

The Significance of Yoga Tantra  
and the *Compendium of Principles (Tattvasaṃgraha Tantra)*  
within Tantric Buddhism in India and Tibet

Steven Neal Weinberger  
Indianapolis, Indiana

B.A., Amherst College, 1986  
M.A., University of Virginia, 1991

A Dissertation presented to the Graduate Faculty  
of the University of Virginia in Candidacy for the Degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

Department of Religious Studies

University of Virginia  
May, 2003

UMI Number: 3175637

Copyright 2003 by  
Weinberger, Steven Neal

All rights reserved.

UMI<sup>®</sup>

---

UMI Microform 3175637

Copyright 2005 by ProQuest Information and Learning Company.  
All rights reserved. This microform edition is protected against  
unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code.

---

ProQuest Information and Learning Company  
300 North Zeeb Road  
P.O. Box 1346  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106-1346

© Copyright by  
Steven Neal Weinberger  
All Rights Reserved  
May, 2003

## *Abstract*

The *Compendium of Principles of All Tathāgatas* (*Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*) is arguably *the* single most important development of Indian Buddhist tantra. In this text we find the coalescence of a variety of tantric elements organized around two new and seminal narratives—Śākyamuni’s enlightenment recast in tantric terms and Vajrapāṇi’s subjugation of Maheśvara—that for the first time self-consciously announce tantra as a new and distinct form of Buddhism. In declaring tantra’s independence, these narratives present a clearly defined soteriological goal, a new paradigm for this liberative path in which ritual is central, and innovations such as deity yoga (self-generation as an enlightened figure), consecration rites, and practices involving violence and sex. These reflect both developments within Buddhism and external pressures, including violence and the exercise of power predominant in early medieval Indian socio-political forms as well as a decline in patronage of Buddhist institutions.

The *Compendium of Principles* marks the emergence of mature Indian Buddhist tantra at the end of the seventh century, and it immediately spawned a body of literary progeny that has played a central and enduring role in the development of tantric Buddhism in India, Tibet, China, and Japan. Consolidated over time into traditions known in some Indian circles as Yoga Tantra, they spread as widely as Śrī Lanka, Southeast Asia, Khotan, Mongolia, and Sumatra.

The *Compendium of Principles* and its constellation of texts form the first Buddhist tantric corpus, as many texts amplify practices and doctrines of the *Compendium of Principles*. The continued growth and development of these traditions resulted in

subsequent phases of tantra later classified as Mahāyoga. While these tantras, which include the *Secret Assembly (Guhyasamāja)*, *Yoga of the Equality of All Buddhas (Sarvabuddhasamayoga)*, and *Secret Nucleus (Guhyagarbha)*, exhibit strong non-monastic influence, the roots of their characteristic practices focusing on violence and sex reach back to the *Compendium of Principles*. In Tibet, the *Compendium of Principles* and texts classified as Yoga Tantra played a central role in the transmission and development of Buddhism from the eighth through eleventh centuries, and continued to exert influence even after the introduction of new tantric developments.

# *Contents*

Acknowledgements	i
Technical Note	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: The <i>Compendium of Principles</i>	13
Chapter 2: The Yoga Tantra Corpus	92
Chapter 3: Import and Innovations	173
Chapter 4: Yoga Tantra and Mahāyoga	219
Chapter 5: Yoga Tantra in Tibet	292
Chapter 6: Conclusion	327
Bibliography	333

## *Acknowledgments*

A multitude of people have aided me in writing this dissertation, and I cannot thank them all. I would like to thank my parents for their unwavering support, in so many ways, for so long. They and my sister have been my bedrock throughout this project, my safety net when it seemed I had fallen off the dissertation writing wire. I am also forever grateful to Jeffrey Hopkins for the training in Tibetan language and Buddhist systems I have received, for his friendship, and for the example he sets. He suggested this project and has guided it since its inception. I would also like to thank David Germano for expanding my intellectual horizons and expanding my view of Tibetan and Buddhist studies. His copious, insightful suggestions for each chapter gave this work a coherent structure and brought the larger issues into clear relief. The other members of my committee, Paul Groner and Bill McDonald, also offered numerous valuable suggestions, for which I am grateful. I have also both enjoyed and benefited from a cyber-dialogue with Stephen Hodge concerning early Indian tantra.

I would also like to thank my graduate school cohort at the University of Virginia, and particularly Gregory Hillis, Maricel Cruz, Nathaniel Garson, Bryan Cuevas, and Derek Maher, with whom I developed lasting friendships while navigating the shoals of graduate school coursework and the dissertation writing process. I would also like to thank my more recent colleague-friends Hun Lye, with whom I traveled the writing path, and Kevin Vose. In addition, Hun and Dominick Scarangelo generously lent their expertise in locating texts in the Chinese canon related to my research, identifying data concerning their translation, summarizing passages, and so forth.

Research for this project was carried out under Fulbright-Hays and American Institute of Indian Studies dissertation research fellowships, for which I am grateful. Numerous Tibetan lamas have kindly contributed to my education. I can only mention here those directly involved in this work, explaining textual passages and answering my questions: Khenpo Dorje Tashi, H.H. Sakya Trizin, Denma Lochö Rinpoche, the monks of Likir Monastery (Ladakh), Khetsun Sangpo Rinpoche, Luding Khen Rinpoche, the late Geshe Tubten Gyatso, Senkar Rinpoche Tubten Nyima, the late Pema Lozang Chögyen, Kirti Tsanshap Rinpoche, Jonang Khenpo Tsultrim Dargye, Geshe Tenzin Dhargye, and Khenpo Künga Wangchuk. Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to H.H. the Dalai Lama for his inspiration, for entertaining a barrage of my questions over the course of a thirty-minute audience—and for everything else.



## *Technical Note*

In order to make this work more accessible to non-specialists and to facilitate ease of reading, wherever possible I have translated foreign-language text titles and terms into English. Also, in order to render Tibetan names in a pronounceable manner, I have adopted a modified version of Matthew Kapstein's essay phonetics (*The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2000], pp. xv-xvi) that approximates the pronunciation of modern Central Tibetan. I also include parenthetically at the first occurrence of a Tibetan word the transliteration according to a system devised by Turrell Wylie ("A Standard System of Tibetan Transcription," *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, vol. 22 [1959], pp. 261-267). When pairs of Tibetan and Sanskrit terms are given, the first term is always Tibetan unless otherwise noted.

Kapstein's essay phonetics system is this: the vowels *a*, *i*, *e*, *o*, *u* are pure vowels and are pronounced as in Italian. The final *e* is always pronounced as *é*; thus, *dorje* is pronounced *dorjé* and not *dorj*. The vowels *ö* and *ü* are pronounced as in German.

Most consonants are pronounced approximately as they are in English. *C* is always soft, resembling the English *j*. I have diverged from Kapstein's system in rendering the first two consonants in a series with the same letter. Thus, the guttural consonants *k* and *kh* are both rendered as *k*. While this creates some ambiguity, it is preferable to a system in which the labials *p* and *ph* are used, since this *ph* is an aspirated vowel and is never pronounced as an *f*. This also eliminates the confusing use of *th* for the aspirated dental, since this is an aspirated *t* (as in *Tom*) and is never pronounced *th* (as in *the*). The same

holds for the palatals and affricates. Retroflex consonants are rendered by *tr* (for both unaspirated and aspirated letters, which avoids the unwieldy convention *trh*) or *dr*.

In rendering Chinese terms I have followed the Wade-Giles transliteration system. Sanskrit words are transliterated according to the standard system employed in scholarship concerning India.

## *Introduction*

The *Compendium of Principles of All Tathāgatas* (*Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṃgraha*) and the group of textual traditions associated with it play a critical role in the historical development of tantric Buddhism and literature in India, Tibet, China, and Japan. The *Compendium of Principles* marks the emergence of mature Indian Buddhist tantra at the end of the seventh century, and immediately spawned a body of literary progeny that, over time, was consolidated into traditions known in some Indian circles as Yoga Tantra. These traditions represent one of the most widely disseminated Buddhist systems, exerting significant influence not only in the aforementioned regions but also in Śrī Lanka; southeast Asia; central Asian centers of Buddhist activity such as Khotan; Mongolia; and Sumatra.

During the first quarter of the eighth century the *Compendium of Principles* and texts associated with it were transmitted to China. These south Indian traditions organized the texts into an eighteen-part tantric corpus called the Vajraśekhara Yoga system. Because the flowering of tantra in China occurred during the eighth century, later developments of Indian tantra did not have a significant impact there (or in Japan, whose traditions of esoteric Buddhism stem from China during this period). Therefore, the *Compendium of Principles* and its associated corpus of texts were never displaced by newer developments and continued as central fixtures of tantric Buddhism in China (until its decline) and in Japan to the present.

In contradistinction, by the middle of the eighth century north Indian traditions began consolidating the *Compendium of Principles* and the texts that it spawned into a tradition

they referred to as “Yoga Tantra.” Beginning in the middle of the eighth century these traditions were transmitted to Tibet, where they were further developed and codified under the rubric of Yoga Tantra already established in India. The transmission of the *Compendium of Principles* and its corpus of associated tantras in India and Tibet continued even after subsequent tantric developments replaced them on the cutting edge of Buddhist tantra.

The *Compendium of Principles* is arguably *the* single most important development of Buddhist tantra, representing the first expression of mature institutional tantra in India. Ronald Davidson has cogently argued that the keystone of mature tantra is its central metaphor of coronation as a king and the deployment of royal power, and that this reflects the internalization of the dominant early medieval Indian socio-political forms revolving around violence and the exercise of power—the cultural milieu in which tantra developed.<sup>1</sup> While Davidson subsumes the many elements considered to be “tantric”—including consecration, the use of mantras (verbal incantations), mudrās (physical gestures), and deity yoga (generation of oneself as an enlightened figure)—under this central metaphor,<sup>2</sup> this is only a partial explanation.

Although I agree with Davidson that narrative is extremely important to the emergence of mature Indian tantra, I will argue that central to this importance is narrative’s function of self-consciously announcing and promoting its identity as a new and distinct Buddhist tradition, and that this importance is multi-faceted. Furthermore, I will argue that these narratives occur for the first time in an Indian Buddhist tantra in the *Compendium of Principles*, and that this seminal Buddhist tantra is also the source of many distinctive tantric features that are developed further in subsequent tantras. Thus, it is my claim that

---

<sup>1</sup> Ronald M. Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism: A Social History of the Tantric Movement* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), p. 160.

<sup>2</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 121.

the *Compendium of Principles*, with its two central narrative structures, clearly stated soteriological program in which consecration and ritual are central, detailed presentation of the process of deity yoga, fivefold maṇḍala structure, and so forth represents the moment when mature Buddhist tantra emerges in India; that it, the *Compendium of Principles* is the decisive moment of the revolution that is Buddhist tantra.

## Issues

The questions that underly this study are: what are the distinctive features of the *Compendium of Principles* and the corpus of tantras associated with it, and what is their relationship to earlier and later developments of Indian Buddhist tantra? What are its innovations, and how did it launch the revolution that is tantric Buddhism? How did it subsequently grow into a full-blown tradition, with a constellation of tantras around it, exegetical traditions dedicated to it, and so forth? Wherever possible, I will relate this examination to the social structures and historical realities within which these texts and traditions developed, in both India and Tibet.

In chapter one I will discuss the provenance and historical development of the *Compendium of Principles* in India, paying particular to the cultural context in which it arose. I will also set the text within the broader context of Buddhist tantra, elucidating elements that distinguish it from earlier strata of tantra as well as those that influence and prefigure later developments. I will then present the structure and contents of the *Compendium of Principles* as well as the Indian exegetical traditions associated with it (as preserved in Tibetan translation).

In chapter two I will present the individual texts that developed around the *Compendium of Principles* and were later classified under the rubric “Yoga Tantra,” and will discuss their intertextual relationships, drawing on the fourteenth-century Tibetan scholar Butön’s sixfold typology of tantras to underscore the importance of these texts as the first true tantric cycle in India. In chapter three I will treat the significant innovations

and developments of the *Compendium of Principles* and will present the arguments for my thesis that this text represents the “declaration of independence” of mature tantra. I will then discuss significant aspects of the tantras closely associated with the *Compendium of Principles*.

This discussion will focus on several innovative elements of the tantra. First, I will examine the specifically tantric mythologies found in the *Compendium of Principles*, which are expressed in the narrative of Śākyamuni’s enlightenment through the distinctly tantric process of the five manifest enlightenments and the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi’s subjugation of Maheśvara. This will include a discussion of innovative tantric technologies, practices involving sex, violence, and even murder, and other death-related practices. I will argue that the *Compendium of Principles* contains many elements not seen in earlier Buddhist tantras and also that several elements characteristic of later Buddhist tantras, such as practices involving violence and sex, are already found here in embryonic form. I will also examine the status of the *Compendium of Principles* in the development of maṇḍala structure from earlier three Buddha-family systems to five-family systems.

I will then discuss the importance of other texts included in the Yoga Tantra corpus such as the *Vajraśekhara Tantra*, the *Conquest over the Three Worlds*, the *All Secret Tantra*, the *Śrī Paramādyā Tantra*, the *Perfection of Wisdom in 150 Stanzas*, and the *Vajra Essence Ornament Tantra*. I will conclude the chapter with an examination of the *Purification of All Bad Transmigrations Tantra* and the significance of its many rites designed for practical purposes, with a particular emphasis on its funerary rites. Throughout this chapter I will draw out implications of my argument against the backdrop of Indian culture of the seventh and eighth centuries.

In chapter four I will examine the relationship between texts classified as Yoga Tantra and the texts of the next major development of Indian Buddhist tantra, Mahāyoga. I will

present an argument for the *Compendium of Principles* and its related texts as the source of much—but not all—of what constitutes tantras of the Mahāyoga class. A particular focus of this chapter will be the *Secret Nucleus Tantra*, the central Mahāyoga tantra-text. I will begin with a brief inquiry into the use of the term “mahāyoga” and will then proceed with a presentation of the Mahāyoga corpus and the relationship of several of its texts with Yoga Tantra. This investigation will include the structure of maṇḍalas and iconography as well as an examination of the Buddha figures Mahāvairocana and Samantabhadra in Mahāyoga and their likely roots in the *Compendium of Principles*. I will also discuss the relationship between Yoga Tantra and Mahāyoga in terms of two important narratives—the Maheśvara subjugation myth and an origin myth—and the developments and interrelationships they reflect.

I will then examine features shared by tantras of the Yoga Tantra and Mahāyoga classes, beginning with the common structural element of an eighteen-text cycle. I will continue with tantras included in both Yoga Tantra and Mahāyoga systems such as the *Śrī Paramādya*, and the intriguing case of the *Collection of All Procedures* and its relationship to the *Vajraśekhara Tantra* and the *Yoga of the Equality of All Buddhas*. Finally, I will examine the relationship between the traditions of Yoga Tantra and Mahāyoga in terms of important eighth-century Indian exegetes involved in both systems such as Buddhaguhya and Padmasambhava.

In chapter five I will discuss the role of traditions surrounding the *Compendium of Principles* and the corpus of Yoga Tantras in Tibet, with a particular emphasis on two critical periods: the first dissemination of Buddhism from the middle of the eighth to the middle of the ninth century, and the beginning of the second dissemination during the late tenth and early eleventh centuries. This will examine the continuation in Tibet of a process—began in India—of consolidating and codifying the *Compendium of Principles* and its related tantras into a coherent tradition called “Yoga Tantra.” I will ground this

discussion in the Tibetan socio-political context into which the texts and traditions of the Yoga Tantra class were transmitted, and will focus on issues such as royal patronage and proscription, the cult of the deity Vairocana, and funerary rites. I will also use the accounts of the translation and transmission of several Yoga Tantras and their commentaries to illustrate important aspects of the translation process.

## Sources

While I use Tibetan translations and, where available, Sanskrit editions of various tantras and their exegetical literature, throughout this study I will draw heavily on an extensive introduction to and history of Yoga Tantra by the Tibetan polymath Butön Rinchendrup (*Bu ston Rin chen grub*, aka *Bu ston Rin po che* or *Bu ston Thams cad mkhyen pa*, 1290-1364). This text, *Ship for Launching onto the Ocean of Yoga Tantra*,<sup>3</sup> includes a mytho-history of the origins of the *Compendium of Principles* and other individual Yoga Tantras as well as a detailed summary of each tantra-text, a

---

<sup>3</sup> *rNal 'byor rgyud kyi rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru gzings* , in *Collected Works of Bu ston* , Part 11 *da* (Lhasa: Zhol Printing House, 1990; photographic reproduction Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), 1a.1-92b.2.

The two known editions of Butön's *Collected Works* both stem from the same source: the traditional xylographic edition published by the Zhöl Printing House (*zhol par khang*) in Lhasa. I came into possession of the volume of Butön's *Collected Works* with the Yoga Tantra texts I am using through the kindness of my adviser Jeffrey Hopkins, who brought the volume from Tibet and gave it to me when I began this research.

The photographic reproduction of the Lhasa wood-block prints produced in Delhi under the direction of Lokesh Chandra made the *Collected Works* much more widely available than it otherwise would have been. While one might expect this edition to be a faithful reproduction of the Lhasa edition, it is not. "Corrections" were made to the negatives before the Delhi edition was printed. In almost every case of a variant reading that I have checked, the Delhi version's "correction" was in fact a "miscorrection": it actually introduced errors by changing correct readings in the Lhasa edition to incorrect readings. Therefore, I have used the Lhasa edition of Butön's Yoga Tantra texts, and page references are to this volume. The pagination of the two editions differs, since the Delhi edition assigns Arabic numeral page numbers to each folio side of the Lhasa edition. However, the Lhasa edition page numbers can easily be located by reading the margin pagination on the front side of the folios in the Delhi edition.



historiographical account of their development in India, and an account of their translation and dissemination in Tibet. Thus, it provides much of the structural framework for this study in addition to much detailed information.

A few remarks about Butön are necessary at the outset. He is arguably the most influential redactor of the Tibetan *Kangyur* (*bka' 'gyur*) and *Tengyur* (*bstan 'gyur*), the translations of Buddha-voiced texts and Indian commentaries on them, respectively; author of one of the central Tibetan histories of Buddhism in India and Tibet; translator and reviser of Sanskrit texts; one of the foremost Tibetan experts in the *Kālacakra* and *Secret Assembly* (*Guhyasamāja*) tantras; an important figure in the lineages of many tantric systems and author of liturgical commentaries who established his own school of Tibetan Buddhism (Tib: *bu lugs*);<sup>4</sup> and one of the most prolific writers in Tibetan history, with his *Collected Works* comprising some thirty volumes. Of particular import to the study at hand, he is also the most prominent scholar in the field of Yoga Tantra that Tibet has produced.

Butön's literary style also warrants mentioning. He often employs a "cataloguing" technique in which he lists several opinions (of both Indian and Tibetan masters) on the topic or point he is discussing, using the Tibetan term *kha cig* ("someone says" or "a certain scholar says") to indicate each individual position. This provides at once a wealth of information and frustration: while in some cases Butön refutes or modifies a mistaken position, in other cases he simply states the view and says it should be investigated, or moves on without commenting on its veracity or fault. This style runs throughout the

---

<sup>4</sup> D.S. Ruegg, *The Life of Bu ston rin po che: With the Tibetan Text of the Bu ston rNam thar* (Roma: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1966), pp. xi-xii. The view that Butön established a separate school still has currency in contemporary Tibetan culture. Kushog Wangdi, a scholar of the Sakya monastery just outside Gangtok, Sikkim, stated that there were five schools of Tibetan Buddhism: the standard four (Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyü, and Geluk), to which he added a fifth, Butön's Buluk school (personal communication, December, 1994).

*Ship for Launching onto the Ocean of Yoga Tantra* as well as other texts on Yoga Tantra he composed.

Throughout this study, it is important to bear in mind that one cannot simply transpose Tibetan systems and accounts of tantra back into India and presume that one is looking at a clear picture of the Indian state of affairs. However, Tibetan traditions and sources do provide important clues concerning the contours of Indian tantric systems, and, while these at times may be sketchy, in many cases they are the only sources of information available to us. Thus, with caution the use of such sources provides important evidentiary materials for understanding Indian Buddhist tantra as well as illuminating how Tibetans understood, presented, and developed Indian tantric traditions in Tibet.

### ***The Compendium of Principles***

There are two extant Sanskrit manuscripts of the tantra, both from Nepal. Guiseppe Tucci obtained a nineteenth-century Nepalese manuscript of the tantra, and in 1956 David Snellgrove and John Brough discovered an Indian palm-leaf manuscript that they identified as a ninth or tenth-century work from Bihar, India.<sup>5</sup> Snellgrove and Lokesh Chandra published a photographic reproduction of this manuscript,<sup>6</sup> and Isshi Yamada produced a romanized Sanskrit version of this edition of the *Compendium of Principles* with reference to Tibetan and Chinese translations.<sup>7</sup> Kanjin Horiuchi produced a critical romanized edition using both extant Sanskrit manuscripts as well as translated materials in Chinese and Tibetan.<sup>8</sup> Lokesh Chandra also published a Devanagari edition of

---

<sup>5</sup> Lokesh Chandra and David Snellgrove, *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha: Facsimile Reproduction of a Tenth Century Sanskrit Manuscript from Nepal* (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1981) p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Chandra and Snellgrove, *Facsimile Reproduction*.

<sup>7</sup> Isshi Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha nāma mahāyāna-sūtra: A Critical Edition Based on the Sanskrit Manuscript and Chinese and Tibetan Translations* (New Delhi: Sharada Rani, 1981).

<sup>8</sup> Kanjin Horiuchi, ed., *Shoe Kongōchōkyō no Kenkyū, Bonpon Kōteihen Bonzōkan Taishō*, 2 vols (Kōyasan University: Mikkyō Bunka Kenkyūjo, 1983).

Snellgrove's manuscript that offers no improvement over Yamada's romanized edition and in fact introduces textual errors.<sup>9</sup>

The earliest extant translations of the *Compendium of Principles* are eighth-century Chinese works. In 723 CE the Indian master Vajrabodhi (641-741) produced the *Recitation Sūtra Extracted from the Vajraśekhara Yoga*.<sup>10</sup> This text, in four fascicles, is not a translation proper; rather, it is Vajrabodhi's introduction to the *Compendium of Principles* and a larger system of eighteen tantras, of which the *Compendium of Principles* was the most prominent member. Dale Todaro, in the introduction to his translation of the first five chapters of the *Compendium of Principles* from Yamada's Sanskrit edition, describes Vajrabodhi's text as "a somewhat unorganized and partial outline of the major practices in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* lineage."<sup>11</sup> This text does, however, include many passages that correspond verbatim to sections of the first chapter of the extant Sanskrit edition.<sup>12</sup>

Vajrabodhi's disciple Amoghavajra (705-774) in 754 translated the first chapter of the tantra.<sup>13</sup> The Indian monk Prajñā (Chi: Hannya, 744-810) also produced a partial

---

<sup>9</sup> Lokesh Chandra, ed., *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha: Sanskrit Text with Introduction and Illustrations of Maṇḍalas* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987).

<sup>10</sup> *Chin kang ting yü ch'ieh chung lia ch'u pien sung ching*, T. vol. 18, No. 866 (Dale Todaro, *An Annotated Translation of the "Tattvasaṃgraha" [Part 1] with an Explanation of the Role of the "Tattvasaṃgraha" Lineage in the Teachings of Kukai* [Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1985], p. 11; Stephen Hodge, "Considerations on the Dating and Geographical Origins of the *Mahāvairocanaṅghisambodhi-sūtra*," in *The Buddhist Forum*, eds. Tadeusz Skorupski and Ulrich Pagel, vol. 3 [London: School of Oriental and African Studies; rpt. New Delhi: Heritage Publishers, 1995], p. 66).

<sup>11</sup> Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 11.

<sup>12</sup> Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 11.

<sup>13</sup> *Chin kang ting i ch'ieh ju lai chen shih she ta hsien cheng ta chiao wang ching*, T. vol. 18, No. 865, 207a-223b (Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 10).

translation.<sup>14</sup> A complete translation was not made until the beginning of the eleventh century, when the Indian monk Dānapāla (Chi: Shih-hu) produced a thirty-fascicle translation of the *Compendium of Principles* between 1012 and 1015.<sup>15</sup> This text corresponds closely to the extant Sanskrit manuscripts and also the Tibetan translation.<sup>16</sup> Amoghavajra also composed the *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle (Vajraśekhara) Scripture*, which consists of a detailed summary of the *Compendium of Principles* and abbreviated summaries of seventeen other tantras. Rolf Giebel has published a heavily annotated translation of this text,<sup>17</sup> which I have made extensive use of in this study. The Tibetan translation of the *Compendium of Principles* is a late tenth- or early eleventh-century work attributed to Rinchen Zangpo and Śraddhākaravarman,<sup>18</sup> although, as I will discuss in chapter five, the tantra likely was first translated during the latter part of the eighth century.

While various fields of Buddhist philosophy have been relatively well developed in modern scholarship,<sup>19</sup> in general the study of Buddhist tantra is still in its early stages.

---

<sup>14</sup> T. vol. 18, No. 868 (Kenneth W. Eastman, “The Eighteen Tantras of the Vajraśekhara/Māyājāla,” unpublished paper presented to the 26th International Conference of Orientalists in Japan [Tokyo, 8 May, 1981], p. 1, n. 3; summary in *Transactions of the International Conference of Orientalists in Japan*, No. XXVI, [1981]).

<sup>15</sup> *I ch’ieh ju lai shen shih she ta che’ng hsien cheng san mei ta chiao wang ching*, T. vol. 18, No. 882 (Ian Astley-Kristensen, *The Rishukyō: The Sino-Japanese Tantric Prajñāpāramitā in 150 Verses [Amoghavajra’s Version]* [Tring, U.K.: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1991], p. 18, n. 70; Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 10).

<sup>16</sup> Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh*,” p. 127, n. 13.

<sup>17</sup> *Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei*, T. vol. 18, No. 869 (Rolf W. Giebel, “The *Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei*: An Annotated Translation,” in *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies*, No. 18 [1995], p. 107).

<sup>18</sup> *De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid bsodus pa zhes bya ba theg pa chen po’i mdo*, in *The Tibetan Tripitaka: Peking Edition*, ed. Daisetz T. Suzuki (Tokyo-Kyoto: Tibetan Tripitaka Research Institute, 1956), P112 (Toh. 479), vol. 4, 217.1-283.2.2.

<sup>19</sup> I use the word “modern” here to indicate the contemporary scholarly conventions employed in Europe, America, and other places. In contradistinction, I will use the word “traditional” to refer to indigenous

The *Compendium of Principles*, although one of the most important tantras, has not received the scholarly attention it merits. Giuseppe Tucci opened scholarship in a western language on the *Compendium of Principles* with his work on the Maheśvara subjugation myth it contains.<sup>20</sup> David Snellgrove expanded these inroads in both his introduction to the facsimile reproduction of the Sanskrit manuscript he published and his presentation of tantra in volume one of *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, throughout which is woven a discussion of the *Compendium of Principles* and translations of several passages from it.<sup>21</sup> Dale Todaro produced a serviceable although mechanical translation from the Sanskrit of the first section of the tantra, together with a study of the role of the *Compendium of Principles* and associated texts in the system of Kūkai, founder of the Japanese Shingon School.<sup>22</sup> While there are a smattering of short articles and sections in larger works concerning the narrative of Śākyamuni's enlightenment found in the

---

Buddhist traditions, such as those that developed in India, Tibet, and elsewhere. This is not to say that “traditional” types of scholarship are not undertaken outside India, Tibet, China, Japan, and so forth, or that “modern” scholarship is not done in places such as Japan and other non-Western nations.

<sup>20</sup> Giuseppe Tucci, *Indo-Tibetica*, Reale Accademia d'Italia Studi e Documenti I (Rome: Reale Accademia d'Italia, 1932), vol. 1, pp. 135-145. Tucci also discussed the enlightenment narrative in the *Compendium of Principles* (Giuseppe Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls* [Roma: Libreria dello Stato, 1949], p. 225).

Other works on the Maheśvara subjugation myth, which I will discuss in chapters one and three, include Rolf A. Stein, “La soumission de Rudra et autres contes tantriques,” *Journal Asiatique* 283: 1, pp. 121-160; Ronald M. Davidson, “Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skyapa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka,” in *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 2 (1991), pp. 215-217; Ronald M. Davidson, “The Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi's Subjugation of Śiva,” in *Religions of India in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), pp. 547-555; and Nobumi Iyanaga, “Récits de la soumission de Maheśvara par Trailokyavijaya—d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises,” in Michel Strickmann, ed., *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein* (Brussels: Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques, vol. xxii, 1985), pp. 633-745.

<sup>21</sup> David Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and Their Tibetan Successors*, vol. 1 (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1987), pp. 117-330.

<sup>22</sup> Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, pp. 128-368.

*Compendium of Principles*, there have not been any full-length studies of the tantra in a western language even though it represents a significant stage in the development of Indian Buddhist tantra.<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>23</sup> There is, however, a large corpus of scholarship on the *Compendium of Principles* in Japanese.

# *Chapter 1: The Compendium of Principles*

## **Introduction**

The aggregation of traditions known as Buddhist tantra represents a distinctive development of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism. Ronald Davidson presents a view of the near-total innovation of what he calls “mature institutional esoteric Buddhism”—mature tantra as it developed in Indian monasteries during the seventh century (I will discuss the meaning of “mature tantra” below, p. 21). Davidson presents his case that the new metaphor of royal coronation and the exercise of dominion is the single dominant aspect of tantra, with all other distinctive features subordinate to and in service of it.<sup>24</sup>

While Davidson only explicitly mentions the *Compendium of Principles* on occasion, I will argue that this text represents the pivotal point in the development of Buddhist tantra, the moment at which the revolution that is Buddhist tantra emerges as a distinct and self-conscious tradition. In chapter three (see p. 173) I will discuss the important aspects and innovations of the *Compendium of Principles* and the continuities and discontinuities these display in relation to earlier Buddhist traditions. In this chapter, I will provide the background for chapter three, and will address the following issues: What is Buddhist tantra? What are its sources (I will continue this discussion in chapter three)? How do we locate the *Compendium of Principles* within Buddhist tantra? How do we understand the term “Yoga Tantra” devised later to categorize the *Compendium of Principles* and related texts, and the terms “Action Tantra” and “Performance Tantra,” also devised later

---

<sup>24</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 121.

as doxographical rubrics for organizing early Buddhist tantras? What is the structure of the *Compendium of Principles*, and what are its contents?

## Buddhist Tantra: An Introduction

### Tantra as a Category Term

According to Monier-Williams' Sanskrit dictionary, the word "tantra" itself means "loom" or "warp."<sup>25</sup> It is employed in traditional Buddhist usage with much the same meaning as the word "sūtra"—the sense of a thread or something drawn out, and by extension a discourse. The term is discussed in several texts later classified as Yoga Tantra. In the *Śrī Paramādyā Tantra* the term is described in this way: "Tantra is explained as 'continuum'."<sup>26</sup> Similarly, the *Vajraśekhara Tantra* says, "A tantra is explained as 'that which is continuous'."<sup>27</sup> The fourteenth-century Tibetan exegete Butön further delineates tantra as two types: tantras that are the "expressed meanings" and tantras that are the "expressive words."<sup>28</sup> The latter are the tantra-texts themselves, and the former are the meanings their words convey. Butön further subdivides tantras in the sense of expressed meanings into causal tantras (*rgyu'i rgyud*), resultant tantras (*'bras bu'i rgyud*), and method tantras (*thabs kyi rgyud*), and his explanation of all the above usages of "tantra" includes the sense of continuum or continuation.<sup>29</sup> As for tantras that

---

<sup>25</sup> Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary: Etymologically and Philologically Arranged with Special Reference to Cognate Indo-European Languages* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1899; Rpt: New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers, 1994), p. 436.

<sup>26</sup> *rgyud ni rgyun zhes bya bar bshad/* (Butön Rinchendrup [Bu ston Rin chen grub], *An Extensive Explanation of Ānandagarbha's "Source of All Vajras": A Wish-Fulfilling Jewel, rDo rje thams cad 'byung ba'i rgya cher bshad pa yid bzhin nor bu*, in *Collected Works of Bu-ston*, Part 11 (da) [Lhasa: Zhol Printing House, 1990; photographic reproduction Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968], 19a.2).

<sup>27</sup> *rgyud ni rgyun chags zhes bya ste/* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 18b.5).

<sup>28</sup> *rgyud ni/ brjod bya don gyi rgyud dang/ rjod byed tshig gi rgyud gnyis* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 18b.2).

<sup>29</sup> Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 18b.2-19a.3.



are the expressive words (that is, the texts themselves), Butön explains that because the collections of words that teach the meanings expressed are “connected and continuous”<sup>30</sup> they are tantras.

We see in this explication of “tantra” the emphasis on the sense of continuity and/ or continuum. Thus, the word “tantra,” like “sūtra,” comes to indicate a discourse and, by extension, a type of text. While “sūtra” is used to denote a text of Buddha-speech from the earliest strata of Indian Buddhism through the development of Mahāyāna, works that include the word “tantra” in their title almost always belong to a corpus of texts that contain the distinctive doctrines and practices that represent the last stage in the development of Indian Mahāyāna Buddhism. In traditional works, while the texts themselves are termed “tantras,” this stage of Mahāyāna Buddhism is identified as a tradition not by the word “tantra”<sup>31</sup> but rather by the word “mantra” or the term “secret mantra” (Skt: *guhya-mantra*; Tib: *gsang sngags*; Chi: *chen-yen mi-chiao*; Jap: *shingon mikkyō*). However, modern scholarship has adopted the convention of using “tantra” as a category term that refers to the vast and varied corpus of such texts and their related practices.<sup>32</sup> I will follow this convention of using “tantra” as a category (which includes the use of the adjective “tantric”) since it is the established norm in academic discourse, but it is important to remember that this usage of the term “tantra” is a modern and non-traditional convention.

---

<sup>30</sup> *de nyid ston par byed pa'i sgra'i tshogs 'brel cing rgyun chags pas na/ rgyud* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 19a.3).

<sup>31</sup> Traditional scholarship *does* employ the word “tantra” in doxographical discussions categorizing tantric texts. See the doxographical discussion below.

<sup>32</sup> Among scholars employing the word “tantra” in this way are David Snellgrove, Yukei Matsunaga, Jeffrey Hopkins, and Samten G. Karmay. It should be noted that in scholarship on East Asian Buddhism the term “esoteric Buddhism” is often used instead of the term “tantric Buddhism.”

The development of Buddhism over the centuries involved the development of a wide variety of doctrines and practices. At some point during the early centuries of the common era some Buddhist exegetes considered their systems different enough from earlier doctrines and/ or practices to make a distinction between them. They employed the term “vehicle” (Skt: *yāna*) and, based on their view of the differences in goals, methods, and doctrines, began to call their own traditions the “Great Vehicle” (*mahāyāna*) while referring to earlier traditions as the “Lesser Vehicle” (*hinayāna*). Early Indian tantric commentators situate tantra as a subcategory of Mahāyāna rather than as a separate vehicle on the level of the pair Hinayāna and Mahāyāna. For example, the eighth-century exegete Buddhaguhya, in his *Word Commentary on the Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*, employs the term “mode of mantra” (Tib: *sngags kyi tshul*; Skt: *mantranaya*) in contradistinction to the term “mode of the perfections” (Tib: *pha rol tu phyin pa'i tshul*; Skt: *pāramitānaya*), which he uses for non-tantric Mahāyāna.<sup>33</sup> This is not a novel usage of these terms, however, as we find in the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* itself, which dates to the middle of the seventh century,<sup>34</sup> the terms “mode of secret mantra” ( *gsang sngags kyi tshul*; \**guhya-mantra-naya*)<sup>35</sup> and “mode of mantra practice” ( \**mantra-caryā-naya*).<sup>36</sup> Thus, in early

---

<sup>33</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 58.

<sup>34</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 65.

<sup>35</sup> *rNam par snang mdzad chen po mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa shin tu rgyas pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po zhes bya ba'i chos kyi rnam grangs, Mahāvairocanābhisambodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulyasūtrendrarāja-nāma-dharmaparyāya*, translated by Śilendrabodhi and dPal brtsegs, P126 (Toh. 494), vol. 5, 240.4.6. The corresponding phrase in an English translation of the tantra can be found in Stephen Hodge, *The Mahā-Vairocana-Abhisambodhi Tantra with Buddhaguhya's Commentary* (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003), p. 46.

<sup>36</sup> J. W. de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature in India,” in *Acta Indologica VI* (1984), p. 92.

Indian tantric literature tantra is conceived of as a new type of Mahāyāna Buddhism that is distinguished by its innovative and unique practices.

Later in India tantra gained a sufficiently separate status and, as a result, new terms were formulated to refer to tantra as a category. For example, during the eleventh and twelfth centuries the tantric exegetes Advayavajra and Ratnākaraśānti employ the term “mantra-yāna” (“mantra vehicle”) for tantra, in contradistinction to “pāramitā-yāna” (“perfection vehicle”).<sup>37</sup> Although this pair of terms represents the two divisions of Mahāyāna, they are referred to as “vehicles.” It is not clear whether “mantra vehicle” and “perfection vehicle” at that time were used with the status of “vehicle” on the order of the Hinayāna/ Mahāyāna distinction. However, they were certainly moving toward such a meaning and beyond the earlier terms “mode of mantra” and “mode of the perfections” (which, to further confuse matters, Advayavajra and Ratnākaraśānti also use).<sup>38</sup>

It is clear, however, that tantra would come to be seen as a distinct and important category of Buddhist practice. As David Snellgrove points out, with the use of the term “vajra-yāna” (“vajra-vehicle”) in India we find a shift to a self-conscious demarcation that, while still considering tantra to be a form of Mahāyāna Buddhism, now elevates it to a status on the level of Hinayāna and Mahāyāna.<sup>39</sup> It is odd for Vajrayāna (that is, tantra),

---

<sup>37</sup> de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature,” pp. 92-93.

<sup>38</sup> de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature,” pp. 92-93.

<sup>39</sup> Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 129-130. It is interesting to note here the usage of the terms “vajra-vehicle” (*rdo rje'i theg pa*, \*vajra-yāna) and “definition vehicle” (*mtshan nyid kyi theg pa*, \*lakṣaṇa-yāna) to refer to tantric and non-tantric Mahāyāna, respectively, in the *Garland of Views: Esoteric Instructions* (I will discuss this text in more detail in chapter four). This work is traditionally attributed to the Indian tantric master Padmasambhava, who came to Tibet during the second half of the eighth century. Such a provenance would place the usage of the term “vajra-vehicle” in eighth-century India. Some scholars have questioned the attribution of authorship to Padmasambhava, in which case the text’s date could be pushed forward, into the ninth century.

a subdivision of Mahāyāna, to be considered a vehicle in its own right, on the same level as the category of which it is a part. However, this underscores the innovation of tantric doctrine and praxis in comparison with non-tantric Mahāyāna (in which it had its roots) and the importance given to it by its adherents.

### Characteristics of Tantra

Attempting to formulate a comprehensive definition of tantra that covers all tantric texts is a difficult task that in the end is not of great use. No single definition is broad enough to cover all cases of tantra and still retain much meaning, and many important aspects of tantra, such as visualization, are also found in non-tantric Mahāyāna traditions. As a result, most attempts to define or outline tantra are polythetic in nature. Several scholars have elucidated lists of features that characterize Buddhist tantra, with the caveat that the list is not exhaustive and that not all the elements will be found in every tantric text.<sup>40</sup> I will briefly describe some of these characteristic elements.

The proliferation of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas found in Mahāyāna literature continues in tantric literature. The clustering of deities arrayed in maṇḍalas—representations of the universe in enlightened form—is also a characteristic of tantra, the roots of which likely

---

We do, however, find the term “vajra-yāna” used in an eighth-century Chinese text written by the Indian tantric master Amoghavajra. This text, the *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle (\*Vajraśekhara) Scripture* (Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei, T. vol. 18, No. 869), employs the term “vajrayāna” (Chi: chin-kang-ch’êng) in its concluding line (Rolf W. Giebel, “The *Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei*: An Annotated Translation,” in *Journal of Naritasan Institute for Buddhist Studies*, No. 18 [1995], p. 200). I will discuss this important text by Amoghavajra later.

<sup>40</sup> Four such lists are as follows: Stephen Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 59; Jeffrey Hopkins, *The Tantric Distinction: An Introduction to Tibetan Buddhism*, ed. Anne C. Klein, (London: Wisdom Publications, 1984), pp. 155-164; David Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” in *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*, eds. G. Gnoli and L. Lanciotti (Rome: Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1988), p. 1359; and Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 117 & 121.

extend to pre-tantric Mahāyāna texts.<sup>41</sup> While recollection and worship of various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas—as well as other types of interaction with them—occur in earlier Mahāyāna developments, one practice that is perhaps unique to tantra is the practice of identifying with the deity itself. In conjunction with various specifically tantric techniques, practitioners recreate themselves as deities. This practice, usually termed “deity yoga” (*lha'i rnal 'byor*, *devatā-yoga*), is one of the unique features of tantra (although we must bear in mind that it is not found in every instance of tantra).<sup>42</sup> I will discuss deity yoga and its importance in the *Compendium of Principles* in more detail in chapter three (see p. 176).

In addition to deity yoga (and often in conjunction with it), tantric practice involves many other characteristic elements, among which is the employment of mantras. Mantras, which may be short (a few syllables) or several sentences long, are recited to a specific effect (and as such the word “mantra” is sometimes translated as “spell”). While mantras are an important element of tantra, they are also found in pre-tantric Mahāyāna texts, where they are often called *dhāraṇī* and are employed for mundane or practical purposes such as protection from various harms, stopping storms, causing rain, and so forth.<sup>43</sup> The use of mudrās—generally speaking, a gesture (or symbol) that “seals” the practitioner’s identity as the deity through symbolizing various of the deity’s attitudes and attributes—is also a common feature of tantra. Another unique component of tantra is initiation or consecration (Tib: *dbang*; Skt: *abhiṣeka*), a ritual process by which a

---

<sup>41</sup> Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” p. 1365.

<sup>42</sup> In fact, the fourteenth/fifteenth-century Tibetan scholar Tsongkapa ( *Tsong kha pa bLo bzang grags pa* , 1357-1419) states that deity yoga is the main distinguishing feature of tantra. For a discussion of this see Hopkins, *Tantric Distinction*, esp. pp. 155-164). Tsongkapa’s view is, however, just one opinion from among a host of Indian and Tibetan presentations of the difference between sūtra and tantra.

<sup>43</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” pp. 60 and 62. It is important to remember that the use of spells in India dates back to the Vedas and thus has long been entwined in the cultural fabric.

teacher admits a student into a maṇḍala and then authorizes and instructs him/her in its various rites. Finally, the use of desire and sexual yoga, as well as the use of violence and other afflictive emotions, is often found in tantric practices.<sup>44</sup>

These are some of the techniques employed in tantra that are said to distinguish it from non-tantric Mahāyāna Buddhism. While there was a long history of rituals in Mahāyāna Buddhism alongside the philosophical aspects that have been emphasized in western scholarship, in tantra ritual moves from the periphery to the center, and innovative methods of practice are also introduced, as I will discuss in chapter three (see p. 173 ff). We also find the metaphor of coronation as a king and the exercise of dominion that is one of tantra's central features.<sup>45</sup> While this brief description of tantra is admittedly lacking and incomplete, it provides some background for topics I will discuss later.

### **Indian Cultural Context**

Ronald Davidson has written a groundbreaking monograph on the Indian cultural context in which tantric Buddhism developed. He examines medieval India after the break-up of the Gupta Empire, focusing on the period between the sixth and twelfth centuries. This period witnessed the feudalization of India, with the rise of regional centers and military adventurism in the absence of a central imperial power. Also characteristic of this period was the apotheosis of these new rulers of petty kingdoms, their reliance on new sources of legitimatization such as the discourse of violence employed by emerging Śaivite sects, and so forth.<sup>46</sup>

---

<sup>44</sup> For a more extensive discussion of tantra, see for example Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, pp. 117-303.

<sup>45</sup> Ronald Davidson argues that the exercise of dominion is *the* central metaphor of tantra (Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 2).

<sup>46</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 2-4.

In terms of the effects such cultural changes had on Buddhism, Davidson enumerates the following: the loss of guild-based patronage; the contraction in the number of Buddhist institutions, and their concentration in the northern and extreme southern areas of India; the decline in women's participation in Buddhism; the development of philosophical skepticism and "non-Buddhist epistemological axioms"; and the rise of large monastic institutions.<sup>47</sup> It is within this milieu—both of the broader Indian culture and of the Indian Buddhist sub-culture—that tantric Buddhism developed.<sup>48</sup>

## Tantric Doxography

Before discussing the *Compendium of Principles* and other tantras in more detail, a brief discussion of tantric doxography is necessary. Texts now classified as tantras began to be produced at the beginning of the seventh century, but the first Indian doxographical discussions of tantra did not arise until the middle of the eighth century in northern India. Furthermore, this might represent a regional development, as south Indian traditions of approximately the same period do not categorize the tantras.<sup>49</sup> Thus, it appears that for more than one hundred years tantras were not classified or stratified. Moreover, the evidence cited above also suggests that the conception of "tantra" as a distinct Buddhist tradition did not emerge until the middle of the eighth century at the earliest.

Before presenting doxographical strategies employed by Indian exegetes, I must state that, although both traditional and modern scholars have categorized Buddhist tantras, these schemes seem rather artificial at best for the earliest strata of texts. Studying the various early tantric texts themselves—those that would later be classified under the rubrics of Action Tantra (*bya rgyud*, *kriyā-tantra*) and Performance Tantra (*spyod rgyud*, *caryā-tantra*)—is necessary. I have not studied the requisite range of texts, and I cannot

---

<sup>47</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 4-5, 76-77, & 91.

<sup>48</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 4.

<sup>49</sup> I am referring here to Chinese translations and traditions stemming from Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra.

discern distinguishing features in the translations and partial translations I have read sufficient for meaningful categorization. Additionally, although I will argue that the *Compendium of Principles* includes many features that distinguish it from earlier tantras and that it presents for the first time a self-conscious tantric identity, I have found no doxographical references in the text itself. The category to which it is assigned—Yoga Tantra—does not appear until fifty or seventy-five years after the tantra’s production. Therefore, when referring to the early tantra texts, I will attempt to avoid using terms such as Yoga Tantra with a sense of a monolithic tradition that emerged at the same time as the tantras themselves. I will, however, use doxographical category terms when referring to subsequent traditions as they became consolidated in India and, later, as they are further standardized in Tibet.

In an early Indian doxography the eighth-century author Buddhaguhya mentions *three* types of tantra in his *Commentary on the Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra: Action Tantra* (*bya ba’i rgyud, kriyā-tantra*), *Yoga Tantra* (*rnal ’byor gyi rgyud, yoga-tantra*), and *Dual Tantra* (*gnyis ka’i rgyud, ubhaya-tantra*), a special category for the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* that is called such because it contains elements of both Yoga Tantra and Action Tantra.<sup>50</sup> Vilāsavajra (aka Varabodhi), another important tantric exegete of roughly the same period, mentions only the three divisions of

---

<sup>50</sup> Buddhaguhya, *rNam par snang mdzad mngon par byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa’i byin gyis brlabs kyi rgyud chen po’i bshad pa, \*Vairocanābhisambodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhānamahātantrabhāṣya*, P3490 (Toh. 2663A), vol. 77, 231.2.3-231.3.1. In particular, 231.2.8-231.3.1 reads: *de bzhin du rnam par snang mdzad mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa’i rgyud ’di yang thabs dang shes rab gtso bor gyur pa rnal ’byor gyi rgyud yin mod kyi/ bya ba la mos pa’i gdul bya’i ’gro ba rnams gzung ba’i phyir bya ba’i rgyud kyi rjes su mthun pa’i spyod pa dag kyang bstan pas/ bya ba’i rgyud dam/ gnyis ka’i rgyud lta bur so sor brtags shing grags so/.*



Action, Performance, and Yoga Tantra in his commentary on the *Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī*,<sup>51</sup> which dates to the latter part of the eighth century.<sup>52</sup>

The Sarma (*gsar ma*) schools of Tibetan Buddhism—those deriving mainly from the second period of translation activity that commenced at the end of the tenth century—principally employ a fourfold system to categorize tantra: Action Tantra (Tib: *bya rgyud*; Skt: *kriyā-tantra*), Performance Tantra (*spyod rgyud*; *caryā-tantra*),<sup>53</sup> Yoga Tantra (*rnal 'byor rgyud*; *yoga-tantra*), and Highest Yoga Tantra (*bla med rnal 'byor rgyud* or *bla med rgyud*; *anuttara-yoga-tantra* or *anuttara-tantra*). This fourfold doxography, however, did not enter Tibet until the latter half of the tenth century, and therefore in all probability reflects later Indian developments.<sup>54</sup> It is important to remember that this was only one of a number of doxographical strategies employed in India to organize tantric texts into affiliated traditions,<sup>55</sup> and that while at times these categories seem quite natural, at other times they seem rather contrived.

The fourfold scheme derives from later Indian traditions; therefore, because it was among the last systems transmitted, it has been one of the two dominant tantric doxographies employed in Tibet. While the fourfold tantric doxography predominates in

---

<sup>51</sup> Ronald M. Davidson, “The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī: Text and Translation of the *Mañjuśrīnāmasaṃgīti*,” in *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques*, Vol. 20, ed. Michel Strickmann (Brussels: Institute Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1981), p. 15 (hereafter abbreviated as “Names of Mañjuśrī”).

<sup>52</sup> Davidson, “Names of Mañjuśrī,” p. 7.

<sup>53</sup> This category is also referred to as *Upa-Tantra* (or *Upa-yoga*), *Upāya-Tantra*, and *Ubhaya-Tantra* (Tib: *gnyis ka'i rgyud*) (Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” p. 1357).

<sup>54</sup> In this regard, Snellgrove mentions Kaṇha’s commentary on the *Hevajra Tantra*, which discusses the series Kriyā Tantra, Caryā Tantra, Yoga Tantra, and Anuttarayoga Tantra. He tentatively dates this text to the ninth century, although he says that it might well be later (Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” p. 1383).

<sup>55</sup> Yukei Matsunaga identifies several Indian categorization schemes for tantra, including fivefold and sevenfold doxographies in addition to the threefold and fourfold systems (de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature,” p. 93).

the Sarma schools that developed from the second propagation of Buddhism in Tibet, Nyingma schools—which trace their origins to the first dissemination of Buddhism in Tibet that began during the eighth century—employ a nine-vehicle system that encompasses both non-tantric and tantric forms of Buddhism. In this system, tantra is divided into six categories classified in two divisions: the outer tantras (vehicles 4-6), which roughly correspond to the categories of Action Tantra, Performance Tantra, and Yoga Tantra as found in Sarma systems; and the inner tantras (vehicles 7-9) of Mahāyoga, Anuyoga, and Atiyoga. The nine-tiered classificatory scheme has been the chief alternative to the fourfold tantric doxography in Tibet since the tenth century.

There is evidence for Indian origins of the nine-vehicle doxography, as we find a proto-nine vehicle system already in the dynastic period work *Garland of Views: Esoteric Instructions*.<sup>56</sup> This important text is attributed to the Indian tantric master Padmasambhava (c. eighth century), a central figure in traditional accounts of the early dissemination and establishment of Buddhism in Tibet. Moreover, Padmasambhava is a central figure in many traditions of the Nyingma School, as he is believed to have initially “concealed” the vast majority of texts and practices later discovered as “treasures” by subsequent generations of Tibetans.

The *Garland of Views: Esoteric Instructions* divides tantra into three categories: Action Tantra, Dual Tantra (the category into which Buddhaghosha classified the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*), and Yoga Tantra. Yoga Tantra is then subdivided into two: 1) outer yoga, the vehicle of the tantra of asceticism<sup>57</sup> and 2) inner yoga, the

---

<sup>56</sup> Padmasambhava, *Garland of Views: Esoteric Instructions*, *Man ngag lta ba'i phreng ba*, in *Selected Writings (gsun' thor bu) of Roñ-zom Chos-kyi-bzañ-po*, Smanrtsis Shesrig Spendzod vol. 73 (Leh, Ladakh: S.W. Tashigangpa, 1974), pp. 1-18. The text also appears in the Peking edition of the *Kangyur*: Padmasambhava, *Man ngag gi rgyal po lta ba'i phreng ba*, P4726, vol. 83, 83.3.7-85.3.5.

<sup>57</sup> *rnal 'byor phyi pa thub pa rgyud kyī theg pa* (Padmasambhava, *Garland of Views*, P4726, vol. 83, 84.1.1).

vehicle of the tantra of method.<sup>58</sup> The former represents Yoga Tantra as found in the fourfold doxographical systems, while the latter is further divided into three: the mode of generation, the mode of completion, and the mode of great completion.

## History of Tantra

Attempting to determine precisely the history of tantric Buddhism in India is an undertaking of great difficulty. Sanskrit manuscripts have often been lost, particularly for the earlier tantric works. Additionally, because tantras were often composed/ compiled in stages, settling a date for the earliest version of a text that we have now only in its final form is problematic. However, extant Sanskrit texts as well as Chinese and Tibetan translations (when dates are available and reliable) provide some evidence for dating.

## The Earliest Tantras

Yukei Matsunaga traces the historical development of Indian tantric texts by tracking the changes in the deployment of new concepts and techniques that occur over time in the Chinese translations of earlier and later versions of individual texts. He begins with the use of spells employed for practical purposes in various Mahāyāna sūtras.<sup>59</sup> These develop further in the earliest tantric phase and include rituals for various purposes—controlling nature (avoiding storms, causing rain), warding off evil (robbers, poisonous snakes and the like), and so forth<sup>60</sup>—combined with the recitation of spells, meditation on Buddhist images, and so forth.<sup>61</sup> It is not clear exactly when these tantras were produced. However, elements they contain are found in Mahāyāna sūtras translated

---

<sup>58</sup> *rnal 'byor nang pa thabs kyi rgyud kyi theg pa* (Padmasambhava, *Garland of Views*, P4726, vol. 83, 84.1.1- 84.1.2).

<sup>59</sup> Yukei Matsunaga, "A History of Tantric Buddhism in India with Reference to Chinese Translations," in *Buddhist Thought and Asian Civilization: Essays in Honor of Herbert V. Guenther on His Sixtieth Birthday*, eds. Leslie S. Kawamura and Keith Scott (Emeryville, CA: Dharma Publishing, 1977), pp. 171-174.

<sup>60</sup> de Jong, "A New History of Tantric Literature," pp. 95-96.

<sup>61</sup> Matsunaga, "A History of Tantric Buddhism," pp. 173-174.

into Chinese as late as the sixth century,<sup>62</sup> and therefore it appears that these early tantras—which might not have been clearly distinguished from other Mahāyāna sūtras—developed at the latest by the first quarter of the seventh century.

This early stratum of tantric texts was retrospectively designated “Action Tantra” by Buddhaguhya around the middle of the eighth century. He identified the following texts as constituting this category: the *Susiddhikara*, the *General Secret Tantra*, the *King of the Three Vows*, and the *Vajrapāṇi Initiation Tantra*. It is important to remember that even after new developments emerged, texts of older types continued to be produced; thus, not every tantra in this group necessarily dates to the beginning of the seventh century,

Another feature of many tantras that reflects historical development is the division of deities into families (Tib: *rigs*; Skt: *kula*). According to Snellgrove, the employment of “families” as an organizing structure represents the process by which originally non-Buddhist deities were admitted into the Buddhist fold.<sup>63</sup> In the early strata of tantra we find deities that populate the maṇḍalas organized into three families, at the head of each of which is a leading figure: the Tathāgata family, at the head of which is Śākyamuni (sometimes represented by Mañjuśrī); the lotus family, headed by Avalokiteśvara; and the vajra family, led by Vajrapāṇi.<sup>64</sup> Initially a hierarchy obtained between these three families. The Tathāgata family, consisting of traditional Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, was held to be the highest. Below it was the lotus family, comprising peaceful deities of non-Buddhist origin. Lowest of the three families was the vajra family and its cast of wrathful deities, also of non-Buddhist origin.<sup>65</sup>

---

<sup>62</sup> Matsunaga, “A History of Tantric Buddhism,” p. 173.

<sup>63</sup> Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, p. 191.

<sup>64</sup> Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” p. 1364.

<sup>65</sup> Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” p. 1364.

## Provenance of the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*

The *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana* represents the next stage in the development of Indian Buddhist tantra.<sup>66</sup> It contains a clear soteriological thrust that is not readily apparent in many earlier tantras, in which the emphasis is on practical aims such as protection from various misfortunes and so forth.<sup>67</sup> Moreover, we find also the inclusion of specifically Buddhist doctrinal content in its first chapter, a lengthy presentation of the nature of the mind that strongly reflects the influence of the Yogic Practice School (*rnal 'byor spyod pa*, *yogācāra*; aka Mind-Only School, *sems tsam*, *cittamātra*).<sup>68</sup> Additionally, this text demonstrates the systematic organization of rituals around the three secrets of body, speech, and mind.<sup>69</sup> In terms of Buddha-family structure, the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* embodies a three-family system.<sup>70</sup> Significantly, however, in the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* we find the beginning of the shift from Śākyamuni as the central figure of the maṇḍala to Vairocana as the central figure.

In terms of later doxographies, the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana* is categorized under the rubric of Performance Tantra (*spyod rgyud*, *caryā-tantra*), although the terms “upa-tantra” and “upāya-tantra” are also used. Because it combines elements common to both the earlier and subsequent strata of tantra (that is, the later categories of

---

<sup>66</sup> *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*, *rNam par snang mdzad chen po mngon par rdzogs par byang chub pa rnam par sprul pa byin gyis rlob pa shün tu rgyas pa mdo sde'i dbang po'i rgyal po zhes bya ba'i chos kyi rnam grangs*, *Mahāvairocanābhisaṃbodhivikurvitādhiṣṭhāna-vaipulyasūtreन्द्रarāja-nāma-dharmaparyāya*, tr. by Śilendrabodhi and dPal brtsegs, P126 (Toh. 494), vol. 5, 240.3.2–284.3.1.

<sup>67</sup> de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature,” p. 96.

<sup>68</sup> Hodge, *Mahā-Vairocana*, p. 31 ff.

<sup>69</sup> de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature,” p. 98.

<sup>70</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 65. Hodge points out that the Supplement ( *rgyud phyi ma*, *uttara-tantra* ) to the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*, which likely represents a later outline of the tantra's rituals, exhibits inclination toward a five-family format.

Action Tantra and Yoga Tantra), Buddhaghuhya refers to this category as “Dual Tantra” —obviously a designation formulated in hindsight, since it is only *after* the *Compendium of Principles* is produced and then classified as Yoga Tantra that a text could be considered to combine elements from it and the earliest stratum of Buddhist tantra.

Stephen Hodge sets the period for the composition/ compilation of the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* between 630 and 640.<sup>71</sup> Similarly, Matsunaga cites archeological evidence—the occurrence of Padmapāṇi and Vajrapāṇi together in the cave temples of Aurangabad at the end of the sixth century—to support the possibility that the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana* was composed during the first half of the seventh century.<sup>72</sup> Based on references to various flora in the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*, Hodge locates the site of its production in northeast India, and particularly in the tract that runs from Nālandā Monastery 100 miles north to the foothills of the Himalayas.<sup>73</sup> Hodge also indicates that those involved in the production and early transmission of the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana* were closely connected with Nālandā Monastery.<sup>74</sup>

### **Origin and Development of the *Compendium of Principles***

The next major development after the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana* is the *Compendium of Principles Tantra*, the text with which this study is chiefly concerned. This tantra is of particular importance because in it we find the coalescence of a variety of earlier tantric aspects as well as the introduction of several innovative features of doctrine, ritual, and narrative, the result of which is the emergence of mature Indian Buddhist tantra. Drawing largely on Chinese sources, Stephen Hodge situates the early

---

<sup>71</sup> Stephen Hodge, personal communication, 13 March 2002.

<sup>72</sup> de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature,” p. 100.

<sup>73</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 72.

<sup>74</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” pp. 70 and 74.

development of the *Compendium of Principles* in south India during the last quarter of the seventh century.<sup>75</sup> Soon thereafter, the three central Indian figures in the dissemination of tantric Buddhism to China during the eighth century—Vajrabodhi (671-741; Chi: *Chin-kang-chih*),<sup>76</sup> his disciple Amoghavajra (705-774; Chi: *Pu-k'ung chin-kang*),<sup>77</sup> and their elder countryman Śubhakarasiṃha (637-735; Chi: *Shan-wu-wei*)<sup>78</sup>—arrived in China. Of these three Indian tantric masters, Vajrabodhi and Amoghavajra were the central figures in the translation and transmission of the *Compendium of Principles* and related traditions to China.

In terms of the historical development of the *Compendium of Principles*, the earliest datable reference to the tantra, found in the Chinese biography of Vajrabodhi, locates the tantra right at the turn of the eighth century. According to this biography, Vajrabodhi received teachings on the *Compendium of Principles* in 700 CE in south India from Nāgabodhi.<sup>79</sup> In 723 Vajrabodhi authored a text, preserved in Chinese, summarizing the central practices of the *Compendium of Principles*. This text, the *Recitation Sūtra Extracted from the Vajraśekhara Yoga*, was drawn from the teachings he received in south India circa 700 CE.<sup>80</sup> The title “Vajraśekhara Yoga” here refers to an eighteen-text cycle of tantric texts and is not to be confused with the *Vajraśekhara Tantra*, an explanatory tantra of the *Compendium of Principles* known in Indian and Tibetan traditions but not in China. I will discuss this issue in more detail below (see p. 94).

---

<sup>75</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 66.

<sup>76</sup> Dale Todaro, *An Annotated Translation of the “Tattvasamgraha” (Part 1) with an Explanation of the Role of the “Tattvasamgraha” Lineage in the Teachings of Kukai* (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1985), p. 11.

<sup>77</sup> Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 3.

<sup>78</sup> Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 3.

<sup>79</sup> Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 66.

<sup>80</sup> *Chin kang ting yü ch'ieh chung lia ch'u pien sung ching*, T. Vol. 18, No. 866 (Hodge, “Considerations,” p. 66; Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 11).

In 753, some twelve years after Vajrabodhi had died, his disciple Amoghavajra translated the first chapter of the *Compendium of Principles*, using a manuscript of the tantra he had obtained in south India<sup>81</sup> when he visited there from 743 to 746.<sup>82</sup> This text is thought to represent a later and more developed version of the *Compendium of Principles* than the one Vajrabodhi received at the beginning of the eighth century.<sup>83</sup>

Sometime between Amoghavajra's return from south India in 746 and 771<sup>84</sup> he wrote the *Indications of the Goals of the Eighteen Assemblies of the Yoga of the Adamantine Pinnacle (Vajraśekhara) Scripture*,<sup>85</sup> a summary of the contents of the eighteen texts that comprise the Vajraśekhara Yoga cycle. The *Compendium of Principles* is the first and foremost text of this eighteen-text cycle that represented the latest developments in Indian Buddhist tantra. The centrality and importance of the *Compendium of Principles* is evidenced by the fact that roughly half of Amoghavajra's presentation of the Vajraśekhara canon is a summary of the *Compendium of Principles*, while the second half consists of his summaries of the other seventeen texts.<sup>86</sup> Amoghavajra describes the four sections of the *Compendium of Principles* much as they appear in the extant complete versions of the tantra (Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese). Furthermore, he briefly describes additional material that suggests he was familiar with the contents of the Supplement (*rgyud phyi ma, uttara-tantra*) and Second Supplement (*rgyud phyi ma'i*

---

<sup>81</sup> Ian Astley-Kristensen specifies that Amoghavajra returned to China from Sri Lanka (Ian Astley-Kristensen, *The Rishukyō: The Sino-Japanese Tantric Prajñāpāramitā in 150 Verses [Amoghavajra's Version]* [Tring, U.K.: The Institute of Buddhist Studies, 1991], p. 10).

<sup>82</sup> Hodge, "Considerations," p. 66. Amoghavajra's translation is T. Vol. 18, No. 865: *Chin kang ting i ch'ieh ju lai chen shih she ta hsieng cheng ta chiao wang ching* (Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 10).

<sup>83</sup> Hodge, "Considerations," p. 66.

<sup>84</sup> Giebel, "*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*," p. 109.

<sup>85</sup> *Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh shih-pa-hui chih-kuei*, T. Vol. 18, No. 869 (Giebel, "*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*," p. 107).

<sup>86</sup> Giebel, "*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*," p. 112.



*phyi ma, uttarottara-tantra*) of the complete versions of the tantra as we have them today, although his text of the *Compendium of Principles* might have contained these elements in earlier stages of their development.<sup>87</sup>

Since Amoghavajra composed his digest of the eighteen-part *Vajraśekhara* cycle after he returned to China from south India in 746, we can assume it was based on the version of the *Compendium of Principles* he obtained and the related teachings he received during his trip. Furthermore, because his description of the *Compendium of Principles* and his translation of its first chapter—both produced after his trip to south India—closely resemble the extant versions of the tantra, we can conclude that by the middle of the eighth century in south India the *Compendium of Principles* had developed into something closely resembling the final form in which we have it today in Sanskrit as well as Tibetan and Chinese translations.

Buddhaguhya also refers to material in all five sections of the tantra—the four sections plus the fifth section consisting of the Supplement and Second Supplement—in his commentary on the *Compendium of Principles*,<sup>88</sup> although the way he refers to them suggests that they might have represented a cycle of independent texts rather than a single organic text.<sup>89</sup> Thus, since Buddhaguhya flourished during the middle of the eighth century and was a resident of Nālandā Monastery in northeastern India, we can conclude that by the middle of the eighth century something close to the final version of the *Compendium of Principles* existed in northeastern India as well as in south India. By the

---

<sup>87</sup> Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh*,” n. 155, pp. 163-164.

<sup>88</sup> Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 29. He draws this information from Takeo Kitamura, “*Tantrārthavatāra* o Chūshin to shita *Kongōchōkyō* no Kenkyū, I,” *Mikkyōgaku* No. 7, 1970, pp. 6, 14-15; *ibid.*, II, *Mikkyōgaku* No. 8, 1971, pp. 3, 6, 11, 19, and so forth. Further research into Buddhaguhya’s text—checking the passages he quotes from the *Compendium of Principles* against the text of the tantra itself and so forth—is necessary to determine more precisely the development of the *Compendium of Principles*.

<sup>89</sup> Stephen Hodge, personal communication, 14 April 2002. This requires further investigation.

time Śākyamitra composed his *Kosala Ornament*<sup>90</sup>—the first word-by-word commentary on the *Compendium of Principles*—probably near the end of the eighth century, the tantra had developed into the final form in which we find it today.<sup>91</sup>

Therefore, based on the evidence from Chinese sources as well as the Tibetan translations of commentaries by Buddhaguhya and Śākyamitra, we can conclude that the *Compendium of Principles* developed in India over time from its initial composition during the last quarter of the seventh century until sometime in the middle of the eighth century. How this composition and development occurred, and how texts and practices circulating independently might have been included in the tantra during the development of the *Compendium of Principles*, remains far less clear.

As for the location of the *Compendium of Principles*' production, Chinese sources point to south India. Vajrabodhi received teachings in south India from Nāgabodhi, a disciple of Nāgārjuna (according to Sino-Japanese traditions).<sup>92</sup> Chinese traditions relate that the *Compendium of Principles* appeared when a *bhadanta* (perhaps Nāgārjuna)<sup>93</sup> took it from the Iron Stūpa in south India.<sup>94</sup>

---

<sup>90</sup> Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament: Extensive Explanation of the "Compendium of Principles," De kho na nyid bsdus pa'i rgya cher bshad pa ko sa la'i rgyan*, *Kosala-alaṅkārayatattvasaṃgrahaṭīkā*, P3326 (Toh. 2503), vol. 70, 189.1.1–vol. 71, 94.2.6. This text consists of 12,000 stanzas (Butön, *Ship*, 64b.1).

<sup>91</sup> The *Kosala Ornament* as preserved in Tibetan translation comments on all five sections of the *Compendium of Principles* as we find it today. Aside from some minor differences in translation, I have found the *Compendium of Principles* as quoted in the *Kosala Ornament* to be the same as the tantra as preserved in the extant Sanskrit version and in its Tibetan translation. While I have located passages in the *Kosala Ornament* that comment on all five sections of the *Compendium of Principles*, thoroughly checking the tantra quoted in the commentary against the entire text of the tantra itself remains a desideratum. I will discuss below Śākyamitra's dates.

<sup>92</sup> Hodge, "Considerations," p. 66.

<sup>93</sup> Charles Orzech relates that the Chinese disciples of Amoghavajra identify the *bhadanta* as Nāgārjuna, and present the lineage passing from him to Nāgabodhi and then to Vajrabodhi himself ("The Legend of the Iron Stūpa," in *Buddhism in Practice*, ed. D.S. Lopez, Jr. [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995], p. 314). Although this Nāgārjuna is often identified as the same person as the fourth-century Nāgārjuna who is the central figure in the Mādhyamaka philosophical school, this is an error. Here it

The location of south India as the place of the *Compendium of Principles*' origin also finds support in a Tibetan source. Butön includes in his *Ship for Launching onto the Ocean of Yoga Tantra* a passage (in Tibetan but translated from Sanskrit) in which the *Compendium of Principles* and related tantras are described as descending onto the roof of King Prakāśacandra<sup>95</sup> of Patikirti, a city near Śrī Parvata in south India.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, Butön records an oral tradition from fourteenth-century Tibet explaining the lineage as passing through Nāgārjuna and Nāgabodhi (as Chinese traditions assert),<sup>97</sup> and a contemporary Tibetan oral tradition holds that Nāgabodhi is still alive in south India.<sup>98</sup>

The reference to Śrī Parvata suggests further corroborating evidence for south India as the place of the *Compendium of Principles*' production. David Lorenzen not only locates Śrī Parvata in south India (and specifically in the state of Andhra Pradesh), but he also identifies it as a center of tantric activity by the seventh century:<sup>99</sup>

---

refers to the tantric Nāgārjuna, whose full name is sometimes given as Nāgārjunagarbha and who authored several tantric commentaries preserved in the Tibetan canon. This figure probably lived during the mid to late seventh century.

<sup>94</sup> Orzech, "Legend of the Iron Stūpa," p. 314. If Nāgārjuna is indeed the first human in the lineage, this further supports the argument that the *Compendium of Principles* first appeared in the last quarter of the seventh century, since Vajrabodhi would then be the third human in the lineage and he is said to have received teachings on the tantra around 700 CE.

<sup>95</sup> I have reconstructed this Sanskrit from the Tibetan *rab gsal zla ba*. Leonard van der Kuijp reconstructs the Sanskrit as Pradyotacandra rather than Prakāśacandra (Leonard W. J. van der Kuijp, "Notes Apropos of the Transmission of the Sarvadurgatipariśodhanatantra in Tibet," in *Studien zur Indologie und Iranistik* 16 [1992], p. 124, n. 25).

<sup>96</sup> Butön Rinchendrup (Bu ston Rin chen grub), *Ship for Launching onto the Ocean of Yoga Tantra* (*rNal 'byor rgyud kyī rgya mtshor 'jug pa'i gru gzings*), in *Collected Works of Bu ston*, Part 11 *da* (Lhasa: Zhol Printing House, 1990; photographic reproduction Delhi: International Academy of Indian Culture, 1968), 59a.6-59a.7.

<sup>97</sup> *de'i gnam rgyud dang mthun par rgyal po indra bhū ti che chung gsum la brgyud nas/ klu sgrub/ klu byang/...la brgyud par kha cig 'chad do/* (Butön, *Ship*, 61a.4-61a.5).

<sup>98</sup> Geshe Jampel Thardo, personal communication, May, 1999.

<sup>99</sup> David N. Lorenzen, *The Kāpālikas and Kālāmukhas: Two Lost Śaivite Sects* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1972; revised edition, 1991), pp. 50-51.

The famous holy center Śrīparvata (also called Śrīśailam) is located in Kurnool District of Andhra Pradesh. It is mentioned in the *Mahābhārata* as a place sacred to Śiva and Devī...These two references by Bāṇa indicate that Śrīparvata was already famous as a center of tantric worship by the first half of the seventh century...

Additionally, a short modern work on Andhra Pradesh more specifically locates Śrī Parvata in the Nagarjunakonda Valley of the Krishna River.<sup>100</sup>

In conclusion, all the available evidence—from Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan sources—points to south or southeastern India as the locus of production of the *Compendium of Principles*. Furthermore, the initial composition of the tantra most likely occurred during the last quarter of the seventh century, and the *Compendium of Principles* developed into its final form—probably in part through incorporating one or more independent texts—by the middle of the eighth century.

I will discuss in some detail the innovative practices and doctrines found in the *Compendium of Principles*, along with their import, in chapter three (see p. 173 ff). In brief, we find in this seminal tantra and texts related to it the continued development of distinctly tantric contemplative practices, deities in their wrathful reflexes, and the introduction of practices involving sex and violence. In terms of Buddha families, the maṇḍalas of the *Compendium of Principles* and most of its associated texts exhibit an expansion of the three-family structure found in earlier tantras into a five-family structure. Vairocana and his Tathāgata family are still at the center of the maṇḍala, but the hierarchical relationship between the three families found in earlier tantras has now fallen away, and all the families of deities stand on equal footing. However, Vajrapāṇi takes on a central role in much of the *Compendium of Principles* and several related

---

<sup>100</sup> N. Ramesan, *Temples and Legends of Andhra Pradesh* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1962), p. 15.

texts,<sup>101</sup> and this prefigures the ascendancy of the vajra family and its wrathful deities that we find in later tantric texts (classified under the rubrics of Mahāyoga, Yoginī Tantra, Highest Yoga Tantra, and so forth).

Although the maṇḍalas of the *Compendium of Principles* and its family of tantras are arranged around five Buddha families, the contents of the tantras are frequently divided into sets of four. This indicates the transitional status of these texts in Indian tantric Buddhist development from three-family to five-family systems, which I will discuss in chapter three (see p. 200 ff). In terms of later doxographical categorization, the *Compendium of Principles* and the group of texts that it spawned (the *Purification of All Bad Transmigrations*, the *Vajraśekhara Tantra*, the *Conquest over the Three Worlds*, the *Śrī Paramādyā*, and so forth) are classified as Yoga Tantra.

## **Mahāyoga**

As one analyzes the pattern of changes from the earliest tantras to the *Compendium of Principles* and the family of texts it generated, one finds a number of features that distinguish mature Indian tantra, including a clear soteriological bent, narrative structures bound up with both legitimization and the introduction of new doctrines and practices, and a self-conscious identity as a new and distinct tradition (I will discuss these in detail in chapter three, p. 173 ff).<sup>102</sup>

The continued development of doctrines and practices growing out of the *Compendium of Principles* and the texts it directly spawned resulted in the next phase of Indian Buddhist tantra—texts such as the *Secret Assembly Tantra* (*Guhyasamāja*), the *Yoga of the Equality of All Buddhas* (*Buddhasamayoga*), and the *Secret Nucleus Tantra* (*Guhyagarbha*)—which would later be classified as Mahāyoga. As David Germano and

---

<sup>101</sup> Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” p. 1364.

<sup>102</sup> Traditional scholarship has explicitly focused on the shift away from external rites and to internal contemplation in defining the *Compendium of Principles* and the corpus of tantras related to it.

others have argued, these developments were initially seen as extensions of the texts that would be included under the rubric of Yoga Tantra—they were “great” or “supercharged” Yoga Tantra. As a result, the term “Mahāyoga” (“Great” or “Super Yoga”) was used to classify them (at least in some quarters).

I will discuss Mahāyoga, and particularly its relationship with the *Compendium of Principles* and its family of texts, in detail in chapter four (pp. 219-291, and especially pp. 236-289 for the relationship between Yoga Tantra and Mahāyoga), so I will make only brief remarks here. Practices involving ritualized sex and violence found in the *Compendium of Principles* and texts of its ilk are expanded and amplified in the corpus of texts classified as Mahāyoga. Two of the most important of these texts are the *Secret Assembly Tantra* (*Guhyasamāja Tantra*) and *Secret Nucleus Tantra* (*Guhyagarbha Tantra*). Amoghavajra discusses the *Secret Assembly* as the fifteenth text in his synopsis of the eighteen texts of the *Vajraśekhara* cycle.<sup>103</sup> Matsunaga concludes that this represents a nascent form of the tantra as we have it today in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese, and that this early version must have been in existence in India before 746 CE.<sup>104</sup> The *Secret Nucleus* is likely a later work that dates to the latter half of the eighth century.<sup>105</sup>

In terms of Buddha families, the *Secret Assembly Tantra* refers to both five families and six families; this apparently transitional status between five- and six-family systems also suggests a relatively early date for the tantra. In some of the Mahāyoga tantras Vairocana and his Tathāgata family are at the center of the maṇḍala, as is the case with the *Compendium of Principles* and most of the texts classified as Yoga Tantra. In the *Secret Nucleus Tantra*, however, Akṣobhya and his vajra family of wrathful deities are

---

<sup>103</sup> Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh*,” p. 193.

<sup>104</sup> Matsunaga, cited in Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh*,” p. 195.

<sup>105</sup> See p. 235 ff for a discussion of the *Secret Nucleus Tantra*’s dates.

central. This shift to wrathful deities is further developed in later tantras, and indicates that the *Secret Nucleus Tantra* is a later composition than the *Secret Assembly Tantra*.

There are Indian commentaries on the *Secret Nucleus* preserved in Tibetan translation and attributed to the Indian exegetes Vilāsavajra and Buddhaguhya, places the tantra's production sometime during the eighth century. We must bear in mind that, while the *Secret Nucleus Tantra* is the central Mahāyoga tantra in Tibetan Nyingma traditions, Amoghavajra does not mention it in his description of the eighteen-tantra cycle—nor to my knowledge do any Chinese materials. Amoghavajra also does not refer to the category “Mahāyoga”—or indeed to any doxographical classifications. Thus, the construction of “mahāyoga” as a category of tantra, and indeed tantric doxography itself, must be seen as a later development, and perhaps one that represents only regional Indian tradition.

The tantras grouped together under the rubric of Mahāyoga reflect the continued development of extreme or radical practices found in inchoate form in the *Compendium of Principles* and the family of texts that developed out of it. In particular, we find more advanced forms of wrathful practices and sexual practices (for instance, the *Secret Assembly Tantra* was taught when the Supramundane Victor was residing in the female vagina).<sup>106</sup> It seems unlikely that the introduction of practices involving the subtle body and the manipulation of life-energies at internal psycho-physical centers (and the subtle levels of consciousness associated with them) occurred with these tantras. Certainly the later commentarial traditions include such practices, but the evidence suggests that the earliest traditions of the tantras themselves do not.

---

<sup>106</sup> Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” p. 193.

## Yoginī Tantras and Highest Yoga Tantra

Mahāyoga constitutes the first of the three inner vehicles in nine-vehicle systems. However, fourfold doxographical systems subsume texts such as the *Secret Assembly Tantra* under the rubric of Highest Yoga Tantra (Tib: *bla med [rnal 'byor] rgyud*; Skt: *anuttara-[yoga]-tantra*). Again, this demonstrates the artifice involved with doxographical constructs. A further example of this is a group of tantras sometimes referred to as yoginī tantras, of which there is some overlap with texts classified as Mahāyoga in nine-vehicle doxographies and as Highest Yoga Tantra in fourfold classification systems. The continued development of practices and doctrines found in Mahāyoga, and particularly those involving wrathful deities, sexual yoga, and the subtle body, resulted in tantras that would eventually be classified as Highest Yoga Tantra. The antinomian bent of the violence and sex in these tantras reflects their origins outside monastic institutions, in the traditions of the “Perfected” (Skt: *siddha*) yogi cults (and perhaps also local deity cults).<sup>107</sup> The earliest known yoginī tantra is the *Yoga of the Equality of all Buddhas*,<sup>108</sup> which is included in Amoghavajra’s summary of the Vajraśekhara Yoga cycle and so dates, at least in an early stage of its development, to the middle of the eighth century (and probably earlier).<sup>109</sup> Furthermore, in the latter half of the eighth century Vilāsavajra quotes from the *Laghusaṃvara*, a Yoginī Tantra, in his commentaries on the *Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī* and the *Secret Essence Tantra*,<sup>110</sup> so

---

<sup>107</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 294-299.

<sup>108</sup> Giebel reconstructs the Sanskrit as *Sarvabuddhasamāyogaḍākinisaṃvarajālayoga* (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh*,” p. 180, n. 197).

<sup>109</sup> Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch’ieh*,” pp. 180-181, n. 197 & p. 193. Matsunaga also dates the development of other texts later classified under the rubric of Highest Yoga Tantra from the middle of the eighth century on (Matsunaga, “A History of Tantric Buddhism,” p. 179).

<sup>110</sup> Davidson, “Names of Mañjuśrī,” p. 8.



we know that such tantras had reached a more advanced stage of development by that time.

The maṇḍala structures in these texts diverges from the five- and six-family structures found in texts classified as Yoga Tantra and Mahāyoga. In many tantras of the yoginī type, the central figure resides in union with his female partner and is surrounded by eight female deities (often termed *yoginīs* or *ḍākiṇīs*).<sup>111</sup> In the *Hevajra Tantra*, for instance, we find Hevajra and his consort surrounded by eight female deities, arranged in the four cardinal directions and the four intermediate directions.<sup>112</sup> Other texts portray a central female deity surrounded by other female deities; still others include rituals involving a single deity, of both male and female gender.<sup>113</sup> Continuing the trend of the Mahāyoga tantras, the vajra family is the central fixture of the maṇḍala, and the central deity is thus identified as an emanation of Akṣobhya.<sup>114</sup>

As the production of such tantras continued, their exegetical proponents—and some of the texts themselves—came to call themselves “Highest Yoga Tantra.” This category was further subdivided, with Mahāyoga tantras such as the *Secret Assembly* classified as Father Tantras and Yoginī Tantras such as the *Hevajra* and *Cakrasaṃvara* classified as Mother Tantras.<sup>115</sup> The last subcategory to develop historically was that of Non-Dual Tantras, to which the *Kālacakra Tantra*, the final stage in the development of Indian Buddhist tantra, belongs. There has been much speculation about the relationship between Śaivite-type tantras of Bengal, Bihar, Kashmir, and so forth and Buddhist tantras included under the rubric of Highest Yoga Tantra—some arguing for wholesale unilateral

---

<sup>111</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 295-297.

<sup>112</sup> Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1, p. 209.

<sup>113</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, pp. 295-297.

<sup>114</sup> Snellgrove, “Categories of Buddhist Tantras,” p. 1365.

<sup>115</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 244 and de Jong, “A New History of Tantric Literature,” p. 105.

influence in one direction, some arguing for it in the other direction, some arguing for mutual sharing and bilateral borrowing. However, this fascinating and complex issue is beyond the purview of the current study. **Structure of the *Compendium of Principles***

The received text of the *Compendium of Principles* as we have it today is a rather lengthy text, especially for a tantra. One of the two surviving Sanskrit manuscripts consists of 150 palm-leaf pages; since the text is written on both the front and back of each palm leaf, it totals 300 sides in all.<sup>116</sup> The Tibetan translation by Rinchen Zangpo and Śraddhākaravarman as it appears in the Peking edition of the *Kangyur* spans some 260 folio sides. The Chinese translation of the tantra in its final form by Shih-hu (Dānapāla) consists of thirty fascicles.<sup>117</sup>

An introduction, a body, and an appended section constitute the *Compendium of Principles*. The introduction describes the qualities of Vairocana—the teacher of the tantra—as well as the audience, location, and time of the teaching. It also includes descriptions of Mahāvairocana and Samantabhadra. The body of the tantra consists of the emanation and description of five cycles of maṇḍalas as well as their respective rites. These are arranged in four sections, referred to in the commentarial tradition as the Vajra-Element Section (Tib: *rdo rje dbyings kyi dum bu*; Skt: *\*vajradhātu-khaṇḍa*),<sup>118</sup> the Conquest over the Three Worlds Section (Tib: *'jig rten gsum las rnam par rgyal ba'i dum bu* or *kham s gsum rnam par rgyal ba'i dum bu*; Skt: *\*trilokavijaya-khaṇḍa*), the Taming Transmigrators Section (Tib: *'gro ba 'dul ba'i dum bu*; Skt: *\*jagadvinaya-*

---

<sup>116</sup> Snellgrove, *Facsimile Reproduction*, p. 7. This refers to the Sanskrit manuscript discovered in Nepal by Snellgrove and Brough, a romanized edition of which Isshi Yamada has published under the title *Sarva-tathāgata-tattva-saṅgraha nāma mahāyāna-sūtra*.

<sup>117</sup> Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 10.

<sup>118</sup> An alternate title for this section, “Manifest Realization of all Ones Gone Thus (Tib: *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi mngon par rtogs pa*; Skt: *\*sarva-tathāgata-abhisamaya*), is less frequently used.

*khaṇḍa* or \**sakalajagadvinaya-khaṇḍa*), and the Achievement of All Aims Section (Tib: *don thams cad grub pa'i dum bu*; Skt: \**sarvārthasiddhi-khaṇḍa*).<sup>119</sup> There is also an appended fifth section consisting of a Supplementary Tantra (Tib: *rgyud phyi ma*; Skt: *uttara-tantra*) and a Second Supplementary Tantra (Tib: *rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma*; Skt: *uttarottara-tantra*), but the body of the tantra—in this context referred to as the “root tantra” (Tib: *rtsa ba'i rgyud*; Skt: *mūla-tantra*)—is taken to be the four sections. I will discuss the Supplementary Tantra and the Second Supplementary Tantra below (see p. 69 ff).

Each section consists of a number of chapters, which total twenty-six in all. The first section spans five chapters, and the third, fourth, and fifth sections contain four chapters each. The anomalous second section, which unlike the other three sections that comprise the body of the tantra contains two maṇḍala cycles rather than one (I will discuss this section in more detail below, p. 77 ff), encompasses nine chapters. In terms of length, however, the first section is the longest. This reflects both the introductory material that occurs only at the beginning of the text and the fact that the maṇḍalas in the first section

---

<sup>119</sup> These section titles appear in the Indian exegete Amoghavajra's Chinese work summarizing the eighteen texts of the *Vajraśekhara Yoga* system, so they were current by the middle of the eighth century (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” pp. 127, 141, 154, and 158). Ānandagarbha, a prolific Indian author of the ninth century, also employs these same section titles in his *Illumination of the Principles* (P3333, vol. 71, 146.5.7-146.5.8; 142.3.6; 144.1.3).

In the tantra itself these sections are identified, respectively, as the “Manifest Realization of the Great Vehicle of All Tathāgatas Great King of Procedures (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi theg pa chen po'i mngon par rtogs pa zhes bya ba'i rtog pa'i rgyal po chen po, sarvatathāgatamahāyānābhisamayanāmamahākālpārāja*),” the “Vajra Pledge of All Tathāgatas Great King of Procedures” (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi rdo rje'i dam tshig zhes bya ba'i rtog pa'i rgyal po chen po, sarvatathāgatavajrasamayanāmamahākālpārāja*), the “Doctrine Pledge of All Tathāgatas Great King of Procedures” (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi chos kyi dam tshig zhes bya ba'i rtog pa'i rgyal po chen po, sarvatathāgatadharmasamayanāmamahākālpārāja*), and the “Action Pledge of All Tathāgatas Great King of Procedures” (*de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi las kyi dam tshig zhes bya ba'i rtog pa'i rgyal po chen po, sarvatathāgatakarmasamayanāmamahākālpārāja*).

as well as the various rites associated with them serve as prototypes for the maṇḍalas and rites that occur in the subsequent sections. Thus, the explanations in the first section are more detailed and thorough, as they are to be carried over to the explanations in subsequent sections, which become increasingly more abbreviated.

Divisions in the *Compendium of Principles* primarily come in sets of four. Each of the four sections of the tantra is associated with a central Buddha figure, a Buddha family, and an aspect of enlightened expression. The first section is associated with Vairocana (the central figure in Yoga Tantra as a whole), the Tathāgata family (Tib: *de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs*; Skt: *tathāgata-kula*), and enlightened body; the second, with Akṣobhya, the vajra family (Tib: *rdo rje'i rigs*; Skt: *vajra-kula*), and enlightened mind; the third, with Amitāyus (aka Lokeśvararāja and, in later traditions, Amitābha), the doctrine family (or lotus family; *chos kyi* or *padma'i rigs*, *dharma-* or *padma-kula*), and enlightened speech; and the fourth, with Ratnasambhava, the jewel family (*rin po che'i rigs*, *ratna-kula*), and enlightened action.

There are also four main types of maṇḍalas and four types of mudrās found in the *Compendium of Principles*, with one type of maṇḍala and one type of mudrā being emphasized in each of the four sections of the tantra (although all four types of maṇḍala and all four types of mudrā are found in each section). Before discussing the individual maṇḍalas and rites of the *Compendium of Principles*, I will make a few comments on maṇḍalas and mudrās.

In general, maṇḍalas are representations of the state of enlightenment, and comprise both the deities who represent various aspects of the enlightened state and the multi-chambered, multi-walled, multi-storied palaces in which they reside. The four types of

maṇḍalas found in the *Compendium of Principles* are great maṇḍalas<sup>120</sup> (*dkyil 'khor chen po, mahā-maṇḍala*), retention maṇḍalas (*gzungs dkyil, dhāraṇī-maṇḍala*),<sup>121</sup> doctrine maṇḍalas (*chos dkyil, dharma-maṇḍala*), and action maṇḍalas (*las dkyil, karma-maṇḍala*).<sup>122</sup> There are two additional types of maṇḍalas presented in each section of the *Compendium of Principles*, the four-mudrā maṇḍala and the single-mudrā maṇḍala. However, these are condensed versions of the four central maṇḍalas, and their rites are abbreviated versions of the extensive rites of the four maṇḍalas. According to Butön the *Compendium of Principles* has a total of 213 maṇḍalas,<sup>123</sup> although it is not at all clear how he arrived at this figure.

The deities in the great maṇḍalas appear in physical form. The deities in the retention maṇḍalas appear as their respective hand-symbols, such as a vajra, bell, hook, noose, and so forth.<sup>124</sup> In the doctrine maṇḍalas of the *Compendium of Principles* the central deity is in physical form while the other deities take the form of their respective hand-symbols on their respective seats, with the deity in the center of its hand-symbol. In the action

---

<sup>120</sup> This fourfold typology of maṇḍalas is taken from Butön's fourteenth-century Tibetan exegesis, although the Indian tantric master Amoghavajra employs the same categorization in his eighth-century Chinese work on the eighteen texts of the Vajraśekhara cycle. In the text of the *Compendium of Principles* itself the maṇḍalas are identified by their individual names and these four categories are not mentioned.

<sup>121</sup> This type of maṇḍala is also called "pledge maṇḍala" ( *dam tshig gi dkyil 'khor, samaya-maṇḍala* ) or "vajra maṇḍala" (*rdo rje'i dkyil 'khor, vajra-maṇḍala*). While the *Compendium of Principles* itself identifies this type of maṇḍala as a vajra maṇḍala, Tibetan commentarial traditions refer to them as retention maṇḍalas. The eighth-century Indian tantric master Amoghavajra also refers to them as retention maṇḍalas (Giebel, "*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*," p. 132).

<sup>122</sup> Each section of the *Compendium of Principles* actually includes two additional maṇḍalas—the four-mudrā and single-mudrā maṇḍalas. However, the four maṇḍalas just mentioned are the primary maṇḍalas; the four-mudrā and single-mudrā maṇḍalas are less elaborate and the rites associated with them are abbreviated versions of the full rites employed in the four maṇḍalas.

<sup>123</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 26a.4.

<sup>124</sup> In some Chinese translations of texts related to the *Compendium of Principles* the deities appear in female form, holding their respective hand-symbols (Giebel, "*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*," pp. 133-134, n. 28).

maṇḍalas the five Buddhas appear in physical form while the other deities appear in the form of female deities such as the offering goddesses and so forth.

The four-mudrā and single-mudrā maṇḍalas that appear in each section are condensed versions of the four maṇḍalas just described. The central figure in the four-mudrā maṇḍalas is one of the five Buddhas, who is surrounded by the other four Buddhas in the form of mudrās (and hence the name “four-mudrā maṇḍala”). There are five four-mudrā maṇḍalas in each of the four sections of the *Compendium of Principles*, with each of the Buddhas of the five families at the center of his own four-mudrā maṇḍala, surrounded by a distinctive set of four mudrās (vajras, lotuses, hooks, and so forth). The single-mudrā maṇḍalas consist of a single deity on a moon-disc in the center of the maṇḍala.

In the strictest sense mudrās are symbolic gestures made with the hands. However, they often entail postures of the entire body, such as the lean of the torso or tilt of the head, and sometimes involve movement of the hands, arms, and so forth. Basically, the mudrā of a deity is the embodiment of the characteristics of enlightenment that the deity represents, and constructing a deity’s mudrā means taking on those characteristics. The literal meaning of “mudrā” (Tib: *phyag rgya*) is “seal,” and relates to official seals used by the government. An official’s seal on a document mandates that the instructions contained therein cannot be transgressed. Similarly, “sealing” oneself as a deity means that one does not pass beyond visualizing oneself as that deity and thinking and acting accordingly.

The four types of mudrās found in the *Compendium of Principles* are great mudrās (Tib: *phyag rgya chen po*, abbreviated to *phyag chen*; Skt: *mahā-mudrā*), pledge mudrās (*dam tshig gi phyag rgya*, abbreviated to *dam rgya*; *samaya-mudrā*), doctrine mudrās (*chos kyi phyag rgya*, abbreviated to *chos rgya*; *dharma-mudrā*), and action mudrās (*las kyi phyag rgya*, abbreviated to *las rgya*; *karma-mudrā*). Great mudrās differ from the other three types of mudrās in that their “construction” entails not physical postures but

rather creating oneself as the deity through visualization itself. There is a proliferation of mudrās in the *Compendium of Principles* not seen in prior or subsequent developments of Indian Buddhist tantric,<sup>125</sup> for reasons that are as yet unclear.<sup>126</sup>

Types of mantra represent another set of four employed in the tantra. The four types of mantras appear to be mantras (Tib: *sngags*), essence mantras (*snying po*, *hṛdaya*), knowledge mantras (*rig pa*, *vidyā*), and mudrās. Though this last term in general refers to gestures, in some instances in the tantra it refers to a type of mantra, as Snellgrove has noted.<sup>127</sup> While I have not found commentaries linking the four types of mantras with corresponding maṇḍalas or mudrās, they are important components of the *Compendium of Principles*.

The Tibetan translation of the *Compendium of Principles* has an additional structural component: the text is divided into nine parts (*bam po*) of roughly equal length. The nine parts usually break the text at logical points (such as the ends of chapters) and so might represent divisions based on content. However, they also likely reflect the physical characteristics of the Sanskrit palm-leaf manuscripts from which the Tibetan translation was made, as the nine parts probably represent nine bundles into which the palm-leaf manuscript was tied for ease of transport and storage.

The tantra most likely represents a compilation of several shorter texts (or parts thereof) in existence during the middle to late seventh century. The beginning of the tantra in particular appears to be an amalgamation of seemingly unrelated pieces that

---

<sup>125</sup> When the topic of Yoga Tantra is broached with Tibetan lamas, their initial response most often is to comment on the large number of mudrās in Yoga Tantra.

<sup>126</sup> Ronald Davidson has suggested that the proliferation of mudrās in Indian royal initiation rites found in the *Dharmottara Purāṇa* and the *Agni Purāṇa* may be the source of the proliferation of mudrās in the *Compendium of Principles* (Ronald Davidson, personal communication, 4 November 2000). Further investigation is necessary.

<sup>127</sup> Snellgrove, "Categories of Buddhist Tantras," p. 1363, n. 10.

lurch from one to the next without explanation or transition. In addition, the narrative of the Bodhisattva Vajrapāṇi's subjugation of Maheśvara with which the second section of the tantra opens, and the anomalous structure of the second section itself (two cycles of maṇḍalas rather than a single cycle), reveal what was likely an independent text (or texts) incorporated into the *Compendium of Principles*. Finally, the fifth section of the tantra, consisting of a Supplementary Tantra (Tib: *rgyud phyi ma*; Skt: *uttara-tantra*) and a Second Supplementary Tantra (*rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma*; *uttarottara-tantra*), also represents appendices added to the text after the compilation of the beginning material and the four sections of the body. I will discuss each of these components of the text below.

All the extant versions of the *Compendium of Principles* in Sanskrit, Tibetan, and Chinese consist of a combination of prose and verse. Although the text is extensive, the style is often terse. As is characteristic of Buddhist tantras in general, details are often omitted from descriptions of maṇḍalas, meditations, and other rites and activities. Buddhist traditions hold that tantras are purposely truncated. Such abbreviation restricts access to all but those qualified by initiation and guidance from a qualified teacher and so forth. Butön explains the secrecy of tantra this way:<sup>128</sup>

In order to stop [people] from becoming involved with tantras of their own accord, tantras are set forth in an incomplete way, in an unclear way, and with confusion.

The necessity of filling out the missing details, clarifying what is unclear, and so forth compelled the composition in India of exegetical literature of various types. These include commentaries proper as well as practice texts such as descriptions of maṇḍalas

---

<sup>128</sup> *rgyud du/rgyud la rang dgar gzhus pa dgag pa'i phyir ma tshang ba dang/mi gsal ba dang/ 'khrugs kyi tshul du gsungs bas* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 15a.4).



and rites performed therein (Tib: *dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga*; Skt: *maṇḍalopāyika* or *maṇḍalavidhi*), descriptions of meditative practices focused on particular deities (Tib: *sgrub thabs*; Skt: *sādhana*), and so forth.

An example of a commentary proper is Śākyamitra's *Kosala Ornament*, a word-by-word explication of the *Compendium of Principles*.<sup>129</sup> Ānandagarbha's *Rite of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala: Source of All Vajras*<sup>130</sup> represents a text that sets forth in extensive form the rite of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala taught in incomplete form in the first chapter of the *Compendium of Principles*.<sup>131</sup> For instance, in the tantra itself the description of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala rite does not even mention the preliminary activities that must be carried out *before* a vajra-master (*rdo rje'i slob dpon, vajra-ācārya*) can perform the rites of admitting students into the maṇḍala, initiating them

<sup>129</sup> Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 189.1.1–vol. 71, 94.2.6.

<sup>130</sup> Sanskrit: “Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍalopāyikā-Sarvavajrodayanāma—bonbun tekisuto to wayaku—(I),” in *Annual of the Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University (Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kunkyūjo nenpō)*, Issue 8 (1986), pp. 258-224 and “Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍalopāyikā-Sarvavajrodayanāma—bonbun tekisuto to wayaku—(II),” in *Annual of the Institute for Comprehensive Studies of Buddhism, Taisho University (Taishō Daigaku Sōgō Bukkyō Kunkyūjo nenpō)*, Issue 9 (1987), pp. 294-222; Tibetan *rDo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i cho ga rdo rje thams cad 'byun g ba zhes bya ba, Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍalopāyikasarvavajrodayanāma*, P3339 (Toh. 2516), vol. 74.

<sup>131</sup> Butön indicates the several sources upon which Ānandagarbha draws in composing this maṇḍala rite:

He [Ānandagarbha] mainly gathers together this material from all texts that have a contribution for the rite of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala in the *Compendium of Principles Tantra*. He will gather together important features of the rite from all texts that contribute to a rite of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, these being other maṇḍalas—for instance the retention maṇḍala of the Vajradhātu section [of the *Compendium of Principles*]; other procedures—for instance the second section [of the *Compendium of Principles*]; other tantras—for instance the *Śrī Paramādyā Tantra*; and other tantra sets—for instance [the Performance Tantra] the *Questions of Subāhu Tantra (de nyid bsdus pa'i rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po ston pa'i skabs nas gtso bor btu la/ dum bu de nyid kyi gzungs dkyil lta bu dkyil 'khor gzhan dang/ dum bu gnyis pa lta bu rtog pa gzhan dang/ dpal mchog lta bu rgyud gzhan dang/ dpung bzang lta bu bya rgyud sde gzhan te/ rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga la phan pa ston pa'i gzhung kun nas cho ga'i khyad par gal che ba rnam btu bar bya'o/* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 19b.4-19b.6).

therein, and so forth.<sup>132</sup> In contrast, Ānandagarbha's ritual text spends some time describing the preliminary procedure.<sup>133</sup> The vajra-master first performs bathing to purify his body. Then through a series of steps he visualizes his tongue as a vajra on a lotus, and thereby blesses his speech and gives it powerful ritual efficacy. He similarly visualizes his hands as vajras (and each individual finger as a single-pointed vajra); this gives the actions performed by his hands powerful ritual efficacy. There follows an extensive and thorough series of practices to secure the area where the maṇḍala will be constructed and the rite will be performed. This includes visualizations in combination with the construction of various mudrās and the recitation of various mantras to drive out obstructive entities from the environs of the rite. In this preliminary phase of the rite each of the ten directions are secured at least once.

These preliminary practices, which are not even mentioned in the *Compendium of Principles*, presuppose that the reader possesses a body of ritual knowledge necessary to fill in required material that is absent from the tantra's description of the rite. Such knowledge would likely be gained from familiarity with other tantras, other rites, and so forth, as well as from one's own teacher (that is, from oral tradition). Thus, the brevity and truncation of much of the *Compendium of Principles* (and Buddhist tantras in general) must be set within a larger context of assumed knowledge and a culture in which much requisite information was still transmitted primarily, and sometimes exclusively, orally.

Ānandagarbha's *Rite of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala: Source of All Vajras* represents an attempt to commit to writing the complete rite—the terse and incomplete description found in the *Compendium of Principles* filled out with the missing but

---

<sup>132</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 229.3.1.

<sup>133</sup> This presentation is drawn from Ānandagarbha, *Rite of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala*, P3339, vol. 74, 3.1.1-3.1.5.

requisite parts drawn from other texts (both written and oral). However, as Butön’s mammoth 700-side commentary on Ānandagarbha’s *Source of All Vajras* attests, such texts are never complete, nor are such bodies of knowledge closed.

## The Tantra’s Introduction

The *Compendium of Principles* begins, as do almost all texts claiming to have been spoken by a Buddha (or elicited by and/ or confirmed by a Buddha), with the familiar refrain: “Thus have I heard at one time: ...”.<sup>134</sup> The introduction then continues with the standard pentad of excellences (Tib: *phun sum tshogs pa lnga*) that serve as the criteria by which a work is considered to be an authentic Buddha-voiced text (Tib: *sangs rgyas kyi bka’*; Skt: *buddha-vacana*): the teacher, location, audience, time, and teaching. Vairocana is identified as the teacher of the tantra. A description of the Akāṣiṣṭha Pure Land<sup>135</sup>—the location of the teaching—follows a rather lengthy list of Vairocana’s attributes. The audience is described as 990,000,000 Mahāsattva-Bodhisattvas, of which eight are identified by name: the Bodhisattva-Mahāsattvas Vajrapāṇi, Avalokiteshvara, Ākāśagarbha, Vajramuṣṭi, Mañjuśrī, Sahacittotpādadharmacakrapravartin, Gaganagañja, and Sarvamārabalapramardin. In addition there are also Tathāgatas<sup>136</sup> as numerous as the

<sup>134</sup> Skt: *evam mayā śrūtam ekasmin samaya*; Tib: *’di skad bdag gis thos pa dus gcig na*.

<sup>135</sup> The location is more specifically the abode of the king of the gods of Akāṣiṣṭha.

<sup>136</sup> I am leaving untranslated the Sanskrit term “*tathāgata*” (and its Tibetan translation equivalent *de bzhin gshegs pa*). It is sometimes translated as “one gone thus” or “thus-gone one.” The Indian exegete Śākyamitra explains the Sanskrit term “*tathāgata*” in this way, in the context of describing the Tathāgata Vairocana:

Because of realizing (Tib: *thugs su chud pa*, Skt: *\*adhigama*) reality (*chos nyid, dharmatā*) in exactly the way (*de bzhin du, tathā*) previous Buddhas realized [it, Vairocana] is a Buddha, that is, a **One Gone Thus** (*de bzhin gshegs pa, tathāgata*), because “**gone**” (*gshegs pa, gata*) means “realize” [and hence *tathāgata* means “realizes (reality) in exactly the way (previous Buddhas realized it)”. Or, in another way, because of teaching phenomena in exactly the way they exist, in a creative etymology in which letters have been transformed, it is One Who Teaches Thus (*de bzhin gshegs pa, \*tathā-darśana*) (*sngon gyi sangs rgyas rnam kyis ji ltar thugs su chud pa de bzhin du chos*

grains of sand of the River Ganges in attendance. The occasion when Vairocana was residing in Akaniṣṭha surrounded by this audience indicates the time of the teaching, the fourth of the five excellences.

The introduction then elaborates further on the host of Tathāgatas present in the audience in this way:<sup>137</sup>

Furthermore, it is thus: the bodies of these limitless, innumerable Tathāgatas appear together in Jambudvīpa, completely filling it like sesame seeds [fill a sesame pod]. Also, from each Tathāgata's body innumerable, limitless Buddha-fields appear.

Here we find an expression of the proliferation of Buddha-fields (also called Pure Lands) found in Mahāyāna literature—and particularly in Pure Land texts and some of the visionary Perfection of Wisdom texts. While the use of the sesame simile occurs again just below in the *Compendium of Principles*—at the beginning of the enlightenment narrative that is such a crucial feature of the tantra<sup>138</sup>—here its presence seems rather abrupt. It is possible that this represents material added later to the *Compendium of Principles*, or material added from a source other than that of the description of Vairocana's qualities, the audience, and so forth. I will discuss further the possibility that the tantra was composed from multiple sources below.

---

*nyid thugs su chud pas na sangs rgyas ni de bzhin gshegs pa ste gshegs pa ni thugs su chud pa'i don yin pa'i phyir ro/ yang na chos rnams ji ltar gnas pa de bzhin du ston par mdzad pas na nges pa'i tshig gi tshul gyis yi ge bsgyur ba byas pas de bzhin gshegs pa'o/; Śākyamitra, Kosala Ornament, P3326, vol. 70, 192.4.5-192.4.6).*

<sup>137</sup> *de yang 'di ltar 'dzam bu'i gling na de bzhin gshegs pa tshad med grangs med pa de dag gi skus kyang til gyi gang bu bzhin du gang bar snang ngo/ (Compendium of Principles, P112, vol. 4, 219.1.6-219.1.7).*

<sup>138</sup> *Compendium of Principles, P112, vol. 4, 219.4.3-219.4.4.*

After the description of the audience, the introduction indicates that the fifth excellence, the teaching, is to follow: “In these Buddha-fields this mode of doctrine is taught.”<sup>139</sup> This consists of the various maṇḍalas and the teaching of their rites that comprise the body of the text.

The tantra continues with a description of Mahāvairocana that seems to be pasted in without any clear relation to what precedes it in the tantra, or to what follows it. The long description of Vairocana’s qualities is situated within the context of the five excellences. It not only distinguishes the salient features of Vairocana, the teacher of the tantra, but it also indicates the location and audience: Vairocana was residing in the abode of the king of the gods of Akaniṣṭha, accompanied by 999,000,000 Bodhisattvas. Within this there is even a sub-description of Akaniṣṭha, but this too is in a particular context—the location of the teaching—and so relates to both the material that comes before it and the material that follows it.

In contrast to the litany of Vairocana’s qualities at the beginning of the text, the long description of Mahāvairocana (which spans more than one and a half folio sides) is not set in any context; it is simply a description. There has been no previous mention of Mahāvairocana (“Great Vairocana”; Tib: *rnam par snang mdzad chen po*, usually abbreviated to *rnam snang chen po*), and a search of an electronic edition of the *Compendium of Principles* located no other references to Mahāvairocana in the tantra.

Butön uses the two terms with two distinct meanings throughout his several Yoga Tantra texts. For instance, he speaks of the three meditative stabilizations (*ting nge ’dzin gsum, tri-samādhi*) as “the method of attaining [the states of] Vairocana and Mahāvairocana.”<sup>140</sup> Butön elucidates the difference between Vairocana and

---

<sup>139</sup> *sangs rgyas kyi zhing de dag na yang chos kyi tshul ’di ’chad do/* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 219.1.7).

<sup>140</sup> *rnam snang dang rnam snang chen po thob pa’i thabs* (Butön, *Ship*, 12b.1-12b.2).

Mahāvairocana by quoting from both Ānandagarbha’s *Commentary on the Earlier Part of the Compendium of Principles*<sup>141</sup> and Śākyamitra’s *Kosala Ornament*. Butön presents Ānandagarbha’s explanation of the difference this way:<sup>142</sup>

Someone asks, “What is the difference between these two?” The one who became manifested and completely buddhified in Akaniṣṭha—the essence of the bodies of the five Tathāgatas—is Vairocana. Vairocana’s non-dualistic mind and the sphere of reality having the character of beginninglessness and endlessness which serves as the cause of generation in the mode of Vairocana and Vajrasattva and so forth who are arisen from [that non-dual] mind are Mahāvairocana.

Śākyamitra characterizes Mahāvairocana in this way:<sup>143</sup>

Mahāvairocana is the nature of enlightened wisdom—liberation from the afflictive obstructions and the obstructions to omniscience—that which causes the thorough display of the individually appearing natures of all things.

In contrast, he states, “Vairocana is a Form Body.”

Thus, Vairocana is the enlightened form of the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi (aka Siddhārtha; I will discuss his enlightenment narrative below). In contrast,

---

<sup>141</sup> This refers to the first part of Ānandagarbha’s *Illumination of the Principles*, P3333 (Toh. 2510), vol. 71.

<sup>142</sup> *’di gnyis kyi khyad par ci zhig yin zhe na/ ’og min gyi gnas su mngon par rdzogs par sangs rgyas pa de/ de bzhin gshegs pa lnga’i sku’i ngo bo nyid ni/ rnam par snang mdzad yin la/ de nyid kyi gnyis su med pa’i sems dang sems las byung ba’i rnam par snang mdzad dang/ rdo rje sems dpa’ la sogs pa’i tshul du bskyed pa’i rgyur gyur pa chos kyi dbyings/ thog ma dang tha ma med pa’i mtshan nyid can ni/ rnam par snang mdzad chen po yin no/* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 10b.4-10b.6).

<sup>143</sup> *rnam par snang mdzad chen po ni/ ye shes kyi rang bzhin te/ nyon mongs pa dang/ shes bya’i sgrib pa las rnam par grol ba/ dngos po thams cad kyi rang bzhin so sor snang ba yang dag par ston par spyod pa’o/* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 10b.6-10b.7).

Mahāvairocana represents the non-dualistic expression of enlightened mind—the beginningless and endless mind of enlightenment, pure of all defilements and so forth—and reality which it realizes. This non-dual entity of the mind of enlightenment and the sphere of reality—that is, Mahāvairocana—gives rise to the various expressions of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas (and, it seems, to the appearances of all things). Butön sums this up elsewhere in his *Extensive Explanation* by describing Mahāvairocana as “the non-duality of the sphere of reality [emptiness] and enlightened wisdom”<sup>144</sup>

Following the litany of Mahāvairocana’s attributes—which appears without any explanation of how it might relate to the material it precedes or follows—there is a presentation in verse of the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra’s qualities. This is the debut of Samantabhadra (“All Good”; Tib: *kun tu bzang po*) in the *Compendium of Principles*. There is no explicit link made between Samantabhadra and Mahāvairocana or his list of attributes. However, after listing Samantabhadra’s qualities, the text states, “The Supramundane Victor mind of great enlightenment, the great Bodhisattva Samantabhadra, resides in the minds of all Tathāgatas.”<sup>145</sup> Thus, unlike Mahāvairocana, he is tied into the larger narrative of the introduction through his relationship to all Tathāgatas. Additionally, it is possible that Samantabhadra represents the embodiment of Mahāvairocana, since, as we have seen, Mahāvairocana represents the non-dual entity of enlightened wisdom (or the mind of enlightenment) and the sphere of reality, and Samantabhadra here is described as the mind of enlightenment. Samantabhadra becomes the central figure of tantric traditions transmitted to Tibet beginning in the middle of the

---

<sup>144</sup> *dbyings dang ye shes gnyis su med pa* (Butön, *Extensive Explanation*, 9a.2).

<sup>145</sup> *bcom ldan byang chub chen po'i thugs/ byang chub sems dpa' chen kun tu bzang po ni de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thugs la gnas so/* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 219.4.2-219.4.3). The Tibetan text treats *bcom ldan byang chub chen po'i thugs* as the last line of verse, while Yamada’s Sanskrit edition treats the corresponding Sanskrit, *bhagavān mahābodhicittaḥ*, as the beginning of the prose section (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 7).

eight century, so it is possible that his appearance in the introduction to the *Compendium of Principles* represents an early stage of his development in Indian tantra. It is also possible that this material represents a slightly later stratum of Buddhist tantra that was incorporated into the text as it underwent revision. In any case, the presentation of Samantabhadra and his attributes is at least somewhat contextualized: he resides in the minds of all Tathāgatas, and there has already been some discussion about all Tathāgatas earlier in the *Compendium of Principles*.

Samantabhadra does appear in the enlightenment narrative that follows, although it is not clear whether the term is used as a name or simply as an adjectival description or epithet for the mind of enlightenment. In any case, as with the presentation of Mahāvairocana's attributes, the litany of Samantabhadra's attributes seems rather disconnected from the rest of the tantra. The litanies of the respective qualities of Mahāvairocana and Samantabhadra perhaps represent independent texts (or sections thereof) spliced into the beginning of the *Compendium of Principles*.

The purpose of such an operation is not immediately clear. It is possible that the section on Mahāvairocana is designed to communicate the more abstract qualities of enlightened mind and the state of enlightenment, and, although they are not that dissimilar from the attributes of Vairocana with which the *Compendium of Principles* opens, that this represents a later stratum of development. The characterization of Samantabhadra as the mind of enlightenment (*byang chub kyi sems, bodhicitta*) perhaps ties him in with Mahāvairocana, which is the mind of enlightenment and reality as undifferentiable. It also perhaps connects to the narrative of the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi's enlightenment through the process of the five manifest enlightenments (Tib: *mngon byang lnga*; Skt: *pañca-abhisambodhi*), in which the generation of the mind of enlightenment is described as "*samantabhadra*" ("all-good"); and to the generation of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, in which the Bodhisattva Samantabhadra appears as the mind of



all Tathāgatas.<sup>146</sup> It is possible that the litany of Samantabhadra’s attributes was an independent entity added as further description for the term “*samantabhadra*” that occurs in the enlightenment narrative; however, it would seem more logical to place such a description *after* the enlightenment narrative rather than before it. It is also possible that the description of Samantabhadra’s qualities represents a later (or at least separate) development inserted into the text to expand on the references to Samantabhadra in the sections on the five manifest enlightenments and the generation of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Whatever the case, the passages on Mahāvairocana and Samantabhadra are not explicitly tied to the rest of the tantra. Thus, these two sections, although perhaps related to each other, seem to float unmoored in the waters of the tantra that surround them.

Stephen Hodge has suggested that in the development of Mahāyāna Buddhist literature (which includes tantras) texts are often reworked, and that this process sometimes involves a “new front-end”—the insertion of new material at the beginning of a text.<sup>147</sup> Hodge discusses such a process in the context of the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana*, suggesting that the entire first chapter of this important Buddhist tantra existed as an independent Mahāyāna work before being incorporated into the text.<sup>148</sup> The *Compendium of Principles* begins with seemingly unrelated sections on Vairocana, Mahāvairocana, Samantabhadra, Śākyamuni’s enlightenment narrative, and the generation of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala that follow one after the other without any transition or explanation of how they relate to each other. Thus, it is possible that the rather haphazard character of the beginning of the *Compendium of Principles* reflects the

---

<sup>146</sup> *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi thugs kun tu bzang po zhes bya ba* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 220.3.3-220.3.4).

<sup>147</sup> Stephen Hodge, personal communication, April 17, 2002.

<sup>148</sup> Hodge, *Mahā-Vairocana*, pp. 14-15.

process of the tantra's composition and perhaps its compilation from multiple sources and its reworking over time.

After the passage in which it is revealed that Bodhisattva Samantabhadra resides in the minds of all Tathāgatas, the frame-story of the *Compendium of Principles* begins. This is the narrative of the final stage of Śākyamuni's enlightenment, albeit recast, as we shall see, in tantric terms.<sup>149</sup> There is no transition out of the Samantabhadra section. Rather, after “The Supramundane Victor mind of great enlightenment, the great Bodhisattva Samantabhadra resides in the minds of all Tathāgatas,” the tantra abruptly and disjointedly continues, “Then all Tathāgatas thoroughly filled this Buddha-field as for example [sesame seeds completely fill] a sesame pod.”<sup>150</sup> Then all these Tathāgatas assemble and proceed to where the great Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi is seated on the platform of enlightenment (*byang chub kyi snying po, bodhimaṇḍa*). They display their Complete Enjoyment Bodies for his benefit and address him thus:<sup>151</sup>

Son of [good] lineage, how will you complete the unsurpassed complete and perfect enlightenment, you who act with energy for all austerities without the knowledge of the principles of all Ones Gone Thus?

The dialogue continues as Sarvārthasiddhi, compelled by all the Tathāgatas who have gathered and addressed him, rises from the unfluctuating meditative stabilization (*mi g.yo*

---

<sup>149</sup> I am summarizing the narrative mainly from the Tibetan ( *Compendium of Principles* , P112, vol. 4, 219.4.3-220.2.7.

<sup>150</sup> *de nas de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyis/ /sangs rgyas kyi zhing 'di dper na til gyi gang bu bzhin du yongs su gang bar gyur to/* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 219.4.3-219.4.4).

<sup>151</sup> Tibetan: *rigs kyi bu khyod kyis gang gi phyir de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid mngon par ma rtogs par dka' ba spyod pa thams cad la spro ba bskyed cing/ ji ltar bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub mngon par rdzogs par bya snyam* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 219.4.5-219.4.6); Sanskrit: *katham kulaputrānuttarāṃ samyaksambodhim abhisambhotsyase, yas tvam sarvatathāgatatatvānabhijñatayā sarvaduḥkarāṇy utsahasiti* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 7).

*ba'i ting nge 'dzin, āsphānaka-samādhi*) and asks them what the principles of all Tathāgatas are like and how he should practice. As I will argue in chapter three, the ramifications of this short query posed to the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi by all the Buddhas are far-ranging not only for the *Compendium of Principles* and the corpus of texts later classified as Yoga Tantra but also for the establishment of tantric Buddhism itself and its very claim as an authentic Buddhist development.

The Tathāgatas' response to Sarvārthasiddhi's question and the dialogue that follows presents the process of the five manifest enlightenments (Tib. *mngon par byang chub pa lnga*, usually abbreviated to *mngon byang lnga*; Skt: *pañcābhisambodhi*)—the process by which the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi becomes enlightened. This is *the* foundational practice set forth in the *Compendium of Principles*, as well as many of the texts it directly spawned. Furthermore, it can be viewed as the *sine qua non* of Buddhist tantric practice subsequent to the *Compendium of Principles*. I will discuss this in more detail below (see p. 176 ff) but will summarize it here.

The Tathāgatas instruct Sarvārthasiddhi to examine and meditate on his own mind and to repeat the mantra *oṃ citta-prativedhaṃ karomi* (oṃ I perform penetration of the mind). The Bodhisattva responds that he sees what he has realized as a moon-disc at his heart. The structure of the Tathāgatas instructing the Bodhisattva in a specific meditative practice (which includes a specific mantra to recite) is employed for the four subsequent manifest enlightenments as well.

This is the first of the five manifest enlightenments. Commentarial traditions call this “manifest enlightenment through examination of the mind” and identify it with the mirror-like wisdom (from among the five aspects of a Buddha's wisdom) and the Buddha Akṣobhya, head of the vajra family.<sup>152</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 7b.4-7b.5.

The narrative continues as the Tathāgatas explain to Sarvārthasiddhi that this mind he has just realized the nature of is naturally luminous, and that it is transformed according to how it is trained or cultivated, just like a white cloth changes when it is dyed. They then instruct him to generate the mind of enlightenment, and provide him with a mantra with which to do so. The Bodhisattva reports that he sees a second moon disc.<sup>153</sup> This is the manifest enlightenment arisen from generating the mind of enlightenment, and is identified with the wisdom of equality and Ratnasambhava of the jewel family.<sup>154</sup>

Next, the Tathāgatas direct Sarvārthasiddhi to manifest the essence of all Tathāgatas—the all-good (*samantabhadra*) mind generation—and to stabilize it through visualizing a vajra on the moon-disc and reciting a specific mantra. The Bodhisattva reports back that he sees a vajra on the moon-disc at his heart. This is the manifest enlightenment arisen from a stable vajra, and is identified with the wisdom of individual analysis and Amitābha of the lotus (or doctrine) family.<sup>155</sup>

In the fourth manifest enlightenment all tathagatas instruct the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi to stabilize further the mind he has been developing, and they bless him and consecrate him with the name “Vajradhātu.” The Bodhisattva follows their instructions for meditation and recitation of another mantra, and reports that he sees all Tathāgatas’ bodies as himself. This is the manifest enlightenment through having a vajra nature, and is identified with the wisdom of achieving activities and Amoghasiddhi of the action family. This is the manifest enlightenment through having a vajra-nature.<sup>156</sup>

---

<sup>153</sup> There is debate within commentarial traditions on this point. According to Butön, Buddhaguhya and Śākyamitra assert that in the first manifest enlightenment the moon appears as a crescent moon and that this is then completed in the second manifest enlightenment. Ānandagarbha, following the explanatory *Vajrasāekhara Tantra*, says there are two individual moon-discs (Butön, *Ship*, 8b.1-8b.4).

<sup>154</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 8b.4.

<sup>155</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 9a.4.

<sup>156</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 10a.1.

In the fifth and final manifest enlightenment all Tathāgatas instruct the Bodhisattva in another meditation and mantra. With this, the Bodhisattva Vajradhātu (aka Sarvārthasiddhi) becomes a Buddha. This is the manifest enlightenment through being exactly as all Tathāgatas are, and is identified with the wisdom of reality and Vairocana of the Tathāgata family.<sup>157</sup>

Although Sarvārthasiddhi has now become a Buddha, he requests and receives from all the assembled Tathāgatas further blessings and consecrations. Butön identifies this continuation of the five manifest enlightenments as the process of the four magical displays (*cho 'phrul bzhi*, \**catur-prātihārya*).<sup>158</sup>

This narrative of the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi's enlightenment through the five manifest enlightenments (and the four magical displays) represents the frame-story of the *Compendium of Principles*. Although the relationship of the enlightenment narrative to the material that precedes it (descriptions of the attributes of Vairocana, Mahāvairocana, and Samantabhadra ) is not clear, its relationship to what follows is less confusing. The narrative leads out of the enlightenment account and into the generation of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala as the Supramundane Victor Vajradhātu leaves the site of his enlightenment—the Akaniṣṭha Pure Land—and travels to the peak of Mt. Meru. Here he is blessed again as all Tathāgatas and sits on the lion-throne. He is then joined by the four Tathāgatas who lead the four Buddha families—Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Lokeśvararāja (aka Amitāyus), and Amoghasiddhi, who are also blessed as all Tathāgatas—seated in the four cardinal directions.

Although we find in this section of the narrative continuity with Sarvārthasiddhi's enlightenment narrative, we also find some discontinuities. Throughout the process of

---

<sup>157</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 10a.7.

<sup>158</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 10b.1.

the five manifest enlightenments the Bodhisattva is called Sarvārthasiddhi until he undergoes the name consecration during the fourth manifest enlightenment. After this point, he is referred to by his new name, “Vajradhātu”; this is the name by which Sarvārthasiddhi is known when he becomes a Buddha. Furthermore, it is under this name that he leaves Akaniṣṭha and travels to the peak of Mt. Meru. However, after arriving there and being joined by the Buddhas at the heads of the four Buddha families, Vajradhātu is referred to as Vairocana. The name “Vajradhātu” does not appear again in the body of the tantra. In fact, it appears only three more times in the entire text: once in the Supplement (*rgyud phyi ma, uttara-tantra*) and twice in the Second Supplement (*rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma, uttarottara-tantra*). As I will discuss below, the Supplements are most probably later additions to the text, so for all intents and purposes the Tathāgata Vajradhātu—the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi who became a Buddha through the five manifest enlightenments—disappears from the text and is replaced by the Tathāgata Vairocana. This happens abruptly: Vajradhātu goes to Mt. Meru and then is suddenly referred to exclusively as Vairocana, with no further mention of Vajradhātu.

This section also includes what appears to be a gratuitous reference to Śākyamuni in an apparent attempt to link explicitly the enlightenment narrative with the historical Buddha. Having blessed themselves as all Tathāgatas, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Lokeśvararāja, and Amoghasiddhi then observe or contemplate the equality of all directions before seating themselves in the four directions. This observation or contemplation is made “by way of (or due to) the Supramundane Victor Śākyamuni’s realization of the sameness of all Tathāgatas.”<sup>159</sup> While the meaning of this passage (in

---

<sup>159</sup> *bcom ldan 'das shākya thub pa de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad mnyam pa nyid du rab tu rtogs pa'i phyir phyogs thams cad mnyam pa nyid du dmigs nas phyogs bzhir bzhugs so/* (P112, vol. 4, 220.3.2-220.3.3); *bhagavataḥ śākyamunes tathāgatasya sarvasamatāsuprativedhatvāt sarvadiksamatām abhyālambya catasṛṣu dikṣu niṣaṇṇāḥ* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 10).

both Tibetan and Sanskrit) is somewhat unclear to me, the line seems to be spliced into the narrative without apparent reason. Śākyamuni has in fact been mentioned nowhere else in the tantra to this point, even though it would seem logical to identify him as the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi after he has become a Buddha through the five manifest enlightenments. However, the name Vajradhātu is used rather than Śākyamuni.

I will detail the generation and arrangement of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala below (see p. 72). Here, the disjunctions just discussed likely indicate yet again the rather piecemeal compilation of the beginning of the *Compendium of Principles*. It is quite possible that the narrative of the generation of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala existed as a separate entity that was incorporated into the *Compendium of Principles*. How early this independent text—and the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala it describes—might have existed is unclear. However, the *Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī*, another important tantra dated to approximately the same time period (late seventh or early eighth century)<sup>160</sup> as the *Compendium of Principles*, has a section of fourteen verses on the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala.<sup>161</sup> Thus, it seems likely that the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala existed in some stage of development prior to the compilation of the *Compendium of Principles*.<sup>162</sup> Given its importance not only in the *Compendium of Principles* but also in other included under the rubric of Yoga Tantras as well as in the development of Indian Buddhist tantra as a whole, it is quite possible that the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala represents the core practice of the

---

<sup>160</sup> Ronald M. Davidson, “The Litany of Names of Mañjuśrī,” in *Religions of India in Practice*, ed. Donald S. Lopez, Jr. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 105 (hereafter abbreviated as “Litany”).

<sup>161</sup> Davidson, “Litany,” pp. 108-109.

<sup>162</sup> For a brief discussion of the developments that occur in the composition of maṇḍalas as drawn from Chinese translations, see Matsunaga, “A History of Tantric Buddhism,” pp. 174-176.

*Compendium of Principles* around which the rest of the tantra was composed/ compiled.<sup>163</sup>

## The Body of the Tantra

Following the introduction and narrative of Śākyamuni's enlightenment, the greater part of the *Compendium of Principles* consists of a series of maṇḍalas and their respective rites. For each maṇḍala, the deities that comprise it are first emanated, and then the maṇḍala is taught. This teaching includes both a presentation of the arrangement of the deities in the maṇḍala and an explanation of the rites that are performed therein.

In the first section of the *Compendium of Principles*, the five Buddhas of the five Buddha families enter into absorption in meditative stabilization and then emanate the deities of the maṇḍala through uttering their respective mantras (these short mantras are, in most cases, knowledge-mantras [Tib: *rig pa*; Skt: *vidyā*<sup>164</sup>]). This is an abbreviated rendering of the process; I have omitted several steps involving the emanation of light-rays from the hearts of deities that purify all worlds, the withdrawal of these rays back into the deities' hearts where they transform into various other deities, and so forth.

Butön summarizes this process in this way: since the first section of the *Compendium of Principles* is associated with the Tathāgata Buddha family, the maṇḍalas in this section are emanated by the five Tathāgatas. Then Vajrasattva, the Universal Monarch (*'khor los*

---

<sup>163</sup> I will argue below that the process of meditation detailed in the narrative of the five manifest enlightenments is a significant innovation for Indian Buddhist tantra. However, it is not explicitly related to the maṇḍala cycles presented in the body of the *Compendium of Principles*. Thus, although it is a major development for tantra in general, it likely represents an independent practice and text incorporated into the beginning of the *Compendium of Principles* after the four sections of the body had been composed/ compiled.

<sup>164</sup> The text actually reads *rig pa'i mchog / vidyottama*, but I take *mchog/ uttama* to be the adjective "supreme" rather than part of the name of the mantra itself.



*sgyur pa, cakravartin*) of the Tathāgata family,<sup>165</sup> carries out the explanation of the maṇḍalas and the teaching of their respective rites.<sup>166</sup> For the process of emanating the maṇḍalas of the other sections of the *Compendium of Principles* Vairocana is often joined by other deities—the Buddhas of the four directions, the Universal Monarchs of the four Buddha families, and so forth. The teaching of the maṇḍalas and their rites, however, is handled by the Universal Monarch of the Buddha family associated with that section of the tantra.

The second, third, and fourth sections all begin with all Tathāgatas assembling, praising the lead Bodhisattva of that section—Vajrasattva in the form of the Universal Monarch connected with the section—and requesting him to generate the deities of his Buddha family. The second section is anomalous in that it consists of two cycles of maṇḍalas whereas the other three sections have only a single cycle. I will further discuss the second section below (see p. 77 ff). For each of the four maṇḍalas of each of the four sections, the extensive rite that is set forth comprises the three meditative stabilizations—the meditative stabilizations of initial application (*dang po sbyor ba'i ting nge 'dzin, ādiyoga-samādhi*), supreme king of maṇḍalas (*dkyil 'khor rgyal mchog gi ting nge 'dzin, maṇḍalarājāgri-samādhi*), and supreme king of activities (*las rgyal mchog gi ting nge 'dzin, karmarājāgri-samādhi*). Although I have not found a clear elucidation of these three phases, initial application seems to include all the activities involved with the maṇḍala up to the point of the actual emanation of the deities, supreme king of maṇḍalas

---

<sup>165</sup> The tantra itself identifies this deity as Vajrapāṇi. However, at the beginning of the emanation of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala, Vajrasattva transforms into Vajrapāṇi, so there is some justification for identifying Vajrasattva as the Universal Monarch of the first section. It is possible that this substitution of Vajrapāṇi for Vajrasattva reflects continuing developments in Indian Buddhist tantra and the evolution of wrathful forms of deities.

<sup>166</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 13a.6-13a.7. Although Butön states that Vajrasattva performs the activities of explanation in the first section, the tantra in fact identifies him as Vajrapāṇi. However, these two figures are often interchangeable.

seems to consist of the emanation of the maṇḍala, and supreme king of activities seems to encompass all rites and activities subsequent to the emanation of the maṇḍala.<sup>167</sup> Whatever the exact parameters of the three meditative stabilizations may be, they comprise the complete rite in its most extensive form.

Each of the four sections of the *Compendium of Principles* also presents a middle-length rite and an abbreviated rite. The middle-length procedure for each section is associated with the four-mudrā maṇḍala and is a condensed version of the extensive rite set forth in the section's four main maṇḍalas<sup>168</sup> (viz., the great maṇḍala, retention-maṇḍala, doctrine-maṇḍala, and action-maṇḍala). While the particulars concerning this maṇḍala are not presented clearly in the *Compendium of Principles* itself, emanation of the maṇḍala is effected by Vairocana and the Buddhas of the four directions—Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitāyus, and Amoghasiddhi.<sup>169</sup> The Bodhisattva who serves as the Universal Monarch for each section—in the first section this is Vajrapāṇi—then explains

---

<sup>167</sup> Daniel Cozort describes these three meditative stabilizations in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra ( *bla med rnal 'byor rgyud, anuttarayogatantra*) in this way: initial application is visualization of the external environment of the maṇḍala as well as its central deities; supreme king of maṇḍalas is the complete generation of the maṇḍala with all its deities; and supreme king of activities involves oneself, now visualized as the various deities of the maṇḍala, carrying out those deities' respective compassionate activities (Daniel Cozort, *Highest Yoga Tantra: An Introduction to the Esoteric Buddhism of Tibet* [Ithaca, New York: Snow Lion Publications, 1986], p. 51).

Stephan Beyer also presents a rendering of the three meditative stabilizations in Highest Yoga Tantra, albeit specifically from the *Diamond Garland Tantra* of the Guhyasamāja cycle: initial application involves preparatory activities and the generation of the central deity-pair of the maṇḍala; supreme king of maṇḍalas consists of the generation of all the deities of the maṇḍala; and supreme king of activities are all the deities of the maṇḍala engaging in activities for the benefit of all beings (Stephan Beyer, *The Cult of Tārā: Magic and Ritual in Tibet* [Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1973], p. 117).

<sup>168</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi rigs kyi rtogs* [sic; read *rtog*] *pa'i rgyal po chen po'i cho ga rgyas pa 'di'i dngos grub thams cad bsdu ba'i don du* (P112, vol. 4, 238.2.1); *asya sarvatathāgatakulamahākālpavidhivistarasya sarvasiddhisamgrahārtham* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 142).

<sup>169</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 238.1.8-238.3.1; Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, pp. 142-143.

how to draw the maṇḍala. However, this description is terse and does not depict the composition of the maṇḍala except in a brief and cryptic fashion.

The Indian exegete Śākyamitra, however, explains that the structure of the maṇḍala is similar to that of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala—it has four sides and four doors.<sup>170</sup> In terms of the residents of the maṇḍala, he explains that in Vairocana’s location in the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala—that is, in the center—one sets the physical form of a Buddha,<sup>171</sup> and in the locations of Akṣobhya and so forth—the Buddhas of the four directions—one draws the four female deities Sattvavajri and so forth.<sup>172</sup> Śākyamitra then further explains that in the single inner maṇḍala sealed with vajra-words(?) one places Vairocana, and in the middle of the eight pillars one sets the four mudrās—the vajra mudrā, jewel mudrā, lotus mudrā, and action mudrā.<sup>173</sup> We see here the reason this type of maṇḍala is designated “the four-mudrā maṇḍala”, since it consists of a central Buddha figure surrounded by four mudrās. Śākyamitra explicitly states this when he poses the hypothetical question, “Isn’t it the case that this also has a fifth [mudrā]—the

---

<sup>170</sup> *rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i tshul du gru bzhir bgyi zhing sgo bzhi* (Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 271.5.3-271.5.4).

<sup>171</sup> This seems to indicate a statue of the deity, as indicated by the use of the verb “*bzhag*” (in Tibetan translation)—to put or place—rather than the verb “*bri*”—to draw. This is how Giebel understands it also (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” n. 43, p. 138).

<sup>172</sup> *rnam par snang mdzad kyi gnas su sangs rgyas kyi sku gzugs la mi bskyod pa la sogs pa'i gnas su sems dpa' rdo rje ma la sogs pa bzhi bri bar bya'o/* (Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 271.5.5-271.5.6).

Amoghavajra states that the four-mudrā maṇḍalas of the second, third, and fourth sections of the *Compendium of Principles* consist of twenty-one deities. However, as Giebel states, the import of this number is not clear (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” p. 149 and n. 84, p. 149).

<sup>173</sup> *rdo rje tshig gi btab pa'i nang gi dkyil 'khor gcig tu rnam par snang mdzad bzhag par bya'o/ lhag ma ka ba brgyad kyi dbus su rdo rje la sogs pa'i phyag rgya bzhi dgod par bya.../sogs pa zhes smos pas na rin po che dang/ padma dang/ las kyi phyag rgya rnam bsdu'o/* (Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 271.5.6-271.5.8).

Buddha mudrā?”<sup>174</sup> He answers, “This is indeed true, but the fifth mudrā is not drawn; the actual physical form is set down. Four are drawn as mudrās; therefore, the name of the maṇḍala is designated from those.”<sup>175</sup>

Later, following his explanation of the rites performed in the four-mudrā maṇḍala, Śākyamitra’s explication of a brief passage in the *Compendium of Principles* elucidates five individual four-mudrā maṇḍalas. The first is that discussed above, with Vairocana at the center surrounded by four mudrās. This is referred to in the tantra itself as the “Vajra-Feat Four-Mudrā Maṇḍala.”<sup>176</sup> The tantra continues by saying that the maṇḍalas of Akṣobhya and so forth should be drawn just like the Vajra-Feat Four-Mudrā Maṇḍala, in the manner of a four-mudrā maṇḍala and with their respective mudrās.<sup>177</sup> Śākyamitra’s commentary explicitly renders the five individual four-mudrā maṇḍalas, saying:<sup>178</sup>

The same is extended—“the four-mudrā maṇḍalas of Akṣobhya and so forth also should be drawn” exactly as is Tathāgata Vairocana’s four-mudrā

<sup>174</sup> *dris pa lnga pa sangs rgyas kyi phyag rgya yang 'di na yod pa ma yin nam zhes na/* , (Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 271.4.7).

<sup>175</sup> *bden mod kyi de ni 'bri ba ma yin gyi sku gzugs dngos su bzhag par bya ba yin la/ gzhi* [sic; read *bzhi*] *ni phyag rgyar bris pa yin pas na de rnams las dkyil 'khor gyi ming btags pa yin no/*, (Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 271.4.7-271.4.8).

<sup>176</sup> *rdo rje'i dngos grub gyi phyag rgya bzhi pa'i dkyil 'khor* ( *Compendium of Principles* , P112, vol. 4, 238.5.3), *vajrasiddhicaturmudrāmaṇḍala* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 147).

<sup>177</sup> *rdo rje'i dngos grub gyi phyag rgya bzhi pa'i dkyil 'khor ji lta ba bzhin du mi g.yo ba'i dkyil 'khor la sogs pa dkyil 'khor thams cad phyag rgya bzhi pa'i dkyil 'khor gyi tshul du rang rang gyi phyag rgya rnams su bris* ( *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 238.5.3-238.5.4), *yathā vajrasiddhicaturmudrāmaṇḍalam evam Akṣobhyādini sarvamaṇḍalāni caturmudrāmaṇḍalayogena likhet/ svābhīḥ svābhir mudrābhīḥ* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 147).

<sup>178</sup> *bcom ldan 'das rnam par snang mdzad kyi phyag rgya bzhi pa'i dkyil 'khor ji lta ba de bzhin du/ mi bskyod pa la sogs pa'i phyag rgya bzhi pa'i dkyil 'khor yang bri bar bya'o zhes bsgre ba yin no/ sogs pa smos pas ni rin chen 'byung ldan dang tshe dpag med pa dang gdon mi za bar gyub pa rnams bsdu'o/* (Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 273.5.2-273.5.3).

maṇḍala [that is, the Vajra-Feat Four-Mudrā Maṇḍala]. Ratnasambhava, Amitāyus, and Amoghasiddhi are included in the statement “and so forth.”

Slightly later, in discussing the respective mudrās, he explains that the four mudrās to be drawn in Akṣobhya’s four-mudrā maṇḍala are a vajra, hook, arrow, and *mgu ba*.<sup>179</sup>

Thus, each of the four sections of the *Compendium of Principles* has five individual four-mudrā maṇḍalas.<sup>180</sup> The ninth-century Indian exegete Ānandagarbha explicitly indicates this when he states that the Vajradhātu section—the first section of the *Compendium of Principles*—has ten maṇḍalas.<sup>181</sup> Since there is only a single great maṇḍala, retention maṇḍala, doctrine maṇḍala, action maṇḍala, and single-mudrā maṇḍala in the first section, there must be five four-mudrā maṇḍalas to bring the total number of maṇḍalas to ten. This is Butön’s position, as he describes the four-mudrā maṇḍalas of the first section in this way:<sup>182</sup>

Concerning the four-mudrā maṇḍala: the [Buddhas of the] five families, through meditative stabilization and essence-mantras, emanate their respective four-mudrā maṇḍalas.

---

<sup>179</sup> *mi bskyod pa’i dkyil ’khor du rdo rje dang lcags kyu dang mda’ dang mgu ba rnam bri bar bya’ol* (Śākyamitra, *Kosala Ornament*, P3326, vol. 70, 273.5.5-273.5.6). Both the Peking (273.5.6) and dGa’ ldan gser bris (516.1) editions of the text read *mgu ba*. As I have not found this word in any lexicographical sources, I will leave it untranslated here, although it most likely is a hand implement of some type.

<sup>180</sup> Snellgrove seems to have missed the fact that there are five four-mudrā maṇḍalas in each section of the *Compendium of Principles*, and also that the four Buddhas surrounding the central figure appear as mudrās (here meaning instruments) such as vajras, hooks, lotuses, and so forth (Snellgrove, *Facsimile Reproduction*, p. 38).

<sup>181</sup> *rdo rje dbyings kyi dum bu la/ de bzhin gshegs pa’i rigs kyi dkyil ’khor ni bcu’ol* (Ānandagarbha, *Illumination of the Principles*, P3333, vol. 71, 146.5.7-146.5.8).

<sup>182</sup> *phyag rgya bzhi’i dkyil ’khor ni/ rigs lngas ting nge ’dzin dang/ snying pos rang rang gi phyag rgya bzhi’i dkyil ’khor sprul* (Butön, *Ship*, 13a.4).

For the four-mudrā maṇḍalas of the third and fourth sections of the *Compendium of Principles*, Butön explicitly states that there are five four-mudrā maṇḍalas.<sup>183</sup>

The four-mudrā maṇḍalas, employed in the middle-length rites of the *Compendium of Principles*, each consists of a central Buddha figure (represented at least theoretically by a statue) surrounded by the four female Bodhisattvas in the form of a mudrā such as a vajra, lotus, hook, and so forth. Each of the four sections of the *Compendium of Principles* has five four-mudrā maṇḍalas. While these maṇḍalas are emanated by the five Buddhas, it is not clear whether each Buddha emanates his own four-mudrā maṇḍala or whether all five Buddhas together emanate each of the five maṇḍalas.

The single-mudrā maṇḍala and its rites represent the most abbreviated procedure set forth in the *Compendium of Principles*. From its description in the tantra and Śākyamitra's explanation,<sup>184</sup> this maṇḍala appears to consist solely of a single figure (and thus the “single-mudrā” nomenclature).<sup>185</sup> In the first section Vairocana emanates the single-mudrā maṇḍala in which the single deity is Vajrasattva (who likely represents Vairocana), and then Vajrapāṇi—the Universal Monarch of the first section whom Butön refers to as Vajrasattva—teaches the maṇḍala rite. In the second section Vajrahūmkara appears to be the deity in the maṇḍala, and it is he who emanates and teaches the maṇḍala

---

<sup>183</sup> *phyag rgya bzhi'i pa'i dkyil 'khor lnga sprul* (Butön, *Ship*, 21a.6).

<sup>184</sup> Butön does not describe the composition of the single-mudrā maṇḍala. The eighth-century Indian exegete Amoghavajra indicates a multiple-deity maṇḍala in this way:

If one recites the *mantra* of Vairocana or [the *mantra* of] the Bodhisattva Vajrasattva, it comprises seventeen deities; in all other cases it comprises thirteen [deities] (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” p. 139).

However, as Giebel indicates, East Asian traditions have been vexed by this statement (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” n. 47, p. 140). Perhaps Amoghavajra is referring to seventeen or thirteen individual single-mudrā maṇḍalas, each with a different deity.

<sup>185</sup> Snellgrove has apparently missed the existence of the single-mudrā maṇḍala completely, as he never once mentions it in his summary of each of the four sections of the *Compendium of Principles*.

as well. In the third section the identification of the solitary figure is unclear, but it might be Viśvarūpa; the maṇḍala is emanated and taught by Avalokiteśvara, the Universal Monarch of the third section. In the fourth section the presentation of the single-mudrā maṇḍala is so abbreviated that it is not described; however, according to Butön, Ākāśagarbha emanates and teaches this maṇḍala.<sup>186</sup>

At the end of each of the four sections that comprise the root tantra of the *Compendium of Principles* there is a short epilogue with which the section concludes. All Tathāgatas gather and, in order to certify the procedure set forth by the Universal Monarch (that is, the teaching of the maṇḍalas and their attendant rites) as an authentic Buddha-voiced teaching (*sangs rgyas kyi bka'*, *buddha-vacana*), they say, “Bravo for you, Vajrasattva!”<sup>187</sup> and so forth, and otherwise extol the teaching as supreme.

### **The Appended Fifth Section**<sup>188</sup>

The fifth section of the *Compendium of Principles* begins with the Supplement, also known as the Supplementary Tantra (*rgyud phyi ma, uttara-tantra*). Butön explains that while the teaching of the root tantra (that is, the first four sections of the *Compendium of Principles*) consists of the principles of all supramundane and worldly *doctrines* and is common for all beings (understood as all who would practice Yoga Tantra), the

---

<sup>186</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 22b.3.

<sup>187</sup> Tib: *rDo rje sems dpa' khyod legs so*; Tib: *sādhu te vajrasatvāya*.

<sup>188</sup> According to Japanese scholars, the eighth-century Indian tantric exegete Buddhaguhya quotes from all five sections of the *Compendium of Principles* (Todaro, *Annotated Translation*, p. 29; drawn from Takeo Kitamura, “*Tantrārthāvatāra* o Chūshin to shita *Kongōchōkyō* no Kenkyū, I,” *Mikkyōgaku*, No. 7, 1970, pp. 6, 14-15; *ibid.*, II, *Mikkyōgaku*, No. 8, 1971, pp. 3, 6, 11, 19, and so forth.).

Amoghavajra, another Indian author of the eighth century, does not explicitly identify a fifth section in his Chinese summary of the *Compendium of Principles*. However, at the end of his discussion of the tantra—after he has finished describing the fourth section—he mentions additional material which seems to correspond to the fifth section (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” pp. 163-165).

Supplementary Tantra teaches the practice of supramundane *feats* and is for the benefit of the sharpest and most able Yoga Tantra trainees.<sup>189</sup>

The structure of the fifth section of the *Compendium of Principles* is different from that of its first four sections. Vajrapāṇi resumes his role as the lead Bodhisattva, and he teaches the cultivation of the four mudrās that are taught in the four great maṇḍalas of the first four sections of the tantra.<sup>190</sup> Rather than being labeled “extensive rites” as is done in the first four sections, the divisions in the Supplementary Tantra are into tantras—“the tantra of the extensive rite of the pledge-mudrā feat of all families” and so forth. Each “tantra of the extensive rite” is subdivided into four individual “tantras,” with one for each of the four Buddha families.<sup>191</sup> At the conclusion of the Supplement all Tathāgatas assemble, praise Vajrapāṇi, and thereby confirm what he has taught as authentic, just as they do at the end of the first four sections of the *Compendium of Principles*.

Although the divisions of the Supplement are called “tantras of the extensive rite,” their description is brief—far more so even than the terse descriptions of rites in the first four sections of the *Compendium of Principles*. In spite of their brevity, it is clear that the function of the rites that comprise the Supplementary Tantra is to elaborate on practices from the first four sections of the *Compendium of Principles*. The title of this section from the tantra itself—“the tantra of the extensive rites of the feats of the methods of all procedures from the *Compendium of Principles of All Tathāgatas*”<sup>192</sup>—reflects this,

---

<sup>189</sup> 'jig rten las 'das pa'i dngos grub sgrub pa gong ma'i yang gong ma'i sems can rjes su gzung ba'i don du rgyud phyi ma (Butön, *Ship*, 22b.5-22b.6).

<sup>190</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 22b.6.

<sup>191</sup> In some cases there is a fifth “tantra” at the beginning of the “tantra of the extensive rite”—a “tantra of the Tathāgatas” precedes the “tantra of the Tathāgata family.”

<sup>192</sup> *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid bsdu pa las brtag pa thams cad kyi thabs kyi cho ga rgyas pa'i rgyud* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 271.1.3); *Sarvatathāgatatatvasaṃgrahāt Sarvakalpopāya-siddhi-vidhivistara-tantram* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 475).



as does Butön's description of this section: rites of achieving feats related to the root maṇḍalas.<sup>193</sup>

The Second Supplement (*rgyud phyi ma'i phyi ma, uttarottara-tantra*), which I also translate as Second Supplementary Tantra, structurally resembles the Supplement that precedes it. The teacher again is Vajrapāṇi, and the teaching consists of a series of tantras of extensive rites. However, the intended audience of the Second Supplement is different from that of the Supplement. According to Butön, the Second Supplement is taught for those trainees who are frightened by meditation and are strongly attached to activities.<sup>194</sup> These rites involve external activities such as making offerings to painted representations of deities and so forth. At the end of this subsection of the *Compendium of Principles* all Tathāgatas assemble and praise Vajrapāṇi, and thereby confirm the content of the Second Supplement as authentic Buddha-voiced doctrine.

In order to examine further the relationship between the Supplementary Tantra (and the Second Supplementary Tantra) and the four sections that comprise the body of the *Compendium of Principles* we must look at the case of the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*, which precedes the *Compendium of Principles* both chronologically and doctrinally. Stephen Hodge has suggested that the Supplementary Tantra of this text in fact represents a summary of the rituals for the convenience of those employing them—a kind of ritual handbook—and that over time this extra-textual appendix came to be regarded as part of the tantra itself.<sup>195</sup>

It seems likely that this is also the case for the *Compendium of Principles*. Unlike the first four sections of the tantra, there are no maṇḍalas explicitly generated in the Supplement and Second Supplement. Rather, the rites described in these two subsections

---

<sup>193</sup> *rtsa ba'i dkyil 'khor dang 'brel ba'i dngos grub sgrub pa'i cho ga* (Butön, *Ship*, 23b.1).

<sup>194</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 24a.3.

<sup>195</sup> Hodge, "Considerations," p. 71.

are clearly derived from the maṇḍalas and rites laid out in the four sections that constitute the body of the tantra. Additionally, the traditional account is that these two subsections are for the most capable and the least capable practitioners, respectively.

All these pieces of evidence support the contention that the Supplement and Second Supplement originated as extra-textual notes appended to the end of the tantra by those employing the text, and that over time these were absorbed into the text proper. However, it is not clear when the incorporation of the supplements into the text proper occurred. Buddhaguhya, who flourished in the middle of the eighth century, refers to the Supplement and Second Supplement, and Amoghavajra also refers to material from them—although he presents the tantra as consisting of only four sections—in a work written on the basis of Indian materials he gathered before 746 CE. Thus, it seems likely that the process of incorporation was occurring already at the beginning of the eighth century, and that by the middle of the century the Supplement and Second Supplement were considered to be part of the tantra proper.

## **Important Aspects of the First and Second Sections**

### **The Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala**

After the Bodhisattva Sarvārthasiddhi has become enlightened as Vajradhātu through the process of the five manifest enlightenments and this supreme enlightenment is then further stabilized and blessed, he travels to Mt. Meru. In the narrative, he is now referred to as Vairocana rather than as Vajradhātu. Butön specifies that this is the Emanation Body (*sprul sku, nirmāṇakāya*) Vairocana, and that he went to the tiered palace (*khang brtsegs, kuṭāgāra*) made of vajra-jewels on the peak of Mt. Meru, where he seats himself on the lion-seat (*seng ge gdan, \*siṃhāsana*).<sup>196</sup>

---

<sup>196</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 12a.4-12a.5.

There, he is joined by the Buddhas who head the other four Buddha families: Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Lokeśvararāja (aka Amitāyus or Amitābha), and Amoghasiddhi. After further blessing themselves as all Tathāgatas, Vairocana enters meditative stabilization and emits the essence-mantra “vajrasattva” from his heart, through which Vajrasattva, the first of the sixteen Bodhisattva residents of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala, is emanated. Following this are various activities such as emitting and drawing back light-rays that pervade all worlds with their beneficial presence, deities entering into and emerging from each other’s hearts, and so forth.

The Bodhisattva Samantabhadra is an integral part of this process, although it is not clear whether Samantabhadra is the embodiment of the minds of all Tathāgatas or is in fact another manifestation of and name for Vairocana; further investigation is required. It does appear that Samantabhadra is consecrated as the Universal Monarch (Tib: *'khor los sgyur pa*; Skt: *cakravartin*) of all Tathāgatas through the jeweled crown of all Tathāgatas consecration, and that he is then consecrated by all Tathāgatas as Vajrapāṇi through the “Vajrapāṇi” vajra-name consecration.<sup>197</sup> While Butön explains that the Universal Monarch of the first section is Vajrasattva,<sup>198</sup> in the tantra itself the names Samantabhadra, Vajrasattva, Vajrapāṇi, and Vajradhara seem to be used indiscriminately and interchangeably. When all Tathāgatas gather and request the Universal Monarch to teach the maṇḍala by praising him with 108 names, the Universal Monarch is identified consecutively as “Lord of all Tathāgatas,” “Self-Vajrasattva,” “beginningless and endless,” and “Mahāvajradhara.”<sup>199</sup> To further cloud the waters, the beginning of the

---

<sup>197</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 221.1.1-221.1.3.

<sup>198</sup> *de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs kyi 'khor los bsgyur ba po/ rdo rje sems dpas* (Butön, *Ship*, 13a.6-13a.7).

<sup>199</sup> *de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi bdag po rang gi rdo rje sems dpa' thog ma dang tha ma med pa rdo rje 'dzin pa chen po* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 229.1.2-229.1.3); *sarvatathāgatādhipatiṃ svavajrasatvam anādinidhanaṃ mahāvajradharam* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 60).

praise refers to the Universal Monarch with the names “Vajrasattva-Mahāsattva,” “Vajrasarvatathāgata,” “Samantabhadra,” “Vajrādya,” and “Vajrapāṇi.”<sup>200</sup>

In any event, Butön states that Vairocana emanates the sixteen Bodhisattvas, beginning with Vajrasattva<sup>201</sup> (I will elucidate all the deities of the maṇḍala below).

Then the four Buddhas of the four directions—Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Lokeśvararāja (aka Amitāyus), and Amoghasiddhi—emanate their respective female Bodhisattvas Sattvavajrī and so forth (the Perfection Goddesses). Following this, Vairocana emanates the four inner offering goddesses beginning with Vajralāsyā. Then Akṣobhya and the other three Buddhas emanate the four outer offering goddesses beginning with Vajradhūpā. Finally, Vairocana emanates Vajrāṅkuśa and the other three gatekeepers.

Following this, there is further interplay between all Tathāgatas and Vairocana—praising, blessing through all Tathāgatas and their retinues of Bodhisattvas entering into and again issuing forth from Vairocana’s heart, and so forth. Then, in order to bless the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala, all Tathāgatas praise the lead Bodhisattva Vajradhara (aka Vajrasattva, aka Vajrapāṇi, aka Samantabhadra, and so forth, as discussed above) with 108 names and request that he teach the rite of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala.<sup>202</sup>

Vajradhara then enters into meditative stabilization and teaches the structure and arrangement of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala (which I will describe in some detail below) as well as its attendant rite in extensive form. Butön summarizes the rite thus: “from the vajra-master’s activities, the rite of entering all maṇḍalas, the siddhi-wisdom, mudrā-wisdom, and so forth through to undoing [that is, releasing or unbinding]

---

<sup>200</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 229.1. 3; Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 60.

<sup>201</sup> This discussion follows Butön’s description in *Ship*, 12a.3-12b.1.

<sup>202</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 228.4.8-229.2.6.

mudrās.”<sup>203</sup> These rites include initiation into the maṇḍala and its practices as well as other activities. Furthermore, certain rites are devoted to the development of special abilities or feats (Tib: *dngos grub*; Skt: *siddhi*) of both the mundane and supramundane type, such as the ability to discover the location of treasure, to walk on water, and so forth (mundane feats) and progress on the Buddhist path, culminating in the attainment of enlightenment (supramundane feats).

I will now describe the layout of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala (*rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor*), the first maṇḍala that appears in the *Compendium of Principles*. From among the four types of maṇḍalas, it is of the “great maṇḍala” type. It consists of thirty-seven deities. The central figure is Vairocana, who is the Buddha at the head of the Tathāgata family (*de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs, tathāgata-kula*). He resides in a circle at the center of the maṇḍala. He is surrounded by the Buddhas at the heads of the other four families, each residing in a circle and arranged in the four cardinal directions: Akṣobhya of the vajra family in the east, Ratnasambhava of the jewel family in the south, Lokeśvararāja (aka Amitāyus or, in later traditions, Amitābha) of the lotus (or doctrine) family in the west, and Amoghasiddhi of the action family in the north.

A set of sixteen great Bodhisattvas are also present in the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Around each of the four Buddhas surrounding Vairocana are arrayed the four Bodhisattvas of their respective Buddha family: Vajrasattva, Vajrarāja, Vajrarāga, and Vajrasādhu around Akṣobhya; Vajraratna, Vajratejas, Vajraketu, and Vajrahāsa around Ratnasambhava; Vajradharma, Vajratikṣṇa, Vajrahetu, and Vajrabhāṣa around Lokeśvararāja; and Vajrakarma, Vajrarakṣa, Vajrayakṣa, and Vajrasandhi around Amoghasiddhi.

---

<sup>203</sup> *slob dpon gyi las dang/ dkyil 'khor thams cad du 'jug pa'i cho ga dang/ dngos grub kyi ye shes dang phyag rgya'i ye shes la sogs pa nas phyag rgya dgrol pa'i bar gyi rdo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i cho ga rgyas par gsungs so/* (Butön, *Ship*, 12b.3-12b.4).

Additionally, there are four female deities, known as Perfection goddesses, and each is paired with the Buddha of her respective family. Sattvavajrī accompanies Akṣobhya, Ratnavajrī accompanies Ratnasambhava, Dharmavajrī accompanies Lokeśvararāja, and Karmavajrī accompanies Amoghasiddhi.

These twenty-five deities are arrayed in the center of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, with Vairocana the central figure. The four inner offering goddesses Vajralāsyā, Vajramālā, Vajragīti, and Vajranṛtyā take their places in the four corners of the inner precinct of the maṇḍala. Vajradhūpā, Vajrapuṣpā, Vajrālokā, and Vajragandhā—the four outer offering goddesses—are positioned in the corners of the outer precinct of the maṇḍala. Finally, the four gate-keepers Vajrāṅkuśa, Vajrapāśa, Vajrasphoṭa, and Vajrāveśa (aka Vajraghaṇṭa) guard the four gates, with Vajrāṅkuśa at the eastern entrance, Vajrapāśa in the south, Vajrasphoṭa in the west, and Vajrāveśa at the north gate.

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*. With the exception of the first cycle of maṇḍalas in the second section, about which I will say more later, all maṇḍalas of the four main types consist of the same thirty-seven deities as those that comprise the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala. These thirty-seven deities appear in different forms, and under variant names, in the maṇḍalas of the *Compendium of Principles*, but there is no doubt that they are the same deities, arranged in the same configuration, as we find in the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala. In fact, the explanation of maṇḍalas in the text of the *Compendium of*

*Principles* itself often includes the description “in the manner of the arrangement of the Vajradhātu great maṇḍala.”<sup>204</sup>

The 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. It is the primary maṇḍala of the *Compendium of Principles* and the prototype for the other maṇḍalas of this tantra. 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.

### **The Structurally Anomalous Second Section**

The structure of the second section of the *Compendium of Principles* differs from that of the other three sections. In the first section of the tantra, after the emanation of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala, all Tathāgatas assemble, praise the Universal Monarch (*'khor los bsgyur pa, cakravartin*) Vajrapāṇi (aka Vajrasattva) with a litany of 108 names, and request that he explain the maṇḍala and its rites. The second, third, and fourth sections also begin with all Tathāgatas assembling and requesting Vajrasattva, aka Vajrapāṇi—who has taken the form of the Universal Monarch of the Buddha family predominant in that section—to generate the deities of his Buddha family.<sup>205</sup> In the third and fourth sections the generation of the respective great maṇḍalas then ensues.

In the second section, however, the Universal Monarch Vajrapāṇi, initially identified as the Supramundane Victor who turns the great wheel of all Tathāgatas (*bhagavantam*

---

<sup>204</sup> Tib: *rdo rje'i dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po bkod pa'i tshul du* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 233.4.6); Skt: *vajradhātumahāmaṇḍale sanniveśayogena* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 100). In fact, the description of the next maṇḍala after the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala includes such an explanation.

<sup>205</sup> In the second section, they also request that he teach the maṇḍala rite as well.

*sarvatathāgatamahācakravartinam*) in the Sanskrit text<sup>206</sup> and the Supramundane Victor lord of all Tathāgatas who turns the great wheel (*bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi bdag po 'khor lo chen po bskor ba*) in the Tibetan,<sup>207</sup> refuses to accede to the request of all Tathāgatas to generate his family of deities.<sup>208</sup> The assembled Tathāgatas ask why, and Vajrapāṇi responds to their question with a question of his own: there are pernicious beings such as Maheśvara who are not subjugated through peaceful methods even by the Tathāgatas; how should he deal with them? There follows the narrative of Vajrapāṇi's battle with and subjugation of Maheśvara (aka Śiva), which I will discuss in some detail in chapter three (see p. 189 ff) and revisit in the context of Mahāyoga in chapter four (see p. 248 ff).

Briefly, Vajrapāṇi outduels Maheśvara and slays him, brings him back to life (at Vairocana's behest), and finally bestows initiation on him through the sole of his foot as he stands on the supine and defeated Maheśvara's body. Maheśvara instantly attains enlightenment and travels to his own world-system. His retinue of worldly gods are also subjugated, and Vajrapāṇi admits them into the maṇḍala and bestows the various initiations on them (including the name initiation, through which each worldly god or goddess receives a new—and specifically Buddhist—name and identity).

While I will discuss various aspects of this episode and its significance in chapters three and four, what is of import in the context of the structure of the *Compendium of Principles* is the creation of the maṇḍala. Whereas in the first, third, and fourth sections of the tantra various Buddhas and Bodhisattvas emanate the maṇḍalas, there is no mention of the emanation of the first maṇḍala of the second section. All Tathāgatas

---

<sup>206</sup> Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 154.

<sup>207</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 239.2.8.

<sup>208</sup> *bcom ldan 'das de bzhin gshegs pa thams cad ma 'tshal lo/* (*Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 239.4.8); *bhagavantaḥ sarvatathāgatā na pratipadyāmi* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 157).



gather and request Vajrapāṇi to generate the deities of his Buddha family, but he refuses. He then defeats Maheśvara and his retinue, admits them into the maṇḍala and initiates them. However, it is not clear into which maṇḍala the worldly deities are admitted and initiated. Unlike the other sections of the *Compendium of Principles*, there has been no description of a maṇḍala being emanated, and therefore no logical assumption can be made about the maṇḍala into which Maheśvara and the pantheon of Hindu deities are admitted and initiated. Perhaps it is assumed that they are admitted into the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala, but there is nothing that indicates this. After the worldly gods and goddesses have been admitted into and initiated in the maṇḍala, Vajrapāṇi explains the maṇḍala and its rites. At this point, the maṇḍala is identified as the “Conquest over the Three Worlds Great Maṇḍala.”<sup>209</sup> The teaching of the maṇḍala follows the standard format seen in the previous maṇḍalas of the *Compendium of Principles*.

This then raises the question of the emanation of the Conquest over the Three Worlds Great Maṇḍala into which Vajrapāṇi admits and initiates the retinue of worldly deities. One possibility, as I have mentioned, is that it is the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala, and that after the worldly gods and goddesses have been transformed into their Buddhist alter egos through initiation they then replace the deities of the Vajradhātu Maṇḍala. Another possibility is that the maṇḍala into which the worldly deities are admitted and initiated is only the physical structure (the residence) and that they then constitute its residents.

Whatever the case, the creation of the first maṇḍala of the second section of the *Compendium of Principles* is clearly and significantly different from the other maṇḍalas presented in the body of the tantra, which Vairocana either emanates himself or directs the lead Bodhisattva of that section to emanate. This likely indicates that the narrative of

---

<sup>209</sup> Tibetan: 'jig rten gsum las rnam par rgyal ba zhes bya ba'i dkyil 'khor chen po (P112, vol. 4, 243.5.2); Sanskrit: *trilokavijayan nāma mahāmaṇḍala* (Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 186).

Vajrapāṇi's subjugation of Maheśvara existed as an independent text that was incorporated into the *Compendium of Principles*. Ronald Davidson has suggested that the Maheśvara subjugation myth as we find it in the *Compendium of Principles* contains elements, such as the snappy repartee of the dialogue, characteristic of itinerant Indian oral storytellers.<sup>210</sup> Thus, it seems probable that the Maheśvara subjugation episode existed as an oral text first set in writing when it was included in the composition of the *Compendium of Principles*. This also raises the possibility that other parts of the tantra—particularly those that include snappy dialogue such as the narrative of the five manifest enlightenments with which the first section opens—indicate the inclusion of material from oral traditions in the written text of the *Compendium of Principles*. Where these oral traditions might have originated and spread, and how they came to be appropriated into written tantric texts, are questions that require further investigation.<sup>211</sup>

Although the second section begins with its irregular first maṇḍala, the remainder of the section returns to the standard pattern of the emanation of the maṇḍala and the teaching of its respective rites for the Conquest over the Three Worlds retention, doctrine, and action maṇḍalas, as well as for the four-mudrā and single-mudrā maṇḍalas. These maṇḍalas feature wrathful forms of the thirty-seven deities of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala. Also, at the end of the cycle of maṇḍalas there is an epilogue in which all Tathāgatas gather and certify what has been taught as authentic Buddha-speech, just as occurs at the end of the first, third, and fourth sections of the tantra.

Although the cycle of three maṇḍalas that follows the Conquest over the Three Worlds Great Maṇḍala adheres to the pattern found in the other three sections of the tantra, the second section is unusual in another way. Unlike the other first, third, and fourth sections

---

<sup>210</sup> Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 151.

<sup>211</sup> See Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, especially chapters five and six.

of the *Compendium of Principles*, which each have only a single cycle of maṇḍalas, the second section has an additional cycle. Following the Conquest over the Three Worlds cycle of maṇḍalas, the second section continues with another maṇḍala cycle, that of the Wheel of the Three Worlds (*'jig rten gsum gyi 'khor lo, triloka-cakra*).

This sub-section begins with a continuation of the Maheśvara narrative. All the Tathāgatas gather and command Vajrapāṇi to release Maheśvara's body. I will discuss this dialogue, the reanimation of Maheśvara's corpse, and related events below. Following this narrative, the tantra returns to the usual procedure for emanating the maṇḍalas and teaching their respective rites. However, this maṇḍala cycle consists solely of the four main maṇḍalas. Unlike the first section, the first maṇḍala cycle of the second section, and the third and fourth sections, the Wheel of the Three Worlds cycle does not include the four-mudrā maṇḍala or the single-mudrā maṇḍala. It does, however, conclude with a confirmation of what has been taught, just as the other maṇḍala cycles do.

Thus, we see that the second section of the *Compendium of Principles* differs from the other three sections of the tantra in several ways. First, the section opens with Vajrapāṇi refusing the request of all Tathāgatas to generate the deities of his Buddha family. This is the only instance in the tantra I have seen in which a Bodhisattva refuses to follow the command of the Tathāgatas. Also, the second section has two sets of maṇḍalas—the Conquest over the Three Worlds cycle and the Wheel of the Three Worlds cycle—whereas the other three sections of the tantra consist of only one cycle apiece. As a result, the second section of the *Compendium of Principles* presents fourteen maṇḍalas, whereas the other three sections each contain only ten maṇḍalas. Furthermore, the emanation of the first maṇḍala in the section—the Conquest over the Three Worlds Great Maṇḍala—is not clearly set forth, so there is uncertainty as to whether the maṇḍala was emanated or whether the subdued worldly deities are arranged in a previously-emanated

maṇḍala. In addition, the second maṇḍala cycle of the second section—the Wheel of the Three Worlds cycle—lacks the four-mudrā and single-mudrā maṇḍalas found in all the other maṇḍala cycles in the four sections of the *Compendium of Principles*.

The maṇḍalas of the second section consist of wrathful deities, and thus reflect the vajra family (*rdo rje rigs; vajra-kula*) predominant in this section of the tantra. However, the two maṇḍala cycles present an additional difficulty: are they both of the same Buddha family? The tantra itself identifies the second cycle as the *external* vajra family (*phyi rol gyi rdo rje'i rigs, bāhya-vajra-kula*).<sup>212</sup> Butön follows this classification, but he adds that the first cycle of maṇḍalas in the second section—the Conquest over the Three Worlds cycle—is the great vajra family (*rdo rje chen po'i rigs, \*mahā-vajra-kula*).<sup>213</sup>

The unique structure of the second section of the *Compendium of Principles* did not escape the notice of Indian tantric exegetes such as the prolific ninth-century author Ānandagarbha. In the *Illumination of the Principles*, his mammoth commentary on the *Compendium of Principles*, he enumerates the maṇḍalas in each section of the *Compendium of Principles*, stating that the first, third, and fourth sections each have the same number of maṇḍalas—ten. The second section, however, contains fourteen maṇḍalas.<sup>214</sup> Thus, Ānandagarbha explicitly comments on the anomalous nature of the

---

<sup>212</sup> *Compendium of Principles*, P112, vol. 4, 250.3.4; Yamada, *Sarva-tathāgata*, p. 257.

<sup>213</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 19a.2. According to Giebel's translation from the Chinese, the eighth-century Indian exegete Amoghavajra described *both* maṇḍala cycles of the second section of the *Compendium of Principles* as belonging to the external vajra family (Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” pp. 143 and 150). For a discussion of this term—which Giebel translates as “outside the Vajra Division” rather than as “external vajra family”—and its interpretation from several sources, see Giebel, “*Chin-kang-ting ching yü-ch'ieh*,” n. 92, pp. 150-151.

<sup>214</sup> *de la dkyil 'khor gyi grangs brjod par bya ste/ rdo rje dbyings kyi dum bu la/ de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs kyi dkyil 'khor ni bcu'o/ khams gsum rnam par rgyal ba'i dum bu la/ rdo rje'i rigs kyi dkyil 'khor ni bcu bzhì'o/ /padma'i rigs dang nor bu'i rigs gnyis la yang grangs de bzhin gshegs pa'i rigs dang 'dra'o/* (Ānandagarbha, *Illumination of the Principles*, P3333, vol. 71, 146.5.7-147.1.1).

second section of the *Compendium of Principles*, at least in terms of the number of maṇḍalas it presents.

The atypical structure of the second section of the *Compendium of Principles* likely indicates its composition from multiple sources. Several facets of the Maheśvara subjugation episode, such as the elements characteristic of oral traditions and the fact that the emanation of the first maṇḍala that leads out of the narrative is not clearly indicated, point to its existence as an independent text that was incorporated into the *Compendium of Principles*. The story of Vajrapāṇi's subjugation of Maheśvara is one of the defining myths of Indian Buddhist tantra, and, as I will discuss in chapter three (see p. 189 ff), its inclusion in the *Compendium of Principles* is significant for several reasons.

## Indian Commentarial Traditions

The three principal Indian exegetes of Yoga Tantra, from the Tibetan perspective, are Buddhaguhya, Śākyamitra, and Ānandarābha. Buddhaguhya was from central India (perhaps Varāṇasi) and resided at the great monastic university of Nālandā. He was perhaps *the* most prominent and prolific of the early Indian monastic tantric exegetes. A student of Buddhajñānapāda, he wrote commentaries and practical instructions on the *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* (later classified as Performance or Dual Tantra), the *Questions of Subāhu Tantra* (later classified as Action Tantra),<sup>215</sup> and the *Concentration Continuation Tantra* (later classified as Action Tantra).<sup>216</sup>

Buddhaguhya flourished during the eighth century, an assessment based on two pieces of evidence. The first is his correspondence with the Tibetan king Trisong Detsen (*Khri srong lde btsan*, 742-797).<sup>217</sup> The second piece of evidence is the inclusion of several of

---

<sup>215</sup> *dPung bzang gis zhug pa zhes bya ba'i rgyud*, *Subāhupariṣcchānāmatantra*, P428, vol. 9.

<sup>216</sup> *bSam gtan gyi phyi ma rim par phyi ba*, *Dhyānottaraṭṭalakrama*, P430, vol. 9.

<sup>217</sup> Samten G. Karmay, *The Great Perfection (rdzogs chen): A Philosophical and Meditative Teaching in Tibetan Buddhism* (Leiden: EJ Brill, 1988), p. 1.

Buddhaguhya's commentaries in the Denkar Palace Catalogue (*dKar chag ldan dkar ma*), which lists the titles and, for commentarial literature, authors of texts translated during the first propagation of Buddhism in Tibet. This catalogue for the most part records officially sanctioned translations and is the earliest extant catalogue of Tibetan translations. Although it was completed during the early part of the ninth century by the translators Peltsek (*dPal brtsegs*), Namke Nyingpo (*Nam mkha'i snying po*), and Lu'i Wangpo (*kLu'i dbang po*),<sup>218</sup> the Denkar Palace Catalogue likely was begun towards the end of the eighth century,<sup>219</sup> and the inclusion of Buddhaguhya's works in it, together with his interaction with Trisong Detsen, dates his interaction with the Tibetan court to the latter half of the eighth century.

The Denkar Palace Catalogue identifies the author of texts such as the *Commentary on the Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra* as "Buddhagupta" rather than as "Buddhaguhya." This has caused some confusion about the identity of the author. However, there is no doubt that the important Indian tantric exegete Buddhaguhya who corresponded with King Trisong Detsen is the same person as the "Buddhagupta" identified as the author of tantric texts such as the *Commentary on the Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana* recorded in the Denkar Palace Catalogue.

---

<sup>218</sup> Adelheid Herrmann-Pfandt dates the Denkar Palace Catalogue to 812 CE, but states that additions were made until at least 830 ("The *Lhan kar ma* as a Source for the History of Tantric Buddhism," in *The Many Canons of Tibetan Buddhism: Proceedings of the Ninth Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies*, eds. Helmut Eimer & David Germano [Leiden-Boston-Köln: EJ Brill, 2002], p. 135).

<sup>219</sup> Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, pp. 440-441; Matthew T. Kapstein, *The Tibetan Assimilation of Buddhism: Conversion, Contestation, and Memory* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 62-63.

In terms of the Yoga Tantra corpus, Buddhaguhya wrote the *Entry into the Meaning of the Tantra*<sup>220</sup>—an important commentary on the *Compendium of Principles*. He is also the author of one of the earliest exegetical works on another important tantra, the *Purification of All Bad Transmigrations*. This work, the *Purification of All Bad Transmigrations Maṇḍala Rite*,<sup>221</sup> is a commentary on the tantra as well as a maṇḍala rite for it.

The earliest of the “three people expert in Yoga Tantra” (*yo ga la mi mkhas pa gsum*), as Tibetan traditions refer to them, Buddhaguhya was an influential figure in the early propagation of Buddhism in Tibet during the height of its dynastic period. While in western Tibet in the environs of Mt. Kailash, he was invited to central Tibet by Trisong Detsen and, although he declined the invitation, sent several of his commentaries (reportedly composed for this purpose). In addition, he is also an important figure in the Mahāyoga tradition preserved by the Nyingma School in Tibet (I will discuss this in more detail in chapter four).

The dates for Śākyamitra and Ānandagarbha are less certain. Śākyamitra probably lived during the latter half of the eighth century (and perhaps into the first half of the ninth century).<sup>222</sup> Of the three, he authored the fewest extant texts.<sup>223</sup> However, his

---

<sup>220</sup> Buddhaguhya, *rGyud kyi don la 'jug pa, Tantrārthāvatāra*, P3324 (Toh. 2501), vol. 70, 33.1.1-73.4.7. Snellgrove discusses this letter, and translates a portion of it, in *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 2, pp. 446-450. For an introduction to and complete translation of the letter in German, see Siglinde Dietz, “Bhoṭasvāmidāsalekha,” in *Die Buddhistische Briefliteratur Indiens: Nach dem tibetischen Tanjur herausgegeben, übersetzt und erläutert*, Asiatische Forschungen Band 84 (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1984), pp. 79-84 and 359-399. I am grateful to Professor Bill McDonald of the German Department, University of Virginia, for translating Dietz’s German into English.

<sup>221</sup> Buddhaguhya, *Ngan song thams cad yongs su sbyong ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga'i rim pa zhes bya ba*, *Sarvadurgatipariśodhanamaṇḍalavidhikramaṇāma*, translated by Mañjuśrivarman and Bran ka mu ti (and, according to some catalogues, Buddhaguhya), P3461 (Toh. 2636).

<sup>222</sup> My thanks to Stephen Hodge for sharing with me his calculation of Śākyamitra’s dates. He arrives at this date by extrapolating from the list of gurus Śākyamitra mentions at the beginning of his *Kosala*

exegesis of the *Compendium of Principles*—the *Kosala Ornament: Extensive Explanation of the Compendium of Principles*<sup>224</sup>—is a seminal work. While Buddhaguhya’s *Entry into the Meaning of the Tantra* is earlier, it is an explanation of important doctrines and practices of the *Compendium of Principles* (it is sometimes referred to in Tibetan traditions as esoteric instructions [*man ngag*] for the tantra). Śākyamitra’s *Kosala Ornament*, although written after Buddhaguhya’s work, represents the first word-by-word commentary on the *Compendium of Principles*, and as such is a seminal exegesis.

Ānandagarbha, the latest of “three people expert in Yoga Tantra,” can tentatively be dated to the latter part of the ninth or early part of the tenth century. A Tibetan source that dates him to an earlier period is Tāranātha’s early seventeenth-century work *History of Buddhism in India*, which states that Ānandagarbha lived during the reign of King

---

*Ornament*, which includes King Indrabhūti of Oḍḍiyāna. One of the pivotal figures in the legendary histories of the origin of tantric texts and lineages in India, King Indrabhūti (actually, three generations of Indrabhūtis) is mentioned in Jñānamitra’s commentary on the *Mode of the Perfection of Wisdom in 150 Stanzas*. Since Jñānamitra’s text was included in the Denkar Palace Catalogue, we know that Indrabhūti predates this. Based on several pieces of evidence, Hodge dates the Indrabhūti with whom Śākyamitra trained to the middle of the eighth century. Thus, Śākyamitra must have been alive at this time. Since he would have reached intellectual maturity and written his *Kosala Ornament* sometime after this, we arrive at the latter part of the eighth century as an approximate date for Śākyamitra’s commentary (Stephen Hodge, personal communication, 14 April 2002).

Ronald Davidson also places Śākyamitra in the late eighth or early ninth century (Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 159). This assessment relies in part on a dedicatory verse at the end of the *Bhadracaryāprañidhānarājaṭikā* (Toh. 4013, 234a.3, as cited in Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 379, n. 141) that identifies the author as Śākyamitra. This commentary is listed in the Denkar Palace Catalogue (Davidson, *Indian Esoteric Buddhism*, p. 379, n. 141), and therefore must date to the late eighth or early ninth century, if not before. Yukei Matsunaga dates Śākyamitra to the same period, although without any explanation, in “A History of Tantric Buddhism,” p. 179.

<sup>223</sup> Only five texts in the *Tengyur*—the Tibetan canon of Indian commentarial literature—are attributed to him, while Buddhaguhya and Ānandagarbha each wrote over twenty texts.

<sup>224</sup> Śā kyamitra, *De kho na nyid bsduṣ pa’i rgya cher bshad pa ko sa la’i rgyan*, *Kosala-alamkārayatattvasaṃgrahaṭikā*, P3326 (Toh. 2503), vol. 70, 189.1.1–vol. 71, 94.2.6.



Mahipāla, who died at roughly the same time as the Tibetan King Relpacen (d. 838 or 841).<sup>225</sup> This would put Ānandagarbha sometime during the late eighth or early ninth century.

However, I think this account is in error. Butön says that Ānandagarbha and Mañjuśrikīrti were “spiritual brothers” (*mched grogs*),<sup>226</sup> which means they would have been contemporaries, and Ronald Davidson dates Mañjuśrikīrti to the tenth century.<sup>227</sup> Thus, if Mañjuśrikīrti and Ānandagarbha were indeed contemporaries, then Ānandagarbha must have been alive during the tenth century. This assessment seems probable, given the range of tantras on which Ānandagarbha composed commentaries, some of which represented later developments of Indian Buddhist tantra. He is taken in Tibetan traditions to be the authoritative Indian Yoga Tantra author, and this is due at least in part to the fact that he represents later developments of the tradition—certainly later than Buddhaguhya and Śākyamitra. Thus, I locate Ānandagarbha toward the end of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century.

There is some biographical information on Ānandagarbha preserved in Tibetan sources. He was a native of Magadha and a resident of Vikramaśīla monastery.<sup>228</sup> A prolific tantric exegete, his corpus of works includes commentaries and liturgical texts on a range of tantras. He wrote an enormous commentary on the *Compendium of Principles* known by its abbreviated title *Illumination of the Principles*.<sup>229</sup> He also composed a

---

<sup>225</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha's History of Buddhism in India*, tr. by Lama Chimpa and Alaka Chattopadhyaya; ed. by Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1990), p. 284.

<sup>226</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 65a.6.

<sup>227</sup> Davidson, “Names of Mañjuśrī,” p. 12.

<sup>228</sup> Tāranātha, *Tāranātha's History*, p. 285.

<sup>229</sup> Ānandagarbha, *Illumination of the Principles, Explanation of the “Compendium of Principles of All Tathāgatas: Manifest Realization of the Great Vehicle” Tantra*, *De bzhin gshegs pa thams cad kyi de kho na nyid bsduṣ pa theg pa chen po mngon par rtogs pa shes bya ba'i rgyud kyi bshad pa de kho na nyid snang bar byed pa shes bya ba,*

maṇḍala rite for the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala—the central maṇḍala of the *Compendium of Principles* and of the Yoga Tantra class as a whole.<sup>230</sup> In addition, he composed a maṇḍala rite for the Conquest over the Three Worlds Maṇḍala, the first maṇḍala of the second section of the *Compendium of Principles*.<sup>231</sup>

Ānandagarbha also authored a number of texts on other Yoga Tantras. He wrote a commentary on and a maṇḍala rite for the *Śrī Paramādyā Tantra*.<sup>232</sup> In addition, he wrote commentaries and ritual texts for the *Purification of All Bad Transmigrations* as well as consecration rites and texts for the practice of deities such as Vajrasattva. He also authored exegetical works on the *Secret Assembly (Guhyasamāja) Tantra* and the *Magical Emanation Net (Māyājāla) Tantra*.

In addition to the texts just discussed, there are a number of other Indian exegetical works related to the *Compendium of Principles* by various authors. Although Butön provides biographical sketches of many of these figures, I will simply list the texts here:<sup>233</sup>

---

*Sarvatathāgatattvasaṃgrahamahāyānābhisamayanāmavyākhyātattvālokarināma*, tr. by (1) Rin chen bzang po and (2) Thugs rje chen po (Mahākaruṇa). P3333 (Toh. 2510), vol. 71, 134.1.1–vol. 72, 152.4.8. This text consists of 18,000 stanzas.

<sup>230</sup> Ānandagarbha, *Rite of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala: Source of All Vajras*, P3339 (Toh. 2516), vol. 74.

<sup>231</sup> Ānandagarbha, *Rite of the Glorious Conquest over the Three Worlds Drawn from the Compendium of Principles Tantra*, *dPal khams gsum rnam par rgyal ba'i dkyil 'khor gyi cho ga 'phags pa de kho na nyid bsdu pa'i rgyud las btus pa*, *Śrītrailokyavijayamaṇḍalavidhi āryatattvasaṃgrahatantroddhṛtā*, tr. by Rin chen bzang po, P3342 (Toh. 2519). This text, which consists of 1,225 stanzas, is almost certainly the text of the same length Butön refers to as the “*Source of Trailokyavijaya*, Rite of the Great Maṇḍala of the Second Section” (*dum bu gnyis pa'i dkyil 'khor chen po'i cho ga 'jig rten gsum rgyal 'byung ba zhes bya ba shu lo ga stong nyis brgya nyi shu rtsa lnga pa mdzad*; Butön, *Ship*, 62b.2-62b.3).

<sup>232</sup> Ānandagarbha, *Extensive Commentary on the Śrī Paramādyā*, *dPal mchog dang po'i rgya cher bshad pa*, *Śrīparamādīṭikā*, tr. by (1) Śraddhākaravarman, Kamalagupta, and Rin chen bzang po; (2) Mantrakalaśa and Zhi ba 'od, P3335 (Toh. 2512), vol. 72, 177.2.3–vol. 73, 213.1.2.

<sup>233</sup> This section draws heavily on the Yoga Tantra section of the *Tengyur* in the *Catalogue of the Nyingma Edition*, vol. 4, pp. 283-313.

- Padmavajra, *rGyud kyi don la 'jug pa'i 'grel bshad*, *Tantrārthāvatārvyākhyāna*, P3325 (Toh. 2502). This is a sub-commentary on Buddhaguhya's *Entry into the Meaning of the Tantra*. Butön mentions Padmavajra in the context of Buddhaguhya's lineage of disciples (*slob brgyud*),<sup>234</sup> and thereby indicates that he was not a direct disciple of Buddhaguhya.
- Muditākoṣa, *rDo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i lha rnam kyi rnam par gzhang pa zhes bya ba*, *Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍalasarvadevavyavasthānanāma*, translated by Padmākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po, P3327 (Toh. 2504). This is a description of the arrangement of deities of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala.
- Munindrabhadra, *rDo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor chen po'i cho ga rdo rje thams cad 'byung ba zhes bya ba'i don bsdus pa*, *Vajradhātumahāmaṇḍalavidhisarvavajrodayanāmapiṇḍārtha*, translated by Munindrabhadra and Chos kyi shes rab (probably the eleventh-century figure known also as the “Translator from Shekar” [*She dkar lo tsā ba*]),<sup>235</sup> P3352 (Toh. 2529). This is a summary of Ānandagarbha's *Rite of the Vajradhātu Great Maṇḍala: Source of All Vajras*. Butön identifies the author and translator as the paṇḍita Munitaṃbhadrā. More importantly, Butön casts doubt on the interpretive value of this text, stating, “it appears that the paṇḍita provisionally wrote a commentary without having the quintessential instructions of the master Ānandagarbha.”<sup>236</sup>
- *rDo rje dbyings kyi dkyil 'khor gyi don bsgom pa'i don bsdus pa*, *Vajradhātumaṇḍalārthabhāvanāpiṇḍārtha*, translated by Kumārakalaśa, P3353 (Toh. 2530).
- Jñānavajra, *Thugs rje 'byung ba zhes bya ba bsgom pa dang bzlas pa'i cho ga*, *Karuṇodayanāmahāvanājapavidhi*, translated by Śraddhākaravarman and Rin chen bzang po, P3346 (Toh. 2524). Butön, in a passage prefaced by “it is said,” relates that this text is a means of achievement (*sgrub thabs*, *sādhana*) for the Vajradhātu

<sup>234</sup> *slob dpon de'i slob brgyud/ slob dpon rdo rje zhes bya bas rgyud kyi don la 'jug pa la rgya cher 'grel pa byas so/* (Butön, *Ship*, 70a.3).

<sup>235</sup> P3890, Tibetan Buddhist Resource Center, [www.tbrc.org](http://www.tbrc.org).

<sup>236</sup> *paṇḍi ta la slob dpon kun snying gi man ngag med par 'grel pa btsan thabs su byas par snang ngo/* (Butön, *Ship*, 74a.3-74a.4).

Maṇḍala (or for the deity Vajradhātu),<sup>237</sup> and hence I have included it as a commentary on the *Compendium of Principles*.

- *rDo rje chos kyi sgrub thabs, Vajradharmasādhana*, translated by Lo chung Legs pa'i shes rab, P3484 (Toh. 2660). Butön discusses two texts with this name: a longer one that presents the great yoga practice and a shorter one that presents the single yoga practice.<sup>238</sup>
- Ānandagarbha, *rDo rje sems dpa' 'byung ba zhes bya ba'i sgrub pa'i thabs, Vajrasattvodayanāmasādhana*, translated by Subuddhaśrīśānti and rMa dGe ba'i blo gros, P3340 (Toh. 2517). According to Butön, this text consists of 250 stanzas;<sup>239</sup> other editions of the *Tengyur* put its length at 200 stanzas.<sup>240</sup> This and the next text were once known, respectively, as the *Great Source of Vajrasattva* and the *Shorter Source of Vajrasattva*.<sup>241</sup> It is possible that this and the next text are related to the *Śrī Paramādyā Tantra* rather than to the *Compendium of Principles*.
- Ānandagarbha, *rDo rje sems dpa'i sgrub thabs, Vajrasattvasādhana*, translated by Subuddhaśrīśānti and rMa dGe ba'i blo gros, P3341 (Toh. 2518).

## Conclusion

The *Compendium of Principles* stands as perhaps the most significant development in the history of Indian Buddhist tantra. It combines a variety of elements—some of which developed out of earlier non-tantric Mahāyāna traditions, some of which are found in earlier tantra texts later classified under the rubrics of Action Tantra and Performance Tantra, and some of which occur for the first time in the *Compendium of Principles*. Among the latter are the structuring of its maṇḍalas around five Buddha families rather

---

<sup>237</sup> *ye shes rdo rjes rdo rje dbyings kyi sgrub thabs thugs rje 'byung ba'i sgom bzlas zhes bya ba mdzad do/* (Butön, *Ship*, 61a.6).

<sup>238</sup> *rdo rje chos kyi gzhi lus byas pa'i rnal 'byor chen po dang/ rnal 'byor gcig ldan yin la/ ming yang de ltar btags* (Butön, *Ship*, 74b.4-74b.5). According to the Cordier, Suzuki, and Mongolian editions, the title of the text is: *Āryavajradharmaika-yogasādhana* (*Catalogue of the Nyingma Edition* vol.4, p. 391), which should refer to the *Means of Achievement of the Single Yoga* Butön mentions.

<sup>239</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 62b.4.

<sup>240</sup> *Catalogue of the Nyingma Edition*, vol. 4, p. 307.

<sup>241</sup> Butön, *Ship*, 76a.6-76a.7.

than three and the identity of the central Buddha figure as Vairocana (prefigured in the earlier *Manifest Enlightenment of Vairocana Tantra*). In addition, the *Compendium of Principles* contains central and detailed narrative structures into which ritual processes are interwoven, and which reflect the earliest emergence of a self-conscious tantric identity.

While the *Compendium of Principles* itself represents a signal event in the history of Indian Buddhist tantra that dates to the last quarter of the eighth century, the earliest attestation we have of the formation of exegetical traditions around it are the works of Vajrabodhi, preserved in Chinese, from the second quarter of the eighth century (but said to reflect teachings he received around 700 CE), and Buddhaguhya's mid-eighth century works, preserved in Tibetan. Buddhaguhya is also the first Indian exegete to treat the *Compendium of Principles* as the central fixture of a corpus of texts that he identifies as Yoga Tantra, and it is to this that I now turn.