21 July 1985
SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
GANGTOK, INDIA
-The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in this field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field.-

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BULLETIN OF TIBETOLOGY

NEW SERIES

1983

No. 2

21 July 1985

SIKKIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE OF TIBETOLOGY
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There are three ways of considering the Tantra, each acceptable in its own degree: firstly, there is the relatively external way of scholarship, concerned largely with accumulat-
ing information and sifting source-material—here questions of influences and origins, and of historical affinities generally, will play a part; secondly, there is the essential and normal way of regarding Tantra, which can also be called the "tradi-
tional" way, under its twofold aspect of a wisdom (jnana) and a method (sakti) or, in other words, a metaphysical theory (lest we forget it, the primitive meaning of the Greek word theoria is "vision"—ἐπίθεσις, = seeing) together with its appro-
riate means of concentration, its yogic expedients; thirdly there is what might be described as a generalised "tantrik sense", whereby it is possible to recognise the existence, in places where the name of Tantra has been unknown, of analogous doctrines and methods, thus providing concurrent evidence in favour of the spiritual methods in question. Let us see how the Tantra will appear when viewed from each of these different angles.

Firstly, the scholarly approach: it should be pointed out, from the outset, that this manner of regarding the subject (or indeed any subject) can be given both a legitimate and an illegitimate form. The true value of scholarship is an ancillary one: it is obviously advantageous to the student, whether engaged in a strictly religious pursuit or otherwise, to be provided with reliable texts and references of various kind, a task which he himself lacking the detailed knowledge and training could hardly undertake for himself; likewise it may be helpful, in an indirect way, to form a picture of the historical background of one's religion; and again, a discussion by experts of the exact bearing of the various technical terms figuring in one's texts can be very useful, since in course of time people often lose sight of certain shades of meaning these terms will have borne for the authors who first used them and which more or less thoughtless repetition may afterwards have blurred—this applies especially to translated texts. All this pertains to the cardinal Buddhist

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virtue of "mindfulness" in varying proportions, from which it can be seen that the conscientious scholar is able to render a very genuine service in this field.

The abusive employment of scholarship, on the other hand, which has become well-nigh all-invading in recent times, consists in examining sacred writings and other religious phenomena in the light, or rather in the darkness, of an inbuilt profane prejudice, with the set purpose of reducing them, one and all, to the status of historical, anthropological or sociological accidents, by an explaining away of every transcendent element to be found therein—revelation, inspiration, intellect—in purely humanistic terms. The latest and in many ways deadliest addition to this process of subversion is the psychological interpretation of religion, of which the Freudian and Jungian schools provide two representative forms, the one being avowedly materialistic and hostile, while the other affeets a sympathetic attitude on the strength of a defily nurtured system of equivocations, as between things of the spiritual and of the psychic order: the Tantrik doctrines have not escaped an attempted annexation to this point of view and the same applies to Zen. The fact is that nowadays even Oriental commentators, who might be expected to see further than their Western colleagues, often exhibit a most uncritical taste in adopting the latest exegetical aberrations and this trend has amounted, in many cases, to a regular intellectual stampede before the modern "scientism" or, in other words, to an urge towards religious and intellectual suicide. It is necessary to be warned of this danger, which is spreading far and wide on both sides of the globe today.

It is under the heading of scholarship, which here must be taken in a very broad sense, that a question is best discussed which has largely entered into the present symposium on the Tantra, namely the relationship (if any) between its Buddhist and Hindu forms: admittedly, to answer a question like this fully, more than conventional scholarship is required; any attempted comment must in fact be accompanied by a certain metaphysical insight, able to look beyond the letter of texts and formulations to the underlying spirit in both the cases under comparison.

When the Tantrik writings first began to attract serious notice outside the Indian world, largely thanks to the outstanding studies of a late Chief Justice of Calcutta High
Court, Sir John Woodroffe (better known by his pen-name of Arthur Avalon), the fact that he himself, as a Sanskritist in close touch with Bengali pandits, devoted the greater part of his work to the Hindu Shakta and their doctrines, led to a hasty assumption, by many, that the Buddhist Tantras, which Arthur Avalon had barely touched on, were but an extension of an "erotic" symbolism, that is to say a representation of reality as the inter-play of a pair of conjoint principles respectively pictured as male and female, seemed to lend colour to the above conclusion: it hardly needs saying that this seeming polarisation into two deities, as Shiva and Shakti in the one case and as the various Buddhas with their female counterparts, in the other, implies no radical dualism; the Tantrik point of view is adritic through and through, so that it is only at the point of indistinguishable union (mukti) of the male and female principles thus depicted that the truth is effectively to be found. The male divinity and his partner essentially are one another and can never be regarded apart; the static is the creative or productive power and vice versa and indeed, it is the very fact that a numerical unity has been avoided in the symbolism, in favour of the more subtle idea of non-duality, that makes the Tantrik symbolical language so peculiarly eloquent and its corresponding methods so effective in unloosing the hold of dualistic habit on the human mind.

Prior to the publication of Arthur Avalon’s series of volumes, the Tantrik practices and also their associated iconography had become a favourite target of vicious insinuation, firstly on the part of ignorant Western commentators, especially missionaries, obsessed with unclean suspicions wherever the word “sex” is even mentioned, and, following their example, also on the part of Westernised Orientals; this prejudice has died hard and it is only in the last few years that the Tantras have begun to be regarded in the world at large as respectable, let alone as spiritually important, doctrines. It is largely thanks to observations carried out in the Tibetan field that this welcome, if belated change has come about. When one looks back to the end of last century and the early years of the present one, barring the lonely voice of Avalon, very few Western writers had a good word to say on the subject: typical examples of the then prevailing prejudice are Madame Blavatsky and Waddell, to mention two well-known names. Even as late as 1936 an
excellent scholar like the Japanese professor Tajima, I found an adherent of a Tantrik school (Sarigaj) accused of common prejudice, not against Tantrism as a whole, but against the Tibetan form of it, by supplementing that which, according to him, had been issued from Nalanda, the Tantrik scriptures, had been issued from Nalanda and Japanese Tantrik documents, he himself had written, and I myself, according to him, had written. I thought this, however, by no means clear. In any case, one could ask, what about Naropa and his Six Doctrines, since he certainly belonged to Nalanda? And where were Mipham and Mila Repa and so much of Tibet’s finest exoteric flowering have been without them? If a man as well informed as Professor Tajima could still echo, even slightly, these old prejudices, this but goes to show how thoroughly the various slanderers of Tantra had gone about their way of sifting mud. There is no doubt, however, that it is the ‘sexy’ denigration of the erotic symbolism that has chiefly helped to fog the issue, over and above whatever genuine problems the question of origins might have presented for more informed minds.

If I may be allowed here to strike a personal note, I should like to explain that when I first became aware of the place of Tantra in Tibetan tradition and art, my first impulse was to strike a blow in its defence, in opposition to the prejudiced reports still current at the time, as described above, in the first flush of discovery that such a thing as a Tantrik Buddhism existed and that it was a treasury of beautiful and eminently significant symbols I was ready to give tongue to my enthusiasm, but certainly was not competent to go very far on the interpretative side—Avalon’s treatises were then almost my only source of information, and very precious they were at the time. That is why I readily resorted to Hindu usage, by referring to the Tan’s divinities as “Consort-Energies” when writing my first book Peaks and Lamas; too much, however, should not be read into this allusion, which was largely accidental and certainly did not amount to a technical appraisal of a definitive kind.

Even so, at early date however, I did perceive one thing, which others have since pointed out from a position of greater information, namely that the sexual symbolism, common to the Buddhist and Hindu Tantr, nevertheless exhibits a divergence, as between the two schools, touching
the way in which the concept is essentially applied in, say, a Hindu ... the symbolic function of these forms was to reflect and correspond to the dynamic aspects or qualities of the key female deity within the Hindu pantheon. We can see how this is true for the Dakini Concourse. In Buddhism, on the other hand, the symbolic placing of these deities in female form which agrees with the Buddhist "spirtual revolution" to females and it also works the other way around: the gyan is pema, the female partner who seems to indicate the more static aspect of the symbolism—"wisdom" is essentially a state or quality of being—while the male element in the gyani is referred to as method (upaya) which, on the face of it, carries dynamic implications, since it is thanks to a deploying of the right means, with their accompanying effect, that pema is able to be realised in the heart of the Buddhas. Moreover, the traditional assimilating of upaya to compassion (if a dynamic conception) lends additional weight to the view that the Buddhist Tantric symbolism works the opposite way to the Hinayana: from which some polemically-minded writers, filled with pre-Buddhist patriotism, have gladly drawn the conclusion that Buddhist Tantrism is something entirely alien to the Hindu Tantrism, to which they add in order, supported by rather tendentious selected and apocalyptic evidence, that it is inferior in origin and that it was the Hindus who borrowed these methods from the Buddhists (as well as other things) and then imposed on them, a roshni, the specifically Hindu action of power, shakti.

Without claiming to be a scholar myself, I do not consider an explanation of this kind necessary in order to account for the available evidence and the same applies for regard to criteria of a more profound kind: the truth would rather seem to be that what was, without abuse of language, called the "Tantrik Revolution" belongs to both the great Indian traditions which it embraced, as it were in answer to a "cyclic need", in one providential overflowing of the Spirit in a manner that implies no derogation respecting the originality of either traditional form—rather let us see herein an example of that universal and divine Compassion which, in apparent disregard of all rationally delimited frontiers, provides what is needed for the salvation of suffering beings at a given time and place. It is not without reason that the Tantrik SuhHAS, wherever these are followed, are regarded as a way most appropriate to the conditions of
the present phase of the world cycle, where more primordial and, in a sense, more inflexible ways no longer fully match the need.

To sum up the above view: the representation of nonduality in the guise of a merging of male and female conjugal love, as well as the variously characteristic yogic practices connected therewith, is enough to prove the fundamental kinship between the Hindu and Buddhist Tantra and that despite some important divergencies as to detail. Granted this basic identity it is going too far, however, to try and establish a point to point correspondence in the respective symbolisms: Shakti and prajna are not simply interchangeable ideas, and each of the two Tantrik currents has evidently given rise to some original features, consonantly with its own peculiar genius, so that the impersonal prajna-agya relationship that has characterized Mahayana Buddhism on the one hand and the personified presentation characteristic of Hindu theism, Śiva-Shakti, on the other, have been able to grow out of the same erotic symbolism without risk of confusion in either direction. I doubt if one will get much nearer the truth of the matter than this.¹

By way of illustrating what might be described as a "metaphysical subterfuge", typical in its way, whereby an underlying identity is able to be discerned across an apparent expression of inter-religious rivalry, I would like to relate a rather amusing explanation given me by a Lama when I was staying near Shigatse in 1947: we were speaking about the Kailas and its pilgrimage and I had just made the observation that the divinity dwelling on the sacred summit, Demchhog (蹬池嘎 - 踐池 ideological) for the Tibetans and Lord Siva, for the Hindus, appeared to have much the same attributes; might one not infer from this, I asked, that Demchhog and Shiva are one and the same divinity and that each is, in effect, the other under a different name? "Oh no," said the Lama "you are mistaken in thinking thus. Shiva is the name of a Hindu god whom Demchhog, in the name of Buddhism, challenged and overcame, after which he appropriated his mountain and all his major and minor attributes, his "fan included"—a truly delightful way of by-passing traditional differences while seeming to make no concession to the other side. Nor must we overlook the fact that, according to this explanation, the Lady Parnab exchanged her former quality of Shakti for that of her new husband's prajna without turning
a hair, which in a way sums up the whole position, but without trying to rationalize it in an unnecessary degree.

Having dwelt so long on this much canvassed question of affinities, it will only be possible to touch briefly on the second of our three aspects of Tantra, on what was described at the outset as its normal or traditional aspect. In this connection it may well be asked, in view of the worldwide religious crisis going on today, whether any of the Tantrik Sadhanas still remain viable for men of the present generation and if so, what are the conditions allowing a man to opt for this way. The answer is that wherever the traditional structure has withstood the pressure of the times sufficiently to allow a would-be Sadhaka to find a guru qualified to initiate and give instruction there is no reason for him to hold off from following this line; let him profit from any discoverable opportunity while the going is good. If a door that is open today becomes closed tomorrow it will then be time to think again; but there is no reason to anticipate on this worser eventuality. Admittedly, the sacrilegious overrunning of Tibet, the chosen home of Tantra, has left the adjoining countries sadly unsupported; it is as if a bountiful fountain of spiritual influence has suddenly dried up. It would be going too far, however, to say that all opportunities of this kind have disappeared in the neighbouring region; in Japan also, the Tantrik initiations of Shinga and Tendai still carry on, which is marvellous in a country where profane forms of education together with industrialism have been developed to an extreme degree, as has happened there. It is these developments, fruits of the conjunction of an asuric substitute for prana with a no less asuric sphere which everywhere constitute the greatest threat to religious life. Contemporary man, helpless slave of his own mechanical creations, remains as if suspended between two karmically interconnected explosions, the nuclear one and the "population explosion". Lacking all discernment, he diverts to the parvenus of rockets to the moon that admiration that once was offered to the Buddhas and the Saints. This fascination exerted on the human mind by trivialities inflated to monstrous proportions is in fact one of the characteristic notes of the fearful era foretold by Tsong Khapa (and also by the Scriptures of all peoples) "when impurity grows greater and greater." (Pā. sūtra I:54a 12.18). This era is now upon us as part of our karma, which we cannot hope to by-pass but have to face; what then is the attitude required of us under these unavoidably distressing circumstances?
Sanskrit is never very true Siddhā is not given to this, namely that the world is always the world ever with times seen fair, nor also Bodhi is Bodhi even in an accurate sense. Therefore I myself, by I mean left as the sole follower of the Way in a world of men hopelessly inattentive; shall continue to pursue the Vedas. This is the only practical attainment for anyone to take up under whatever circumstances the essential message of the Sutras and Tantra does not differ from this.

Though it was natural to refer first, when broaching the above question, to the parent lands of Tantra, in Asia, it might also be asked whether, under the exceptional conditions now prevailing, some exporting of Tantrik methods might not take place in other directions, leading to a fresh local flowering; those who put this question are usually thinking of the dispersion of Tibetan Lamas in various alien lands, whereby some are hoping that a new impetus may be given to slumbering spiritual forces in the West. To such a question one can only answer that exceptional adaptations are always theoretically possible; they cannot be ruled out in principle. Humanly speaking, however, and on a more obvious showing, the kind of spiritual upaya that will be feasible under conditions where the environment is no longer traditionally receptive are likely to differ in various respects from those to which recourse can be had under circumstances of greater human normality; less complex spiritual instruments would seem to lend themselves best to so critical a situation.

Among upayas of this nature, requiring very little in the way of set conditions for their methodic utilisation, the various forms of “invocation” (japa) centred round the presence of a holy Name, focus of mnemonic power, are the first to come to mind. One characteristic example is the Nembutsu, the mantra belonging to Shingon Buddhism in Japan and enscribing the name of Amitabha Buddha as its operative theme; it is moreover evident that the similar use of the mantra of Chintamani, in Tibet, which could also be called the “quintessential invocation”, is closely akin to the Nembutsu in intention, if only by reason of the principal relationship of the Bodhisattva Chintamani and the Buddha Amitabha, as proved “mythologically” by the originisation of the former from the head of the latter. Similarly, in Eastern Christianity, we have the Jesus Prayer, an invocatory formula the use of which by the contemplatives of Mount Athos is extremely reminiscent of certain Tantrik methods.
Again, in the Islamic world, we find the invocation (dhikr) of the Supreme Name, which is the central upaya of the Sufi initiations and of the spiritual confraternities (tariq) attached to them. The important thing to note in every such case is that the formula invoked as mantra will always point to three possible levels of realisation: when used as a means of gaining merit, good karma, it has a relatively external applicability; it can also be used as a means of deepening piety, when it comes under the heading of a bhaktic support; lastly, the same formula can be the basis of a properly jnanic realisation (this implies a methodic invocation under guidance by a qualified Spiritual Master), whereby this upaya rejoins the methods of the Tantras, as much as it is able to take one to the gate of Deliverance itself.

It is evident that, by comparison with the ways described above, the Tantrik meditations, which by the nature of things demand long periods free from interruption for their normal accomplishment, remain relatively unadaptable; what is suitable in a spiritual summer may not be so in the wintry days of profane degeneration. To speculate on what is or is not any longer possible hardly falls within the scope of the present discussion; all one can do is to watch for signs and, where these appear, to respond in the most appropriate way.

What, however, does deserve attention, not only within the Hindu-cum-Buddhist world but also in the lands beyond, is what may fittingly be called "the Spirit of Tantra", our third category in the preamble to this essay. What then are the criteria whereby to recognise that spirit, wherever it may occur? In its way, this question is important under all circumstances and every man of spiritual intent stands to gain from its answering, even if his own way of realisation does not assume one of the forms coming under the Tantrik label. A short discussion of this question will therefore provide a natural conclusion to the present considerations on Tantrik spirituality.

Essentially one can speak of a "Tantrik sense" or a "Tantrik spirit" (the former being the faculty whereby to recognise the presence of the latter) in connection with any doctrine or method of which the conscious aim is a transmutation of the human soul in such a way as to enable the true Intelligence, the "mind of Bodhi" to emerge and take command. This process is properly an ahimsaful one, as much as no element in the soul is actually to be destroyed or cut out;
the Tantrik technique consists in putting to use whatever exists there, without exception; which in its turn implies the possibility of converting whatever is base or polluted into something pure and noble.

In medieval Europe, as also in the Islamic world, the alchemical sciences were founded on this idea: according to the mineral symbolism they used, lead, the basest metal, was to be transmuted, quickly or by stages, into the solar metal, gold; in Hindu terms, this is a question of redressing the balance of the unmas, lead being the metal in which unmas predominates while gold is the most satvic metal of all. In the course of this process certain other symbolical substances, notably sulphur and mercury, were called into play at various stages of the alchemical operation. If even in the Middle Ages the ignorant sometimes credited the alchemists with a literal intention of getting rich by manufacturing gold from lead, historians of modern science have displayed a similar ignorance in believing that Alchemy was simply a primitive attempt to do what the present-day chemist does and that the various materials referred to were what their names indicate and no more; it is thanks to a few investigators who have taken the trouble to study the alchemical writings with proper care and an open mind that this hitherto misunderstood science, so close to the Tantra in intention, has at last been cleared of the crude misconceptions that had gathered round it especially in modern times.

A particularly important point to note in connection with Alchemy, is the recognition, across all apparent differences, of a commen essence linking together the two substances to be found at the beginning and end of the transmutative process. If the Alchemist in course of his investigations happens to find lead mixed in with other metals, he does not hastily throw it on the scrap heap since, to his discerning eye, its leaden dullness already masks the potential radiance of pure gold. Therefore he treasures it like the rest while considering the proper means for converting it into what by right it should be; his attitude is typically "advaitic" and so is his technique. In fact, certain Alchemists have declared that lead, or any "base" metal, is essentially gold fallen sick; gold is lead free from all illness. One might well parallel his statement, from the Tantrik side, by saying that a worldly man is nothing but a sick Buddha; a Buddha is a man who has been wholly healed of his existential sickness.
Together with the idea of transmutation, on which all alchemical processes depend, has gone a certain attitude towards the ethical prescriptions of religion which, in the case of the Tantrik, is among those features that have on occasion provoked accusations of moral laxity of the kind alluded to earlier in this essay. This attitude consists in regarding even a person's vices as a source of latent power, as a virtue misapplied but still utilizable if one knows the proper way to handle it; simply to suppress the outward expression of a vicious tendency, by a single-handed effort of the will carried out when in a state of relative unawareness, may not be the most effective way to rid the soul of the tendency in question—not to mention the danger of letting in another and worse evil in order to fill a vacuum created in a psychic substance not yet conditioned to attract a compensating element from a purely spiritual direction: Christ's story of the seven devils rushing in to occupy the house left empty after the expulsion of the single previous devilish occupant provides a vivid illustration of this particular danger.

The Tantrik or Alchemical healer bases certain of his practices on an awareness that, by comparison with the characteristic slipperiness of human thought, a passion often displays a relatively simple and graspable character, such as allows of its being made to serve as the "raw material" of an alchemical operation in its early stages; to handle a passional element provisionally as an anahata for an avowedly spiritual purpose does not in the least imply a condoning of passion as such and, still less, any writing down of the virtue whereof that passion is the negative reflexion or shadow. All such a healer does is to view any particular passion in relation to the process of purification considered as a whole, which may sometimes require that it be tolerated provisionally for reasons of psychic equilibrium, though certainly not excused in itself. The true Tantrik practitioner is interested in an integral regeneration, nothing less; that is why, for him, every property of body and mind will have its proper place there, the art being to know how to put each thing in its place, without omission or suppression of any utilizable factor, be appearances as they will. Individual abuses apart, it is in the light of this general principle that those Tantrik practices must be judged which have been the occasion of "scandal" to the conventional moralists; anyone who approaches the question in this way will see no further convincing that the Tantrik tradition is as much concerned as exoteric religion with the promotion and practice of the virtues; only its manner of pursuing this purpose goes deeper than symptoms, than the mere form of acts, being in fact most
concerned with the medium in which these acts are able to arise, which it tries to transmute so that only virtue is able to survive there.

A virtue, for one engaged on any esoteric path, is primarily a mode of knowing or, to be more accurate, a factor dispositive to Enlightenment. Similarly, a vice will be rated as a factor of ignorance, or as a cause of thickening the external veil between the human subject and the light; this way of regarding good and evil is a property "intellectual" (jnanic) one, the usual perspective of merit and demerit being, by comparison, relatively external and dualistic, but not wholly untrue for that—indeed far from it. To practice a virtue is then like clearing a window in the soul, to indulge a vice is like smearing that same window with dirt; that is why the practice of the virtues is not less important for one pursuing the jnanic way than for the karma yogin or the bhakta (for the latter it is pleasing or offending the Beloved that counts); more or less enigmatic references in the Tantrik writings to the man for whom the distinction between good and evil has ceased to matter need not deceive anyone on that score.

No better description of Tantra, in a European language, can be found than to call it an "alchemical science of the soul" whereby the lead of samsaric existence becomes transmuted into what it already is in principle, namely the Bodhis gold, eternally gleaming.

NOTES

1. In this connection, attention can fittingly be drawn to a very important article published in the quarterly review Tomorrow, from the pen of Mr. Times Buckland, in which, among other things, the theories of Jung are critically examined: the article is entitled Cosmology and Modern Science and appeared in the summer and autumn numbers 1964 and in the winter number 1965 of the journal in question; part ii deals with the psychological theories concerning religion. Another work containing similar criticism is Western Psychology and Hindu Dharma by Dr. Hans Jacob (published by Allen and Unwin, London); the author is himself an eminent psychiatrist who at one time studied under Jung but later came to discover both the fallacies underlying so much of Western psychological teaching and also the vast superiority of the Hindu and Buddhist handling of the human psyche.
1. The Chinese symbol of "Yin-Yang" conveys a similar message: here Yin, the female principle portrayed as dark in hue and representing the passive and potential side of things; (Shakti might well be rendered as "potency") and Yang the male, light in hue and representing their active or essential side, are combined in a circular diagram (in its way a kind of mandala) the interlocked halves of which evidently correspond to the state of maithuna; each half moreover displays one tiny spot of the opposing colour whereby is indicated the non-dualistic interpenetration of the principles thus depicted.

3. See The Voice of the Silence, where the Tantrik methods are repeatedly stigmatised as dark and unsavoury: it is evident that the lady founder of the Theosophical Society accepted the current labels without the least suspicion that they were tainted. Incidentally, this attitude of hers shows up the absurdity of the claim that The Voice of the Silence was a translation, or shall we say a free adaptation, of an ancient Tibetan scripture. Anti-Tantrik sentiments in a supposedly Tibetan context take a lot of swallowing, to say nothing of the obviously European flavour of the whole text.

4. See his Lamain (Heffer) which despite its much factual material is a regular tissue of misleading statements prompted by sectarian dislike. Waddell's persistent rendering of the female Wrathful Deities as "bendens" is but one example of the lengths to which his own prejudices carried that writer.

5. It might be mentioned, in passing, as an instructive example of "spiritual coincidence", that in the Christian Church under its Orthodox (Eastern) form the doctrine of the "Divine Energies", first fully expounded by the great 14th century doctor St. Gregory Palamas, is distinctly reminiscent of the Hindu idea of Shakti which the word "energy" admirably renders. According to the Palamite theology God creates the world, not by His Essence, but by His Energies.

6. Similar views have been expressed by Dr. S. B. Dast Gupta in his abundantly documented Introduction to Tantrik Buddhism published by the University of Calcutta in 1929. This distinguished scholar, while readily admitting the greater extent and variety of the Buddhist Tantrik literature as compared with the Hindu, nevertheless maintains and, as it seems to me, substantiates the thesis that "Tantricism, whether Buddhist or Buddhistic, ... are fundamentally the same". He certainly does not overlook any of the differences of expression and practice that distinguish the two traditions. His appraisal of the basic theology behind the symbolist concept is clear and concise, while the wealth of illustration and commentary is of the most satisfying proportions. It is noteworthy that here and there in this book the author refers to one or other Buddhist goddes as the shakti of her corresponding male divinity: the context shows, in every case, that here he is making a purely conventional use of the term, as is but natural in one Indian-born, had he been speaking of the Hellenic gods, he would doubtless have referred to Hera as the shakti of Zeus: nothing further is to be read into this
proceeding on his part, which explains itself at a glance. All that one can usefully add is to say that, given the slight verbal inaccuracy in introducing the term shakti into a Buddhist context, the word "Consort" (which exactly renders the Tibetan Tum) is to be preferred as precluding all possible terminological confusions.

7. One of the most authoritative, as well as intelligible, works on the subject now available is Dharmas, by Titus Burckhardt, the same author whose name figured in note 1; the publisher is Walter-Verlag, of Osten and Freiburg in Breisau. This book, which is copiously documented, exists at present in German and Italian; an English translation is much to be desired.
EMERGENCE OF KALACAKRATANTRA

-B. Ghosh

The characteristics of Tantra/Agama/Yamala as in important Hindu works are present in the Buddhist Tantras. The Buddhist Tantras are found in three great divisions into which esoteric Buddhism is divided namely, Vajrayana, Sahajayana and Kalacakrayana. Besides these, three other minor yanas with no marked individuality, such as, Tantrayana, Mantrayana, Bhadrayana etc. (B. Bhattacharyya, Introduction to Buddhist Esotericism (GOS) Varanasi, 1964, pp. 52-53). The advanced Buddhist Tantras are Kriyatantra, Caryatantra, Yogatantra and Anuttaratantra.

It appears from the following citation from the Mulatantra that Kalacakrayana is the earliest source of all later Buddhist Tantric systems. Naropada/Naropa/ Narotapa flourished about 900 A.D. (B. Bhattacharyya, Sadhanamala Pt. II). In Sekadesatika (Ed. Merrio E. Carelli, GOS, 1941) while narrating the manifestation of Bhagavan Sri Vajrapani Naropa quotes verses from the Mula Tantras:

श्रृङ्खलेः ज्ञानशृङ्खलेः प्रज्ञापरिप्रसंध्यायः
तत्त्वं महाप्रत्यावृत्तेऽपैवन्ते द्विदेशालयः
श्रुङ्खलेः महाविश्वेषेन प्रज्ञापरिप्रसंध्यायः
संदर्शयः श्रीकामालयाः महाश्रीरं निरुत्तरम् । (1)

At the outset it should be noted that "Kalacakra" is one of the epithets of Vajra.
The Sekoddesastika deals with the origin of Vajrayana giving a short account of the legend which was the source of the doctrine. In Tantric Literature there are several systems, each of which is attributed to a different revelation. Here it is said that the teachings of Mantrayana (Vajrayana) were given first by Dipankara, the Tathagata Buddha, preceding the historic one. But they had to be adopted to the later age for the purpose the king Sucandra, whose realm is located by Sekoddesa in Shanbala (De-hByung) on the north of river Sita.

Being the Nirmanakaya of Vajrapani Sucandra went to heaven and begged Sambuddha to explain the theory of Seka (initiation/conversion). The Sambuddha (that is Buddha Gautama) summoned a council in Sridhanya. The Council of Sridhanya was held after that of Griddhrakut, in which the doctrine of Prajnaparamita was first expounded, and as it appears from the text was the
source of Vajrayana.

The "Kalacakra" is conceived in the following manner. In that joyful heaven, that the ultimate immutable and unchangeable one, remaining in the sky like Dharmadhatus (the element underlying all the dharma, elements) is called "Kala". It itself is the immutable (adamantine) knowledge. "Cakra" implies the unity of three kinds of existence—the manifestation of Kala (trans., S.B. Dasgupta: An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism, Calcutta 1931, pp. 67-68). The "Kala" with the characteristic of five constitutive group (skandha), nounemic perception (dhatu) and means of the sensorious sets (ayana) is "Cakra". It (the cakra) is the body of Master-point like containing the potency of existence of three spheres of universe, can be visualised by undleared illumination (nirvarana-jeyam), that is Vajra-dhatu-Mahamandala (trans., Carelli).

Again while elaborating the form of Adi-Buddha (the primeval/primordial one), Naropada quotes verses containing concepts of Kalacakra from Narasamgiti: The Buddha who is without beginning and end the Adi-Buddha. He is without connections (Nirvanaya—bereft of lineage). His aspects are universal charity (Karuna) and unsubstantiality (Sunya—Murti) which is connected with Karuna as Prajna and Upaya. He is 'time' (Kala) in so far as his Sakti is 'the involuted one' (Samvriti-
rupini). He is round as wheel (cakra) since he is without end (Sunya). So he is the wheel of Time (Kalacakra), without an equal, imperishable.

Analysing each syllable, KA means the causality which is lost in him. LA means cosmic reabsorption, CA is the mobile mind, KRA is the process of both are to be checked (trans. Carelli)

The editor of Sekoddestatika, M.E. Carelli, does not mention Tibetan version of the work. In Dege Tanjur, Rgyud (Tantra) section Vol. Na. FF 220 (b) -299 (a), however, the Sanskrit title of the book occurs as پرماء قسمارناام سخیککیکیکیک (xigraph in the collection of Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok). The date of compilation of the Sanskrit text appears to be obscure we only know that the author flourished during 10th-11th centuries. In the colophon of Tibetan xigraph (a) it is stated that Kashmiri Pandita Dharmananda and Tibetan Longawa Grags-pa-Rgyal-mthshan collaborated in translation of the text into Tibetan in the metropolis of Nepal. If Daga Gyaltshen be the third Sakya hierarch, his date of birth is 1147. Again Sanskrit Grammarian, Rinchen-Rgyal-mthshan, revised the translation at Sakya monastery (dpal-dzsi-khyar-ba-grwa-men-por).
In this work Sakya Dakpa Gyaltshan (1st vol. p. 245) claims Naropa as his pupil (vide Khensun Biographical dictionary of Tibetan Buddhism, Pt. 1, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives 1973, p. 836).

Sarat Chandra Dac in his article on "the Kalacakra system of Buddhism which originated in Orissa" (Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1905, vol. 3) states: In the Sutra of great renunciation (Abhinis-kramana-Sutra) Buddha delivered the Kalacakra-Mula-Tantra at Srindanyakataka in the beginning of the Twelfth month after his attaining the perfect Buddhahood in the new moon of the year (Water Sheep), at the request of king Chandrabhadra.

S.B. Dasgupta in his book An Introduction to Tantric Buddhism (p. 68) also narrates the above legendary account of propagation of Kalacakratantra from a manuscript (Sri Kalacakra-Tantra) preserved in the Cambridge University Library.

In conclusion we may discuss briefly about the Introduction of Kalacakra Tantra in India from Central Asia. Scholars like Giuseppe Tucci and Helmut Hoffmann have discussed many points from mostly Tibetan literary sources. Raghur Vira and Lokesh Chandra in their work Kalacakra Tantra and other Texts (Sata-pitaka series, vol. 69, 1966) made a review of the various opinions on the Kalacakra.

According to Bostan diffusion of Kalacakra was first in India and thencefrom to Tibet (Sung bum vo) Ngag,
Lokesh Chandra holds the Kalacakra to be one of the last Sanskrit works written in Central Asia, whence it is said to have travelled into India (Lokesh Chandra ibid. p.6). The Kalacakra and its commentary were then brought into India by a Pandita from Odissa (Orissa) named Cilupa, who after long travels by land and by sea came to Sambhala, and having become an expert in this Tantra, this Pandita spread this esoteric doctrine in India under the king Kalasa’s patronage and transmitted these teachings to Pitopa of Bengal and to Kalapa of Varendia (G. Tucci, Tibetan Painted Scrolls, Pt. I, p 212). The Kalacakra had reputedly come to India from Sambhala sixty years before its advent into Tibet. As this Tantra entered Tibet about the year 1016 A.D., its penetration into India may be dated in the year 966 A.D. which is consonant with the fact that it was a dominant creed in India under King Mahipala of Bengal (c.974-1026). Its introduction into India must have been effected by Cilupa and not by Pitopa who is alternately suggested by Surapa Micherpo in Dpag-bsdun-ljon-bsang (Lokesh Chandra p. 7).

Pitopa, whom we have already met, was a pupil of Atisa and who is also described by Taranatha as a disciple of Naropa. According to Lokesh Chandra, Naropa first had knowledge of Kalacakra through that original exponent in India wherever he would be. Lokesh Chandra has expressed doubt about Pitopa being the first Indian exponent of the Kalacakra, basing on many other sources (ibid p.7).
The fact that an Indian mystic received a new name after each initiation adds to the difficulties of identification, but it seems likely that Tsi-lu-pa and the great (i.e., the elder) Kalacakrapada are identical (Hoffmann: *Religions of Tibet*, London 1961, pp. 126-127).

According to Tibetan historian Pad-ma-dkar-po (1326-1392) while Tsi-lu-pa is the great Kalacakrapada, Naropa is the lesser Kalacakrapada; when Tsi-lu-pa went to Nalanda from South India, Naropa, the presiding abbot, entered into disputation and was vanquished; and thereafter Naropa studied Kalacakra under Tsi-lu-pa and was initiated in the Kalacakra (Hoffmann ibid, p. 128). Naropa wrote the Commentary on Sekoddesa and initiated Atisa into its secrets. Atisa later systematized a new chronology in Tibet starting with 1027 A.D., the year of the introduction of the Kalacakra in Tibet (Lokesh Chandra, ibid p. 9). Pad-ma-dkar-po is also reputed to be author of a commentary on Kalacakra.

The new doctrine (Kalacakra) where the Adi Buddha concept found efflorescence, later branched into several schools (Lokesh Chandra, ibid p. 8).

The legend of propagation of Kalacakra from Indian sources may be supplemented from Tibetan sources thus: "Tibetan authorities state that it (Kalacakra) was introduced into Nalanda by a Pandit called Tsiu or Chelu and accepted by Naratapa who was then head of the university. From Nalanda it spread to Tibet. Manjusri-kirti, king of Sambhala, is said to have been
an exponent of it and to have begun his reign 673 years after the Nirvana of Buddha. But since he is the second precursor incarnation of the Panchen Lama and since the fourth precursor (Abhayakara) lived about 1075, he may really have been a historical character in the latter part of the tenth century. Its promulgation is also ascribed to a personage called Siddha Pito. It must be late for it too mentions Islam and Mohammed. It is perhaps connected with anti-Mohammedan movements which looked to Kalki, the future incarnation of Vishnu, as their Messiah, for Hindu tradition says that Kalki will be born in Sambhalagrama (as in Kalika Purana Vishnupurana, Bhagavata Purana). We have also a Siddha called Telopa or Tailopa, who was a vigorous opponent of Islam. The mythology of the school (Kalacakra) according to Eliot is Vishnuite, not Sivaite, and it is noticeable that Pancaratra having some connection with Kashmir lays stress on the wheel or discus (Cakra or Sudarsana) of Vishnu which is said to be the support of universe and the manifestation of creative will. The Kalacakra is mentioned as special form of this cosmic wheel having six spokes (Charles Eliot : Hinduism and Buddhism, Pt. III, p. 387).

As already stated the concept of AdiBuddha found acme of its development in the Kalacakra system; in support of this point we relate the doctrine from scriptures and modern literary sources. The concept and form of AdiBuddha, appears to be enigmatic. Karma-darshana relates how the original AdiBuddha produced
Avalokita by meditation. \textit{Lalita\-avistara} describes Buddha as a Tathagata. The five Jinas and other supernatural personages are often regarded as manifestations of single Buddha-force and as the force personified as AdiBuddha (Charles Eliot: \textit{Hinduism and Buddhism}, pt. II, p. 31). Assung in his \textit{Sutra\-lanka\-ra} (IX 77) condemns the doctrine of AdiBuddha showing that the term was known then, even if it had not the precise dogmatic sense which it acquired later. His argument is that no one can become Buddha without an equipment (Sambhara) of merit and knowledge. Such an equipment can only be obtained from a previous Buddha and therefore the series of Buddha must extend infinitely backward (Charles Eliot, ibid pp. 31-32).

This (AdiBuddha) admittedly theistic form in Buddhism is late and is reported from Nepal, Tibet and Java, a distribution which implies that it was exported from Bengal (Eliot, pt. II, P. 32). For the prevalence of the doctrine in mediaeval Bengal one may see B.K.Sarkar, \textit{Folklore Element in Hindu Culture}, which is however sparing of precise references. The Dharma as Niranjana of \textit{S\-unya Par\-ana} seems to be equivalent of AdiBuddha (Eliot : Pt. I, p. 32). The \textit{Guna\-Karanda\-vy\-\-ha} and \textit{Karanda\-vy\-\-ha} relate the primeval Buddha spirit, AdiBuddha or Swayambhu producing Avalokita by meditation. According to Eliot the first book was translated into Chinese in 270 A.D. (ibid, pt. II, p. 57). The idea that Five (Dhyani) Buddhas are emanations or manifestations of a single primordial Buddha-spirit was a natural
development of Mahayana creed. But no definite statement about it earlier than Kalacakra literature is forthcoming though many earlier works throw hints (Eliot, Pt. II, p.118).

It may be stated here that there are two versions of the book Karanda-yaḥ or an earlier one in prose and a later one in verse. The book is based on a theistic view of the universe. It relates how, at the beginning of all things, AdiBuddha, also called “Svayambhū”, the “self existent” and Adinatha “the first Lord” appeared and created the world through meditation. Now we know that in the fourth century A.D. there were already Buddhist saints who believed in AdiBuddha as “God” and “Creator”. This is proved by Maitreyanatha saying in Mahayana Sutralankara IX. 77, “There is no AdiBuddha” (A History of Indian Literature by Maurice Winternitz Vol. II, University of Calcutta 1933, p. 306).

The well-known Visva Bharati scholar, Biswanath Bandopadhyaya, relates the real nature of Sri Kalacakra.

“The nature of Sri Kalacakra becomes clear from the commentary of Vimalaprabha (Asiatic Society Miss. No. G 4727). He is saluted here as Sunyata, Karuna, bereft of origination and destruction, the unitary embodiment of knowledge and knowable embraced by Prajna (Transcendent Wisdom), who in both endowed with and bereft of forms (contents). He is sublime bliss and devoid of all lower pleasures. He is creator of all the Buddhas and knows the three periods of time. He is omniscient,
he is the great AdiBuddha and the only Lord. The commentary begins with ... salutation to the Lord Kalacakra (Journal of the Asiatic Society vol. XVIII, 1952 no. 2, A note on the Kalacakrantana and its commentary).

Reference may be made to a later work describing Mandala, namely, Nispannayogavali of Mahapandita Abhayakaragupta (C. 1114 A.D.) (Ed. B. Bhattacharyya, GSO 1949, p. 22). The way Hindu deities are incorporated in the Mandala of Kalacakra as in Nispannayogavali shows conclusively that there was considerable exchange between Buddhist and Hindu Tantras by 12th century A.D. This work was composed when the Kalacakra cult was firmly established in India.

Gautama the Buddha was silent on God and the Dharma in the beginning was not frankly interested in any theistic view of the universe and its creation. The Dharma even after Nagarjuna, that is in its Mahayana form, did not exhibit any firm notion of God or Creator. The concept of AdiBuddha as in the Kalacakrantana introduced the notion of Eternal Creator.

Central Asia, particularly the basins of rivers Oxus, Jaxartees and Tarim, was the meeting ground of the theistic, rather mono-theistic, creeds like Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and later Islam. Mahayana monks must have encountered the exponents of these creeds in Central Asia. This is mentioned to refer to several theories about foreign (West Asian) inspiration behind the concepts of Shambhala, Kalacakra and AdiBuddha.
The corresponding Tibetan texts (translation) from Tanjur are as follows:

(1)

(2)

(3)
(4) ལེགས་པར་དགོས་པར་དོན་པར་

(5) ལེགས་པར་དོན་འདོད་དོན་

(6) ལེགས་པར་དོན་འདོད་དོན་
DIPANKARA ATISA
DARMA, TANTRA AND ATISA
- Nirmal C. Sinha

PROLOGUE

Tantra in Sanskrit or Rgyud in Tibetan is generally rendered in English as mysticism, mysteries etc. Like 'religion', the term 'mysticism' has multiple or diverse and even contradictory connotations. Not being a scholar in the discipline of religion or philosophy, I begin this article with a prefatory explanation.

In a recent controversy about Dipankara Atisa (982-1054) I am accused as having said that the great savant was a Tantrika preaching "debased Tantra" in Tibet. I have contradicted this as a false allegation in the last issue of this Bulletin pp. 41-43. My Tibetan friends, who know my opinions and sentiments well expect an elaborate writeup on what they consider slanders and insinuations against their Dharma of which Tantra is an essential component. I comply as a student of history-hard facts of history, and as one with particular interest in the history of Buddhism.

I hold here no brief, pro or contra, for any religion or ideology. Born in a conservative Bengali Hindu family, schooled early with Presbyterian Scots, I had the unique opportunities of sitting at the feet of Muslim scholars of Bha Charif and Jamia Millia and also with the Jesuit scholars in Darjeeling and elsewhere. My important and relevant credential for the present debate is my close association for three decades with the Mahayana or
Northern Buddhist monks and lay believers. I do not
deny my highest veneration for Gautama Buddha. However
I join this debate not so much as a believer but as a
student of history.

DHARMA

The Dharma taught by Gautama Buddha is different
from all other religions because of Buddha's silence
on God or Godhead and because of his reservations on
miracles and mysteries. Nevertheless, it will be historically
wrong to assert or affirm that Buddha was not a superman
or that he was neither a Muni nor Yogi, as these appella-
tions implied in the sixth century B.C. and down to the
current century A.D. Buddha's teachings cannot be brac-
eted with the teachings of mere intellectuals; his life
as well as his teachings were more phenomenal than
noumenal. Madhava, the encyclopaedic scholar, in Sarva-
darsanasastra (c. 1380 A.D.), classes Buddha Dharma
as sui generis and places Buddhism in a central position
between the clearcut atheism/materialism on one side
and the clearcut theism/spiritualism on the other side.

On this point I can do no better than express my
findings in the words of Edward Conze from his book
Buddhist Thought in India (London, 1962). "There are
of course, a few modern writers who make Buddhism
quite rational by eliminating all metaphysics, reincarna-
tion, all the gods and spirits, all miracles and supernatural
powers. Theirs is not the Buddhism of the Buddhists".
(p. 29 foot note) Conze continues "Bitter and incredible
as it must seem to the contemporary mind, Buddhism bases itself first of all on the revelation of the Truth by an omniscient being, known as "the Buddha", and secondly on the spiritual intuition of saintly beings." (p 30)

A brilliant Theravada scholar, K.N. Jayatilleke, in his monumental work *Early Buddhist Theory of Knowledge* (London 1963), presents the teachings of Buddha with a studied avoidance of supernatural or transcendental matters. Yet the concluding sentence of Jayatilleke’s book is a runaway deduction. "It was not that there was something that the Buddha did not know, but that what he ‘knew’ in the transcendent sense could not be conveyed in words because of the limitations of language and of empiricism." (p. 476)

A saint of modern India, Ramakrishna Paramahansa (1836-1886), not read in Pali Canon, used to say that Gautama Buddha had the Vision of Brahma but had no adequate or appropriate words to convey his experience. Ramakrishna would quote wellknown as well as obscure Vedic texts to emphasise that Revelation of Truth or Enlightenment of Mind is not capable of expression in terms already coined.

**EARLY RELIGIONS**

It is now admitted that the earliest spiritual speculations of man were about the Nature - its forces and wonders, and the ancient man made efforts to propitiate
and utilize the Nature. The mysteries or mystic rituals were thus the first religions generally designated Shamanism by modern scholars. A comprehensive handbook by a foremost authority is Myrcia Eliade: *Shamanism* (London 1964).

In India mysteries or mystic rituals were no doubt practised by the Indus Valley and other peoples (c. 3000 B.C). Whether the so-called Aryans borrowed any idea or ritual from the Indus people or not, the later Vedic religion as in *Atharva Veda* was full of mystic rituals and magic spells. The wonder and veneration for Nature and the deities representing the different forces of Nature was however the independent speculations of the Aryans. This mystic cult found its sublime expression in the Upanishads.

In *Katha Upanishad* it is clearly stated that deepest learning or highest instruction can not lead to realization of the Absolute for which Inner Illumination is the only means. Upanishadic lore began on the eve of Gautama Buddha's advent and several texts were composed before Buddha's teachings. On this subject reference may be made to Deussen: *Philosophy of the Upanishads* (1906), Ranade: *A Constructive Survey of Upanishadic Philosophy* (1927), and Dutta: *Early Monastic Buddhism* (1960).

The point to press here is that though elaborate rituals and animal sacrifices were denigrated, mystic contemplation, Dhyana and Yoga were prized. Gautama Buddha was thus come in a milieu where supernatural or transcendental knowledge was not taboo. Tantra as
a sublime process was not altogether unknown in Buddha’s time.

Mahayana believers need not quote extensively from Kanjur and Tanjur or Rinchen Terzod and Tsonghkapa to prove that Gautama Buddha was a mystic who did perform miracles. My friends from Himalayan and Trans-Himalayan regions ask me to note the Southern Buddhists’ adoration of the Buddha relics, their adherence to the epithet Tathagata (‘the meaning of which non-Buddhists may not comprehend’) and above all their pilgrimage to Sankissyya (Farukhabad : UP), site where Gautama landed after preaching to his mother in the Heaven of Thirty Three Devas.

The above digression is made to repeat a truism that all religions have a core of mystic rituals or mystic philosophy. From my limited knowledge, I would consider ‘sacrament of bread and wine’ among Christians as a necessary reminder for the hope eternal.

MYSTICISM : SACRED & PROFANE

Mystic rituals or mysticism can be overdone and even debased. History of different religions abounds with malpractices; and neither Buddhism nor Hinduism can claim completely clean record. This however does not detract from the merits of mysticism as a sublime process. A Roman Catholic scholar, R.C. Zaehner, while Spalding Professor of Eastern Religions and Ethics at Oxford, wrote in his book *Mysticism Sacred and Profane* (Oxford 1937) the following.

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"Let us first consider what is common to all mysticism. Now it is generally agreed that there are two primary instincts in man, the instinct of self-preservation and the sexual instinct. The first is a wholly individual instinct and is concerned with maintaining individual life; the second, qua instinct rather than qua biological purpose, is the instinct to unite with what is other than and different from oneself. The form the union will take will, naturally, depend on the sex of individual concerned. The crude instinct of the male is to hunt and subdue, of the female to surrender and accept. The sexual instinct is in any case inimical to the instinct of self-preservation, as anyone who has observed animals in heat will have noticed for when an animal’s sexual instinct is overwhelmingly strong, its instinct of self-preservation is reduced practically to zero. So on the psychological plane, on the one hand there is pride in being a unique person, different from all others, alone, and rejoicing in one’s isolations on the other, there is the desire, usually submerged in the unconscious, to lose the sense of individuality and to merge into a greater whole. There seem to be two motives for this first the sense of isolation becomes unbearable, for as Aristotle correctly pointed out, man is a social animal, however much he may regret it. Thus there comes a point in most lives when one tires of the ceaseless responsibility of having to act and choose, and one longs for a higher power to take over the direction of one’s life even if the higher power is only the army or a party organization. Further one longs for a more intimate union with one’s
surroundings, one has a pathetic desire to belong. The equivalent of both instincts can be found in the varieties of mystical experience and mystical theory as we shall have occasion to see". (pp.141-42)

THE TANTRAS : PROS & CONS

The Tantras, Buddhist and Hindu, have devout admirers as well as bitter critics. John Woodroffe (Arthur Avalok) and Marco Pallis (Tubten Tenzin) wrote in admiration while Austine Waideel was the leading denigrator. It may cover both sides if I quote an Anglo-American member of the Ramakrishna Mission, Christopher Isherwood, from his book Ramakrishna and his Disciples (Calcutta Edition 1974).

"The Tantras are a vast body of literary works in Sanskrit, dating from the ninth to the sixteenth century A.D. They deal with various forms of ritualistic worship, magical and sacramental formulas, mystical letters and diagrams. On the upper level, the aim of Tantra is union with God, and specifically with the Divine Mother. On the lower level, it is success in love or business, avoidance of disease, revenge upon your enemies. So Tantra ranges from ritual worship to mere magic. It is two-faced, and therefore very easy to condemn. What is symbol to one participant is gross physical action to another. For example, the many Tantrik pictures to be found in India and Tibet may be taken either as representations of the symbolic play of Shiva and his Shakti, Brahman with the Power of Brahman; or as illustrations to a manual on the art of sexual intercourse. In the practice
of left-handed Tantra, male and female devotees translate the Shiva-Shakti relationship into an act of copulation**.
(p. 75)

The male-female feature in Tantra has attracted great notice from Western psychologists. Much is written by such scholars on "sublimation of biological energy into art, literature or religion" in both Buddhist and Hindu Tantras. This point however does not concern the present debate, that is, whether Buddha accommodated Tantra and whether Atma was a Tantrika; and I would refer any interested reader to Jung's introduction in Evans Wentz's *The Tibetan Book of the Great Liberation* (Oxford 1934).

Materialistic interpretation of Tantra, with no emphasis on purely carnal aspects, is however not much attempted, at least in our country, in modern times. This relates to the productivity of earth and the more important role of woman in productive economy of mankind. It is a matter of pride for our country that an Indian scholar, Debiprasad Chattopadhyaya, has made an original and substantial contribution. The work is *Lokayata* (People's Publishing House 1939). I mention this study to high light that Tantra is not all black magic and that history has some good words for Tantra in the past.

**TANTRA IN BUDDHISM**

Highest heights of Yoga involving clairvoyance and such supernatural powers are attributed to Gautama Buddha in Sanskrit (Mahayana) texts and more in Tibetan
and Mongol literary works. Pali (Theravada) sources are not so categorical and much less spoken. Whatever the mores, scholars and intellectuals of early Buddhism and later Theravada school said and believed, the masses along with the less intellectuals like kings and other patrons of Dharma knew Gautama Buddha as Yogi, Muni, Bhagavan and Tathagata. Buddha was not described as Tantrika in contemporary or even later Indian records. But was Buddha ignorant of Tantra and yet could do miracles? His Sankissya landing was a physical impossibility, so far as history would attest, but feats like levitation and communion with beings in other worlds were admitted by even rationalists and puritans.

Nagarjuna (c. 150 A.D) and the Prajnaparamita texts are accepted from the historical point as the incorporation period of Tantra in Buddhism. The Mahaayan deities Manjusri or Avalokitesvara and the consort deities Prajna or Tara are objects of mystic meditation, and more approximately deities of esoteric mysticism, which came to be universally known as Tantra in both Buddhist and Hindu scriptures. By the end of the Gupta Age, Tantra was an established fact.

Whether the import of the esoteric mysticism, Tantra, and the saviours, Tara, was from the north-western frontier regions or from the heart of Dravidian south is a matter of controversy. (Hirananda Shastri: The Origin and Cult of Tara (ASI Memoir 20) and E. Conze: The Prajnaparamita Literature (The Hague 1960) may be seen). The popularity of this new cult was same with
Hinduism as with Buddhism, Mahayana had completely made Tantra a Buddhist mode of spiritual striving.

The monasteries and universities in eastern India, generally called Vangala in Tibetan literature, specialised in Tantrik learning as much as some Mahayana centres of learning in south India. There was nothing un-Buddhist or anti-Buddhist in such studies and as Chinese pilgrims had noted Mahayana and Hinayana (Theravada) sects and sub-sects lived in harmony in the monastic universities that the Chinese visited. Under the patronage of the Pala of East and the Chola of south, monks and priests of different schools and sects travelled to Suvarnadvipa and the adjacent islands. These monks and missionaries carried the new learning, that is, Tantra across the seas. In this new development there was sometimes incorporation of similar concepts and rituals from the native past of the islands. These facts, I mention, not to glorify or malign Tantra, but to make clear that much before Dipankara Atisa journeyed to Suvarnadvipa the new learning from India was an old affair. Whether this learning was all sacred, all profane or all, hocus-pocus may be the theme of a separate discussion. But what must be said here is that even the concept of Adi-Buddha, the focal point of the Kalachakra, was not unknown in Suvarnadvipa etc before Atisa came here for advanced courses. The advent of the Kalachakra in India is aptly discussed by B. Ghosh in this issue of the Bulletin and nothing I may add on this point.

References to source material about introduction and development of Tantra, including Kalachakra, in
Suvarnadvipa regions will be found in two standard hard-
books. These are Quaritch Wales: *The Making of Greater
India* (London 1961) and Reginald Le May *The Culture
of South East Asia* (London 1954). Authoritative works
of Indian scholars like Ramesh Majumdar, Nilakanta
Sastry, Nihar Ray, Bijnaraj Chatterjee and Hemanta
Sarkar are too well-known to be detailed here.

**DIPANKARA ATISA NOT A TANTRIKA !!!**

"Dipankara Srijana was not a Tantrika." Under
this caption a Lama wrote an article in *Atish Dipankara
Millennium Birth Commemoration Volume* (Calcutta: JagaJJyoti Publication 1983). In view of its diverse and
contradictory implications, the term "Tantrika" is spar-
ingly used and is used if adequate explanation is provided.
The Lama has obviously no inhibitions or reservations
and on clear presumption that "Tantrika" means an adept
in black magic, sorcery and all that, he issues a sort
of character certificate with a blanket statement that
Atisa was not a Tantrika. The basic premises for the
Lama's simplification are obviously that "Tantra" is
nothing but a corrupt cult and "Tantrika" is nothing
but a corrupt man. I have already commented on such
basic premises.

I have also to say much about the Lama's fact finding
and reasoning processes for his novel theory that Atisa
had nothing to do with Tantra after his return from Su-
varnadvipa, and that in Tibet he did not speak on Tantra
and never on Kalachakra Tantra.

The two simple premises of the Lama are as follows.
First, Dipankara was not satisfied with his education at Nalanda and Vikramashila which was Tantrik and "alien to Buddhism". Second, Dipankara went to Suvarnaśīva for schooling in "classical Buddhism". Third, Dipankara's ordination in Suvarnaśīva was a break with his earlier career, according to Indian colleagues of the Lama. Fourth, on return to his homeland Dipankara dropped Tantra and had no associations with Tantrika masters. Fifth, the works of Dipankara in Tanjuś do not speak of any preachings on Tantra in Tibet. Last, there is no evidence in the Lama's knowledge that Dipankara preached Kalachakra in Tibet.

Before I comment on these premises of the Lama, I would submit that I am not proficient in Tibetan language and am not read in Tibetan literature to a degree that I should confront a Lama without hesitation. I have disputed the Lama's "basic premises" about Tantra and Tantrika on purely academic grounds at some length. Now I dispute the Lama's "simple premises" about Atisa with my elementary knowledge of the language and a fair acquaintance with the sources and traditions relevant to the present question.

My credentials are a few. I have three decades' close association with Tibetan monks, scholars and lay believers; I have lived in the monasteries and temples of Central Tibet for a whole winter and mostly with Gelugpas who trace their concepts of Dharma and Tantra to Atisa; I have learnt much about religion and culture of Tibet through lessons and sermons of Lamas, largely Gelugpas; I gained much about Gelugpa tradition and
Atisa legacy from the last Indian Pandita, Rahul Sankritiyaya, I learnt also from the Northernmost Buddhists, Baikal Buriats, about Atisa's great role in the spread of Saddharma. I consider my knowledge of Tibetan literary sources as a supplementary to the other credentials; another supplementary credential is my knowledge of Indian history acquired from masters like Devadatta Bhandarkar, Ramesh Majumdar, Hem Ray Chaudhuri, Upenbra Ghoai, Prabodh Bagchi and Niranjan Chakravarti (1). It has to be noted that Indian sources are all blank on Atisa in Tibet but Indian sources are indispensable for correct comprehension of the milieu of the period.

The Lama's contention that in Dipankara's time Buddhism "was withering in India" is not so novel as that a discontented Dipankara went in search of "classical Buddhism" in Suvarnadvipa. Dipankara's principal teacher in Suvarnadvipa was Acharya Dharmapala at whose feet had once sat Mahasiddha Ratnakarasanti, the master of Dipankara at Vikramasila. Besides further studies in Pitakas, Dipankara took interest in Tantras in Suvarnadvipa and was duly initiated in the mysteries of the Tantra. As in Vikramasila, Nalanda and Vajrasana, Dipankara took greater interest in Vinaya and Prajna but never disowned the merits of Tantra. On his return to Vangala, Dipankara kept regular company with the Mahasiddhas. He even went through a full course of the new Tantra called Kalachakra from Mahasiddha Tilopa. All details are found in Tibetan sources, besides Tanjur.

The Lama and his Indian colleagues assert, without
any qualification, that Tanjur is the "only source" for the knowledge of Indian Panditas and their works. It is completely forgotten that for Guru Padmasambhava and a few other Indian Panditas very important sources are Tibetan original works, that is, not translations from Sanskrit as in Tanjur. For Dipankara Atisa, the more important sources are the original Tibetan works like Kadam Phacho, Kadam Phucho and chronicles of Bu-ston, Pema Karpo, Taranatha and Sumpa Khenpo. Details of Atisa's life - in India, Suvannadipa and Tibet - are all recovered from the works of Tibetan disciples of Atisa and later monk writers.

The pioneer scholar, Alexander Csoma de Koros (1784-1842) had a thorough and systematized knowledge of the contents of Tanjur and yet could not gather details of Atisa's life. Sixty years later Sarat Das (1849-1917) could find a wealth of data in Tibetan works and revealed the life of a great Indian savant forgotten in his homeland. The Tibetan works including Gelugpa writings, make it abundantly clear that Atisa wrote commentaries and gave sermons on Kalachakra Tantra. I recall with pride my stay for a couple of days at Yarpa where Atisa expounded Kalachakra for some weeks. The Lama's Indian colleagues are obviously innocent of all Tibetan sources. I would not bracket a Lama with such Indian scholars.

**EPilogue**

I conclude by firmly stating that Mahayana had
the seeds of Tantra in Nagarjuna's time. No Mahayana scholar or saint of later days could deny or disown the doctrinal metaphysical truth in Tantra. Guru Padmasambhava (+755) attained full mastery in the application of Tantra. Acharya Sararakshita or Acharya Kamalasila were not adepts in such art but would not deny the Tibetans a matching cult from India against their pre-Buddhist, Bon/Shaman.

Dipankara Atisa was certainly not interested in the art of Padmasambhava and was totally hostile to rituals involving women devotees. He laid down strict rules of Dulva (Ynaya), and Atisa's disciples and their successors openly fought the older sects on charges of debasement of the Tantra. But not even the most puritan Gelugpa would deny or disown Tantra as a component of Dharma.

About Dipankara Atisa I would only remind the Lama scholar that Tara was the Yidam (sthala) of Atisa's meditation. And that Dipankara Atisa had sought advice and blessings of Vajra Yoginis for his historic journey to Tibet. (2).

NOTES

(1) I have mentioned these six great names not to enhance my credit. I learnt in 1930-34 from the first four and in 1940-50 from the last two, that besides the Kanjur and Tanjur, the Tibetan literature is of immense value for Indian history and that for lives of Indian Pandit, Tibetan historical literature is indispensable. I
can never forget the name Taranatha first heard as an undergraduate student more than fifty years ago. The names Bu-ston down to Sumpa Khenpo I first had from P.C.Bagchi and N.P.Chakravarti forty years ago. I am sorry that the Lama and his Indian colleagues do research about Dipankara Atisa with Tonjur only.

(2) In this article I have confined myself to the current controversy. I and my colleagues, Indian as well as Tibetan, plan to write at length on the true role of Atisa the monk cum scholar cum statesman across the Himalayas. I have written several notes on the place of Atisa in the history of Tibet and Mongolia which Atisa did not visit. I do not know why and how Lama Chimpa, an old friend, misrepresents me.
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