

A DHARANI-MANTRA IN THE VINAYA-VASTU

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According to the Tibetan tradition the Tantra had been taught by Śākyaputra Gautama the Buddha among the veteran disciples at Sṛisaila-parvata.¹ The tradition disowns the views prevalent among some academicians who hold that the Tantra in the Buddhism is the 'Later phase of Buddhism' developed by the Christian era.

However, the Buddhist traditions preserved in the Indian languages (Pali and Prakritised-Sanskrit of the Buddhist texts) refer to some stray mentions about the Tantra-aspects in the scriptures. For instance, the Mahāvagga of the Pali Vinaya-piṭaka praises the 'Sāvitrī-mantra' as superior chandas to others². The fourfold practices for attaining supernatural power (iddhipāda/ṛddhipāda) in the course of thirty-seven acquisitions leading to the attainment of 'Bodhi' (bodhipakkhiyā-dhammā/bodhipakṣiya-dharmāḥ) may also be enumerated here³. Furthermore, thirteen rigorous ascetic practices (dhūtaṅga) prescribed for 'dhūtavādin-monks' like Mahā-kassapa suggest that the austere livelihood of the Tantra-practitioners was in vogue among a section of capable monks and nuns. In the case of nuns nine dhūtaṅgas are prescribed. In respect of a Sāmaṇera during his probation period twelve dhūtaṅga-practices could be followed. An upāsaka or an upāsikā (male and female lay-devotee) may observe two practices, namely, to take meal at one sitting (ekāsanikaṅgam) and to possess only one bowl for having all kinds of food offered to (patta-piṇḍikaṅgam)⁴. Many instances may be given in this regard from the Vaipulya Sutras in Prakritised-Sanskrit.

Parittā and Dhāraṇi

Sukomal Chaudhuri⁵ has discussed in details about the parittā (mantra) applied for protection from the evil eyes of supernatural beings like ghosts, spirits and to

cure from snake-biting and so on. A list of suttas and parittas selected for incantations has been given. Such as, Ratana-sutta, Mettā-sutta, Maṅgala-sutta, Su-pubbaṅha-sutta, Bojjhaṅga-sutta, Aṅgulimāla-parittā, Āṭaṇaṭiya-parittā, Dhajagga-parittā, Mora-parittā, Vattaka-parittā and Khandha-parittā in the Pali Vinaya-piṭaka. The term parittā(a) is derived as 'parittayati iti paritta(a)'.

It is generally argued that Śākyaputra Gautama, who was basically a rational thinker and a dynamic personality did not allow such application of charms and magic to protect from the evil influence that caused harm and disease in man's life. Those were the then tendency of popularising the Buddhist faith in the existing societies in India and abroad.

As regards 'Dhāraṇi' the term itself suggests that which holds or supports. The Tibetan equivalent of 'dhāraṇi' is 'gzungs sngags' which explicitly connotes the incantations to hold (for protection from evil influence). In the Tibetan Bstan 'gyur collection more than 260 Dhāraṇi texts are available⁶. Mahāvvyutpatti enumerates twelve Bodhisattva-Dhāraṇi (747-758). La Vallee Poussain assumes that there had been a separate piṭaka named the Vidyādhara-piṭaka of the Mahāsāṅghikas⁷. In the present context it is evident that the 'dhāraṇi' suggests varily the apotropaic (abhicāra) charms to safeguard from supernatural or evil influence. They had prevailed in the Preschismatic Buddhist sangha from which both the Sthavira-vādins and the Mahāsāṅghikas inherited parittā, mantra, vidyā and dhāraṇi. In the Vinaya texts whether in Pali Theravāda tradition or in the Mūlasarvāsti-vāda tradition 'parittā' and 'dhāraṇi' had been accepted unhesitatingly since the pre-Christian period in India.

Mahāmāyūrī-mantra

It is interesting to note that 'Mahāmāyūrī-mantra' had been prescribed by Śākyaputra Gautama, the Buddha, himself when a monk was not cured in spite of the treatment of a Vaidya from his snake-bite. The account is mentioned in the Bhaiṣajya-vastu (T. Sman gyi gzhi) of the Mūlasarvāstivāda-Vinaya-vastu ('Dul ba gzhi: Bka' -'gyur. Nge. Vol. Peking Edn). As usual the method of narrating an account in the vinaya-texts is observed here. A monk named Sāri (Skt. Svāti) had a snake-bite. In this

conneccion a legend of the Peacock-king named suvarna-prabhāsa depicts the efficacy of the Mahāmāyūrī-vidyā who had been conversant in the Vidyā. He was in the right side of the Himalaya mountain when he was caught hold in a net of an enemy at the midnight after being allured in the company of peahens around him. He however regained his memory and chanted the Vidyā. Thereafter, he could run away. The net was broken off.

The Tibetan recension of the Vidya has been appended. It becomes evident that the Vidyā in Sanskrit had been prevalent in India. Then Moraparittā vide the Mora Jātaka in the Pali Jātaka-aṭṭhakathā (PTS edn No. 159) narrates the story of a peacock who had also golden colour. Some variations are observed in the contents of the Mora Jātaka in Pali which may be studied separately. But the parittā contains the spell chanted by that peacock who used to reside on the mountain called 'Daṇḍaka Hirañña' in order to save his life from fowlers.

For protection against snake-bite the Khandha-parittā from the Vinaya-piṭaka in Pali may also be referred here. The Khandhavatta Jātaka in the Jātaka-Aṭṭhakathā (PTS No. 203) also reads the parittā for the same purpose. The texts from the Vinaya-piṭaka and the Jātaka have been given in the Appendix.

In course of time the Mahāmāyūrī-vidyā became prominent for its power to stop snakes biting and it was called Vidyā-rājñī, (Queen of the secret sciences). The Vidyā was included in list of the five protecting Dhāraṇīs (Pañcarakṣā) i.e. mantras chanted for safeguard against sin, evil influences of spirits, snakes and wild animals, harmful planets etc. The Mahāmāyūrī-vidyārājñī has been available in two versions, such as in a longer form and in a shorter form in Chinese. The text has been translated into Chinese repeatedly by Śrīmitra (307-342 A.D.), Kumārajīva (348-417 A.D.), Saṅghapāla (516 A.D.), I-tsing (705 A.D.) and Amoghavajra (746-771 A.D.). Moreover, the Vidya-rājñī has been translated into Tibetan in the 8th cent. A.D. by Śilendrabodhi, ye śes sde and Śākya 'Od (Śākyaprabha). It is also to mention that incantations for snake-charming are also found in the Bower Manuscripts from Central Asia.⁸

Resume

From the above mentioned evidence it leaves a room to hold that the nucleus of the Tantra⁹ in Buddhism prevailed in the pre-schismatic stage of the Buddhist saṅgha. For sake of the mental training to attain complete control over one's mind meditational exercises and esoteric practices had been regarded obligatory for a yellow-robed person since the beginning of the Buddhist saṅgha. By dint of the serious efforts some monks could excel and attained extraordinary efficiencies like clairvoyant vision (dibbacakkhu/divyacakṣu) and clairvoyant listening (dibbasotta/divyaśrotra) and so on. Moggallāna (Skt. Maudgalyāyana) was capable in this respect, besides Śākyaputra Gautama, the Buddha, himself. Moreover, Mahākassapa (Mahākāśyapa) was an excellent esoteric practitioner who could visualise the underlying significance of the Dharma taught by the Master and recited the Abhidharama-piṭaka according to the Theravāda tradition. In spite of high rationale of the teachings of the Buddha the efficacy of mantra-syllables could not be ignored by the Buddhists since the period when Śākyaputra Gautama was alive. The incantation of parittā on occasions and the application of Vidyā-mantra pertaining to an apotropaion for protection, safety and shelter of the Buddhist preachers developed in the subsequent days when their Master was not present in his mundane form (nirmāna-kāya)

NOTES

1. Lessing & Wayman : Fundamentals of the Buddhist Tantric Systems (Eng. trans. of Mkhas grub rje's Tib. work) p. 25f. The Hague, 1968)
2. 'Agghutta-mukhā yañña sāvitti chandaso mukham/rājā mukho manussānam nadīnam sāgaro mukham// (Mahāvagga Keniya-jaṭilavatthu VI. 23.42 PTS edn.)
3. Thirtyseven Bodhipakkhiyadhammas have been divided into seven groups and four iddhipadas (chanda, vīriya, citta and mimāmsā) have been prescribed in the Mahāparinibbāna-sutta as a systematic course of meditational practices for the Bodhi. Digha Nikaya Sutta No. 16, (PTS edn.). It may be mentioned here that the Buddha discouraged the application of iddhi-pāṭihāriya by a monk to exert influence over a layman. He declared that any performance of miracles before laymen for

the sake of worldly gain would be a Dukkaṭa offence (Vinaya-pitaka, Culla-vagga, V. 9.2. (PTS edn). See also Kevatta Sutta (No. 11) Vol. p 214 (PTS edn).

4. Dutt, N. Early Monastic Buddhism p. 153-158, Calcutta, 1960.
5. Sukomal Choudhuri : Contemporary Buddhism in Bangladesh pp 116-125, Calcutta 1982, Winternitz. M. : A History of Indian Literature (Vol. II pp 80) refers to the 'PIRIT' or paritta ceremony in which recitations from the Khudda-ka-pāṭha in Pali for sake of benediction or exorcism formula have been made among the Buddhists in Ceylon.
6. Winternitz. M : A History of Indian Literature II pp 375-401 (Calcutta 1933); Pathak S.K. : The Dhāraṇī Literature and its Importance Today (Proceedings of the 11th International Buddhist Conference, Bodhgaya, 1985).
7. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society, London 1912 (6629 f.) and ibid. 1895 p 433f.
8. Sādhana-mālā also refers to Kurukullā sādhanā for protection from a snake-bite. (Gaekwad's Oriental Series, Baroda XXVI & XLI ed. by Benoytosh Bhattacharaya). See also Mahāmāyūrī-Sādhana II p400f. Winternitz. M. : Hist. Ind. Lit. II, P385-6. Tucci. G. Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal 1930 (N.S.) p. 129f.
9. Pathak S.K.: Nucleus of Tantra in Pali Vinaya-piṭaka, Bulletin of Tibetology (New Series) 1986, 2 pp40-48 (Gangtok, Sikkim)

APPENDIX

BKAH HGYUR, HDUL BA, : ŅE (46a:2)

A. Gleñ bzhi ni mnyan yod na'o l

Khyim bdag gcig gis sañs rgyas la sogs pa dge sloñ
 gi dge 'dun bsro khañ la spyān drañs soj de'i tshe tshe
 ldan pa Sa ri zhes bya ba (46a:3) gzhon nu thor bu
 lañ tsho dar la bab ciñ rab tu byuñ nas riñ po ma lon
 pa/bsnyen par mdzogs nas riñ po ma lon pa/Chos 'dul ba 'dir
 'oñs nas riñ po ma lon pa/ des bsams pa/ bcom ldan 'das

kyis gañ gis nyuñ du byin pa dañ/ gañ (46a:4) gis miñ du byin pa dañ/ gañ gis bzañ po byin pa dañ/ gañ gis yid dga' bas las bya pa dañ/ gañ gis rab tu dañ ba'i sems kyis rjes su yi ran ba de dag thams cad ni bsod nams kyis skal pa can du 'gyur ru zhes gsuñs kyis/ ma (46a:5) la bdag gis kyañ las śig by'o snyam nas des śin gśag par brtsams pa las ji tsam na śin rul ba zhig gi ser ka nas sbrul sdug pa zhig byuñ nas rkañ pa gyas pa'i mthe bo la ziñ pa dañ/ de dug gi śugs kyis brgyal nas sa la 'gy el (46a:6) te dbu bar skyug ciñ bzhin yañ gyur/ mig kyañ gyur te/ de de ltar sdug bsñal ba bram ze dañ khyim bdag rnams kyis mthoñ nas smras pa/ Śes ldan dag khyim bdag su zhig gi bu yin/ gzhan dag gis smras pa/ che ge mo zhig gi'o/ de dag (46a:7) gis smras pa/ dge sbyoñ śa kya'i sras mgon med pa rnams kyis nañ du rab du byuñ gi gal te rab du ma byuñ bar gyur na nye du rnams kyis 'de dpyad byas pa zhig ces bya ba'i skabs de dag dge sloñ rnams kyis bcom ldan 'das la gsol pa dañ/ bcom ldan (46a:8) 'das kyis bka' stsal pa/ sman pa la dris la dpyad byos śig/ dge sloñ gis sman pa la dris pa dañ/ des smras pa/ 'phags pa sbyar ba'i zas gsol cig pa'i skabs te dge sloñ dag gis bcom ldan 'das la gsol pa dañ/ bcom ldan (46b:1) 'das kyis bka' stsal pa/ sman pas bstan na sbyin par bya'o/ dge sloñ dag gis zas sbyar na ji lta bu yin pa ma śes nas/ de rnams kyis sman pa la dris pa dañ/ des smras pa/ 'phags pa dag kyed nyid kyis ston pa bcom ldan 'das ci thams cad (46b:2) mkhyen pa thams cad gzigs pa kho na nyid yin te/ de nyid mkhyen te zhes pa/ dge sloñ rnams kyis bcom ldan 'das la gsol dañ/ bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal pa/ dge sloñ dag zas sbyar ba ni lci ba dañ/ thal ba dañ/ (46b:3) sa'o/ dela lci ba ni byuñ nas riñ po ma lon pa'i be'u rnams kyis'o/ gcin yañ de dag kho na'o/ thal ba ni śin lña po kan tsa na'i dañ/ ka bi thā ka'i dañ/ a śva tha'i dañ/ U dum ba ra'i dañ/ nya gro dha'i'o/ sa ni sa las sor bzh'i 'og nas byuñ (46b:4) ba'o/ 'di ni sbyar ba'i zas yin no/

de nas dge sloñ rnams kyis tshe dañ ldan pa Sa ri la zas sbyar ba byin no/ 'on kyañ sos pa ma gyur pa'i skabs de dge sloñ rnams kyis bcom ldan 'das la gsol ba dañ/ bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal (46b:5) pa/ kun dga' bo khyod kyis da las rma bya chen mo'i rig sñags

bzuñ nas kun chub par byas te/ dge sloñ sa ril sruñ
 ba dañ/ yoñs su skyab pa dañ/ yoñs su gzuñ dañ/ dug
 gzhel ba dañ/ chad pa spañs pa dañ/ dug gsad pa
 (46b:6) dañ/ mtshams gcad dañ/ sa bcin bar nus sam/
 bcom ldan 'das kyis bka' stsal du gsol gnyan te bgyi o//
 'dul ba gzhij bam po drug bcu pa/

de nas bcom ldan 'das kyis de'i (46b:7) tsher ma bya
 chen mo'i rig sñags 'di bka' stsal lo/ sañs rgyas la
 phyag 'tshal lo/ chos la phyag 'tshal lo/ dge 'dun la
 phyag 'tshal lo/ 'di lta ste/ AMALE/ VIMALE/ NIRMA
 LE/ MAÑ GA LYE/ HI RA NYE/ HI RA NYE GARBHE/
 (46b:8) BHA DRE/ SU BHA DRE/ SA MAN TA BHA
 DRE/ SRI. R. BHA DRE/ SARBA ARTHA SĀ DHA NI/ PA
 RA MĀR THA SĀ DHA NI/ SARBA ANAR THA PRA
 ŚA MANI/ SAR BA MAÑ GALA SĀDHA NI/ MA NASI/
 MA HĀ MANASI/ ATSYUTE/ AD BHU TE/ AD DYAN
 BHUTE/ MO GATE/ MO CANE/ MO (47a:1) KṢA NA/ A
 RA DZE/ BI RA DZE/ A MA RE/ A MR TE/ A MA RA NY
 BRA HME/ BRA HME SVA RE/ SU RA NI/ SURANI
 MA NO RATHE/ MU KTE/ DZI BAN TE/ Sa ri'i gnod pa
 dañ/ 'jigs pa dañ/ nad thams cad las sruñs sig SVA HA/
 (47a:2) btsun pa bka' bzhin 'tshal/ zhes tshe dañ ldan
 pa kun dga' bos bcom ldan 'das kyi spyen sda nas
 rma bya chen mo'i rig sñags blañs nas/ dge sloñ ril bde
 legs su 'gyur ba bya pas dug med nas ston gyi ji
 ltar ba bzhin du gyur to//

dge sloñ (47a:3) rnam the tshom skyes nas the
 tshom thams cad gcod pa sañs rgyas bcom ldan 'das
 la zhus pa/ bcom ldan 'das ji tsam du bcom ldan 'das
 kyi rma bya chen mo'i rig sñags sman pa dañ/ gces
 sbras bgyid pa ño mtshar che lags so/ dge sloñ (47a:4)
 dag de ltar 'ba' zhig tu ma yin te/ ji ltar 'das pa'i dus
 na yañ du log par thufñ ba'i lus mi khom par gyur
 pa na rig sñags gyi rgyal po rma bya chen mos phan
 pa dañ gces sbras byas pa de nyon cig/

dge sloñ dag sñon byuñ ri'i rgyal po gañs (47a:5)
 ri'i lho phyogs kyi ños rma bya i rgyal po gser du snañ
 ba zhes bys ba zhig gnas te/ de nañ bar rma bya chen
 mo'i rig sñags 'dis bde legs su 'gyur pa byas te nyin
 mo bde legs su gnas/ nub kar bde legs su gnas pa

byas te/ mtshan mo bde (47a:6) legs su gnas so/ de
dus gzhan zhig na 'dod pa'i 'dod chags la lhag par
chags/ 'dod pa rnam la zhen/ 'tshums/ brgyal/ myos/ rab
tu rmoñs/ rab tu brgyal te/ bag med pas nags kyi rma
bya chen mo rab tu mañ po rnam dañ ldan cig tu
kun (47a:7) dga'i ra ba nas kun dga'i ra ba dañ/ bskyed
mos 'tshal nas bskyed mos 'tshal dañ/ ri'i ños la ri'i ños
su rgyu ba las ji tsam na ri'i Señ ge zhig tu zhugs
pa dañ/ de der yun riñ du phir rgo/ ba/ dgrar gyur pa
'tshe bar gyur pa/ glags lta ba rnam kyi rma bya'i
snyis (47a:8) / bzuñ s'e/ de mi mdza' ba'i nañ du soñ pa
dañ/ rab tu rmoñ pa las dran pa rnyed nas rma bya chen
mo'i rig sñags 'di kho na yid la 'byas so//

B. (Mahāmāyūrī vidyā-mantra in Sanskrit)

Mūlasarvāstivādi-vinaya : Bhaiṣajya-vastu (Gilgit Mss
p.287 ed. Nalinaksa Dutt & Vidyavaridhi pt. Shiva Nath
Shastri, Calcutta 1950)

'Namo Buddhāya namo Dharmāya namaḥ Sanghāya
Tadyathā amale vimale nirmale maṅgale hiranye hira-
nyagarbhe bhadre subhadre samantabhadre Śrī-bhadre
Sarvārtha-sādhani paramārtha-sādhani sarva-maṅgala-sādha-
ni manase mahāmanase acyute adbhute atyadbhute mukte
mocani mokṣaṇi/raja viraje amṛte amare (amarani) bra-
hme brahmesvare purṇe purṇa-manorathe mukte jivate
rakṣa svātim sarvopadrava-bhaya ragebhyah svāhā//'

C. Four verses are common in the Cullavagga (v.2.9)-
Pali Ahirāja-parittam (Khuddaka-vatthu-khandhaka) and
in the Khandhavatta-jātaka (PTS. p. 145-47) in Pali-

Virupakkhehi me mettāṃ mettāṃ erapathehi me/
Chabbyāputtehi me mettāṃ mettāṃ Kaṇhāgotamakhehi cā'ti//
Apādakehi me mettāṃ mettāṃ dvipādakehi me/
Catuppadehi me mettāṃ mettāṃ bahuppadehi me ti//
Mā maṃ apādaka hiṃsi mā maṃ hiṃsi dvipadako/
mā maṃ catuppado hiṃsi mā maṃ hiṃsi bahuppado ti//
Sabbe sattā sabbe paṇā sabbe bhūtā ca kevalā/
Sabbe bhadraṇi passantu mā kiñci pāpamāgamā ti/

D. The verses partly recur in the Bower manuscripts in Sanskrit which are found in the ruins of the ancient city at Khasgarh (Journal of the Pali Text Society, 1893. p.64).

E. The Bhesajjakhandhaka (Mūlādi-bhesajja-kathā) in the Pali Vinaya-piṭaka (Mahāvagga) however does not read a paritta in Verses. The text is given below (6.2.9. PTS edn.) :

‘Tena kho pana samayena aññataro bhikkhu ahinā dattho hoti, Bhagavato etamattham arocesum/ anujānāmi bhikkhave’ cattari mahāvikaṭāni datum—gūtham, muttam, chārikam, mattikam ti, atha kho bhikkhūnam etadahosi:—
“appatiggāhitāni nu kho udāhu patiggahetabbāni” ti, Bhagavato etamatham arocesum/ anujānāmi, bhikkhave, sati kappiyakārake patiggahāpetum, asati keppiyakārake sāmam gahetvā paribhuñjitum ‘ti//