

Formation of the Practice System of Anuttarayoga-tantra, with Special Reference to the Accomplishment of Physical Body

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I. Preface

In Mahāyāna Buddhism the bodhisattvas who forgo *Nirvāṇa* and continue to do their work until no sentient beings remain in *Sāṃsāra* is called *Mahākaruṇa-icchāntika*. The character of the Bodhisattva in the later period of Tantric Buddhism changed into different forms such as Vajrasattva, Vajradhāra or Vidyadhāra. But the concept of these Attained Ones is a little different from that of other Bodhisattvas because their stage of attainment is the the same as that of the Buddha but their role is that of a Bodhisattvas.

Esoteric Buddhism in India is divided into Kriyā-tantra, Caryā-tantra, Yoga-tantra and Anuttarayoga-tantra. Of these Anuttarayoga-tantra was introduced in the late 8th century and pervaded India, Tibet and Nepal, but was not accepted in the regions of the Korean Peninsula, China and Japan.

Anuttarayoga-tantra of Esoteric Buddhist tradition belongs to the latter period of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism in India and the tantric practice

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system proceed from the Generation Stage to the Completion Stage in order to achieve the ideal beings such as Vajrasattva, etc. One of the special features of Anuttarayoga-tantra is a practice system to which brings about changes in beings, namely change of Life Stage, Intermediate Stage and Death Stage of Sentient Beings into *Nirmāṇa-kāya*, *Sambhoga-kāya* and *Dharma-kāya* of Buddha.

This paper studies the formation of the practice system of Anuttarayoga-tantra, particularly its focus on the accomplishment of the Physical Body as an attainment of Vajrasattva.

II. The Practice System of Caryā-tantra

In the Indian tradition of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, development of the practice system from *Pāramitāyāna* to Anuttarayoga-tantra is in accordance with the division of Tantric scriptures in sequence by Bu-ston who was an eminent scholar in the 15th Century. Tantra is divided into Kriyā-tantra, Caryā-tantra, Yoga-tantra and Anuttarayoga-tantra, and the doctrines and practice system of Esoteric Buddhism was founded through the advent of *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* and *Vajra Peak Tantra* respectively. Bu-ston have defined *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* as Caryā-tantra and *Vajra Peak Tantra* as Yoga-tantra.

In a Section of "Stages of Mind" in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, are defined as 'those who carry out the conducts of Bodhisattvas by practicing the Gate of *Mantrayāna*'. In the first half of the same section Vairocana Buddha is described as omniscient and omnipotent one who takes on different roles and carries out various conducts to save sentient beings. Following this description, Vajradhara, who is a leading questioner, asks about the Ultimate Wisdom of Omniscience. The Buddha replied "Awakened Mind is the source, Compassion is the root and Expedition is the ultimate purpose".

The quoting above is known as 'A Teaching of Three Phrases' in the tradition of the *Mantrayāna* School of Japan, and it is considered to be an expression of succeeding idea of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism in *Mantrayāna*. But the 'ultimate purpose' of the Three Phrases is certainly

different if compared with the tradition of *Pāramitāyāna* because the idea of saving sentient beings with Omniscient Wisdom is applicable to such Great bodhisattvas as Avalokitesvara and Samantabhadra of *Pāramitāyāna*.

Actually the Bodhisattvas in *Pāramitāyāna* tradition are almost the same as the Buddhas in nature but their stage of attainment is not equal to the Buddhas due to the vows to save sentient beings, and usually in the Buddhist scriptures those are described by an disciples or executors of Buddha. In the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* the attained one is referred to as Vajrasattva and this is meaningful in that the sūtra is an opening to a new tradition in *Mantrayāna* concerned with carrying out the spirit of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism by guarding and saving sentient beings.

The practices highlighted in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* are reciting Mantra, visualizing *Maṇḍala*, and Visualizing the Ornament Body by way of Five Characters. Vajrasattva as an attained one is based on the depicting in the section of the 'Stage of Mind' where Vajrasattva is the omnipotent and omniscient one and to emanates his body in this real world to save sentient beings. The depiction of Vajrasattva in this section looks unrealistic but it is possible to consider the idea of an emanating body as symbolic carrying out the spirit of *Mahāyāna* Buddhism in this real world.

In the study of the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* it is easy to find the traditional idea of *Pāramitāyāna*: that of Emptiness, Mind Only or *Tathāgata-garbha* and these idea are expressed by mixed forms. A main theme in the sūtra is 'emptiness and mind and world of space are ultimate, this is repeated in many parts of sūtra.

The idea that this mundane world is ultimately emptiness in nature is a central idea expressed in *Pāramitā-sūtras*, and it was further developed in the scriptures of esoteric Buddhism. In the *Prajña-pāramitā-naya-satapañcāsatikā* it is said that the physical body of human beings itself is a pure world of Bodhisattvas and this idea is expressed by the Phrase of Seventeen Purity.

It is a realm of the physical body and includes the sense that

objects that the body is experiencing, as with seeing, touching and holding, etc. The pleasure arising from the physical body is called by Mahā-sukha which means Great Pleasure of the Awakened One. This was described into a system of practice in Esoteric Buddhism.

Introducing the practice of Visualizing Ornamented Body by Five Characters in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* the practitioner superimposes the five characters of 'A', 'Va', 'Ra', 'Ra', 'ha', 'Kha' to parts of his body, such as the bottom of the body, lower belly, upper belly, throat and at the top of his head respectively, then he visualizes his body as a Stupa of the *Dharma-kāya*. Actually it is said in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* that the practitioner experiences the mystical phenomena through his body. For example in the case of visualizing the character 'Va' in the lower belly it is said in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*

Listen! Whenever visualizing 'Va', it is like white snow, milk, or ivory and arises from the navel of the body. It's a vivid plate of white lotus and you will see a white colour like the moon of autumn in the evening while remaining in the state of deep mediation. This *Maṇḍala* is a lotus of nine layers of which all the Buddhas of past have been spoken. While the practitioner maintains the state of mist and clouds all anguish will vanish with the forms of clean milk or the crystal of moon light (T.18, 20b29).

Also in the same section it is said that this rite is to make a benefit for sentient beings and that the rite belongs to a category of yoga practice.(T.18, 21b2) This 'category of yoga practice' is a remarkable one, especially as a mean to classify the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* in the system of Esoteric Buddhism.

In the 'Section of Adventing Siddhi' which introduces the practice of Visualizing Ornament Body by Five Characters, it is said:

The Vairocana, the Bhāgavat has conquered Four Evils by remaining in the *Samādhi* of Vajra Delight and preached that he has conquered Four Evils. This practice demonstrates that sentient beings who satisfy Perfect Wisdom of Buddha can be saved from

Samsāra.(T.18, 20a16).

Here the Four Evils are Skandha-māra, Kleśa-māra, Mṛṣu-māra, and Deva-putra-māra all of which prevent sentient beings from achieving Buddhahood. The word 'A *Samādhi* of Vajra Delight' is a mental world of Vairocana Buddha so it is especially possible to define the practice of Visualizing Ornament Body as a means to accomplish Yoga *Samādhi*.

As already has been said Bu-ston classified the scriptures of Esoteric Buddhism into four categories and among them he defined Caryā-tantra as a practice of Yoga *Samādhi* through the carrying out of the actual rites. Here Bu-ston classified *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* as a Caryā-tantra and defined Anuttarayoga-tantra as a practice of changing the physical body to an Emanation body of Buddha.

There is the difference between Caryā-tantra and Anuttarayoga-tantra, in that the former focuses the changing mental world as yoga *Samādhi*, and the latter focuses on changing the mental and physical worlds. In spite of the differences between Caryā-tantra and Anuttarayoga-tantra it is not difficult to see that the ideas of *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* have effected the formation of Anuttarayoga-tantra, especially when considering this mundane world as a world of truth and protecting the sentient beings in this real world as living Buddhas.

III. Practice of Accomplishing Vajrasattva in Yoga Tantra

In the classification of tantras by Bu-ston, Yoga-tantra is defined as dealing with the practices of internal change of practitioner. Bu-ston pointed out the *Vajra Peak Tantra* as a representative scripture of Yoga-tantra. Looking into the practice of Yoga-tantra the purpose of the tantra is to change the mental world of the practitioner such as to change the mind view which is contaminated by Kleśa. Here the Kleśa is a main disturbance to sentient beings preventing the right view of their intrinsic nature. So it is possible to say that Yoga-tantra practice is based on the doctrine that this mundane world and the physical body of sentient beings are in themselves an original nature without

Kleśa or false view.

The Visualization of Accomplishing Body by Five Images is a representative practice system in the the *Vajra Peak Tantra* and to composed of five stages. The first to the third stages involves a visualization of the emptiness and the immutability of mind. It is noteworthy in the fourth step that the purpose of this is to attain the immutability of body, language and mind as expedients to save sentient beings. The fifth step concerned with accomplishing a perfect Buddha body and the aim of these practices is to accomplish a perfect existence, both of mind and physical body. The accomplished one is Vajrasattva who can activate his reality in the actual world through body, language and mind. This is an advanced system of practice compared with the practice of Caryā-tantra because the practice in Yoga-tantra is showing concrete realization of Vajrasattva in this actual world while the practice of Caryā-tantra is still concerned with the conceptual realm.

The practice of Yoga-tantra is limited to the change of consciousness in the practitioner and is not concerned with any other actual practices to change physical body as with Anuttarayoga-tantra. But the Visualization by Five Characters in the *Mahāvairocana-sūtra* contains steps visualizing the internal state of the physical body.

IV. The Formation of Anuttarayoga Tantra

The *Guhyasamāja-tantra* is a representative scripture from the Father Tantra of Anuttarayoga-tantra system. The present form of the scripture was completed in several steps. It is composed of 18 chapters, and the final chapter is *Uttara-tantra* while the rest is called *Mūla-tantra*. *Uttara-tantra* is thought to be added after the formation of the *Mūla-tantra* which is composed of 17 Chapters. The contents are summaries of the *Mūla-tantra* written in the form of questions and answers.

The practice system of *Guhyasamāja-tantra* is divided into the Generation Stage and the Completion Stage like other

Anuttarayoga-tantras, but the Ārya-Nāgārjuna School of *Guhyasamāja-tantra* maintains that it is necessary to practice the Four Expedients as a preliminary stage. Piṇḍi-krama is one of the Sadhana of the Generation Stage written by Ārya-Nāgārjuna who was a leading master of the Guhyasamāja-tantra school. In the Piṇḍi-krama it is said that Four Expedients consist of the Seva-sadhana, Upa-sadhana, Sadhana, Maha-sadhana. Among these, Seva-sadhana is divided in detail into Saḍaṅga-yoga and Catur-vajra. Jñānapada School of *Guhyasamāja-tantra* existed earlier than the Nāgārjuna school and some differences can be found between the two schools by comparing the remaining works today.

In the Stage of Saḍaṅga-yoga Light we find the definition of the Four Vajras as a practice of the Generation Stage, and Saḍaṅga-yoga it is that of the Completion Stage(D. Ed. No.1879, 94b3). But in the *Uttara-tantra* is said that "The supreme nectar of wisdom is accomplished by Saḍaṅga-yoga. The Seva-sadhana is composed of Saḍaṅga-yoga and it is impossible to achieve supreme Siddhis by practicing any other way"(GST[M]XVIII, p.123).

Here the definitive difference is that, for the Jñānapada school, Saḍaṅga-yoga is the Completion Stage but for the Nāgārjuna school, the Saḍaṅga-yoga is just a preliminary course of the Generation Stage and Completion Stage. Looking into Saḍaṅga-yoga in detail the yoga is composed of Pratyāharā, Dhayāna, Prānāyāma, Dhāranā, Anusmriti and *Samādhi*.

Firstly Pratyāharā is said to be a visualization of a lotus and full moon superimposed on the practitioner's heart(D.Ed.No.1879, 94b5) for the purpose of practicing emptiness. So the practice of Pratyāharā has much in common with the practice of Yoga Tantra as regards the point of visualizing the Moon. In other commentaries of Saḍaṅga-yoga it is evident that the stages of the yoga are designed to accomplish Buddhahood through the practice of the physical body but this is not shown in Caryā-tantra and Yoga-tantra.

In *Staigayoganāmatikā*, a commentary on Saḍaṅga-yoga says that Saḍaṅga-yoga is used to convert the senses and objects of physical body

into the stage of intrinsic nature of desire. The practice is also to convert five desires of Kleśa into the nature of Great desire of Buddha(D,Ed.No.1990,286b1~287a6). Here it is clear that Saḍaṅga-yoga stands on the basis of the idea of Great Pleasure while practice of Yoga-tantra does not. The actual practice of Prāṇayama is to visualize small point of a seed in the practitioner's nose and to promote yoga of the physical body in order to control the practitioner's breath. The seed is called Tilaka which is ultimately used as a core to control the physical body and mind. The circulation of energies of the body are called Vāyu wind, so that complete control of the body by Tilaka and wind is essential to achieve ultimate Buddhahood in the practice of Anuttarayoga-tantra.

The last stage of Saḍaṅga-yoga is a *Samādhi* which is referred to in *Uttara-tantra* concerned is, "With the equal maintainance of wisdom and expedience you can see through every phenomenon of this world, by way of concentration practice on the core of the Buddha's state, and soon the *Samādhi*, the ultimate wisdom will be initiated."(GST[M](XVIII, p.124).

Here it is possible to say that Saḍaṅga-yoga is still focussed on the change of Mind, as with other *Samādhi* such as Carya and Yoga Tantra. It is this reason, that in spite of the fact that Jñānapada school considered Saḍaṅga-yoga as Completion Stage of ultimate practice, in the phrase of *Uttara-tantra* it is considered it as just a preliminary practice. This it is possible to assume that the *Guhyasamāja-tantra* of today was completed over a long time, and many schools and masters contributed to the formation of the doctrines and practice system of this tantra. So where as once the Saḍaṅga-yoga was considered a Completion Stage of practice, later it changed its to a *Samādhi* yoga by schools or scholars of Buddhist Tantra.

V. Conclusion

The formation of Tantric Buddhism was born from a combination of Indian religion and Buddhism but it is possible to find authoritative

in Buddhist scriptures that Buddhism accepted the external aspects of the Indian religion in order to lead the Indian populace to believe Buddhism. And what is more important is that the formation of Tantric Buddhism was a consistent flows developed and refined within Buddhism.

The rites of practice in Caryā-tantra and Yoga-tantra have a common intention to develop and change the practitioner's mind, but the Yoga-tantra is a more developed one because it has transcended the limits of outer rites. The thought of Great Pleasure in Tantric Buddhism is based on the writings of the *Pāramitā-sūtras* which considers the physical body of sentient beings as an intrinsic nature of Dharma. This was extended and applied to the practice system of Tantric Buddhism such as Visualization of the Ornament Body by Five Characters in *Mahāvairocana-sūtra*, and Visualization of Accomplishment of the Body by Five Images in *Vajra Peak Tantra*.

Guhyasamāja-tantra appeared in the 8th century, earlier than other scriptures of Anuttarayoga-tantra, and the practice system was developed by schools of Jñānapada and Ārya-Nāgārjuna. Saḍaṅga-yoga was defined as a preliminary practice of the Generation Stage and Completion Stage in the *Uttara-tantra* which appeared later and this is concretely shown in the Sadhanas of the Ārya-Nāgārjuna school.

Saḍaṅga-yoga has been a main practice of the Jñānapada school. It was developed to change the nature of the physical body to that of a Buddha. Later a medical system was adopted drawing from both the Indian and Buddhist thought. This system as a refined practice was used to control the physical body of practitioner for the first time in Buddhist history and was developed to the advent of many Tantras in the history of Indian Buddhism.

Glossary

- Emptiness 空性
 Mind Only 唯識
 Tathagata-garbha 如來藏
 Generation Stage 生起次第
 Completion Stage 究竟次第

Maṅṭrayāna 真言乘
 Saḍaṅga-yoga 六支瑜伽
 Uttara-tantra 續-tantra
 Section of Adventing Siddhi 悉地出現品
 Completion Stage 究竟次第
 Death Stage 死有
 Emanation body 化身
 Four Evils 四煩惱
 Four Expedients 四方便
 Gate of Maṅṭrayāna 真言門
 Generation Stage 生起次第
 Intermediate Stage 中有
 Kleśa 煩惱
 Life Stage 生有
 Mahākaruṇa-icchāntika 大悲闍提
 Nirmāṇa-kāya 化身
 Sadhana 成就法
 Saṃbhoga-kāya 報身
 Section of the Stage of Mind 住心品
 Seventeen Phrase of Purity 十七清淨句
 Siddhi 悉地
 Teaching of Three Phrase 三句法門
 Ultimate Wisdom of Omniscience 一切智智
 Vajradhara 持金剛
 Vajrasattva 金剛薩埵
 Vidyadhara 持明人
 Visualization of Ornament Body by Five Characters 五字嚴身觀
 Visualization of Accomplishment of Body by Five Images 五相成身觀

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