THE CONCEPT OF VAJRA AND ITS SYMBOLIC TRANSFORMATION

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An illuminating and inspiring discussion on various concepts of Vajra has been introduced by Sri N.C. Sinha, Director of SRTI in the Bulletin of Tibetology (Vol. VII, No. 2). There he has treated almost all the major points on evolutionary concept of Vajra. Again, in Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 3, the same author and a Tibetology scholar also contributed notes throwing more light on Vajra.

Here we propose to discuss or rather illustrate or confine those concepts mostly Sanskrit, Indian and Pali available sources.

The earliest reference of the word Vajra and Concept and formation of ontological meaning we find in Aitareya Brahmana. Where it denotes according to Geldner, the ‘handle’ while Kuts means ‘Head’ of the Hammer (vide. A.A. MacDonell and A.B. Keith, Vedic index Vol. II, p. 237).

We find in Asvaghosa’s Vajrasati this important text from the illustrious scholar referred to Vedas, the Mahabharata and Mahavadhamasatra but no mention of Puranas. Either, the Puranas were not composed at all or were not old, or well-known enough to be quoted in the work of a distinguished author, therefore, we may suppose that the word Vajra obviously taken from the Vedic literature.

We may also state that the main objections against the authorship of Asvaghosa raised by eminent scholars like Wintermies are enumerated by A.K. Mukhopadhyayaya (Int. XII) we can only state that ‘It is not enumerated either by I-Tsang or in the Tibetan Tanjirs among the works of Asvaghosa (Ibid lat. XII). Any way we are not in this paper going to discuss the point of authorship of the text. Vajrasati also reveals an intimate knowledge of Brahmanical literature (Ibid, lat. XII).

In the famous Sanskrit lections such as Amarkosa (Swargavarga) the synonymous for we give as follow: सङ्कुचिनि नाखन्ति व्याप्तिः सूचिः निधेवि अवि। नामार्दिति: । सङ्कः घः ।

In Amarkosa (Nanartha varga):—
The word वाज्राः is also used as a single unrevolved concept वाज्राः गायत्रिकूटम्; (गायत्रि गायत्रिकूट अर्थात्)
In the above-stated manifold terms of vajra have varied significant derivative meanings. The first two synonymous dynamic velocity, the sense conjectured from the derivative root all the rest terms besides the गायत्रि signifies the sense of Penetration. Here we are not concerned about the derivative meaning of each word. But two instances of derivative will clarify the above senses. Firstly, while the word वाज्रा-derived from verb root which means वात् which means velocity, गायत्रि whereas the term गायत्रिकूट although have varied derivative meaning yet the two verb roots गायत्रि meaning प्रेक्षार्थम् and गायत्रि means contract.

Therefore the both the words suggest the sense of velocity and Penetraibility. If we get back to original meaning of vedic sense of vajra we find the meaning of 'Kuta' or head. We know that super rate of dynamic motion depends on the penetraibility of an inanimate being. The ancient Indian -philologists were well conscious about the evolution of the concepts of Vajra. So we find lexigraphist are tidentifying to static and dynamic aspects of originating around “Vajra” in expression वाज्राः गायत्रिकूटम्. The scholars know the “vajra” or Thunder and “Asani” lightning as indivisible aspect “Vajra”. The Adamantine. This identity has more clearly expression in a lexicon...अमरकोश. Thunder or lightning is also indivisibly denote ‘vajra’ and ‘Tadita’. Thunder and lightning Bhattacharjikhi’s son of Bhanujidikshit in his commentary on Amarakosa refer medikara also denoting vajra as Hiraka an inanimate adamant object diamond. While it dissolves or cut through the other nothing can penetrate it. So diamond symbolizing the “Hardest” aspect in human imagina-

tion.

The adamant concept which underlay in vajra, gradually taken to aesthetic expression of the poetic literature of Brahmanical as well as Buddhist. And also particularly became symbolic via media to define psycho-physical abstract aspects of Hindu and Buddhist antras.

Here we thing it will not be out of place to cite some instance. A Buddhist scholar Vidyakara prepared an antholgy of Sanskrit court poetry shortly before the year 1100 who belonged to the Jagaddala monastery of Malda district. While eulogising the patron enlightened being of transcendental wisdom Manjughoshha or Manjusi — invokes him with the epithet ‘Manjusvajra’ in the following verse:—

मुष्कालातिर्भुजास्वरूपिणें—
कादेन कालिन्यपति धुमराणेषे।

यो वन्दनमणिरीति धर्मराजे—
अगुरु यो हिंदुलक्षम स दुधुक्तकरक्

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"May he who consecrates his worshipper into the kingdom of his law,
With anointing liquid, golden red as saffron,
Poured from golden ambrosia his foot,
Where in his lovely toes are ceremonial buds,
May Manjusri (Manjuvajra) watch over you,
For your happiness and good."

(An anthology of Sanskrit court poetry; translated by Daniel H.H. Ingalls

In Pali literature the reference of word Vajra is very scanty. In Sutta-Pitaka,
Dighanikaya Pali. Pt. I.P. 284. (Nava Nalada Edn.) We find the following word:—
विणितपानी (विणितपानी), विणिति सुभाषिरि (विणिति सुभाषिरि). विणिति निवृत्ति (विणिति निवृत्ति),
are traced.

In Ambarta-Sutta-4, कण्ठल-सगुणि an event is described, when Ambhatta
for the third time denied to give answer to lord Buddha’s reasonable answer, the
king of the yakshas ‘Vajra-Pani’ appeared in the sky on the head of Ambatha
wielding bright and burning iron hammer (Ayokuta) to smash his head into seven
pieces, if denies still to answer and prayed shelter to the Buddha, the much terrified
Ambatha.

Again, we find in शूपास्यणम्—शूप Sutta-pitaka, Majjhimanikaya pt. I, p.
284. The thing happened to Nighanto Putta who likewise desired from giving
answer. The name of शूपि—सगुणि occurs in भिषणिकाय-धम्मविपिनम् निमित्तीम्—शूपि-5

The ontological sense of Vajra found its best expression in Mahayana
Sanskrit literatures. In रमणविविधवार्णे महायानवत्तम-तत्त्वज्ञ अथर्व or रस or the sublime
science of the great vehicle to salvation, a manual of Buddhist monism, the work
of Arya Maitreya with a commentary by Arya Asanga (Eng. trans. by E. Obermiller
of the body of the Shasthra (वाच्य-व्रतिरि) has been depicted by Arya-Maitreya and
the book commences with the following verse:

ओ गम्भीरवाच्यायाः
वाच्यन्यो च चारण्यो दुःखं भातू।
गृहीताम् कर्म वीप्रवतम्
पुनस्य दुःखन्यं अपरिानिव तस्मात् वाच्यमात्रां सः॥
The Buddha, Dharma, Gunas, Dhatu Bodhi-gunas, Karma and the last Buddha; these are the body of the whole Shasta (The Shasta consist of these seven aspects). The concrete essence, in short these seven aspects are identical with the word vajra.

Here we are not going to discuss seven aspects of the Shasta, but propose to deal with the concept of vajra.

Asanga while expounding the verse gives an interesting analogical definition of the word vajra in the following manner:

"Vajra is a non-extinguishable object which is impenetrable through the knowledge of auditory perception and mental reflection, and hence which is not determinable by speech; which can only be realised by intuitive knowledge. Therefore, the object should be known as hard as vajra. The non-extinguishable object, which denote that adamantine object, because that object leads to the path which is conducive to the realisation of that are manifestation of that adamantine sense, is called as absolute object (Padam). Thus, the vajra object, denotes the impenetrable sense and which reflects manifested meaning, which is then the object and which is the manifested meaning. The objects are seven, such as, the Buddha, the Dhatu, the Sangha or the order, the Dharma or essence, the Bodhi, the enlightenment, the guna or the glory and the karma or the action. Here it is said, by which words seven aspects are to be realised are indicated illustrated, that is why it is known as reflective meaning. This significance which is denoted by the word “Vajra” is to be realised from the relevant Sutra.

In the commentary Aryasang projected a passage from दुम्बिक - अभिधर्मम् परिवर्तित - सूत्र to confirm the above stated aspects defined by the word vajra, thus, "अभिधर्मम् अति तत्त्वाद् दुम्बिकः " अभिधर्मम् तत्त्वाद् दुम्बिकः भवः । तत्वात् अभिधर्मम् अति तत्त्वाद् दुम्बिकः भवः ॥ (२)
"Oh, Ananda, the Tathagata is indefinable. He can not be seen by eyes. The Dharma is inexpressible. That can not be heard by ear. The Sangha's unconditioned that can not be propitiated either by body or by mind. The sense of the vajrapada should by realized as explained in the Sutra of Dharmacharya-paramarta".

Thus Assanga referred more five-Sutra for the true understanding of other aspects of denoted by the word Vajra. Having expounded the seven indefinable aspects of the Shasta. Aryamaitraya narrates the adamantine aspects of Joana and Karuna of Tathagata in the following verse.

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\text{Aryaassanga commenting on this makes an analogy of these two aspects with vajra in the following passage:—}
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The suffering, which originated from the perplexed "vision i.e. belief in the existence of one's own individuality can be irradiated by obtaining the power of knowing the suffering truth [रेण नार्द्ध प्रेमः] This suffering can not be overcome by temporal knowledge. The strength of compassion and absolute wisdom of the Tathagata is like vajra, which even penetrates (annihilates) the (Klesha), which is like the immovable hidden enclosure in the deep forest. This strength should be known through this analogy of vajra.

Edward Conze an internationally accepted authority on Prajñāparamita literature, in his edition of most important and smallest text of above category, literature entitled Vajra-chedika-Prajna-paramita (pub. Rome 1957), states the prefix "vajra" is used rather sparingly in the larger Prajñāparamitas, and there indicates an "adamantine" Samadhi as Dharma or citta or Joana. The combination Vajra-Prajñāparamita is not found anywhere (vide p. 2, note).

Max Muller rendered the title of the text as "Diamond Sutra" conze opined that "there is no reason to discontinue this" popular usage (bid p. 7) but he states", "but strictly speaking, it is more than unlikely that the Buddhist here-understood vajra is the material substance which we call" Diamond". The term is familiar from many Buddhist texts, including the large Prajna-Paramita Sutra. Everywhere it refers to the mythical "Thunderbolt", and indicates irresistible strength, both passively and actively the Teile therefore means 'The perfection of wisdom which cuts even the thunderbolt', or 'less probably which would cut even a thunderbolt'.

(2 bid 7.8)
Chandraciti while expounding the verse:

"Those who by form do not see me,
And those who followed me by voice,
Wrong the efforts they engaged in.
Me those people will not see,
From the Dharma should one see the Buddhas,
For the Dharma-bodies are the guides.
Yet Dharma's true nature should not be discerned,
Nor can't it, either, be discerned."

We find almost same idea in तथागतसमासूति in the ch. तथागत कर्तिकेयि परिवर्ण (Gilgit, MSS. VI, pt. II, p. 297). On the following passage, कौणसिन महात्मान तथागतसमासूति प्रदानम् (तथा कर्तिकेयि) मन्त्रायनाति यथा कर्तिकेयि ममास्य न श्रवणम् प्रारम्भिता। तथागते वृत्तचं बोधिसङ्गे महात्माने समासूति कर्तिकेयि प्रारम्भितं—कर्तिकेयि तथागतसमासूति कर्तिकेयि समासिद्धविशेषम् .......
The same idea has been illustrated in gatha:—

"In the above-stated passages we find that the Dhammakaya can not be perceived through illusory sense of organ, "From the Dharma one should see Buddha," Even that Dhamma, that is, "Dharma's true nature should not be discerned, nor can it, either, be discerned", one can realize Dharma through Samadhi, or through the "Apriyamancetram" by (pure, translucent thought, unsupported thought, trans. concæe Prabhavasrava-citta (illustrate-in mind). In the ch. of तथागतसमासूति प्रदानम् of तथागतसमासूति we find the same idea has been illustrated in the following line:—

..."
"The mind non-adhered to name-form is indistinct-clear mind."

'The Prajnaparamitas in order to establish Sunyata have shown that there is nothing in the world of our knowledge which has any real existence. Everything that we are conscious of has only dreamy existence, and that all the 84,000 Dharmakandhas are only expedients (upayakaranay) adopted by him to benefit of ignorant and deluded beings, and consequently a Bodhisattva while practising the Prajna paramita should treat them as mere apparitions devoid of reality ...... the function of the Prajnaparamita is to make a bodhisattva bear in the mind that the Paramitas ... samadhi, Samapathik, phala of bodhopak sikkharmas, which he has been 'practising, are 'only aids and expedients invented by Buddhas to help beings to the realisation of the ideal.' (N. Dutt 'Aspects of Mahayana Buddhism and its relation to Hinayana, p. 334).

Therefore from the above stated facts we know that, the realisation of the Upayakaranay as mere devoid of reality is the highest perfection of wisdom which even makes the transcendent virtues baseless (Apratibhita), is the perfection of wisdom which cuts the Thunderbolt. These expedience are Thunderbolt the Adamantine aspects leading a bodhisattva to ultimate illumination. Siksaasamuccaya quotes a passage from chandrapradipa Sutra as follows:—

उपायेष वारिष्ठयो दोषप्रचुरविशय विद्यतात्।
इदम् संक्षेपायथावशयितः ||
शुच्यतात् कारणार्थायास्ति भीतस्य अवृत्तिः ||

the gift imbibed with the knowledge of Sunyata and Karma begets virtue, the same text quotes Vajraecenedika:—

गयुधे वज्रप्रकाश निकाती
यो बोधिसत्त्वोपरिधिविद्यत द्वार द्वाराति।
सत्सुधकारमुच्यत सुधर
प्राणायामुच्यतेति सन्तति। (सिक्षासमुच्यां प. 2755)

Before we set to discuss Vajrayana view on Vajra, we think it will not be out of place to say a few words about the various synonyms of the yana. Vajrayana also generally known as mantra yana. Its full name is guhya-mana mantra Phala-Vajra-Yana, is variously called Phalayana Upayayana, and Vajrayana. The sivalaprabha states as quoted by V. Guenther. "Vajra means sublime indivisibility and indestructibility, and since this is (the nature of) the course, one speech of vajraship. This is to say that vajrayana is the indivisibility of cause or Paramita method and effect or mantra method. According to Bang-ndor-bshian,

"Awareness of nothingness is the cause
To feel unchanging bliss is the effect
The indivisibility of nothingness
And bliss is known as the enlightenment of mind."

Here the indivisibility of awareness which directly insists nothingness, and the unchanging, supreme bliss is conceived as consisting of the two phenomena goal approach and goal-attainment. Such is interpretation of vajrayana, however, applied to Anantarayogatantras, not to these lower Tantras. For this reason the explanation of the Nying-Pai-lug will have to be added, "The essence of mahayana is the six perceptions." Their essence is fitness of action and intelligence of which the essence or one valumess is the enlightenment-mind. Since this is the Vajrasattva-concentration it is Vajra, and being both vajra and a spiritual cause, one speaks Vajrayana. And this is the meaning of mahayana. Thus Vajrayana is synonymous with vajrasattva-yoga which effects the indivisible union of fitness of action and intelligence. The indivisibility of cause and effect is one of the many meaning of Vajra.

The union of insight and action, of unlimited cognition and it is active framework of communication with others in a wide order is referred to by the symbol of Vajrasattva.

Vajra is the Dharmakayaic awareness in which three types of enlightenment enter indivisibly from ultramas, and Samva is the apprehensible form pattern deriving from it (quoted from the collected works of Tsong-kha-pa, Tashihunpo edition I, 10, 2, a-b, quoted by V. Guenther, Tibetan Buddhism without mystification, Lehde E.S. Brill, p. 59. The attempt to effect this integration of thought and action is termed Vajrasattva-yoga, which is synonymous with vajrayana. Mahayana has been said to consist of the Paramitayana as the cause end vajrayana as the climax (Ibid, p. 60, Tsong Khapa). For further discussion vidi V. guenther, Tibetan Buddhism without mystification, (p. 54:60).

Many scholars have surveyed the mode of transformation of some philosophical ideas of Mahayana Buddhism. Here we are not concerned about all the aspects of Tantric Buddhism. "Its the mode of transformation the most important point is the transformation of the idea of Suryata (vigour) into the idea of Vajra, or the Thunderbolt. The Suryata-nature (svabhava) of the world is its ultimate immutable nature, as immovable as the thunderbolt, so it is called the Vajra. It has been said in the Adhya-vajra-Samgraha, "Suryata, which is firm, substantial, indivisible, impenetrable, incapable of being burnt and imperishable, is called the Vajra."

And bliss is known as the enlightenment of mind."

And bliss is known as the enlightenment of mind."

**Note:** The text contains a reference to an absent page number, which is likely a typographical error. The content appears to be a continuation of previous discussion on the nature of Vajra in the context of Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism. The reference to "vajra-yoga" and the discussion on the integration of thought and action align with traditional Tantric Buddhist practices. The mention of Tsong Khapa and other scholars indicates a scholar of Buddhist studies is discussing the transformation of ideas within the Mahayana tradition and its syncretic elements with Tantric Buddhism.
This transformation of Sunya to Vajra will explain the term Vajrayana and in vajrayana all the gods, goddesses, articles for rituals have been marked with vajra to specialize them from their originally accepted nature. The supreme deity of Vajrayana is the Vajra-Sattva/Vajra-Sunya, vajra, Sattva-quiescence, who is of the nature of pure consciousness (Vijnapti-Marannti of Visvanavadin Buddhists) as associated with Sunya in the form of the absence of subjectivity and objectivity. (Ibid, p. 27).

The missionary author Rev. Graham Sandberg, who is so little favourable to Buddhism that he can discover (p. 260) in it “no scheme of metaphysics of morality which can be dignified with the title of an ethical system “when however, speaking of this mystic depraves form” in short chapter on the Tantras and Tantrik rites (Tibet and Neo-Tibetans, p. 218), says this new vehicle (Ngag-Kyi-Thegpa) did not prefer to supersede the time honoured Vajrayana (Dzoge-Thegpa) but it claimed by its expanded mythological scheme and its fascinating and even sublime mystic conceptions to crystallize the old tantrik methods into a regular science as complicated as it was successful (V. Sir John Woodroffe, Sakti and Saktis, p. 196).

Here we may state an interesting fact related to Vajra, John woodroffe states in above stated book, “Tantricism was reinforced on the arrival in 719 A.D. of Two Indian Brahmanas, Vajrabodhi and Amoghaha. The demand of Tantra became so great that Amoghaha was officially deputed by the Imperial government to bring back from India and Ceylon as many as could. Amoghaha who was the favourite of these Emperors holding the rank of minister and honoured with many titles lived till 774. He made the tantrism a fashionable sect. . . . Amoghaha, however demanded more of those who sought initiation. In the Indian fashion he tested (Paraksha) the would be disciple and initiated only those who were fit and had the quality of Vajra. (V. Sakti and Saktis pp. 200-201)."

In vajrayana tantrik texts the vajra represents various aspects. In the Panetkarma of Nagajunapada we find four gradation in the sunya doctrine. The first is Sunya, the second Ati-Sunya, the third Mahasunya and the fourth or the final is the Sarva-Sunya. The first stage Sunya has been explained as Aloka, it is knowledge (Prajna). The second stage viz., Ati-Sunya is said to be the manifestation of light (Alokabhasa) and while the sunya is said to be Prajna, Ati-Sunya, is said to be the Upaya or the means. It is to be of the nature of constructive imaginations (Parikalpa) and it belongs to the mind and its state (citasanja). It is also said to be right (dakshina) the solar circle (Sunya-Mandala) and the Thunderbolt (Vajra). Third stage viz., Maha-Sunya proceeds from the union of Prajna and Upaya or Aloka and for (first stage Sunya has been explained as Aloka in Lalita-Vinay, ed. ed. Dr. S. Leibman pp. 417-18). Alokabhasa, or Sunya or Ati-Sunya the fourth stage viz., Sarva-Sunya (all-valid or perfect void is free from all three fold impurities and is self-illuminate. For details vide S.B. Dasgupta, An Introduction to Tantrik Buddhism p. 43-44).
According to Dr. Dasgupta, the Sri Samaja, which is credited by some to be the earliest authoritative text on vajra-yantra, which he explained as the "Adharmantite-way" is really the way or means for the realisation of the Vajra-nature the immovable and impenetrable void-nature of the self as well as the dharmas. The above text explains vajra-yantra as the means which has recourse in the five families (Kulas) of the Bodhisattvas viz., Maha (Presided over by Vairocana with his sakti Vajradhativasvari), Deva (Presided over by Akshobhya with his sakti Vajradha, etc. but these are by no means foundation of the vajra or the Sunyatana.

(Dasgupta: Ibid, p. 70)

We quote here, Dr. Dasgupta in his own word about the comprehensive idea of vajra which will help us to understand the ubiquity of perfect void in every aspect of Vajrayana. “It is the conception of the element of the most striking feature of Vajrayana which justifies the general name giver to it, is the use and function of the idea of vajra. Vajra, as we shall presently see, is the void (Sunyata), and in vajra-yantra everything is vajra i.e., perfect void. In worsting a god, the god is thought of as of vajra-nature, his image is vajra the worshipper is vajra, the materials of worship are vajra, the mantras are vajra, the processes are vajra and everything is vajra. This vajra, as we have already said, often serves as the stamp of the Vajrayana.” (Ibid, p. 72)

Vajrayanists declare that there cannot be anything evil for a vajrayanist, as work not to be done, so food not to be taken, no woman not to be enjoyed. (Quoted Dasgupta, p. 72). After understanding practice of the prescribed Sadhana, a Sadhaka should think of the world of static and dynamic as all are void and place himself in the void with the mantras, "Om Shantoyam Jaya - Jaya - Jaya - Jaya - Om" “Om I am of the nature of the immutable knowledge of void” then should realize that all the Dharmas are pure by nature and he too is pure (Ibid, p. 76).

As many phenomenal objects have been conceived to be the manifestations of impersonal and eternal beauty in monastic philosophy, like Vedanta, with the attributed glorious substantial, beautiful, brilliant quality. Thus truth found expression in Lord Krishna’s utterances to the apostle Arjuna.

Gita, ch. X, Verse 41.

Whatever being there is, endowed with glory and grace and vigour, know that to have sprung from a fragment of my splendour.”

(trans. S. Radhakrishnan)
This divine aesthetic concept as it was, appeared to the visionary mind of the seers of all Faith. Thus we find 'the tree of life' or 'cosmic tree' (Avanha-Pipal relians) in Gita, the blooming, fragrant and purple lotus is revealing the Supreme Bliss or enlightenment-symbolizing dedicated-hearted, the brilliant jewels are symbolic of divine beauty and principles. The vajra is the embodiment of the unending and intransigent (Ts. ma 'gyur) vacuity and indescribable essence of nature (vajra-satvā). Even the vajra representing the intense and potential aspect of the body of Sākta (Sastra-Sākta).

So we find the adamantine aspect of vajra evolutes from the divine mutability of intelligence and then its flowering into the unnamable ultimate nature-Sunya-sa.

We have already stated that transformation of total nature into the adamantine aspect of vajra.

We think it would not be irrelevant to state that, as the transformation of divine objective and subjective aspects has taken place into the vajra, so in the like manner this took place for the place name and other phenomenal objects into the concept of vajra.

Which is accepted as identical with 'Subha-bhumi', was only a part of Ladha (Radha on vajra-bhumi) were, according to commentaries the two division of Ladha Limit of Bengal. (vide, Berayendra Sen: Some Historical Aspects, of the inscription of Bengal, University of Calcutta, 1942, p. 47, a part of Vajrabhumi lay beyond the present western, Limit of Bengal

But earlier Brahmanical literatures knows Olly Subha, yet Jaina literatures refer the word of esoteric significance-Vajra.

Here we may state that, both the Buddhism and Jainism deny the existence of an intelligent first cause, adobe defied Kautilya. Both the systems are indifferent to the authority of the vedas. There is no doubt about the truth, that the things concern with appreciation of beauty and metaphorical objects have been transformed into metaphysical aspects and displayed in symbolic religions Art, and manifested in Buddhist Art abundantly than in Brahmanical. It is due to its ethical and creative evolutionism, and more, so in the mahayana and profoundly in Vajrayana Art. Thus we find, the mystical reference of vajra in pluralistic realist literature of Jaina and creative evolutionist literatures of the Buddhist.

The story of Mahavira's journey in Lodha country contained in the Acharanga-Sutra. Is specially interesting for one reason. There is a fair degree of possibility that at least a part of Vajra-bhumi lay beyond the present western limit of Bengal. There is a probable reference of Vajra-bhumi in classical Tamil work "Silppadhihkeam" which supposed by some scholar to preserved a genuine account
of the career of Karikata, the Choky king, whose date can not be definitely fixed. The ruler of Vajra maintained neutrality. The commentators in explaining the passage, point out that the vajra country was situated "on the bank of river Sona. It was surrounded by "great waters on all sides" and its contiguity to Magadha, whose ruler after some resistance-submitted to the invader, is implied in the story which refers Magadha, next to its mention of Vajra. If this tradition has any historical value, it is necessary to place Vajra somewhere in the neighbourhood of Magadha along the western side of Radha.

The Mahabharata refers Bhimas exploits in eastern countries and the same tract of country under the name "Prasuhna" (western Subha). It has been suggested that Vajra-bhumi or vajra as a geographic term is not entirely unknown to Indian epigraphy. An attempt has been made to connect it with the designation of a class of officials, who were specially entrusted with the task of assisting the Maurya Emperors Asoka in the propagation of Dharma.

As regards the alleged mention of Vajra-bhumi (Vajra-bhumi) by Ashoka, it may be safely said that the theory has no foundation in fact. In his XII the Rock edict the Maurya Emperor informs us that the Dharma-Mahamantras, Mahamantras in charge of women, the vacha-bhumikas, and various engaged in such a way as to promote the growth of every separate religion as well as the awakening of Dharma among the subjects. (Rock inscription XII, 9) of the Gimmer edict, Kalinga's Vacha-Bhumika, the reading in the Manusheha (XII, 8) and the Shabhragrahic text is Vrachabhumika (7, 9). Vacha or Vracha may be equated with "Vajra". This word has been actually used in the Vih Rock edict of Ashoka, where it is impossible to suggest that it is the name of a country (cf. Gimmer). It will be natural to suggest that "Vacha" in "Vacha-bhumika" should be taken in the same sense in which it has been used in the Vih Rock edict. Vajra meaning a cow-pen or cattle herd, pasture or a high road, is mentioned in the Vih Rock Edict. The Vajra-Bhumika (from Vajra and bhumi, i.e. office) in the employ of the Maurya were either superintendents of cattle establishments like the Godhikshaka or Kustihy Arthasastra (12, 29), or they were officers in charge of high roads, the protection of which was a duty of the king in ancient time, (Ibid, pp. 50-52).

We think it necessary to say few words on "Vajra" before we retract to original topic, that is, Vajra-bhumi.

As we know that all the Buddhists unanimously held in high esteem the "Vajrasana". The immutable seat (Tib; Rdo-rgyal, gdan), where the Gautama Siddhartha Buddha attained ultimate illumination. The Buddhist claim the place to be the Navel of the Jumbling or "the centre of earth". Likewise, we find in Brahminic Vaishnavas also held the "Sri" (Vrja) "The cow-pen" and popularly know as "The divine sphere of Vrja because this is the abode of divine play (मूर्दन संबद्धि) by the lord Krishna along with chosen companions. In some Puranas, such as Matsy, Padma, Bhavisya etc., and the Vaishnava text "Vrja-Bhakti, Vilasa, which
analysing the "Vraja", gave an interesting description of "Vraja". The area sur-
rounded by twelve auspicious maniferae the "Vraja-Mandala" circle of Vraja. One
who makes a Journey over here, his all ambitions will be fulfilled, attain the sphere
of Vishnu, be victorious over all by virtue of this:

Even the sense of impenetrability, which underlay "Vajra" also metaphorically
conjectured in the sense "As the cow-pen is besieged by cow-herd" in the follow-
ing verse of the port Magha.

Even the Hathigumpha inscription. In the seventh line of the epigraph, there was
a uncertainty among the scholars so far as the reading of the first three letters in
concerned, Vajira (Cunninghams), Vajata (prince), Vajira (Jayaswal-1918), and
late Vajira, can be taken as approximations of vajra. It has been used at all as the
name of a country, the site represented by it is probably to be sought for else-
where, in Bengal or its immediate neighborhood.

Vajra-bhumii (Tami Vajra) which was a part of Radha, lay close to Madgada.
The Sanskrit word Vajra may mean "the hard or mighty one" (Moorat William’s
for Vira-bhumii (Bhikshum) which is the name of a modern district in Western Bengal
sitten on the border of the Santal Parganas of Bihar.

According Jain Kalpa Sutra Mahavira spent sometime in a place named
Punjabhum (Puniya-bhumii in the Jains Bhagavati), which the commentators
explain as situated in Vajrabhumi. The Vaishnabhum comprising portion of the
modern district of Bhiwani, Bankura and Midnapur in Bengal the Rajmahal hills
in the Santal Parganas and the eastern district of Chunaragpur is the province of
Bihar (ibid, 52-53).

While Bhendarkar in his book 'Ashoka' (Calcutta University 1955) expresses
somewhat difficulty to understand who vachhabhuminas were, and expresses pity
as the ignorance about the exact identity of the Vachhabhuminas and their func-
tions. Accepted the designation as has been according to him, twice-mentioned in
the Arkasatas as equivalent to "Vraja".

Dr. Beni Madhav Barua is certain that designation of the Asokan officials
as denoted by the word Vrachhabhuminas, had something to do with Vrata in
Rock Edict VI. That the word Vrata is the equivalent of Vraja is evident from

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The Sāhādazgiri text of Rock Edict VI and R.E. XIII where the verbal forms Vacheya and Vrachati occur. In support of “Vajra” he shows instances from Dharm R.E.V. and visualizes, while in all the versions of R.E. VI the word is either Vachya or Vachcha. The equation of Vachya or Vrachca with Skt. Varschas would be free from all objections. But unfortunately no sensible meaning can be made out of it. The choice lies at last between the two equations namely that with the Arthāhamadgāthi, Vachhatsa and with the SK. Vajra. in the Arthāhamadgāthi dictum, Mūnī vachhasta (Acaranga Sutra Ed. by U Schuhbinger, I, p. 13) the word vachhasta is Sanskritised in the commentary as Vartya, a word which does not occur in any Sanskrit Lexicon. The word Vartya which might not be proposed instead does not suit, the context, its usual meaning bring a man of the twice born Brahman class who has not undergone the purificatory rites various interpretations of Vachya have so far been suggested on the strength of its equation with Vajra. According to Amarakosha (Nātakaha, 95) Vajra may mean goldshāla (cow-pen) addhva (food) nivaha (assemblage) vide. Asoka and his inscriptions pp. 183-184. In view of after-stated facts we find that besides Benoy Chandra Sen no later scholar on Asokh inscription, has conjectured the term to be vajra for vachya. Dr. Beru, Bandhare, A.C. Sen and R. Mukherjee have accepted the equivalent “Vikrta” for “Vachya” or “Vrachcha”. It is not probably that the reading ‘Vajra’ for vachya has not caught the sight of these scholars.

A.L. Basham, while discussing the reference of Pāsūyabhumi in the text of Bhagavati sutra states, Beru ignoring the clear statement of the Bhagavati that Pāsūyabhumi was near Kallaga, which was a settlement near Nalanda, located in Vajrabhumi, on the strength of Vinaavjuviya’s commentary to the relevant passage of the Kośa Sutra (Journal of the Development of Letters, Calcutta University). The Acaranga Sutra states that Mahāvira did not in fact visit Vajra-hum, which the commentators Salaka described as a district of Ladha or western Bengal. In his ninth year of asceticism Mahāvira decided to visit non-Aryan countries, in order to invite persecution and that to work off his Kama. Accompanied by Gosala he Journalised to Ladha and Vajjabhumi (W. Bengal). The visit of Mahāvira to this district is confirmed by the early Acaranga-Sutra. The Kośa Sutra confirmed that Mahāvira passed rainy seasons in the places specified by Jina, with the exception of that spent in Ladha and Vajjabhumi. The discrepancy is explained by the commentator Vinaavjuviya, who states that Pāsūyabhumi, where Mahāvira is said by the Kośa Sutra to have spent a rainy season, is in Vajrabhumi. Thus it is evident that Jina passed not less than the whole of his story (Basham, History and Doctrines of the Jains, pp. 41, 45-46).

The History of Bengal (Ed. Majumdar says, “The Acaranga Sutra, divides the land of Ladha into two parts named Vajjabhumi and Siddha (Sudha) Bhumi, Vajjabhumi or Vajrabhumi had its capital, according to commentators, at Paśūyabhumi. The name Vajrabhumi “Land of Diamond”, reminds us of the Sarkar of Madarān in South-West Bengal mentioned in the Aśvin-Ākhāri in which there was a diamond mine. The Sarkar is answer to parts of the modern Behbhum, B'dwan, 38
and Howauly districts. The "Land of Diamond" may have extended west wards as far as Kokka on the Borders of Bihar which was famous for its diamond mines in the days of Emperor Asoka (p. 9).

Although he reading vajra for vaccha or vajra a conjectural proposition, yet, we have to shew obviously clear word for place name prepositive with vajra, namely 'Vajrayogini' name of a village of Vikramapura, Dacca, the residence of the celebrated Buddhist Savant Aitana Dipankaëa Sixana. The Vajrayogini copper plate of Samala Varmadeva. It is also suggested that one Harrvarna succeeded Satavarnam. The name of Harrvarna was familiar to scholars long ago from the colophons of the Buddhist manuscripts, copied respectively in the 19th and 39th years of his reign (vide. S.K. Maqy and R.R. Mukherjee, Corpus of Bengal Inscriptions, Calcutta, 1997), we found another name of a country Vajrasati in Uttarapatha (somewhere about Western Punjab) was ruled by kind Vajrasanda (Bodhisattvadana Kāṣāya, ch. 103rd. p. 4) V. Bimala Chaurap, Geographical Synopsis, vol. I, p. 27).

Both the word 'Vajra' and 'Vajra' have been derived from the root "Vraj" meaning "to go". It seems from the derivative that the original word was most probably "Vajra" then through linguistic alteration of modification process it underwent change into the form of 'Vajra' of course, it occurred so in remote prehistoric, Vedic times.

Vajra denotes the first instance, in Rigveda, the place to which the cattle resort (from Vraj "go") the "feeding ground" and secondarily the "herd" itself. According to some such as Reth "Vajra" as primarily the "enriceure", for more detail vide, A.A. Macfisell, Vedic Index, vol. II, p. 340.

Even the concept of Vajra has transcended Himalayan regions well, as a result we find significant names adom-be places tantrik importance: Do-Le-gying (Darjeeling, Vajapuja) in eastern Himalaya. And also we find reflective transformation of whole image of 'Vajrasana' of Boudhigaya in Darjedan name of a locality in Central Tibet, as we find वाज्रसान (Nizinda also name of a small monastery in Phenyul in Tibet, Do-Ra (Do-Le-Ra-Ba) and enclosure with palars with capitals of the shape of the Vajra, which surrounds the Monastery of Samye, and so on. This shows the immutable cultural bonds that is as adamantine as that of Vajra, in between Bharata and Bod.

Finally, we may say, the Buddhist Tantricis may have borrowed lines of spiritual practices from the Hindus but it retained the Mahayanic philosophy of सत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्यसत्य (Characteristics-issness) विसंिगि, ठानस्कड्मन्ती (Pure-consciousness apart from sense-consciousness). In Guayyszavma, an early Tantric text, Vajra is defined as the Reality or the highest Truth. It is explained as the oneness of the diverse objects and beings of the universe i.e. Thatness of the Madhyamikas. A Bodhisattva must attempt to
develop a mental state (Buddhicita-Vajra) in which will vanish the distinction between the two opposite extremes. He should realize that acts of passion are not apart from the truth and so it is stated in the Tantric texts that hatred, delusion and attachment as well as the practitioner (Dharma) for realizing the Truth and The Truth (Vajra) constitute the five means of escape from the world of desire.

N. Dut. Tanrik Buddhism; Bulletin of Tibetology, vol. 1 (p. 2).

To translate “Vajra” as powerbolt by David Snellgrove seems to be quite unenable in view of basic stands that has been taken by Buddhist philosophers fundamental ideas that Underlay in Vajra have been discussed in the foregoing pages. Dr. Snellgrove in his most fascinating work on travel and comparative study of Buddhism, entitled ‘Buddhist Himalaya, while dividing Vajragani as the family of the Vajra (Thunderbolt), states for this signified the power of powerful being. He himself again explained Akshobhya-one of the five Buddhhas, presiding over the east, with blue colour and of Vajra family and Vajra symbol as ‘imperishable’, the rest four Buddhhas have different sign and symbols. Again his statement ‘since magical power which is represented by Vajra in all important tantras’. These seems to be paradoxical and verify the reflection of preconceived idea of Hindu concept of Vajra. In his recent book, Pour Lamas of Dolgo, he rendered Vajra as ‘powerbolt’. This is the visualization of the idea of Vajra he here in mind, which is evident from his earlier interpretation of the word.

He also claimed the new coinage ‘Powerbolt’ as a satisfactory translation than the earlier rendering.

‘Thunderbolt’ and ‘Diamond’

That Thunderbolt is not a fully satisfactory translation, has been however admitted and as explanatory the word Adamant has been used. Several English knowing Lamas object to the construction ‘powerbolt’ since Thunder and not bolt, is essence of Thunderbolt. As Shri N.C. Sinha put it in suggestive English in his two notes (vide: Bulletin of Tibetology, vol. VII, No. 2 and vol. VII, No. 3, literal rendering of Sanskrit, Vajra, the Weapon of Indra should be Thunder or Thunderbolt. In his reference of Brahadaranyakya upanishad confirmed also the identity of idea of Vajra blended in two concepts. Also the identity of idea of Vajra blended in two concepts. The Lama scholar, Kunga Yonten’s examination of Vajra also determine the hard, void, imperishable, indestructible attributes of Vajra. As he states diamond has two names De-je Rm-Po-che and De-je Phan-Lam. And if we study the inherent intangible sense of three forms of Vajra, of three spokes, five spokes and nine spokes (vide: Bulletin of Tibetology, vol. VII, No. 3), it does not at all reflect the concept of power that has been conjectured by some scholars.

There is no doubt that Indra has become a mere background figure for the towering personity of the Buddha. The phenomenal development of the practice 40
of making image and worshipping them is interestingly indicated by the fact that
even the attributes or weapons meant to be placed in the hand of the deity were
personified and represented anthropomorphically. Such representations came to
be designated generally. Such representations came to be designated generally as
“Ayudhapurusha”. The earliest representation of “Ayudhapurusha”, however, seems
to go back to the Indo-Scythian period. Vajra appears on some Copper Coins of
maats as a man behind whom is carved a double-pronged Thunderbolt, just in-
front of Zeus-Indra whose right hand is placed over his head. Various emblems,
such as cakra, gada, tankha, padma in Vishnuite reliefs and Vajra, Sakti, Danda,
Khadga, Pusa, Ankusa, Trishula etc. are also personified in late iconographic text
(vide, J.N. Barmejee, Development of Hindu Iconography, p. 537).

In Bhaddevata, we find Vijayadhir as one of the epithets of Indra and one of
the many epithets of Indra in Vajrapani (V. Sri N.C. Sinha’s note on Vajra. Bul-
letin vol. VII, No. 3). In Buddhist Iconography we find “Vajrapani” “Vajradhara”
are the epithets of the Buddha, therefore we find through these terms that the Buddha
the “Thunder bolt-holder” personified anthropomorphically. When these are rep-
resentation of “Ayudhapurusha”, we think the rendering “Thunderbolt” is more
satisfactory than “Powerbolt” because thunder and not bolt is the essence of
Thunderbolt as suggested by Sri N.C. Sinha.

Here we should not loose sight of the similar weapon “Sakti” which is a
long spear with very sharp edge on both sides and a banner with the design of a
fowl. Unlike “Vajra” it is distinctly termed “Sakti” may be reordered “Power-bolt”
without conjecture.

As we see personified Ayudhapurusha in Hindu and Buddhist Iconography
so we find imagery of weapon of destruction “Vajra” was carried into stipulation
about (impersonal being). Brahmans or absolute. In Katha Upanishad (2. 3-2)
Brahman is linked to Vajra. In Buddhism, the attainment of Bodhi by Shaky
prince, Gautama Siddhartha, was described as attainment of Vajra (vide Sri N.C.
Sinha’s note on Vajra, Bulletin, vol. VII, No. 2). We know Vajrapani from the
representation of ‘laksana’ carried to the transcendent concept of Vajradhara
of Vajrapani as first creative principle.

Before we say anything about the first creative principle to the aforesaid
context of anthropomorphic representation of Vajrapani, we would like to write a
few lines on the historical background of Vajrapani found in Buddhist literatures.

In the Vinaya of Mulasarvastivadin the Buddha takes himself first to the
upper valley of the Indus and on that occasion he is accompanied by the Yaksha-
Vajrapani. In the same Vinaya it is mentioned that the Buddha makes his grand
journey to the North-West with the Yaksha Vajrapani, then the rejuvinates Ananda
and goes with him to Mathura. Vajrapani has been frequently represented in the
graeco-Buddhist sculptures of Gandhara, as a contrast he never appears in the

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According to Benoytosh Bhattacharya, Vajradhara is either the Adi-Buddha or the Dhyani-Buddha, Akshobhya who has the Vajra as the recognition symbol (Sadhanaamala, Preface, p. VIII). In Lokanatha-Sarasa we find Vajradhara has been equated with Maityri, Kshitigarbha (Ibid, vol. I, p. 49). Again in Arya Halabala (Avatokirevara) Hridaya Mantra, Arya-Vajrapani has been equated with Maityri and Samantabhadra and explicitly stated as Maha-Bodhisatva .... नैसर्गिकता अनौठता प्रभुतिपरा महाबोधिसतवा — प्रभुतिपरा तलिकामुख ... (2 bid, vol. II, p. 542).

The conception of Vajradhara Presupposes Adibuddha and therefore, is later than the first half of 10th-century. Vajraashta, being a regular development of the Bodhisatvata Vajrapani emanating from the Dhyani Buddha Akshobhaya, is little earlier, although the conception of Vajradhara and Vajraashta are something inseparably mixed up, in Vajrayana. But Vajradhara was not universally accepted as the Adibuddha or the first creative principle, when the theory of Adibuddha was fully established the Buddhists seem to have ranged themselves into so many sects as it were, holding different views regarding specific forms which the Adibuddha should take. Some considered one among the five Dhyani Buddhas as the Adibuddha, some acknowledges Vajraashta as the Adibuddha, many others were content to regard the Bodhisatvata such as Samantabhadra or Vajrapani as the Adi-Buddha. Thus the cult Adi-Buddha was widely distributed amongst the different schools, which gave rise to as many different sects amongst the Tantrik Buddhists (B. Bhattacharya: The Indian Buddhist Iconography, pp. 41-44).

In the previous notes the Vajra has been described to be made of stone and alternately of iron, Bronze or some sacred metal. Here we are not much concerned of the forms of Vajra. The shape of Thunderbolt the weapon of Indra also carried by several deities. It consists of two identical conical pieces each having three claws joined together in Middle (vide, D.R. Thapar, Icon in Bronze, figure of Vajra ll-41, and p. 44). As the threefold pattern, as typified by three basic evils persists behind the fivefold scheme. As the Buddha families were originally three, Tathagata, Lotus and Vajra also extend to five. And as we find three family protectors Manjusri, Avalokitesvara and Vajrapani, gradually assumes concept of five Buddhas of Vajra-dhara, Mandala (vide, Noel Groves, Buddha-Nimavata, pp. 65-66). In similar way through the analogy we find the original concept of Vajra form of three spikes gradually assuming the shape of five and nine spikes. In the Vedic concept the Vajra which could prevail upon or destroy the mightiest adversary of Devas symbolizes might or power an exprover and potential active property. Which gradually carried to the five spikes Vajra represent five wisdom and the nine spikes Vajra stands for Dhammavattha (vide. Bulletin of Tibetology vol. VII, No. 3). As we see here in Vajrayana concept the Vajra represents the intense introverted, hard, innate and aumantite aspects.
To the Buddhist, Sakti (कृतित्र) is Maya (मया) the very power that creates illusion, from which only Pajna can liberate us. The attitude of the Hindu Tantras is quite different, if no contrary ‘united with Sakti, be full of power’ says (Kalacudamani Tantra). From the union of Siva (सिव) and Sakti (कृतित्र) the world is created. The Buddhist on the other hand, does not want the creation and enfoldment of the world, but the realization of the “un-created, un-formed” state of Sunyata (सून्यता) from which all creation proceeds, or which is prior to and beyond all creation, vide, Atagarika Gvinda, Principles of Buddhist Tantras, Bulletin of Tibetology, Vol. II, No. 1. We may suggest the reader to read an interesting Article on ‘Consideration on Tantrik Sprirituality’ by Thubten Tenzin (Alban) Marco Fallis, Bulletin of Tibetology, Vol. II, No. 2, for accurate understanding and as precluding all possible terminological confusion.

Finally we may sum up, that to realize “Vajra” one has to understand “Vajrayana”. They are so inextricably inter-related that clear vision of one will dispel the misunderstanding of other. In spite giving our own interpretation we would prefer to quote one illuminating passage from a work of the one pioneer Indian exponent of Vajrayana. “The Mahayana in the opinion of the Vajrayanists is consistence with what they called Dharma which they considered as eternal and to which was given a more important place in later Buddhism that was assigned to Buddha himself. The Vajrayanists refer to Sunya in all their writings, but this is not the Sunya of the Mahayamakas about which neither existence nor non-existence nor a combination of the two nor a negation of the two can be predicated.

To the Mahayamakas both the subject and the object are Sunya in essence; there is no reality either of the mind or of the external world. Obviously, this is a position which was not agreeable to the Vajrayanists because to them a positive aspect in the Sunya is absolutely necessary. The Yohacara or the Vijnanavada goes a little further and the view of Vijnanavada as formulated by the school itself that when emancipation is obtained it does not become Sunya, but turn into eternal consciousness. Vajrayana, on the other hand, is characterized as the ‘path which leads to perfect enlightenment’ or what they call in Sanskrit ‘Amutarasamap Smadita’. Vajrayana literally means the adamantine path or vehicle, but its technical meaning is the ‘Samva Vehicile’ where Sunya is used in a special sense to represent Vajra. It is said: ‘Sunyata is designed as Vajra, because it firm and sound, and, cannot be changed, cannot be pierced, cannot be penetrated, cannot be burnt, and cannot be destroyed’.

Advayavajrasamruka. p. 23

(Benoytosh Bhattacharyya, The Indian Buddhist Iconography. pp. 10-11)