

# A Doubt to Authority of the Guhyasamāja-Ākhyāna-tantras

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We cannot throughly trace the development of Tāntric Buddhism in India. It is due to the following two points. In the first place, there were few translations in Chinese or Tibetan made during the period from the 9th century to the 10th, when Tāntric Buddhism most flourished. It is hard to know by means of the history of translation when Tantras, Sādhanas and Vidhis were compiled. In the second place, the Tibetan books of the history of Tāntric Buddhism are not always trustworthy. For they contain some fabrications made in the interests of various schools of Tāntric Buddhism.

To make things clear, it is necessary to examine in detail the contents of Tantras, Sādhanas and Vidhis, paying attention to the contradictions among them, and to criticize the traditional views held by some schools. In this paper the authority of the Guhyasamāja-Ākhyāna-tantras will be re-examined.

In general Tantras belonging to the Anuttarayoga-tantra class consist of Mūla-tantra, Uttara-tantras and Ākhyāna-tantras. As for the Guhyasamāja circle, the Mūla-tantra is the first 17 chapters of the Guhyasamāja-tantra (Tohoku No. 442) of which the Sanskrit text has been published,<sup>(1)</sup> and the Uttara-tantra is the 18th chapter (Tohoku No. 443) of that Tantra, and the Ākhyāna-tantra are generally regarded as the following four Tantras, i. e. the Sandhivvyākaraṇa-tantra (Tohoku No. 444), the Vajramālā-tantra (Tohoku No. 445), the Caturdevīparipṛcchā-tantra (Tohoku No. 446), the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra (Tohoku No. 447). These Ākhyāna-tantras are found in Tibetan only and have more advanced teachings and practices

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(1) B. Bhattācāryya: Guhyasamājatāntra, G. O. S. LIII, Baroda. 1931.

than the Guhyasamāja-Mūla-tantra. But in the teachings and practices of the Ākhyāna-tantras, we can see some bias of a certain school, although it has been generally believed that they have authority which other Sādhanas and commentaries can not have by the reason that they are regarded as the collections of the speech of Buddha himself.<sup>(1)</sup>

Among the schools of the Guhyasamāja circle, the most important ones are the Jñānapāda school founded by Buddhaśrijñāna (Jñānapāda) and the Saint school (ḥPhags-lugs-pa) whose founders are Nāgārjuna and his son, Āryadeva. We now call the latter in question. The Saint school has two chief Sādhanas, the Piṇḍikṛta-sādhana (Tohoku No. 1796) and the Pañcakrama (Tohoku No. 1802). These Sādhanas attributed to Nāgārjuna, are the Utpatti-krama and Utpanna-krama (Niṣpanna-krama) respectively of the Saint school. Prof. L. de la Vallée Puossin published the Sanskrit text of these two Sādhanas put together.<sup>(2)</sup> while the Pradīpodyotana (Tohoku No. 1785) by Candrakīrti is one of the most important commentaries on the Guhyasamāja-tantra, and its Sanskrit manuscript was found by Ven. Rāhula Sāṅkṛtyāyana in Tibet, and I have obtained the photograph of this manuscript through the kindness of Jayaswal Institute in Patna.

### 1. Vajramālā-tantra and Pañcakrama

According to the traditional belief, the Piṇḍikṛta-sādhana, the Pañcakrama and the Pradīpodyotana were written on the basis of some Ākhyāna-tantras more than of the Mūla-tantra. The Sādhanas and commentaries frequently quote from the Ākhyāna-tantras as well as the Mūla-tantra, and there are not a few cases in which the authority of the Sādhanas and commentaries of the Saint-school is placed on the Ākhyāna-tantras. A few years ago I studied the interaction between the Vajramālā-tantra and the Pañcakrama.<sup>(3)</sup> The main point of that thesis is as follows. We cannot find

(1) These Ākhyāna-tantras are classified among bkha-gyur in the Tibetan Catalogue.

(2) L. de la Vallée Puossin: Pañcakrama, Gand, 1896.

(3) Y. Matsunaga: On the relations between the Vajramālā-tantra and the Pañcakrama, Bunka, 20-4, 1956, pp. 24-37.

any reference to the system of "five orders" of the Pañcakrama, either in the Guhyasamāja-tantra or in the chapters I to 67 of the Vajramālā-tantra. But in the last 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra, the system of the "five orders" appears. In that chapter three verses are irregular in syllabication, and the same verses are found in the fourth order of the Pañcakrama. In the Vajramālā-tantra the verses before and after the three verses just mentioned are regular in form, while in the Pañcakrama the verses before and after the three are irregular. This indicates that the Vajramālā-tantra took the three verses from the Pañcakrama. It is therefore presumed that the 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra was added after the Pañcakrama had been written.

In the Vajrajāpā-krama, the first order of the Pañcakrama, we have nine verses mentioned that "this is quotation from the Vajramālā-tantra (the 68th chapter)." The Vajrajāpā-krama in the extant text is almost composed of verses quoted from the Guhyasamāja-Mūla-tantra, the Uttara-tantra, the Caturdevīparipṛcchā, the Vajramālā-tantra and the Sandhivā-karaṇa-tantra. But by its old commentaries, the Vajrajapa-tīkā (Tohoku No. 1788) by Śraddhākaravarma and the Caryāmelāpakapradīpa (Tohoku No. 1803) by Āryadeva, we judge that the original form of the Vajrajāpā-krama was smaller than the extant text; the two commentaries have not had all verses quoted from the 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra. It may be said that there were some additions in the Vajrajāpā-kramā of the Pañcakrama after the 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra had been added to the first 67 chapters.

Why were such additions repeated so often? We may say it was because the school wanted to increase the authority of the Pañcakrama. The system of "Five orders" of the Pañcakrama is found neither in the Guhyasamāja-tantra nor in the first 67 chapters of the Vajramālā-tantra. But it was necessary for the Pañcakrama to have its authority in the Tantra. Then the scholars of the Saint school added the 68th chapter which is closely connected with the system of "Five orders" to the 67 chapters of the Vajramālā-tantra which are the basis of the Piṇḍīkṛita-sādhana, but

not of the Pañcakrama. And moreover they interpolated into the Vajrajāpa-krama some verses which they pretended to be the quotation from the Vajramālā-tantra with a view to empowering the Pañcakrama by the authority of the Ākhyāna-tantra.

## 2. Pañcakrama and Pradīpodyotana

The Pradīpodyotana, in its introductory part, gives a brief explanation of the “Five orders” of the Pañcakrama, and says “one should understand Śaṭkoṭi after he accomplishes the practice of the system of the “five orders”<sup>(1)</sup>. The Saptālaṅkāra including Śaṭkoṭi<sup>(2)</sup> and Caturvidhākhyāyikā is the subject matter of the Pradīpodyotana; it is used as standards for the understanding of the Guhyasamāja-tantra, and is explained on the basis of the practice systems of the Saint school found in such Sādhana as the Piṇḍīkṛta-sādhana and the Pañcakrama. Therefore it can be said that the Pradīpodyotana was written evidently after the Pañcakrama had been completed. And moreover the relation of the teacher and pupil between Nāgārjuna who is said to be the author of the Pañcakrama, and Candrakīrti who is said to be the author of the Pradīpodyotana also will give a hint of the question which text was written earlier.

## 3. Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra and Pañcakrama

Now we will examine the relations between the Pañcakrama and the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, one of the Ākhyāna-tantras. The Pañcakrama at the opening of the text, tells us that the system of the “Five orders”<sup>(3)</sup> must be understood on the basis of the Ākhyāna-tantra. But in reality the Ākhyāna-tantra referred to in the Pañcakrama was not the Vajramālā-tantra. Among the four Ākhyāna-tantras the Caturdevīparipreçhā and the Sandhivāyākaraṇa have no explanation of the system of the “Five orders” at all. In the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, we find first the explanation of the Trayajñāna, next the brief explanations of the Śaṭkoṭi,

(1) Skt. Mss. fol. 1a, Tib. Tohoku No. 1785, fol. 2a.

(2) Y. Matsunaga: On the Saptālaṅkāra, Journal of Indian and Buddhist Studies, vol. XI, No. 2, 1963, pp. 92-98.

(3) Pañcakrama p. 18.

Caturvidhākhyāyikā and five kinds of Tantra, and finally the names of the Saptālaṅkāra.

The Trayajñāna is the subject matter of the Sarvaśuddhivīśuddhikrama (Anuttarasandhi-krama), the second order of the Pañcakrama. In the Pañcakrama, however, we cannot even find the name of the Vajrajñāna-samuccaya-tantra, much less a quotation from this Tantra. On the contrary, the first order of the Pañcakrama consists mainly of the quotations from the Mūla-tantra and other three Ākhyāna-tantras, and the second order which should have cited from the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra as its authority has no such quotations except some from the Mūla-tantra and other Sūtras.

Next, in the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, the Trayajñāna is explained in relation to Ṣaṭkoṭi and Caturvidhākhyāyikā that are the subject matter of the Pradīpodyotana, which is later than the Pañcakrama. By these points we may conceive that the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra was compiled after the Pañcakrama.

#### 4. Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra and Pradīpodyotana

The Pradīpodyotana, in its introductory part, professes to explain one by one the Saptālaṅkāra in reference to Ākhyāna-tantra<sup>(1)</sup>. It says that the Saptālaṅkāra which is the subject matter of the commentary should be understood on the basis of the Ākhyāna-tantra. It has been popularly believed that, even if the commentary does not give the name Vajrajñāna samuccaya-tantra, the Ākhyāna-tantra as mentioned above means the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, for the reason that explanations of the Saptālaṅkāra are found in the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, but not in any other Ākhyāna-tantras. The commentators of later years accept that the Ākhyāna-tantra referred to in the Pradīpodyotana is the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra<sup>(2)</sup>.

But against such traditional beliefs we may well wonder why the

(1) Skt. Mss. fol. 1b, Tib. Tohoku No. 1785, fol. 2a.

(2) Tohoku No. 5077, fol. 21a. No. 6868, fol. 7a etc.

Pradīpodyotana does not have even a quotation from the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra which should have been the only authority of the Saptālaṅkāra. The Pradīpodyotana, on the contrary, quotes often from the other Ākhyāna-tantras, the Mūla-tantra and the Uttara-tantra. To make this point clear we shall compare the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra with the Pradīpodyotana.

As stated above, the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, in its first half, explains the Trayajñāna, Ṣaṭkoṭi, Caturvidhākhyāyikā and five kinds of the Tantra, and in its second half, the Saptālaṅkāra with its subdivisions. In the first half we find a brief explanation of the Ṣaṭkoṭi, i. e. Neyā, Nītārtha, Sandhyāyabhāṣā, Nāsandhyā, Yathāruta and Naruta; we also find three Ākhyāyikā, i. e. Samatāṅga, Garbhīn and Kōlika, among the Caturvidhākhyāyikā, but there is no explanation about the Akṣarārtha. The Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, in its first half, does not give all the names of Alaṅkāras. On the contrary we can not help paying our attention to the fact that the latter half has all the names of the Saptālaṅkāra and its twenty eight subdivisions.

In the introductory part of the Pradīpodyotana, we find an explanation about every one of the Saptālaṅkāra. There, the names of first, second, third and fourth Alaṅkāra, i. e. Upodghāta, Nyāya, Ṣaṭkoṭi and Ākhyāna (Caturvidhākhyāyikā) are given, but there are given no names of the fifth, sixth, seventh ones or of the subdivisions of the Saptālaṅkāra. On the contrary we can see in the latter half of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra all the names not only of the Saptālaṅkāra, but also of the twenty eight subdivisions. We can find well-defined names for the first four Alaṅkāras in the latter half of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra and we can understand the meaning of every Alaṅkāra at a glance. According to the comparison between the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra and the Pradīpodyotana, it may be said that the explanation of the Saptālaṅkāra in the latter half of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra is in better trim than that in the Pradīpodyotana. Upon examination as above, it is more suitable to assert that the latter half of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, especially the ex-

planation of the Saptālaṅkāra with its subdivisions was added after the Pradīpodyotana had been written.

Though at the end of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra we find a postscript' "That is the second chapter of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra", there is no postscript of the first chapter. Therefore it is supposed that either the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra in the present form lost the first chapter or the first chapter is annexed to the second chapter by losing its postscript. The former is not accepted for the following reason. We have in the Tibetan Canons another Ākhyāna-tantra, the Śrī-jñānavajrasamuccaya-tantra (Tohoku No. 450), which presents much similarity in the contents to the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra. This Tantra, with more detailed explanations than the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, begins with the explanation of the Trayajñāna as does the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra. It is, therefore, more agreeable to take the second. It may suggest the later addition of the latter half of the vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra. The first half including the Trayajñāna etc. was completed first. After the Pradīpodyotana had been written, the second chapter of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra having the detailed explanation of the Saptālaṅkāra was added. And as there is an evident indication of development from the first chapter to the second, it may be said that the Tantra lost the postscript of the first chapter. We may say that the Tantra in the present form was completed through the processes above mentioned.

Although the Pradīpodyotana says that the Saptālaṅkāra should be understood in reference to the Ākhyāna-tantra, the Saptālaṅkāra in the complete form cannot be found in any Ākhyāna-tantra, but in the latter half of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, which is a later addition. And it is noted that in the first half of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra, there exist explanations of the Saptālaṅkāra, even if incomplete. From these considerations, it may be asserted that at least the first half of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra already existed at the time when the Pradīpodyotana was written. But by the fact that in the Pradīpodyotana we can not find even the name of the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra or any quotation

from it, while there are many quotations from other Ākhyāna-tantras in it, we can know that even if the first half was completed before the Pradīpodyotana, its period was not very far from that of the Pradīpodyotana. Therefore it seems that the author of the Pradīpodyotana did not use the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra as its authority. In the first part of the sub-commentary of dGe-lugs-pa on the Pradīpodyotana, we find the names of six Ākhyāna-tantras, i. e. the Devendrapariṣcchā, the Uttara-tantra, plus the above-mentioned four Ākhyāna-tantras, while in the next part there are four names, i. e. the Devendrapariṣcchā and three Ākhyāna-tantras of the four Ākhyāna-tantras, excepting the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra. From this fact, we can see that even Tibetan commentators in the later years did not pay a deep regard to the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra.

#### 5. Vajrajñānamuccaya-tantra and Srī-jñānavajrasamuccaya-tantra

As stated above the Srī-jñānavajrasamuccaya-tantra deals with the same subject matter with the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra. It is about eight times as long as the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra. In the first part explaining the Trayajñāna and five kinds of Tantra, we have repetitions by verse that can not be seen in the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra. In addition, the Srī-jñānavajrasamuccaya-tantra has many explanations which the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra have not, for instance, detailed explanation of every Alaṅkāra and of the pantheon. And there are not a little difference between the two, for example, the Srī-jñānavajrasamuccaya-tantra has all the names of the Caturvidhākhyāyikā and of the nature of the Trayajñāna, and changes the names of the Mahāyoga-tantra and the Ubhaya-tantra among the five kinds of Tantra into Anuttarayoga-tantra and Yoga-tantra. Seeing that the Srī-jñānavajrasamuccaya-tantra has some repetitions by verse and lacks a deity in each group of the pantheon, it seems that it pretended to be an archaic text. But the well-arranged contents of the Tantra itself suggest that it was compiled after the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra.

(1) Tohoku No. 6868, fol. 3a.

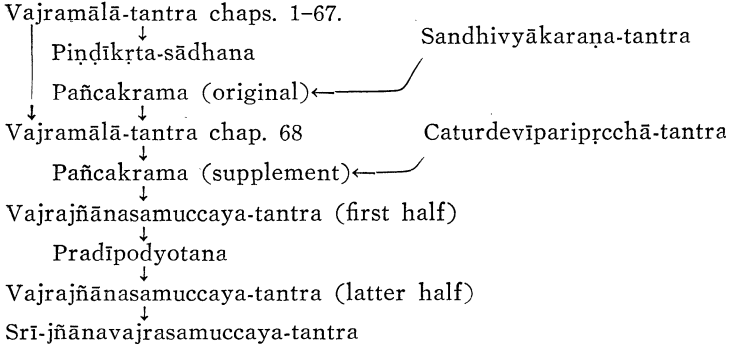
(2) *ibid.* fol. 4b.



## 6. Conclusion

As we have seen, the 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra was added after the original Pañcakrama had been written, while the Pañcakrama took some verses from the 68th chapter of the Vajramālā-tantra. On the other hand the Pañcakrama was completed earlier than the Vajrajñāna-samuccaya-tantra, of which the latter half had not been finished at the time when the Pradīpodyotana was written. The compilation of the Srī-jñānavajrasamuccaya-tantra was even later than the Vajrajñānasamuccaya-tantra.

The following chart represents chronological relations of the texts.



Most of the Ākhyāna-tantras of the Guhyasamāja are closely related to the Sādhana and commentaries etc. of the Saint school. According to the traditional beliefs the authority of the Sādhana and commentaries of the Saint school has been on the basis of the Ākhyāna-tantras. It is true that we can not always find the authority of the Sādhana and the commentaries in the Mūla-tantra and the Uttara-tantra, but we can find it often in the Ākhyāna-tantras. For that reason, traditional beliefs have

been accepted for a long time without any criticism. As a result of comparison of some Ākhyāna-tantras with some texts of the Saint school, we could know that some Ākhyāna-tantras were of the later date than has been believed.

The compilation of the Guhyasamāja-tantra was about 800 A. D., while<sup>(1)</sup> we can see according to Tibetan sources that the Saint school was in full flourish about the 10th century. It may be said that Sādhanas and commentaries of the Saint school, which came much later than the Guhyasamāja-tantra wanted to take in the harvest of the development of Tāntric Buddhism after the Guhyasamāja-tantra. But the scholars of the Saint school could not find any new systems in the Mūla-tantra and the Uttāra-tantra, so that they arbitrarily made some Ākhyāna-tantras, on the authority of which they placed their new systems without losing the appearance of Tantra. We shall be able to solve many contradictions in the Ākhyāna-tantras by finding that these contradictions came from the scholars of the Saint school in their effort to keep the authority of their teachings and practices.

(昭和38年度文部省科学研究費による各個研究の研究成果の一部)

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(1) H. Hadano: On the Jñānapāda school of the Guhyasamāja, *Bunka* vol. 5, 1950; Y. Matsunaga: Some problems over the compilation of the Guhyasamāja-tantra, *Studies in Indology and Buddhism*, Presented in Honour of Professor Gishō Nakano on the Occasion of his Seventieth Birthday, Oct. 1960, Kōyasan, pp. 193-207.