* (1090–1166), a text containing a record of its contents, [and] a commentary [on those biographies] along with some additional stories.

<sup>653</sup> Che tshang rin po che's statement appears in Klaus-Dieter Mathes, "A Summary and Topical Outline," 367.

<sup>654</sup> Unfortunately, I have yet to find any data to corroborate Chetsang Rinpoche's identification of Kūnga Rinchen as the earliest compiler of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*. However, because my survey of historical works on the history of the Drikung Kagyü has been limited in scope to this point, I see no reason to doubt Chetsang Rinpoche's suggestion and have accepted it in good faith for the time being.

<sup>655</sup> Kun dga' rin chen, "Gsan yig rgya mtsho," 70r.5–77r.6. Because this section is a bit long, it is not recorded here. The account of Kūnga Rinchen receiving the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* contains an extensive list of every text in the collection, and is likely one of the best sources for determining its original contents. Kūnga Rinchen's listing of works contained in the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* opens with a detailed listing of works from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement*.

Although the two editions are separated by centuries of history and a vast geographic distance, my suggested motivation for the Seventh Karmapa's original compilation of his *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* aligns well with the stated purpose of the Pelpung edition that was published in the nineteenth century. It is possible to hear echoes of the same issues that were facing the Kagyü in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries in Tashi Chöpel's apprehensions about the potential loss of a distinctively Kagyü identity in the nineteenth century. At the closing of his section on the Seventh Karmapa, Tashi Chöpel embeds the following statements on the important work being carried out by Jamgön Kongtrül between two sections discussing the Seventh Karmapa's efforts to preserve the Kagyü teachings:

In general, in this degenerate age, due to the billowing ocean of evil actions such as undervaluing the dharma, since both the holy dharma and spring water are considered important only when they are consumed, there are very few who care about concerns that the stream [of teachings] might disappear, etc. In our own specific case, in the future the Dak[po Ka]gyü might run to the right imitating others. As long as we are engrossed in lectures that are like a drawing of a rainbow that are full of cliché dharma language and many systems of classification, the profound instructions of the essential meaning of our own tradition along with most of the commentaries and teachings on maturing and liberation shall return to the shrine of the *ḍākinīs* from which they came. It will not take very long for the fragments that remain to depart if [things continue] like this.

Due to the immeasurable kindness of the omniscient venerable one Lodrö Thayé, the unbroken exegetical textual transmission of the three *dohā* and the reading transmission of these Indian works along with the practice instructions of the profound special instructions on maturing and liberating that belong to collection of *tantras* of Mar[pa] and Ngok [Chöku Dorje] (Ngok chos sku dor rje, 1036–1097), the life breath [of this tradition], remains without the slightest loss.<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>656</sup> Karma bkra shis chos dpal, "Sgrub pa brgyud grub pa'i rna rgyan," 21r.3–21v.1.

spyir snyigs ma'i dus su gal chung chos la byed pa'i las ngan kyi mtsho brdol bas dam pa'i chos dang 'bab pa'i chu gnyis nye bar mkho ba na longs spyad pa tsam las/ rgyun nub par dogs pa sogs kyi gnyer kha byed pa shin tu nyung / khyad par rang re dwags brgyud pa'ang phyis su gzhan gyi lad mo'i rjes su g.yas la rgyugs te snyan snyan che che'i chos skad dang rnam grangs mang po bgrangs pa'i bshad yam 'ja' tshon gyi ri mo la g.yengs pa'i bar du/ rang lugs snying po'i don gyi gdams zab phal che ba'i smin grol bshad bka' dang bcas pa mkha' la spyod pa'i rten gyi gtso bor sngar nas gshegs la/ cung zad mchis pa rnam kyang gshegs par 'gyur ba la ches mi ring ba 'di ltar na'ang / kun mkhyen chos rje blo gros mtha' yas kyi tshad med pa'i bka' drin las do ha gsum gyi bshad lung ma chad tsam dang / rgya gzhung 'di dag gi bklags

The concerns around the preservation of the Kagyü at the turn of the sixteenth century thus appear to be very similar to the concerns of the nineteenth century. The response to these concerns in both periods was to compile, publish, and distribute collections of those teachings that had come under threat of being lost forever so that they might once again be integrated into an organized and comprehensive Kagyü curriculum.

Just as the work of nineteenth century ecumenical movement (*ris med*) scholars such as Jamgön Kongtrül generated a series of practical canons that have shaped the course of Tibetan Buddhism in the twentieth century, the Seventh Karmapa's efforts to organize and publish his practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works had a profound impact on Kagyü scholarship in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. During this period, interest in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and the old Indian *mahāmudrā* canon was reinvigorated in a number of polemical works that provided systematic and comprehensive presentations of the Kagyü approach to *mahāmudrā* alongside polemical responses designed to defend the tradition from its critics. These works demonstrate the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works'* progression from practical canon to curriculum, and at least two of the best known works that it helped produce remain an integral part of Kagyü *mahāmudrā* curricula to this day. But before preceding to a detailed analysis of how *The Seven Siddhi Texts* were deployed in this literature, some attention must be given to the other practical canon that derived its organizational structure from the three primary early Indian *mahāmudrā* corpora, *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*.

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lung / mar rngog gi rgyud sde rnams kyi smin grol man ngag zab mo'i nyams khrid bcas dbugs rnga ma chag tsam bzhugs pa lags so/



### III. *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings as a Mahāmudrā Practical Canon and Curriculum*

*The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* is a comprehensive practical canon that preserves of multiple layers of Drikung curricula across its 151 volumes. The very first volumes of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*, which is likely part of the oldest strata of the collection, contain the three early corpora of the Indian *mahāmudrā* canon. Unlike the Seventh Karmapa's *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*, *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* is curricular by design and supplements these corpora with a substantial amount of additional texts, historical works, and summaries of the content of each work. In line with its more curricular function, the opening of the collection's first volume contains a brief introduction on how the Buddha came to teach the Vajrayāna, followed by a brief chronicle of how the three corpora that constitute the practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works among the Drikung, Drukpa, and Karma Kagyü lineages were first compiled in India.

The author of the introductory material to *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* is well aware of the curricular function of providing hagiographic data on the *Drupnying* corpus and the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. This much is clear in the following section, which appears immediately after a lengthy homage at the opening of the text:

Now, I shall compose this [introduction] so that the meaning and the words that are contained [in these texts] may flourish. [The teachings in this collection] have been revealed by many superior *siddhas* and have been eloquently explained by many superior scholars. Since each of them were difficult to obtain until many eons [had passed], the fortunate ones who possess this volume and who have taken it up with devotion should study it with enthusiasm.

In this way, those who do not understand will come to understand.  
 They will cut the net of doubts and misunderstandings.  
 Those with the bias of a particular position will conquer all biases.  
 And those with a correct understanding shall increase.<sup>657</sup>

The text moves into a short summary of how the Buddha came to teach the Vajrayāna, relying upon the common pedagogical trope of the Buddha's skillful methods (*thabs la mkhas pa*) as the means by which he is able to teach them "according to their individual faculties, elemental constituents (*kham*s, *dhātu*), and predispositions."<sup>658</sup> It then presents two seemingly contradictory myths for the dissemination of the Vajrayāna. The first narrative proposes that the Buddha only taught these practices to tenth level bodhisattvas who were subsequently prohibited from writing them down. The second narrative, which the author argues predates the first, states that these teachings were written down by an emanation of the deity Vajrapāṇi, kept as offerings to the *ḍākinīs* in Oḍiyāna and the other three primary *yogapīṭhas* associated with the preservation and dissemination of the Vajrayāna.<sup>659</sup>

<sup>657</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 2r.3–2v.2.  
 /bsdus pa'i tshig don dar rgyas bya phyir da ni yang dag spel bar bya/ /grub mchog du mas mngon du  
 byas shing mkhas mchog du mas legs bsnags pa/ /re re yang ni skal pa du ma'i bar du rnyed dka' na skal  
 bzang rnams kyi glegs bam 'di la gus pas blangs nas 'bad par rigs/  
 'dis ni ma rtogs pa rnams rtogs par 'gyur/  
 /log rtog the tsom dra ba gcod par 'gyur/  
 /phyogs re'i dmigs can phyogs las rnam rgyal 'gyur/  
 /legs par rtogs pa rnams kyang 'phel bar 'gyur/

<sup>658</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 2b.4.  
 de yang thabs la mkhas pas so so'i dbang po dang kham dang bag la nyal dang mthun par chos ston pa  
 yin no/

<sup>659</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 3a.4– 3b.2.  
 / /de la yang rang lha'i rnal 'byor gzhan nas bsgom pa'i lha mo lta ba dang rgod pa dang /\_lag bcang dang  
 gnyis gnyis 'khyud kyi bde chen gyi bde ba lam du byed pa la rgyud sde gcig gsungs so/ /rnal 'byor bla na  
 med rgyud la 'og min du gsungs pa rnams ni sa bcu la gnas pa'i byang chub sems dpa' rnams kyi thugs la  
 mnga' ba la glegs bam du bri bar mi nus so/ /sngon byung du gdul bya dbang po rnon po rnams la rgyud  
 rgyas pa 'bum sde du ma gsungs pa rnams ni rdo rje nyid kiyis sprul pa'i sdu pa pos sdu pa glegs bam du  
 byas nas u rgyan rang gi gtsug lag khang nas la sogs par mkha' 'gro rnams kyi mchod nyin du gnas so/

In that [vehicle], other than the tutelary deity yoga, he taught one class of tantras in which the happiness of great bliss of gazing upon the meditation goddess, arousal, touching with the hand, and mutual embrace is taken as the path. It was maintained in the mind of the Bodhisattvas who abide on the tenth level who were taught the unsurpassed tantra in Akaniṣṭha and were not allowed to write it in a volume.

This brief history is immediately followed by an account of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that reads as follows:

Among the three [corpora], the first was disseminated from the western land of Oḍiyāna as the first of the mantra teachings, thus it constitutes the *mahāmudrā* textual tradition of the *ācāryas* of that country. There are seven works that are commonly known [by the title] '*siddhi*.' The seven are:

- 1) *Guhyasiddhi*
- 2) *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*
- 3) *Jñānasiddhi*
- 4) *Advayasiddhi*
- 5) *Sahajasiddhi*
- 6) *Tattvasiddhi*
- 7) *Guhyatattvasiddhi*

Through their efforts, [these authors'] disciples formulated the collection that became known as *The Seven Siddhi Texts*.<sup>660</sup>

The account of *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence* is more detailed, placing the origin of this corpus in the South at Śrī Parvata (*lho bal* [sic.] *gyi ri la*) and noting that it was the disciples of Śavari who, while in residence at Śrī Parvata, first began to refer to this corpus as *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*. The last of the three corpora, *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement*, is said to have been compiled based on a number of dialogues between the guru Maitrīpa/Advayavajra and his disciples.<sup>661</sup> The author then concludes by indicating that these are simply a known set of three corpora among the innumerable other

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Prior to that, for the benefit of disciples of keen intellect, the many teachings of the collection of one hundred thousand extensive tantras were made into a collected volume (*sdus pa glegs bam du byas nas*) by a compiler who was emanated by Vajra[pāṇi] himself and they remained as the offering of the ḍākinīs (*mkha' gro rnam kyī mchod nyin* [sic?] *du gnas so*) from his own temple in Oḍiyāna, etc. [i.e. the locations of the other Yogapīṭhas]. /

<sup>660</sup> The introductory material to The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings modifies the title of Dārikapāda's work to *Gsang ba'i de kho na nyid grub pa* instead of the more common *Gsang ba de kho na nyid man ngag*. See A mgon rin po che ed. "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 4a.2–4a.4. dang po ni sngags kyī bstan pa'i thog mar nub phyogs u rgyan nas dar bas yul de'i slob dpon rnam kyī phyag rgya chen po'i gzhung mdzad pa la grub pa'i tha snyad sbyar ba bdun byung ba ni/ gsang ba grub pa / thabs dang shes rab kyī gtan la dbab pa grub pa/ ye shes grub pa/ gnyis med grub pa/ lhan cig skyes grub pa/ de kho na nyid grub pa/ gsang ba'i de kho na nyid grub pa dang bdun yin te/ de dag gis rjes 'brang gis mdzad pa rnam kyang de'i sder bsdu pas grub pa ste [sic.] bdun zhes grags so/

<sup>661</sup> The *Yilamijépe* corpus is thus the clearest example of a practical canon among these three corpora of Indian *mahāmudrā* works.

works composed by the *mahāsiddhas*, stating that "the works composed by other *mahāsiddhas* that teach the ultimate meaning of *mahāmudrā* are too numerous to count."<sup>662</sup> Among all of the available authentic works on *mahāmudrā*, the works in these three corpora carried a particularly important status for the compilers of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*. The hyperbole in this statement should thus be read as a declaration of the authoritative status of these three corpora as a practical canon of Indian *mahāmudrā* works from among a broad range of texts identified as *mahāmudrā* teachings from the Indian *mahāsiddhas*.

*The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings'* supplementary materials to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* appear to be a collection of independent works on the corpus rather than a systematic presentation composed by a single author. This material includes brief hagiographies for each of the authors of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* (except for Dārikapāda) that recall how each gained realization and why they decided to compose the treatise at hand. This material is followed in most cases by chapter-by-chapter summaries and outlines of the texts. Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, for instance, is preceded by a chronicle (*lo rgyus*) describing the author and his decision to compose the text in response to a request from one of Indrabhūti's court priests (*mchod gnas*). The next sixty folios contain the text of the *Guhyasiddhi* itself, followed by an untitled work that provides a summary of the main points

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<sup>662</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 4a.4–4b.1. bram ze chen po sa ra ha lho bal gyi ri la byon nas bzhugs pa dang / de'i rjes su klu grub yab sras/ ri khrod yab sras byon nas phyag rgya chen po la snying rje don gyi tha snyad dar bas sa ra ha'i to' ha dang / klu grub kyi phyag rgya bzhi pa dang / 'phags pa lha'i sems kyi sgrib sbyong dang / tog rtse pa'i bsam mi khyab dang / me tri pa'i dbang bskur nges bstan dang / na stid ka pas gnas bsdus dang de rnams la The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence zhes pa'i tha snyad mdzad do/ /de nas mnga' bdag me tri pas lta ba rab du mi gnas pa/ bsgom pa yid la mi byed pa la sogs pa'i dam bca' mdzad pa la/ so so'i dris lan gzhang phran nyi shu rtsa lnga byung ba la slob ma rnams kyi yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor nyi shu rtsa lnga zhes pa'i tha snyad byas so/ /de ltar grub pa sde bdun/\_snying po'i skor drug yid la mi byed pa'i chos skor nyi shu rtsa lnga rnams na grangs su gcod pa yin la/ /gzhan grub chen rnams mdzad pa'i phyag rgya chen po'i don ston pa'i gzhang rnams ni grangs su ma bcad pa zhes bya'o//

discussed in each chapter. This untitled work is in turn followed by a text titled *The Essence of the Glorious Secret Siddhi: A Summary of the Siddhi Texts* (*Dpal gsang ba grub pa thig le grub pa rnams kyi bsduṣ don*) that provides brief prose introductions for *Guhyasiddhi*, *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, and *Jñānasiddhi* and chapter-by-chapter outlines of each text in an outline (*sa bcad*) format. The recently edited edition of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* indicates that this work was composed by Padmavajra, Anaṅgavajra,<sup>663</sup> and Indrabhūti, but there is no indication in the text itself that this is the case. The claim is also questionable given that the text is composed in an outline (*sa bcad*) format following a characteristically Tibetan scholastic literary convention.<sup>664</sup>

The auxiliary works that are appended to *Guhyasiddhi* then concludes with Padmavajra's *Epistle on Insight* (*Shes rab kyi phrin yig, Prajñālekhana*). *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* makes a point to argue that Padmavajra and Indrabhūti were contemporaries, and that both authors were connected through their relationship with Anaṅgavajra, who was a disciple to the former and court priest to the latter. It is possible that the decision to include Padmavajra's *Epistle on Insight* as an auxiliary text to the *Guhyasiddhi* because it was allegedly composed for Anaṅgavajra, who was acting as court priest to Indrabhūti. This interpretation finds support in the chronicle material for the *Guhyasiddhi*, which notes that the *Guhyasiddhi* was itself composed in response to a correspondence that Padmavajra received from "a virtuous *paṇḍita* who was Indrabhūti's

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<sup>663</sup> Anaṅgavajra is referred to by the name \*Amṛtaśubhākara (*bdud rtsi dge ba'i 'byung gnas*) in this text as well as in the chronicle (*lo rgyus*) for his *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi* contained in *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*. The latter source tells us that this is Anaṅgavajra's name prior to his tutelage under Padmavajra. See A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 50b.1–51a.6.

<sup>664</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Dpal 'bri gung bka' brgyud kyi chos mdzod chen mo las sgrub snying pod ka pa," in *Dpal 'bri gung bka' brgyud kyi chos mdzod chen mo*, vol 1. (ka) (Dehradun: Srong btsan spe mdzod khang, 2015), xii. The *dkar chag* to this recent publication of the first volume of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* has the following entry for this work: *slob dpon pad+ma badz+ra/ slob dpon bdud tsi dge ba'i 'byung gnas/ slo bdpon in+d+ra bod+hi bcas kyis mdzad/*

court priest."<sup>665</sup> Later in *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*, the chronicle material for Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* confirms that the *paṇḍita* for whom Padmavajra composed his *Guhyasiddhi* was in fact Anaṅgavajra, and that he composed the text so that his disciple would not forget the guru's special instructions on the *Guhyasamājantra*.<sup>666</sup> Apart from assuming the alleged correspondence between Anaṅgavajra and Padmavajra as the reason for including Padmavajra's *Epistle on Insight*, one strains to otherwise justify why the redactor(s) of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* included this particular text as a final supplementary work to an already lengthy and comprehensive set of materials on *Guhyasiddhi*. The general format for supplementary material to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that is established with the materials appended to Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* continues as the volume progresses through the remainder of the corpus, and in this way, *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* constructs a curricular structure around *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that signals a concerted effort to render it as practical and accessible as possible for its readers.

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<sup>665</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 5r.1.  
 nang du ni sangs rgyas thams cad kyi yul la 'jug pa rnal 'byor rtog pa'i rlung tshub kyis mi sgul ba/ 'od  
 gsal mngon par byang chub pa la mnyam bar bzhag go/ de'i tshe in+d+ra b+hU ti'i mchog gnas paN+Di ta  
 dge ba'i myu gus gsol ba gdab pa'i ngor dpal gsang ba grub pa mdzad do/

Internally, his yoga of penetrating the sense object of all of the *buddhas* was unshaken by the fierce winds of conceptual thought. He attained meditative equipoise in the manifest awakening of the clear light. It was then that he composed the *Śrī Guhyasiddhi* in response to a request by the pen of a virtuous *paṇḍita* who was Indrabhūti's court priest.

<sup>666</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 63r.6–63v.1.  
 maN+Dala phul zhing nyin mtshan du gsol ba gdab pas zhal gyi bzhes su ma btub pa la/ nyid kyis lcam  
 mos lung bstan tshul sogs lo rgyus zhib du zhus pas rjes su bzung / gsang ba 'dus pa'i dbang rgyud man  
 ngag ghang / paN+Di ta'i brjed byang du gsang ba grub pa mdzad nas snang /

[Anaṅgavajra] offered [Padmavajra] a *maṇḍala*, supplicated him night and day and did not take anything to eat or drink. According to the received detailed history of the way in which he [followed] what the consort's directions, he was taken as a disciple. [Padmavajra] gave him the consecration and special instruction of *The Guhyasamāja*. He appears to have composed the *Guhyasiddhi* so that the *Paṇḍita* would remember it perfectly.

The author(s) of the introductory material to *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* rejects reductionist approaches to curricula that are intended to render null any contradictions in the materials it presents. This means that the attempt to make *The Seven Siddhi Texts* 'accessible' in this collection should not be understood as an attempt to generate a homogenous narrative or interpretation of the corpus. In this sense the materials that accompany the corpus should be understood as 'supplementary,' not 'explanatory.' Even in those cases in which these supplementary works do address the content of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in detail, they tend to provide the reader with topical outlines or guides to the texts instead of extensive commentaries that might make sense of each work for the reader. The redactor rejects a more homogenizing approach to curricula in his statements on the motivation behind compiling the *Drupnying* and its related works in a single collection:

Since they are all teachings on the practical integration of the textual tradition due to being special instructions that summarize [its] meaning, they have accomplished something inconceivable. From among all of the [teachings], this collection of a few works was obtained due to the kindness of my glorious holy teachers and [contains] the common and uncommon teaching on the general and specific profound points of scripture. I shall write [them down here] in one place so that the works composed by the lords of scholars of India and Tibet as a support of faith [in the dharma] shall not wane, [so that] they may increase and spread, so that it is easy to find for those who have an eager intellect, so those who do not have an eager intellect might develop one, [so that] they see the hidden flaws of teachings that are like a tidy-looking rosary of contrivances and fabrications, and so that [they may] dispel the exaggerations and denigrations of those who exaggerate and denigrate [the content of these works], due to [their] incorrect understanding regarding the difficulties of fathoming [their] uniquely difficult and profound [instructions].<sup>667</sup>

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<sup>667</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 3b.2–3b.6.

/ /de dag gis don bsdus pa'i man ngag gis gzhung lag len du bstan pa 'di lta bu bsam gyis mi khyab par gcig mdzad pa yin te/\_de dag gis nang nas cung zhig bsdus pa 'di ni/ gdag nyid kyi dpal ldan bla ma dam pa rnams kyi sku drin las thob pa dang / gsung rab spyi dang khyad par gyi zab gnad thun mong dang thun mong ma yin pa ston pa dang / rgya bod kyi mkhas pa'i dbang po rnams kyi kyang yid ches kyi gnas su mdzad pa rnams mi nub cing dar rgyas su bya ba'i phyir dang / don du gnyer ba'i blo yod pa rnams kyi btsal sla ba dang / don du gnyer ba'i blo med pa rnams kyang yod par 'gyur ba dang / bcos ma dang rtog bzo'i phreng ba zab zab ltar bstan pa rnams kyi mtshang mthong ba dang / thun mong ma yin pa'i zab

This passage, styled after the practice of providing a brief statement on the value of the topic and the author's promise to teach the material that is common to both Indic and Tibetan treatises, provides a short statement on the curricular intent behind the author's decision to provide supplementary materials for *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and its related corpora. The practical intention of the collection is clear in this passage, and we are explicitly told that it was compiled so that it would be put to practical use. The phrase '[so that] they see the hidden flaws of teachings that are like a tidy looking rosary of contrivances and fabrications,' (*bcos ma dang rtog bzo'i phreng ba zab zab ltar bstan pa rnam kyī mtshang mthong ba dang*) is of particular interest and indicates what might be a distinctive view of the function of curriculum among the Drikung school that rejects the formulation of curricula that attempt to resolve or hide the 'messiness' one often encounters in the source texts themselves.<sup>668</sup>

The notion that a practical canon such as *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* might be directed at preserving the difficulties in these works and the traditions they represent instead of rendering them into a uniform, homogenous system contradicts least one understanding of the function of practical canonicity as the formulation of an orthodoxy in reaction to the heterogeneous and often contradictory material preserved in the related formal canon.<sup>669</sup> The statement is reminiscent of the so-called 'string of pearls' fallacy that often obstructs the messy historical realities underlying transmission of Buddhist traditions.

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gnad dpag par dka' ba rnam la log par rtogs nas sgro skur du gyur pa rnam kyī sgro skur bsal ba'i don du phyog cig du bri bar bya'o/

<sup>668</sup> A similar sentiment was conveyed to me by the head librarian at the Songtsen Library in Dehradun, India during my stay there in May–June of 2015. I had mentioned that my work on the first volume of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* revealed that the original volumes discovered in Lhasa in 2004 appeared to contain a large amount of scribal errors that made translating the texts particularly slow-going. His reply was that, in general, the Drikung tend to see elements in a textual tradition that might be problematic as an important way of allowing each future generation the opportunity to take an equally critical approach to its source texts.

<sup>669</sup> Stanley, *The Threefold Formal, Practical, and Inclusive Canons*, 4–5.



Carl Yammamoto has commented on this at length in his work on the twelfth-century Tshalpa Kagyü patriarch Lama Zhang (Zhang tshal pa brtson 'grus grags pa 1123–1193). Borrowing the phrase from John McCrea's observation of the same phenomenon in Ch'an and Zen Buddhist lineages that reduce the complexity of their lineage transmissions to a single, one-to-one succession of teachers and disciples,<sup>670</sup> Yammamoto notes that Lama Zhang received instructions from so many different teachers (each of whom also boasted an eclectic range of sources for their own lineages) that it is impossible to limit his particular style of teaching to any one of them.<sup>671</sup> The redactor of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* disparages the practice of simplifying and streamlining the unsystematic presentation of materials written by and about the Indian *mahāsiddhas* so that they conform to a uniform and easily transmitted narrative. This comment cautions against trusting works that repackage this literature in a way that can be readily understood and easily digested. In turn, it acknowledges that the works of the *mahāsiddhas* do not represent a homogenous, 'tidy' tradition but are often contradictory and intractable in their varied presentations of Vajrayāna theory, ritual, and practice.<sup>672</sup>

The inclusion of hagiographic material on *The Seven Siddhi Texts* supports the argument for their recognition as a unified corpus prior to their transmission to Tibet. This concern places the redactor of *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* in the position of advocating for the positive function of etiology as a method for developing

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<sup>670</sup> John McCrea, *Seeing through Zen: Encounter, Transformation, and Genealogy in Chinese Zen Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 8–10.

<sup>671</sup> Carl Yammamoto, *Vision and Violence: Lama Zhang and Politics of Charisma in Twelfth-Century Central Tibet* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 90–95.

<sup>672</sup> This recognition is notably different from the position taken by Sakya Paṇḍita in his *Sdom gsum rab dbye* and other works, where he presents a rather uniform and rigid system of *mahāmudrā* instruction that follows the *Hevajratantra* in its form yet applies this single system across the entire Vajrayāna tradition. One of the polemical applications of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* among Kagyü authors appears to have been their relative heterogeneity, specifically around the format and succession of the consecration ritual. This topic is taken up in detail later in this chapter.

comprehensive curricula and, ultimately, for eliciting the reader's faith in the importance of the work at hand. In this sense, *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* engages in a kind of privileging of origins in its treatment of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as a foundational *mahāmudrā* corpus. The author alludes to the importance of such a concern with origins in the following passage at the end of his lengthy commitment to teach the treatise (*bshad par dam bca'*):

As they say,

A historical work that has an authentic origin generates great faith,  
Preserving the root texts brings about a great blessing,  
Explaining some of the related meaning produces great insight, [and]  
[A work] with these three kinds of greatness is additionally a great miracle!<sup>673</sup>

By opening its presentation of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* with an appeal to a 'privileging of origins,' the introductory material to *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* gives some expression to the primary reason that the corpus came to carry such significance in the *mahāmudrā* polemical literature of a number of Sakya and Kagyü authors from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. The *Seven Siddhi Texts'* authoritative status as one of the earliest collections of Indian works on *mahāmudrā* is accepted without question in the polemical literature, even if the correct interpretation of the relationship between *mahāmudrā* and the tantric consecration rituals in these texts remains contentious. This also means that with rare exception, parties on both sides of the debate tend to fall into the very fallacy of projecting a uniform tradition onto the corpus that the introduction to *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* cautions against.

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<sup>673</sup> A mgon rin po che ed., "Grub pa sde bdun dang snying po skor gsum," 3b.6–4a.1.  
/smras pa/ lo rgyus khungs dang sbyar bas dad pa che/ gzhung tshig rang sor bzhag pas byin rlabs che/  
'brel don cung zad bshad pa shes rab che/ che ba gsum ldan slar yang ngo mtshar che/ zhes bya'o/

#### IV. *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in Tibetan *Mahāmudrā* Polemical Literature

*The Seven Siddhi Texts* play an integral role in a volley of polemical works composed by a handful of Sakya and Kagyü authors from the fifteenth through seventeenth centuries. The first two polemical works from the Sakya side of this debate are roughly contemporary to the publications of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*, and the rebuttals from the Kagyü side post-date the publication of both of these *mahāmudrā* practical canons. The Kagyü response to these works from the Sakya thus supplies evidence for the effect that these two publication projects had on Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical literature as reference works that provided an easily accessible practical canon of authoritative Indian sources to both justify and defend the Kagyü *mahāmudrā* traditions from their detractors among the Sakya and elsewhere. On the whole, the degree of detail with which our Kagyü authors discuss *The Seven Siddhi Texts* indicates a greater level of engagement with these works than the Sakya authors to whom they are responding. Judging from these sources it is possible to say with some degree of caution that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* held greater influence within Kagyü *mahāmudrā* curricula than they did among the Sakya during this period, and the publication of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings Mahāmudrā* practical canons likely played a part in making this so.

The majority of passages that draw upon *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the set of *mahāmudrā* polemical works analyzed here revolve around the following statements from Sakya Paṇḍita's *Distinguishing the Three Vows* (*Sdom pa gsum gyu rab tu dbye ba*) section 3.176–79:

The Great Seal that Nāro and Maitrīpa espoused  
Is held to consist precisely

Of the seals of Action, Dharma, and Pledge,  
And of the Great Seal expounded  
In tantras of the Mantra system.

In his *Caturmudrā*[*nvaya*], Exalted Nāgārjuna himself also asserts this:

“If, through not having known the Action seal,  
One is also ignorant of the seal of Dharma,  
It is impossible that one might understand  
Even the name of the Great Seal.

The King of tantra texts and major commentarial treatises also prohibit  
The Great Seal to one who is unconnected with initiation.<sup>674</sup>

The primary function of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in the polemical thread stemming from Sakya Paṇḍita's *Distinguishing the Three Vows* revolves around the issue of whether or not a necessary and exclusive relationship obtains between the realization of *mahāmudrā* and a disciple's progression through the two-stage yoga and system of four tantric consecrations associated with the textual genre of 'highest' *yogatantra*.<sup>675</sup> Following the context in which the corpus is most often referenced, this section analyzes passages from a handful of authors

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<sup>674</sup> I have retained Rhoton's translation choices here to acknowledge his important work in bringing an English translation of this text to publication. See Sakya Paṇḍita Kunga Gyaltsen, *A Clear Differentiation of the Three Codes: Essential Distinctions among the Individual Liberation, Great Vehicle, and Tantric Systems, the sDom gsum rab dbye and Six Letters*, translated by Jared Douglas Rhoton and edited by Victoria R.M. Scott (Albany: SUNY, 2002), 119. The passage is located in Sa skya Paṇḍita Kun dga' rgyal mtshan, *Sdom pa gsum gyu rab tu dbye ba*, in *Sa skya bka' 'bum* 12 (Kathmandu: Sachen International, 2006), 53.5–54.1. Elsewhere in this article, when this verse is quoted in another work, I have relied upon my own translation, which the reader may note differs slightly from Rhoton's.

<sup>675</sup> The Seven Siddhi Texts are also evoked at times to address some of Sakya Paṇḍita's other accusations against the Kagyü system of Mahāmudrā. For example, Dakpo Tashi Namgyel's (1512/13–1587) *Moonbeams of Mahāmudrā* (*Phyag chen zla ba'i 'od zer*) invokes the corpus to push back against accusations from Sakya Paṇḍita and others that the Kagyü Mahāmudrā is a Chinese doctrine in Indian garb by referencing the *Corpus of Three Dohā* along with the *Drupnying* and Maitrīpa's *Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement* as corpora of authentic Indian origin that validate and promote subitist approaches to non-conceptual meditation. See Dakpo Tashi Namgyal, *Mahāmudrā: The Moonlight-Quintessence of Mind and Meditation*, translated by Lobsang P. Lhalungpa (Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2006), 104. Like the authors examined here, Dakpo Tashi Namgyel also references *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in his argument against Sakya Paṇḍita's rejection of a *mahāmudrā* that is taught outside of the tantras. The topic of subitism is addressed in chapter five of Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, where the author provides "A Refutation of Stupor-Meditation" (*muḍhabhāvanāṇiṣeda*). On the whole, however, references to the corpus from the Sakya and Kagyü authors examined here tend to be employed in the context of determining the relationship between *mahāmudrā* instruction and the process of consecration.

on both sides of this polemical literature who invoke *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to support their respective positions on the relationship between the standardized system of four tantric consecrations, realizing *mahāmudrā*, and the conferral of the guru's blessing.

The progression of works addressed here begins in the fifteenth century with the Sakya authors Dönyö Drup pa and Gorampa. It then moves to Pema Karpo, who is in turn challenged by the Sakya author Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso (Mang thos klu sgrub rgya mtsho, 1523–1596). The progression through these works culminates in a response to Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso from Pema Karpo's disciple Sangyé Dorjé (Sangs rgyas rdo rje, 1569–1645). Two of these works, Gorampa's *Clarifying the Meaning of the Victor's Teaching: A Commentary on Distinguishing the Three Vows* (*Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i rnam bshad rgyal ba'i gsung rab kyi dgongs gsal ba*) and Pema Karpo's *The Victor's Treasury: An Explanation of the Mahāmudrā Instructions* (*Phyag rgya chen po'i mang ngag gi bshad sbyar rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*) remain integral to Sakya and Kagyü curricula, respectively, to this day.

Dönyö Drup pa's three-volume set of commentaries to Sakya Paṇḍita's *Distinguishing the Three Vows* references *The Seven Siddhi Texts* on two separate occasions. The first appears in his commentary to verses 1.244–245 in which Sakya Paṇḍita criticizes those who say it is not necessary to study scriptures and treatises.<sup>676</sup> Both Dönyö Drup pa and Gorampa identify Lama Zhang as the intended target of this verse, and both authors' comments echo Sakya Paṇḍita's *Clarifying the Sage's Intent*, which mentions *The Seven Siddhi Texts* among a short list of treatises that are integral to studying the system of mantra.<sup>677</sup> Dönyö Drup pa and

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<sup>676</sup> Sa skya Paṇḍita, *Sdom gsum rab dbye*, 27.5–27.6.

/kla la rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi/ /gsung rab tshig don zab po dang / /grub thob rnam dang mkhas rnam kyi/ /shin tu legs par bshad pa'i chos/ /tshig gi na ya yin pas na/ /dgos pa med pas dor zhes zer/

<sup>677</sup> Sa skya Paṇḍita, "Thub pa'i dgongs gsal," 9.5.

Gorampa also both employ their own brand of ad hominem in these passages, with Dönyö Drup pa accusing Lama Zhang's statements against the efficacy of textual study as "nothing but nonsense" (*cang la ha la la*)<sup>678</sup> and Gorampa informing his reader that the passage refers to "Zhang Tshalpa and some rag-wearing Ka[gyüs]" (*zhang tshal pa dang / bka' phyag pa la la*).<sup>679</sup>

*The Seven Siddhi Texts* are invoked again in volume three of Dönyö Drup pa's commentary to the mantra vow section of *Distinguishing the Three Vows*. His additions to

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<sup>678</sup> Dge slong Don yod grub pa, "Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i TI ka bstan pa'i sgron me las so thar sdom pa'i rnam bshad," in *Sngon byon sa skya pa'i mkhas pa rnams kyi gzhung 'grel skor* 9, no.1 (Kathmandu: sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2007), 421.5–422.2. gnyis pa/ sde snod la thos bsam mi dgos par 'dod pa dgag pa ni/ zhang tshal pa'am hwa shang gi ston pa cang la ha la la/ rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas gi gsung rab tsig don zab mo mdo rgyud rnams dang grub thob rnal 'byor gyi dbang phyug rnams kyis mdzad pa'i grub pa sde bdun zhes grags te/ slob dpon pad+ma badz+ra gyi gsang ba grub pa/ in+d+ra b+h+U ti'i ye shes grub pa/ bir+wa pa'i 'chi med grub pa/ DoM bi he ru ka'i lhan skyes grub pa/ sa ra ha'i bdag byin gyis brlabs pa grub pa/ yan lag med pa'i rdo rje'i thabs dang shes rab gtan la dbab pa grub pa/ lak+Sh mis mdzad pa'i gnyis med grub pa/ rgyan drug la sogs pa'i mkhas pa rnams kyis sde snod kyi don rigs pas shin tu legs par dpyad cing gtan la phab pa'i chos dbu ma rigs tshogs dang / tshad ma sde bdun sogs tshig gi na ya yin pas na yang dag pa'i don bsgom pa la de dag dgos pa med pas dar bya yin no zhes zer ro/

Second, "Refuting that one does not need to study and contemplate the collections of scriptures and treatises:" The teaching of Zhang Tshalpa or Hwashang is nothing but a bunch of blabbering. The system of verses is the systems of the sūtras and tantras of the profound meaning of the scriptural word of the perfect Buddhas, the so-called *Seven Siddhi Texts* that were composed by the lords of yoga, the siddhas-Ācārya Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, Virwapa's *\*Amṛtasiddhi*, Ḍoṃbiheruka's *Sahasasiddhi*, Saraha's *Svādhiṣṭhāna-siddhi*, Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīścāyasiddhi*, the *Advayasiddhi* composed by Lakṣmī-[and] [Nāgārjuna's] *The Collection of Works on the Logic of the Middle-way* and [Dharmakīrti's] *Seven Epistemological Works*, etc, which is the teaching of the wise ones such as the six ornaments, etc., who thoroughly analyzed and correctly determined the meaning of the collection scriptures using logic. But [Zhang Tshalpa and Hwashang] says that one should throw these out because they are not necessary!

<sup>679</sup> Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge, "Sdom gsum rnam bshad," 133.5. la la rdzogs pa'i zhes sogs tshigs bcad gsum ste/ zhang mtshal pa dang / bka' phyag pa la la/ rdzogs pa'i sangs rgyas kyi gsung rab sde snod gsum dang / rgyud sde bzhis bsdus pa'i tshig don zab mo rnams dang / de dag gi dgongs 'grel grub thob rnams kyis legs par bshad pa'i grub pa sde bdun dang / The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence la sogs pa rnams dang / mkhas pa rgyan drug la sogs pa rnams kyis shin tu legs par bshad pa'i chos sa sde dang / rigs tshogs la sogs pa rnams ni tshig gi na ya sogs so/

The three verses [beginning with] "Some [say] the Perfectly" etc. [refer to] Shang Tshalpa and some rag-wearing Ka[gyüpas]. The three baskets of the perfect Buddha's teachings and the profound meanings of the verses contained in the four classes of tantra, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, etc., which are the accurate explanations by the siddhas who commented on the meaning of those works, and the dharma that was exceedingly well explained by the wise ones who are the six ornaments etc., works such as *The Collection on the Stages* and *The Collection of Logical Arguments* etc., is the textual system.

the root text of verse 3.179 are highlighted in bold in the following translation of this passage:

Other king of tantra texts **such as the *Hevajra[tantra]*** and  
Other great treatises **such as *The Seven Siddhi Texts and more***  
Refute **realization** of *mahāmudrā*  
For one who does not have the consecrations.<sup>680</sup>

Dönyö Drup pa follows this passage with the following quotes from the *Hevajratantra* and

Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* 1.32:

Then the *yoginīs* asked,  
“What is *mahāmudrā* like?” [HT 2.8.1ab]

And in response [he stated],

The innate is not expressed in some other way.  
It is not attained somewhere [else].  
It shall be understood based on one’s merit  
And on the teaching of method during the guru [offering]. [HT 1.8.36]<sup>681</sup>

As it says in *Jñānasiddhi*,

By attaining true supreme gnosis  
That is devoid of all conceptual thought,  
One who receives the *vajra* gnosis consecration  
Shall attain the supreme *siddhi*. [JS 1.32]<sup>682</sup>

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<sup>680</sup> Dge slong Don yod grub pa, *Sdom pa gsum gyi rab tu dbye ba'i TI ka bstan pa'i sgron me las sngags sdom pa'i rnam bshad*, in *Sngon byon sa skya pa'i mkhas pa rnams kyi gzhung 'grel skor* 9 (Kathmandu: sa skya rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 2007), 571.1–572.2.  
/rgyud kyi rgyal po gzhan kye rdo rje sogs dang / bstan bcos chen po gzhan grub pa sde bdun sogs las kyang / dbang bskur dag dang ma 'brel ba de la phyag rgya chen po rtogs pa bkag ste/

My translation differs from that of Rhoton. The divergence is based on Don yod grub pa's gloss of the verse *de la phyag rgya chen po bkag/ as de la phyag rgya chen po rtogs bkag ste/* which I believe pushes the *la bdun* particle toward the possessive sense, and in turn the verb *bkag* to its more common connotation of 'to refute.' Rhoton's translation might be amended here to "Other King of tantra texts and great treatises also refute that one not endowed with the consecration possesses Mahāmudrā." I believe this actually captures the point of the verse more accurately.

<sup>681</sup> HT 1.8.36 is also the verse that Drikung patriarch Jigten Gonpo (1143–1217) uses to identify guru devotion as the single means for realization, a point with which Sakya Paṇḍita takes issue in the section of the *Sdom gsum rab dbye* that immediately follows the current passage. See Jan-Ulrich Sobisch, "Guru-devotion in the Bka' brgyud pa Tradition: The Single Means to Realization," in *Mahāmudrā and the Bka'-brgyud Tradition: PIATS 2006: Tibetan Studies: Proceedings of the Eleventh Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies, Königswinter 2006*. Edited by Roger R. Jackson and Matthew T. Kapstein (ITTBS, GmbH: 2011), 225.

Both passages are referenced here to support the Sakya view that the disciple's own cultivation of non-dual gnosis through practicing the two-stage yoga must then be joined with the guru's consecration and blessing in order to attain the *mahāmudrā-siddhi*. The point is made in contrast to one Kagyü approach to *mahāmudrā* that identifies the guru's blessing as the primary determinant of any disciple's realization of *mahāmudrā*. This implies, as the Kagyü would like to argue, that the sequence of four consecrations and their attendant moments and levels of joy as systematized in the *Hevajratantra* might be abridged or done away with entirely as long as the disciple receives the proper blessing from the guru. Thus the Kagyü argument leaves room for the potential conferral of *mahāmudrā* upon someone 'who does not have the consecrations' while the Sakya approach draws a more systematized and necessary relationship between the disciple progressing through the 'proper' consecration sequence, their generation of gnosis through the stages of the tantric yogas, and their eventual realization of the *mahāmudrā-siddhi* through combining this meditative insight with the guru's blessing. The Sakya position that Dönyö Drup pa presents here, following Sakya Paṇḍita, thus limits its understanding of a truly effective method for the realization of *mahāmudrā* to those systems that are contained within the class of highest *yogatantra*, and draws specifically upon the systematic presentation of the sequence of consecrations in the *Hevajratantra*.<sup>683</sup>

Since the work is so significant to the Sakya position, Dönyö Drup pa's *Hevajra* quote

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<sup>682</sup> Don yod grub pa, *Sngags sdom pa'i rnam bshad*, 571.2–4.

brtag gnyis las/ de nas rnal 'byor ma zhus pa/ phyag rgya chen po ji lta bu/ zhes pa'i lan du/ gzhan gyis brjod min lhan cig skyes/ /gang du yang ni mi rnyed de/ /bla ma'i dus thabs bstan pa dang / /bdag gi bsod nams las shes bya/ /zhes gsungs so/ /ye shes grub pa las/ rtog pa thams cad rnam spangs pa'i/ /ye shes mchog bzang thob pa yi/ /rdo rje'i ye shes dbang bskur bas/ /dngos grub mchog ni sgrub par bya/ /zhes gsungs so/

<sup>683</sup> On Sakya Paṇḍita's view of Mahāmudrā see Julia Stenzel, "The Mahāmudrā of Sakya Paṇḍita," *The Indian Journal of Buddhist Studies* 15 (2014): 199–228.



beginning with the *yoginīs'* question, "What is *mahāmudrā* like?" deserves a closer look. As my notation indicates in the passage above, the *yoginīs'* question comes from *Hevajratantra* 2.8.1 while the 'reply' is taken from *Hevajratantra* 1.8.36. The actual response to the *yoginīs'* question in 2.8.1, were Dönyö Drup pa to present these verses as they appear in the text, is vastly different:

Then the *yoginīs* asked,  
"What is *mahāmudrā* like?"  
Please make us happy and explain [this]  
In terms of [her] conventional body and appearance. [HT 2.8.1.]

The Bhagavān replied,

She is not too tall and not too short,  
Not too dark and not too light. |  
Her complexion is like a lotus petal,  
She has sweet smelling breath, || [HT 2.8.2]

And when she perspires there should be a sweet smell  
That is just like a fragrant musk. |  
And her lotus should emit the faint smell  
Of a blue lotus blossom, like a lotus. || [HT 2.8.3]

A wise one should notice that she has  
The fragrant smell of incense and camphor. |  
She should have the smell of a lotus  
[And] should be light like a bird. || [HT 2.8.4]

She is intelligent and not flighty,  
She has a pleasant way of speaking and is attractive, |  
She has beautiful hair, three folds below the navel, [and]  
Ordinary people consider her an exceptional woman. |  
And having acquired her, one shall attain *siddhi*  
That is the nature of innate joy. || [HT 2.8.5]<sup>684</sup>

Of course there is the possibility that Dönyö Drup pa had a copy of the *Hevajratantra* on hand that substituted HT 1.8.36 for the description that we find in the current canonical edition of the text. But barring this possibility, it seems strange that an author would leave

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<sup>684</sup> This is my own translation from the Sanskrit, which the Tibetan translation matches quite well. For the text see Snelgrove, ed., *The Hevajra Tantra*, 88–91 of Snelgrove's Sanskrit/ Tibetan edition.

himself vulnerable to criticism by manipulating such a well-known source to suit his own purposes. After all, all one would have to do to challenge his argument is to point to this obvious misquote from the *Hevajratantra*, a potentially embarrassing observation for a scholar from a tradition in which the *Hevajratantra* plays such an important role. It is equally intriguing that none of the Kagyü authors who respond to this passage as it is preserved here and in Gorampa's commentary to *Distinguishing the Three Vows* seem to notice that the passage is blatantly misrepresented.<sup>685</sup>

Without Dönyö Drup pa's manipulation of the text, the *Hevajratantra's* description of *mahāmudrā* in these passages seemingly has nothing at all to do with a soteriological absolute that is realized through the combination of the two-stage yoga and fourfold sequence of tantric initiations. Instead, the actual sequence of verses in the *Hevajratantra* presents a list of characteristics becoming of an 'ideal' or 'superior' (i.e. *mahā*) 'consort' (*mudrā*). For a tradition that has come to see *mahāmudrā* as bearing a single meaning as a term signifying the highest realization, the often-messy reality of the way in which the term is used across Buddhist textual traditions would represent a notable inconvenience. Dönyö Drup pa effectively sidesteps this inconvenience by manipulating his source text and substituting a verse that supports the Sakya view of *mahāmudrā*.

This might bear some implications regarding the anticipated behavior of the textual community toward whom he directs his three-volume exegesis on *Distinguishing the Three Vows* by providing some indication of the frequency with which his readers were expected to actually double-check such citations from canonical works against their original sources. The

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<sup>685</sup> 'Brug chen Padma dkar po points out a similar problem in Sakya Paṇḍita's misrepresentation of the verse quoted above from the *Caturmudrānvaya*. For an extensive treatment of this topic see Klaus-Dieter Mathes "bKa' brgyud Mahāmudrā: 'Chinese *rDzogs chen*' or the Teachings of the Siddhas?" ZAS 45 (2016): 309–40. He does not, however, seem to have noticed this problem in Go rams pa's commentary to the *Sdom gsum rab dbye*.

fact that Dönyö Drup pa and others are able to so easily repackage and manipulate their source texts also tells us something about the priority that Sakya textual communities granted to material in their own practical canon over the sources for that material in the broader formal canon of the *Kanjyur*. The perpetuation of this particular reading of the *Hevajratantra's* presentation of *mahāmudrā* among the Sakya thus functions as a case in point for the formulation of sect- and institution-specific textual communities in Tibet. It also provides a glimpse of how the polemical applications of practical canon formation can produce curricula in which misrepresentations of a work as important and well known as the *Hevajratantra* might be handed down from one author to another, or from one generation to the next.

This appears to be the case with Gorampa's commentary on verse 3.179 of *Distinguishing the Three Vows*. Drawing either from the same exegetical tradition or directly from Dönyö Drup pa's work, Gorampa's rendering of *HT* 2.8.1 also treats *HT* 1.8.36 as a response to the *yoginī's* question. His comments in this section open with a short reference to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in reference to *Distinguishing the Three Vows* 3.164–66 where Sakya Paṇḍita outlines his own tradition's viewpoint on *mahāmudrā*. The commentary reads:

As for the second [topic],<sup>686</sup> the ten verses that begin with "Our," etc., the first three verses illustrate the cause [of *mahāmudrā*], verse four illustrates the intrinsic essence [of *mahāmudrā*], then two verses illustrate the time that it is attained, then two verses refute the concept [of *mahāmudrā* as it is understood] among others. After that, two verses illustrate the type of scripture in which one who is intent upon attainment of *mahāmudrā* engages. If one wishes to understand the meaning of these verses in detail, one can understand [it] through *The Seven Siddhi Texts* that were composed by the *ācāryas* who attained the *siddhi* that is the ultimate realization of the entire class of *mahāyoga-tantras*.<sup>687</sup>

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<sup>686</sup> Being the sub–topic "Our Own Tradition's Definition of Mahāmudrā" (*rang lugs kyi phyag chen ngos bzung ba*)

<sup>687</sup> Go rams pa bsod nams seng ge, *Sdom gsum rnam bshad*, 209.5–210.1.

In line with this reference to *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Gorampa's expansion of Dönyö Drup pa's commentary to verse 3.179 of *Distinguishing the Three Vows* follows thirteen folios later in his section on how the Sakya *mahāmudrā* "is in accord with other *tantras* and *sāstras*" (*rgyud dang bstan bcos gzhan dang mthun pa*). *Jñānasiddhi* 1.32 makes another appearance in Gorampa's work, and he provides a more expansive commentary incorporating quoted material from the *Samputatantra* (*Sam bu ti* [sic.]), the *Guhyakośasūtra* (*Gsang ba mdzod gyi mdo*), and an unnamed work by Āryadeva. He then references an additional work from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, citing chapter three of Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* on the *Bodhicittābhiṣeka* (*byang chub sems kyi dbang bskur*).<sup>688</sup> The verse reads:

And as it says in *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*,

According to the path of tantra,  
When the wise one was consecrated  
In the *maṇḍala* of the abode of the *sugatas*,  
He was in the presence of all of the buddhas.

[He perceived] the lord of infinite world systems, [and]  
Attained the self-blessing consecration, [*PUVS* 3.2–3.3b]<sup>689</sup>

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/gnyis pa ni nged kyi zhes sogs bcu/ tshig rkang dang po gsum gyis rgyu bstan/ bzhi pas rang gi ngo bo bstan/ de nas gnyis kyis 'grub pa'i dus bstan no/ /de nas gnyis kyis gzhan du rtog pa dgag/\_de nas gnyis kyis phyag chen bsgrub par 'dod pas gang la 'jug pa'i lung bstan no/ /'di dag gi don zhib tu rtogs par 'dod na rnal 'byor chen po'i rgyud sde rnam kyis dgongs pa mthar thug bgrub pa thob pa'i slob dpon rnam kyis mdzad pa'i grub pa sde bdun las shes bar bya'o/

For the root text see Sa skya Paṇḍita, *Sdom gsum rab dbye*, 52.3. For a translation of the root text see Sakya Paṇḍita, *A Clear Differentiation*, 117.

<sup>688</sup> Anaṅgavajra, *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, Skt. 75–77; Tib. 122–28.

<sup>689</sup> Go rams pa, *Sdom gsum rnam bshad*, 223.2–223.4.

/zhes pa dang / thabs dang shes rab rnam par gtan la dbab pa grub pa las/  
/bder gshegs gnas kyi dkyil 'khor du/  
/rgyud kyi lam gyi rjes 'brang nas/  
/mkhas pa gang tshe dbang bskur na/  
/sangs rgyas thams cad mngon sum yin/

/dpag med 'jig rten khams dbang phyug  
/bdag byin brlabs pa'i rim thob pa/ /zhes gsungs so/\_/

Anaṅgavajra's verse, a reference to the narrative of the Buddha's enlightenment in the *Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgraha*, is employed here by Gorampa as evidence that the Buddha himself only realized *mahāmudrā* through first reaching a certain level of realization prior to being consecrated. Gorampa's final word on the matter introduces a bit of ad hominem, a feature that becomes increasingly pronounced among the texts that follow:

With respect to this some [say,]

"Since attaining the supreme siddhi of *mahāmudrā* accords with the vehicle of the perfections, since abandoning the obscurations abandoned [on the path of] seeing accords with the secret mantra [vehicle], it unties the knot of the central channel." Such talk is senseless babbling. The critical point of the texts referenced above [is expressed in Sakya Paṇḍita's verse that reads] "Here it is refuted that someone not endowed with the consecrations has *mahāmudrā*." This verse explains that there is no *mahāmudrā* in the vehicle of the perfections because such a *siddhi* contradicts the exegetical tradition.<sup>690</sup>

Gorampa's final statement on *The Seven Siddhi Texts* as an authoritative corpus argues that they provide irrefutable evidence that *mahāmudrā* cannot be properly taught or fully realized

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Go rams pa's partial quote of *PUVS* 3.3 renders the fragmented verse somewhat unintelligible because the verse order has shifted in the Tibetan translation.

The Sanskrit reads:

mantramārgānusāreṇa abhiṣikto yadā buddhaḥ |  
 pratyakṣaṃ sarvabuddhānāṃ maṇḍale sugatālaye || 3.2 ||  
 anantalokadhātviśo grāhastathāpi dhīmatā |  
 svādhiṣṭhānakramaṃ prāpya samayaḥṣatibhīruṇā || 3.3 ||

According to the custom of the mantra path,  
 When the Buddha was consecrated, |  
 [He was] in the presence of all of the buddhas  
 In the *maṇḍala*, the abode of the sugatas. || 3.2 ||

And the wise one also perceived  
 The lord of infinite world systems. |

My English rendering of the Tibetan translation supplies the verbal construction (and resolves it into active voice) that Go rams pa's quote omits due to the ordering of the verses in the Tibetan translation. See Anaṅgavajra, *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, Skt. 75–77; Tib. 122–128.

<sup>690</sup> Go rams pa, *Sdom gsum rnam bshad*, 223.4–5.

Tibetan: /kha cig 'dir/ phyag chen mchog gi dngos grub thob pa ni/ phar phyin theg pa bltar na/ mthong spang gi sgrib pa spangs ba dang / gsang sngags pa ltar na rtsa dbu ma'i mdud pa grol ba la zer zhes smra ba ni bab chol te/ gong du drangs pa'i lung rnam dang / 'dir dbang bskur dag dang ma 'brel ba/ /de la phyag rgya chen po bkag /zhes phar phyin theg pa la phyag rgya chen po med par bshad pa dang dngos grub 'gal ba'i phyir ro/

without the disciple's proper progression through the tantric yogas and the series of consecrations. The Kagyü side of this argument, however, employs the very same references from *The Seven Siddhi Texts* to argue precisely the opposite position.

The references to *The Seven Siddhi Texts* from Sakya Paṇḍita, Dönyö Drup pa, and Gorampa exhibit a trend toward greater exegetical engagement with the actual texts in this corpus, but their engagement with the corpus still remains relatively vague. For these authors, it would seem that the fact that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* support the Sakya position on *mahāmudrā* is largely self-evident. A few verses are cited, but the reader is for the most part instructed to read these works on their own, and as the example of Dönyö Drup pa and Gorampa's treatment of *HT* 2.8.1 indicates, it is quite possible that their readers did not in fact take Sakya Paṇḍita's advice by exploring *The Seven Siddhi Texts* on their own. Nor, apparently, were they expected to.

In contrast to the relatively vague indication of Sakya engagement with the corpus, Pema Karpo's *Victor's Treasury* begins with detailed descriptions of each work contained in *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. Writing nearly a generation after the publication of the Seventh Karmapa and Künga Rinchen's respective *mahāmudrā* practical canons, Pema Karpo's *Victor's Treasury* devotes thirty folios in the first section of the text to "A Detailed Analysis of the *Mahāmudrā* Texts" (*gzhung phyag rgya chen po'i rab dbye*) that focuses on the three core Indian *mahāmudrā* corpora. He organizes his analysis according to the Drukpa Kagyü patriarch Chökyi Tsangpa Gyarépa's three categories of supplemental works (*zur 'debs*) for the Kagyü *mahāmudrā* tradition. Chökyi Tsangpa's first category, "The corpus of textual exegeses," (*bshad pa tshig gi skor*) includes *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, *The Sixfold Corpus on the Essence*, and *The Corpus of Teachings on Mental Non-Engagement*. After drawing

attention to the continuity of textual exegesis on *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in his own lineage, Pema Karpo goes on to discuss all seven works in the corpus and provides short chapter-by-chapter explanations of *Guhyasiddhi*, *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, and *Jñānasiddhi* that highlight specific passages from these texts that refute the Sakya position on *mahāmudrā*.

While it clearly shows a greater degree of engagement with the corpus, Pema Karpo's discussion of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* also manipulates its source material in certain cases by reading a number of topics into the corpus that are not present in the original works. His discussion of *Guhyasiddhi*, for example, argues that the text contains instructions on 'the subitist path' (*cig car ba'i lam bstan*) as well as 'the path of passing over' (*thod brgal ba'i lam*) in chapters one and three, respectively. In his discussion of 'the path of passing over,' Padma dkar po provides what appears to be a doctored quote from *Guhyasiddhi* chapter three:

Being expressed to all beginner sentient beings,  
It is what generates faith. [*GS* 3.4cd]

It is the great miracle due to the contact of  
Union of the vajra with the space element.  
The special instruction is what brings it about,  
And that is what generates supreme joy. [*GS* 3.5]<sup>691</sup>

Here Pema Karpo argues that Padmavajra's statement on the supreme state that sentient beings fail to recognize is present in their own bodies is the equivalent of a *thögal* (*thod brgal*) instruction. In order to make this point, it is possible that Pema Karpo himself inserted

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<sup>691</sup> 'Brug chen padma dkar po, "Rgyal ba'i gan mdzod," 9.6–10.1.

Tibetan:

/dang po'i las can sems can rnam/  
/mtshon pas yid ches byed pa po/

/mkha' dbyings rdo rje kun sbyor ba'i/  
/reg pas ngo mtshar chen po nyid/  
/gdams pa gang gis 'byung gyur te/  
/mchog tu dga ba byed pa pa'o/

the term 'special instruction' (*gdams pa*) into the text. The verse as it is preserved in the canonical editions of the text, the Pelpung xylograph of the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works*, and in *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings* all agree with the extant Sanskrit versions of the text that it is the bliss (*bde ba, sukha*) produced from this union that brings about supreme joy (*mchog tu dga' ba, paramānanda*). None of these witnesses mention any instructions (*gdams pa*). Without the variant in Pema Karpo's quote of *Guhyasiddhi* 3.5, this group of verses actually agrees with the common description of the generation of moments of joy during the performance of sexual yoga, which Padmavajra argues introduces beginners to the supreme state for the first time. In other words, without the substitution of 'instructions' (*gdams pa*) for 'bliss' (*bde ba*) in the verse, it is in direct agreement with the Sakya argument that *mahāmudrā* is properly indicated to an initiated disciple in the context of tantric consecration through the experience of the sequence of joys.<sup>692</sup> As with Dönyö Drup pa and Gorampa's misquoting of the *Hevajratāntra*, it is entirely possible that Pema Karpo is providing a faithful reproduction of the text of the *Guhyasiddhi* that he had at his disposal. But, as with the Sakya example, this is not entirely likely to be the case given how conveniently the variant from Pema Karpo's hypothetical version of the *Guhyasiddhi* plays directly in favor of the Kagyü emphasis on the guru's instructions as the critical factor in a disciple's realization of *mahāmudrā*.

In his discussion of *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, Pema Karpo argues that the third consecration is omitted from the consecration rite outlined in chapter three. This analysis is a direct response to Sakya authors like Gorampa who insisted that this same chapter details a

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<sup>692</sup> Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi* only references three types of 'joy,' *ānanda*, *paramānanda*, and *viramānanda*, which would make the text a perfect example of the limitations of a rigid interpretation of Mahāmudrā as necessarily dependent upon the realization recognized and cultivated during the experience of the four moments of joy. Padma dkar po does not, however, make this argument at this point in the text.



complete rite for the three higher tantric consecrations. Pema Karpo interprets the chapter as follows:

The third chapter [discusses] the consecration ritual. The consecration [up through the end of the eulogy to the verse that reads] "After that, the glorious *ācārya*," completes the *maṇḍala* gathering, and that is the secret consecration. At the end of that [secret consecration] it mentions giving the command:

Having received the bodhicitta consecration,  
To the disciple, completely free from sin,<sup>693</sup>  
Who is the supreme heir of the Buddha [PUVS 3.26bcd]

One should thus give the command: [PUVS 3.27a]

And then the word consecration is given to the faithful one:

One should give the consecration of the verbal jewel  
To one with supreme faith in the profound and vast [instruction]. [PUVS 3.38cd]

There is no third consecration in this text. So what are these *ācāryas* who are convinced that this kind of consecration ritual is unacceptable talking about?<sup>694</sup>

Contrary to Pema Karpo's conclusion here, *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* 3.22 may in fact describe something like a third consecration. But these verses and a number of others that provide greater context for the rite are omitted from Pema Karpo's explanation of the chapter. In his defense, however, the terminology employed in the chapter, as well as in the consecration chapters in *Guhyasiddhi* and *Jñānasiddhi*, does not match the more common terminology used for the sequence of consecrations. To make matters more complicated, Anaṅgavajra's instructions seem to combine forms of the consecration rite that are typically

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<sup>693</sup> My English translation preserves the Tibetan syntax in order to make it easier to provide the verse correspondences for the Tibetan translation of *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*.

<sup>694</sup> Padma dkar po, *Gan mdzod*, 13.2–5.

gsum pas dbang bskur/ dbang yang / de nas dpal ldan slob dpon sogs kyis tshogs dkyil bsgrubs te gsang dbang bskur/ de'i mthar rjes gnang sbyin pa gsungs te/ byang chub sems kyis dbang bskur bas/ slob ma sdig dang bral bar 'gyur/ /sangs rgyas sras mchog de la ni/ /rjes su gnang ba de nas sbyin/ /zhes dang / phyis mos na tshig dbang bskur te/ zab cing rgya che ba la lhag par mos na ni/ /tshig gis rin chen dbang bskur sbyin par bya zhes gsungs kyis/ 'di la gsum pa'i dbang ma byung / dbang gi cho ga'i 'gros 'di lta bu mi 'thad na slob dpon tshad mar gyur pa des ji la gsung /

associated with both the *guhya* and *prajñājñāna-abhiṣekas*. After a sequence in which the disciple approaches the *vajrācārya* and presents him with a consort, worships them both, and enters the *maṇḍala* (*PUVS* 3.5–3.19), the following verses contain a sequence of instructions in which the *Vajrācārya* confers the *samaya* upon the disciple, who has been united with the consort:

Then the Ācārya, the fortunate one,  
Unites with the consort  
And deposits the bodhicitta [*PUVS* 3.20bcd]

In the lotus, the abode of the victors.  
With verses of auspicious blessing and  
Chowries, parasols, and victory banners,  
The disciple who is united with the consort [*PUVS* 3.21]

Should be consecrated as the lord of the world.<sup>695</sup>  
After the master, the supreme lord,  
Gives the jewel of consecration  
He then bestows the blissful *samaya* [*PUVS* 3.22]

That clarifies inherent nature and is truly pure.  
The great jewel is mixed with camphor,  
Red sandalwood,  
And the *vajra*-water, [*PUVS* 3.23]

That arise from the pure five.<sup>696</sup>  
"This, my son, is your *samaya*  
Which is taught in accord with all of the buddhas  
You, fortunate one, must always maintain it. Listen, [*PUVS* 3.24]

Now you shall hear the vow. [*PUVS* 3.25a]<sup>697</sup>

<sup>695</sup> The Tibetan text diverges from the Sanskrit, which leaves the term *jagatprabhu* in the nominative singular to match the term *ācārya*. See Anaṅgavajra, *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, Skt. 75.

<sup>696</sup> The Tibetan rendering of this verse might be interpreted as the various substances mentioned here arising from the 'pure five' aggregates. I have opted to leave out any such interpretation because this verse actually diverges from the Sanskrit, which reads *pañcamam vāksamudbhavam* or 'the fifth, which is arisen from speech.' See Anaṅgavajra, *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, 76.

<sup>697</sup> Anaṅgavajra, *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, Tib. 125.

Tibetan:

/de nas slob dpon skal bzang gis/  
/phyag rgya dang ni sbyar byas te/  
/rgyal ba'i gnas gyur byang chub sems/\_20\_/

It is clear in these passages that the disciple is united with the consort, and that he is consecrated while they are in union. The disciple is also, seemingly for the first time during the rite, given a mixture of substances to ingest that signifies his taking of the *samaya*. Both elements typically associated with the *guhya* and *prajñājñāna-abhiṣeka* are thus present here, and it is unclear if the rite describes the former, the latter, or a combination of both. What is clear is that Pema Karpo's statement that the consecration chapter in *Prajñopāyavinīscayasiddhi* does not contain a third consecration glosses over the complexity of the passage, and it does so to his rhetorical advantage.

The second issue in the treatment of *The Seven Siddhi Texts* in *The Victor's Treasury* revolves around Pema Karpo's statement that Anaṅgavajra's chapter on consecration contains a word consecration (*tshig dbang bskur*). In this context, the fourth consecration represents the guru's simultaneous conferral of a final *mahāmudrā* instruction and the disciple's realization of *mahāmudrā*. The term 'word' (*tshig*), however, does not appear as a modifier for the consecration itself, but as an adverbial form describing the verbal expression of the

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/pad+ma'i snod du bzhag nas ni/  
 /bkra shis glu yi tshigs bcad dang /  
 /gdugs dang rnga yab rgyal mtshan bcas/  
 /phyag rgyar ldan pa'i slob ma ni/\_21\_/

/'gro ba'i gtso bor dbang bskur bya/  
 /slob dpon dbang phyug mchog gis ni/  
 /dbang bskur rin chen byin nas su/  
 /rang bzhin gsal zhing mngon sbyangs pa/\_22\_/

/dam tshig nyams dga' sbyin par bya/  
 /rin chen chen po ga bur bcas/  
 /tsan+dana dmar po sbyar ba dang /  
 /rdo rje yi ni chu dang bcas/\_23\_/

/Inga po dag las yang dag byung /  
 /'di ni bu khyod dam tshig ste/  
 /sangs rgyas kun gyi mthun par gsungs/  
 /bzang pos rtag tu bskyang bar byos/\_24\_/

/da ni sdom pa mnyan par gyis/

consecration according to the rituals described previously in the chapter. The Sanskrit verse reads:

deyo 'bhiṣeko vidhibhir yathoktaiḥ  
śiṣyādhimuktaṃ manasāvagamya |  
udāragambhīranayādhimukto  
vācaiva dadyād abhiṣekaratnam || 3.38 ||

The consecration should be given in the various ways mentioned above.  
Having become convinced mentally of the disciple's devotion, |  
One who is confident in the vast and profound system  
Should grant the jewel of consecration verbally. || 3.38 ||

The Tibetan reads:

/cho ga 'di dag nyid kyis dbang bskur byin nas ni/  
/slob ma lhag par mos pa'i yid kyis brtag byas la/  
/zab cing rgya che ba la lhag par mos nas ni/  
/tshig gi<sup>698</sup> rin chen dbang bskur sbyin par bya/\_38\_/

Having given the consecration according to these instructions,  
Having determined mentally that the disciple is very devout,  
One generates great devotion in the vast and profound [teaching],  
And then grants the jewel of consecration verbally.<sup>699</sup>

One can imagine Pema Karpo's temptation to read this as a clear example of the guru imparting a word consecration, and by association a final *mahāmudrā* instruction that is bestowed upon the disciple in the absence of a third consecration. The problem is, just as it is somewhat unclear whether or not there is a third consecration in the chapter, it is also not entirely clear that the verse in question constitutes a set of instructions for bestowing a true word consecration.

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<sup>698</sup> Padma dkar po's quote reads *tshig gi*, but the Beijing and Narthang *Tenjyur* both read *tshig gi*, as does the Sarnath edition of the Tibetan text. The witnesses from Sde dge, Co ne, and Padma dkar po, which all read an instrumental particle here, match the *vācaiva* in the extant Sanskrit version of the text.

<sup>699</sup> Anaṅgavajra, *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi*, Skt 77; Tib 127. Here I follow the variants noted in the Sarnath Sanskrit edition that read *udāragambhīranayādhimukto* instead of *udāragambhīranayādhimukta-*.

The two issues are in fact related. Both revolve around the absence of a clear and standardized vocabulary for the sequence of consecrations in the text. This ambiguity highlights another point at which an important aspect of the commentator's own tradition has been read into his sources with a degree of certainty that is not borne out in the source material itself. It should also be noted that in his subsequent comments to *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*, Pema Karpo admits to reading his own tradition into the text when he presents Anaṅgavajra's chapter on "Meditation on Ultimate Reality" (*de kho na nyis bsgom pa, tattvabhāvanā*) as a teaching on the Kagyü *mahāmudrā* system of four yogas (*rnal 'byor bzhi*). In this case he openly states that "chapter four does not mention the names of the four yogas, but it teaches [them] according to [their] meaning."<sup>700</sup> Importantly, this interpretation also rules out the possibility that the material in chapter four of *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* might contain the 'word consecration' that Pema Karpo identifies at the end of chapter three. This leaves two possibilities for the potential inclusion of a 'word consecration' in chapter three of *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*—either this it appears in liturgy itself in the form of the command (*rjes gñang, anujñā*) that is imparted following the consecration rite, or it is not included in the liturgy for chapter three but merely implied in verse 3.38d.<sup>701</sup> The former position does not make sense because the guru's 'command' in this text is not a final instruction on the nature of reality or *mahāmudrā*. If the liturgy for this 'word consecration' is merely implied in verse 3.38d, then Pema Karpo's entire argument rests on a single phrase (*tshigs gis, vācaiva*) employed in a single verse for which there is no

<sup>700</sup> Padma dkar po, *Rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*, 13.5–13.6.

/le'u bzhi bas rnal 'byor bzhi'i ming ma bshad kyang don ji lta ba bshed de/

<sup>701</sup> As professor Professor Vesna A. Wallace has noted in her comments on this issue, the Indian exegetes Nāropa and Puṇḍarīka argue that the fourth consecration is often implied when it is not explicitly mentioned. Following Isaacson's observations on the development of the consecration rite, I read this as an Indic strategy for dealing with the fact that *caturthābhīṣeka* was a later historical development. This would set an Indic precedent for the kind of implied fourth consecration that Pema Karpo might also allude to in his *Victor's Treasury*.

clear referent in the chapter itself. The latter option would seem to be relatively insubstantial grounds for such an important claim.

Pema Karpo, likely prompted by Dönyö Drup pa and Gorampa, also cites *Jñānasiddhi* 1.32 in his discussion of the role of consecration, treating *Jñānasiddhi* 1.32–33 and 1.37 as a brief set of summary verses corresponding to the lengthy consecration liturgy that Indrabhūti provides later in chapter seventeen. Here Pema Karpo refers to the consecration chapter in *Jñānasiddhi* as a blessing ritual (*byin rlabs kyi cho ga*) and elaborates upon these verses with material from *Jñānasiddhi's* consecration chapter to argue that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* support the view that the guru's blessing can perform the same function as a complete set of consecrations. The ritual elements of the chapter include the performance of a feast offering, the disciple's offering a consort gift (*dakṣinā*) to the guru, the return of the consort along with the guru's blessing, and finally the guru's command. Indrabhūti goes to some lengths to reinforce his argument toward the end of *Jñānasiddhi* chapter seventeen that the disciple has now received the highest consecration, but the chapter only describes a rite approximating what is more commonly referred to as the *guhyābhiṣeka*.<sup>702</sup> For Pema Karpo, Indrabhūti's statement that this rite confers the highest possible consecration is taken as further proof that the guru's blessing can render an incomplete set of consecrations soteriologically effective. Pointing this out to his reader, Pema Karpo throws in a bit of his own polemic, stating "[b]ecause this text is indeed accepted as authoritative, only senile or immature people (*rgan 'chal kho nar zad*) say that the blessing is unable to perform the function of consecration."<sup>703</sup>

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<sup>702</sup> As mentioned above, this terminology does not appear in the text itself.

<sup>703</sup> Padma dkar po, *Rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*, 18.1–3.

Pema Karpo thus employs two works from *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyavinīścayasiddhi* and Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi*, as examples of what the Sakya might consider 'incomplete' consecration rituals that are preserved in what are widely recognized as authoritative Indian sources on *mahāmudrā*. For Pema Karpo, the fact that the guru's blessing is still able to confer a realization of *mahāmudrā* upon the disciple in these works stands as evidence that the form and sequence of the consecration rite is secondary to guru's blessing. This effectively opens up an opportunity for rejecting the Sakya view that *mahāmudrā* can only be properly conferred upon and realized by a disciple who has received the complete sequence of four consecrations.

The Sakya author Mangtö Ludrup Gyatso's *Sunbeams of Mahāmudrā: An Eloquent Exposition of the Chapter Refuting the Objections [of Others]* (*Phyag chen rtsod spong skabs kyi legs bshad nyi ma'i 'od zer*)<sup>704</sup> responds directly to Pema Karpo's work in *The Victor's Treasury*. Ludrup Gyatso begins his work with a short description of the type of criticism that the Sakya view of *mahāmudrā* had suffered by the late sixteenth century and then states the explicit purpose of his treatise as a response to Pema Karpo in the following passage:

The sweet sounding name of "The Glorious Drukpa Tülku" has become the ear ornament of wise ones in all directions, and they are nourished by the nectar of supreme joy in their hearts. Based on whether or not his bodily image appears or does not appear somewhere, the wise one has the power and ability to cause the precious teachings to wax or wane. The great saint who has attained *siddhi*, who possesses the fortunate name Pema Karpo, has composed a treatise called *The Victor's Treasury: A Cohesive Exegesis of Mahāmudrā Instructions* in which, in order to test the deluded scholars among the followers of the glorious Sakya of this time, he criticizes [them] with degrading words and levels numerous responses and refutations. This is appropriate for a scholar, and is the foundation of analytical logic. I have

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/ zhes byin rlabs kyi cho ga kho nas dbang thob pa de rgyud thams cad kyi rdo rje slob dpon du 'os pa sogs gsungs pa'ang mthong /\_/gzhung 'di tshad mar yang khas len bzhin du byin gyis rlabs pas dbang bskur gyi go mi chod zer ba de rgan 'chal kho nar zad do/

<sup>704</sup> The title of this text may also be taken as a veiled attack on Dakpo Tashi Namgyel's famous treatise *Moonbeams of Mahāmudrā*

obtained permission to respond in this work, so it is appropriate that it should be given to discerning scholars.<sup>705</sup>

He then comments on the role of consecration in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* and challenges Pema Karpo's reading of both *Jñānasiddhi* 1.32 and chapter seventeen. He quotes Pema Karpo's ad hominem against the 'childish or senile' who argue that the guru's blessing alone cannot perform the function of a full sequence of consecrations, and refers to this statement as "just the senseless babbling of someone poorly trained who was overwhelmed upon seeing the true profundity of the tantra with the discriminating eyes of a mentally challenged fool (*byis pa blo gros ma smin pa*)."<sup>706</sup> Ludrup Gyatso argues that the blessing ritual in chapter seventeen is explicitly designated for a disciple who has already been brought to maturity through consecration and has already generated gnosis on their own in contrast to Pema Karpo, who argued that the chapter is itself a rite for the performance of a ripening consecration (*smin pa'i dbang*).<sup>707</sup> For Ludrup Gyatso, the presence of this ripening consecration at the beginning of *Jñānasiddhi* chapter seventeen, which he locates in *JS* 17.4–5, indicates that the chapter cannot be interpreted as condoning the conferral of a blessing upon a beginner who has not received any kind of prior consecration.

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<sup>705</sup> Mang thos Klu sgrub rgyal mtshan, "Sdom gsum rab dbye'i dka' 'grel sbas don gnad kyi snying po gsal byed las/ phyag chen rtsod spong skabs kyi legs bshad nyi ma'i 'od zer," in *Mang thos Klu sgrub rgya mtsho'i gsung skor* 5 (Kathmandu: Sakyā rgyal yongs gsung rab slob gnyer khang, 1999), 116.3–116.6. dpal ldan 'brug pa sprul sku zhes snyan pa'i grags pa phyogs kyi mkhas pa rnam kyi rna ba'i rgyan du gyur la/ snying la rab dga'i bdud rtsis gsos 'debs pa/ gang du sku'i snang brnyan shar ba dang ma shar ba las/ bstan pa rin po che la 'phel 'grib kyi rngo thogs par nus pa'i mkhas shing grub pa brnyes pa'i skyes chen pad ma dkar po zhes mtshan gyi dge legs dang ldan pa des/ phyag chen man ngag gi bshad sbyar rgyal ba'i gan mdzod ces pa'i bstan bcos brtsams pa der/ dus deng gi dpal ldan sa skya pa'i rjes 'brang dag la mkhas rmongs kyi nyams sad pa'i phyir/ nyams ldan gyi gsung gis sun 'byin dang / 'gog byed lan gyi rnam grangs mang du ghang ba ni/ mkhas pa la 'os shing / dpyad par rigs pa'i gzhir gyur la/ 'di la lan du bka'i ghang ba yang thob pas/ mkhas pa dpyod ldan dag gsan par bya ba'i 'os so/

<sup>706</sup> Mang thos, *Nyi ma'i 'od zer*, 117.3.

de skad smra ba de ni/ byis pa blo gros ma smin pa'i rnam dpyod kyi mig gi rgyud don zab mor lta ma bzod pa'i bslab nyes kyi bab col kho nar zad do/

<sup>707</sup> Padma dkar po, *Rgyal ba'i gan mdzod*, 16.3–16.4.

bcu bdun par thog mar smin pa'i dbang dgos pa bskur ba'i tshul 'di ni mdor bstan du/

The way that the necessary ripening consecration is conferred is taught at the beginning of chapter seventeen.



Pema Karpo's student Sangyé Dorjé takes Ludrup Gyatso's argument to task in his work *An Affirmation of the Supreme Conqueror of the Threefold World: A Discourse that Refutes Objections to the Treatise 'The Victor's Treasury: An Explanation of the Mahāmudrā Instructions'* (*Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag gi bshad sbyar rgyal ba'i gan mdzod ces bya ba'i bstan bcos la rtsod pa spong ba'i gtam srid gsum rnam par rgyal ba'i dge mtshan*), where he attempts to prove that the chapter is a liturgy for a 'blessing consecration' (*byin rlabs dbang bskur*), not, as Ludrup Gyatso argues, a liturgy for a ripening consecration (*min byed dbang*). The confusion around this issue may derive from a problem in the Tibetan translation of *Jñānasiddhi* 17.4–5. The Sanskrit for *Jñānasiddhi* verse 17.4cd, "*svasamvedyasvabhāvam ca ādattam api niścayam*," has been translated into the Tibetan as "*rang rig pa yi ngo bo la/ bdag ni shin tu nges pa skyes/*." Here the Tibetan translation adds a first person subject to the verse (*bdag ni*) that has no equivalent in the Sanskrit while the past participle *ādattam* falls out of the Tibetan entirely.<sup>708</sup> In order to resolve the issue, Sangyé Dorjé draws upon the following set of instructions (*man ngag*) from an unidentified work of Phadampa Sangyé (Pha dam pa sangs rgyas, 11<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> century) that parses these verses from *Jñānasiddhi* and indicates that the disciple remains the recipient of this 'nature of self-reflexive awareness:'

The Indian [master] Phadampa's instructions [on these verses] say, "The verse that reads 'Oh compassionate one, due to [your] blessing,' [*JS* 17.4a] means that the one who requests the consecration only needs to engage the *vajrācārya*. Thus the disciple says, 'Compassionate one, due to [your] blessing' [referring to] the *ācārya*. Among Tibetans it is said that you 'attain the authentic supreme gnosis,' [*JS* 17.4b] and then 'One gains certainty in the true nature' with respect to that realization of 'the essence of self-reflexive awareness gnosis,' and [thus the verse in *Jñānasiddhi*] says,

<sup>708</sup> It is possible that the Tibetan *bdag ni* reflects a version of the Sanskrit that read *ātmānam api niścayam* for *JS* 17.4d. This variant is not reported in the Sarnath edition. The four Sanskrit manuscripts for *Jñānasiddhi* that I currently have at my disposal (NGMCP A 134/2 A 137/4 E 1474/4; and IASWR MBB 7/4) are all consistent with the reading in the Sarnath edition.

One attains the perfect supreme gnosis and  
Produces supreme certainty regarding ultimate reality  
With respect to the essence of self-reflexive awareness. [JS 17.4.bcd]

Since you [i.e. the *vajrācārya*] possess 'This non-dual gnosis,' [the text says that it] 'does not exist anywhere else in the world' [JS 17.5ab] [meaning among] us [i.e. the supplicant(s)]. At that point, one 'supplicates the supreme guru in order to drink the dharma-nectar.' [JS 17.5cd] After [the guru] makes the portion of dharma-nectar, [the disciple says] 'Please grant me the blessing consecration.'"

Thus the verse [from *Jñānasiddhi* that reads],

This non-dual gnosis is found  
Nowhere else in the world.  
In order to drink the dharma nectar,  
[The disciple] supplicates the supreme guru." [JS 17.5]

is in agreement with [Phadampa Sangyé's] close reading.<sup>709</sup> If one ignores this point and applies [the verse] to the disciple, then [the disciple] must be supplicating [the *vajra ācārya*] for the dharma nectar after having already realized perfect, supreme gnosis. In that case, what is it that he seeks?

He then responds to Ludrup Gyatso's reading of the verse with the following critique:

In this verse [i.e. JS 17.4cd], because it says "self-reflexive awareness" and "I," (*bdag ni*) he made a fundamental error and then misunderstood [the verse], yet the nomad teaches that this mere fragment of a fool's reasoning is the truth. He must acknowledge the mistake.<sup>710</sup>

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<sup>709</sup> The literal meaning of the phrase '*bru gnyer tshul* in this context might read something like 'paying attention to the details.' This translation remains tentative, and further research is needed on similar uses of the phrase to justify this reading. I am grateful for Elizabeth Callahan's suggestion of the translation 'paying attention to the details' for '*bru gnyer tshul*, and for Ācārya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen's confirmation of the meaning of the phrase in this context in their personal email correspondences.

<sup>710</sup> Sangs rgyas rdo rje, "Phyag rgya chen po'i man ngag gi bshad sbyar rgyal ba'i gan mdzod ces bya ba'i bstan bcos la rtsod pa spong ba'i gnam srid gsum rnam par gyal ba'i dge mtshan," in '*Brug lugs chos mdzod chen mo* 42 (Kathmandu: Drukpa Kagyu Heritage Project, 200?), 121.2–3.

pha dam pa rgya gar ba'i man ngag bzhin/ thugs rje'i bdag nyid drin can gyis/ zhes sogs ni dbang bskur ba po rdo rje'i slob dpon kho na la sbyor dgos te slob mas/ thugs rje'i bdag nyid drin can zhes slob dpon la bod nas/ khyod kyis yang dag pa'i ye shes mchog thob nas so sor rang rig pa'i ye shes kyis ngo bo rtogs pa de la bdag nyid nges pa'i shes pa skyes so zhes 'chad pa la/ yang dag ye shes mchog thob ste/ /rang gi rig pa'i ngo bo la/ /bdag ni shin tu nges pa skyes/ zhes pa 'di byung / khyod kyis de ltar rtogs pa'i gnyis med kyis ye shes 'di nyid ni bdag cag 'gro ba gzhan la yod pa ma yin gyi/ da ni chos kyis bdud rtsi 'thung ba'i phyir mchog gi bla ma khyod la gsol ba 'debs so/ /chos kyis bdud rtsi bgo bshar mdzad pa'i slad du byin rlabs dbang bskur stsal du gsol zhes 'chad pa la/ gnyis med ye shes 'di nyid ni/ /'gro ba gzhan la yod pa ma yin/ chos kyis bdud rtsi 'di 'thung phyir/ bla ma mchog la gsol ba 'debs/ zhes 'bru gnyer tshul don dang mthun pa 'di ka'o/ /de ltar ma yin par slob ma la sbyar na/ yang dag ye shes mchog thob zin nas slar

In other words Sangyé Dorjé believes that Ludrup Gyatso is misled here by the passage's reference to 'self-reflexive awareness' and the inclusion of a first person pronoun in the Tibetan version of the text. This error allowed Ludrup Gyatso to read this "I" (*bdag ni*) as a subject who "has generated confidence with respect to the nature of self-reflexive awareness," and to read the verse as a confirmation of Sakya Paṇḍita's view of *mahāmudrā* in his *Distinguishing the Three Vows* as "gnosis arisen from initiation and the self-arisen gnosis that ensues from the meditations of the two processes."<sup>711</sup> This, in turn, allows Ludrup Gyatso to argue that the supplicant in *Jñānasiddhi* verses 17.4–5 has already received a 'blessing consecration,' and that the opening supplication constitutes a request for a 'ripening consecration.' Without this variant in the Tibetan translation of the text, however, it is clear that the disciple is requesting 'perfect supreme gnosis' and 'certainty as to the nature of self-reflexive awareness' that are both attained 'from the blessing' (*prasādāt, drin can gis*). This reading supports Pema Karpo and Sangyé Dorjé's argument that *Jñānasiddhi* chapter seventeen preserves evidence from an authentic Indian source on *mahāmudrā* that the *vajrācārya*'s blessing, in the form of a 'blessing consecration,' can in fact confer a complete realization of *mahāmudrā*.

## V. Conclusion: Imagining a Homogenous "Indian Tradition"

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chos kyi bdud rtsi'i phyir du gsol ba btab nas/ ci zhig don du gnyer/ 'dir rang gi rig pa zhes dang / bdag ni zhes pas 'khrul gzhi byas nas go log rgyab par 'dug kyang rdzob rtags dum tsam 'brog pas los ston/ thugs bden mchis so/

<sup>711</sup> Sa skya Paṇḍita, *Sdom gsum rab dbye*, 52.3; for a translation of the root text see Sakya Paṇḍita, *A Clear Differentiation*, 117. As mentioned above, Don yod grub pa argued that Sakya Paṇḍita's position is supported in The Seven Siddhi Texts without pointing to any particular text or passage from the corpus to support his argument. Mang thos' work thus reflects a greater engagement with the texts contained in The Seven Siddhi Texts, and it is likely that this is a direct function of Padma dkar po's more detailed engagement with the actual content of these works.

This presentation of the role that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* played in the works of several prominent Sakya and Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemicists has brought to light a number of points that are of broader significance for Tibetologists. As chapter ten of this dissertation has shown, *The Seven Siddhi Texts* exhibited some degree of fluidity in the hands of various Tibetan authors, with some authors swapping out members of the standardized list in the *Tenjur* for other '*siddhi*' texts to bring the corpus closer in line with a particular sectarian identity and others expanding the list of seven to include a number of additional '*siddhi*' works. The employment of The Seven Siddhi Texts in Sakya-Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemical literature from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries has revealed a similarly flexible approach to interpreting this *mahāmudrā* practical canon. Authors on both sides primarily drew upon the corpus to clarify whether or not a necessary relationship obtains between imparting and realizing the nature of *mahāmudrā* and the combination of receiving the higher tantric consecrations while progressing through the two-stage yoga of the '*unsurpassed yogatantra*.' In the process, these authors twisted or manipulated their sources to better support their arguments. It is also clear that, due to their employment in this polemical literature, these authors' engagement with *The Seven Siddhi Texts* became increasingly more sophisticated over time. This pattern, I argue, is also a result of the kind of increased awareness and accessibility that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* enjoyed due to their prominent placement in the first volumes of two Kagyü practical canons published at the end of the fifteenth and beginning of the sixteenth centuries, the *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and *The Great Treasury of the Drikung Kagyü Teachings*.

For Tibetan authors on both sides of this polemical literature as well as modern scholars, the task of interpreting the consecration chapters from *Guhyasiddhi*,

*Prajñopāyavinīscayasiddhi*, and *Jñānasiddhi* is complicated by the fact that the sequence of the consecration rituals and the terminology that is used to describe them varies across all three works. This is the case despite assurance from hagiographic sources that these three works represent a single *mahāmudrā* lineage transmission from Oḍiyāna. In addition, none of these works employ a consecration terminology that matches the more standardized lexicon for the three higher consecrations—the *guhya*-, *prajñajñāna*-, and *caturtha-abhiṣekas*.<sup>712</sup> The lack of a standardized and consistent consecration ritual sequence and lexicon across these three works undoubtedly made the job of Sakya and Kagyü *mahāmudrā* polemicists that much more difficult. The fact that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are widely accepted as an authoritative corpus of Indian *mahāmudrā* works meant that Sakya and Kagyü authors were required to find some way to read aspects of later, more standardized consecration system into the texts. In doing so, both sides grappled with a corpus containing a series of somewhat loose internal correspondences around the critical issue of consecration rites.

When confronted with the relatively unorganized presentation of consecration rites in these works, Tibetan authors on both sides of the *mahāmudrā* polemical literature presented here show a minimal degree of sensitivity toward the lack of standardization one encounters in discourses of the *mahāsiddhas* who authored *The Seven Siddhi Texts*. The reason for this, I suggest, is that both sides of this debate may have preferred to leave the rhetoric of an imaginary hegemonic "Indian Tradition" intact instead of problematizing the very foundation of their own arguments by pointing out inconsistencies within the corpus and undercutting its entire authority-granting structure as a collection of Indian *mahāmudrā* works. The belief in a monolithic "Indian Tradition" is, after all, precisely the underlying assumption that gives the

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<sup>712</sup> This fact seems to go unnoticed by both sides of the debate, which is surprising given that the absence of this common vocabulary could only strengthen the Kagyü argument against the more rigid conception of a proper consecration ritual among the Sakya.

Seventh Karmapa's practical canon of *Indian Mahāmudrā Works* and the works it contains rhetorical weight. Such rhetoric, however, neglects the fact that the works contained in *The Seven Siddhi Texts* are products of a dynamic and evolving discourse around tantric consecration rites and meditative techniques. For the modern historian of these traditions, the fact that Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* presents a liturgy in which a ritual approximating the *guhyābhiṣeka* functions as the highest consecration might be taken as an indication that this text reflects a stage in the development of esoteric Buddhism that predates the addition of a third and fourth consecration.<sup>713</sup> Instead, the Tibetan authors analyzed here all seem to insist that *The Seven Siddhi Texts* is in direct conversation with the genre of 'highest *yogatantra*' and fail to recognize that the corpus includes works that are conversant with a number of genres of tantric literature, primarily those associated with the *yogatantra* and *mahāyogatantra* class.<sup>714</sup> This oversight is surprising, particularly since the absence of a clear delineation of four stages of consecration across *The Seven Siddhi Texts*, the absence of any correlation between stages in the consecration rite and the four types of joy (or, in the case of Padmavajra's *Guhyasiddhi*, the presence of a list of only three types joy), and the fact that authors such as Indrabhūti refer to the textual sources for their *mahāmudrā* instructions as

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<sup>713</sup> On the historical development of the four-stage consecration system see Jacob Dalton, "The Development of Perfection: The Interiorization of Buddhist Ritual in the Eighth and Ninth Centuries," in *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 32 (2004): 130 and; Isaacson, "Observations on the Development of the Ritual of Initiation," 261–79.

<sup>714</sup> This is particularly true with respect to the three texts that feature prominently in the Sakya-Kagyü debates around the relationship between the mechanics of consecration and realization of Mahāmudrā. None of these three works (*Guhyasiddhi*, *Jñānasiddhi*, and *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi*) are aware of any category of 'unsurpassed *yogatantra*.' *Guhyasiddhi* is aware of the categories of *kriyā* and *caryā* tantra, but does not provide us with any indication of which class it believes its primary text, the *Guhyasamājatantra*, to belong to. Anaṅgavajra's *Prajñopāyaviniścayasiddhi* itself gives little indication of its source text, and Indrabhūti's *Jñānasiddhi* refers to its own textual sources on several occasions as *yogatantra*, foregoing even the addition of the modified term *mahāyoga* despite the fact that it invokes several texts that would later be categorized as part of this genre.

*yogatantras* (not *mahāyogatantra* or 'highest *yogatantra*') could only play to the advantage of the Kagyü position.

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