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On Maṇḍalas

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The Moves Maṇḍalas Make

In 1895, L. Austine Waddell listed “magic-circles” (maṇḍalas) as being among the “silly secrets,” of Lamaism.¹ Clearly, the study of maṇḍalas has progressed a lot over the last one hundred years, and, judging from the papers published here,² it is continuing to evolve. Geri Malandra’s “unfolding” maṇḍalas at Ellora, Charles Orzech’s ritually “unrolling” maṇḍalas in Tang China, Jacob Kinnard’s search for an “alternative maṇḍala” in Pāla-period iconography, and David Gardiner’s exploration of the overlap and “slippage” of maṇḍala symbolism at Kōyasan in Japan—all can stimulate us to new definitional reflections. One of the thrusts of these papers is to change the ways, or at least the contexts, in which we may view maṇḍalas by presenting them not just as well-ordered, clearly-delimited, pre-defined “cosmograms,”³ but as configurations that are “on the move” in more ways than one, and whose definitions must try to reflect those motions.

This paper is a reworking of the “summary-response” I gave to the papers presented at the symposium entitled “Maṇḍalas on the Move: Caves, Monuments and Icons Across the Buddhist World, ca. 750-850 C. E.,” held April 21 and 22, 1995 at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. I would like to thank Frank Reynolds for organizing the conference and for inviting me to speak.

1. L. Austine Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* (London: W. H. Allen, 1895) 145.

2. All of these papers were presented to the symposium in Chicago. In addition, there was a paper (not included here) by Julie Gifford on Borobudur. Each paper was the focus of oral comments made by designated respondents, Robert Campany, Richard Cooler, John Holt, Geri Malandra, and Jonathan Walters. In what follows, I have tried to limit myself to a consideration of the four papers here published, although sometimes my citations of them will reflect their original versions presented to the symposium. Occasionally, also, I will make use of or refer to insights expressed at the symposium by some of the other participants, for which I thank them.

3. For a presentation of a number of such definitions of maṇḍalas, see E. Dale Saunders, “Maṇḍalas: Buddhist Maṇḍalas,” *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 9 (New York: Macmillan Co., 1987) 155-58.

Of course, other scholars have been aware of the "movement" of maṇḍalas, but, for the most part they have approached this topic within meditational, psychological or doctrinal contexts. For them, maṇḍalas contain polyvalent richness and multidimensional symbolism, but they are more or less timeless, cultureless, and ahistorical "worlds in themselves."⁴ The papers presented here, however, seek to place maṇḍalas themselves "in the world." They take seriously a number of contexts that are often neglected by other scholars. These include the historical, cultural, political, geopolitical, art historical, architectural, physical, ritual, and textual milieu which maṇḍalas reflect and effect. In them, the nature of maṇḍalas cannot be separated from time, space, politics, world views.

My task, as I see it, is not so much to attempt to summarize these papers as to respond to their stimulus. I want to do this by taking seriously the title of the symposium and talking about the various ways in which the maṇḍalas described in these papers are "on the move." I will center my remarks around four topics each reflecting a different sort of motion. Simply put: (1) maṇḍalas themselves are moved; (2) maṇḍalas make moves by rearranging relationships; (3) maṇḍalas move other things over distance and time; and, finally (4), there is movement within maṇḍalas.

(1) First of all, maṇḍalas can themselves be physically moved. The paradigmatic example here is that of Kūkai literally bringing the two Shingon maṇḍalas with him upon his return from China in 806. The significance of this act by this "first mover" is nicely put into its Japanese context in David Gardiner's paper. Yet as Geri Malandra suggests, there were probably other "Kūkais" in other parts of the world, and the more local use

4. For a variety of examples of this genre, see Mircea Eliade, "Maṇḍala," *Yoga, Immortality and Freedom* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1969) 219-27; Carl Gustav Jung, *Mandala Symbolism*, trans. R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Bollingen Foundation, 1972); Minoru Kiyota, *Shingon Buddhism: Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1978), ch. 4; Michael Saso, *Tantric Art and Meditation* (Honolulu: Tendai Educational Foundation, 1990), chs. 2-3; David L. Snellgrove, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1 (Boston: Shambhala, 1987) 198-212; Adrian Snodgrass, *The Matrix and Diamond World Mandalas in Shingon Buddhism*, vol. 1 (New Delhi: Aditya Prakashan, 1988) 121-23; Ryūjun Tajima, *Les deux grands maṇḍalas et la doctrine de l'ésotérisme shingon* (Tokyo: Maison Franco-Japonaise, 1959); Giuseppe Tucci, *The Theory and Practice of the Mandala*, trans. Alan Brodrick (London: Rider, 1961); Taikō Yamasaki, *Shingon: Japanese Esoteric Buddhism* (Boston: Shambhala, 1988) ch. 6.

of movable maṇḍalas or maṇḍala-like depictions by itinerant story-tellers has a long history throughout Asia.⁵ Maṇḍalas were thus part and parcel of the spread of Buddhism. They could be transported across continents or within communities, but in both cases their purpose seems to have been a pedagogic one: they attracted attention and communicated meaning whether at the popular or the esoteric level.

Maṇḍalas, of course, were not the only objects so moved and so used. Kūkai himself brought back with him, along with the maṇḍalas and portraits of Chinese masters, various texts, ritual implements, Buddha relics, and images.⁶ Among these, the texts—Sanskrit manuscripts, Chinese sūtras and commentaries—comprised by far the largest portion. It is interesting, therefore, to see what Kūkai has to say about the pedagogic power of the maṇḍalas in comparison to texts. The passage from his “Memorial,” quoted by David Gardiner, may be paraphrased here: Esoteric teachings, according to Kūkai, cannot easily be expressed in writing, but they can be completely captured and revealed in maṇḍalas, the simple sight of which can bring one to Buddhahood.⁷ Thus maṇḍalas, unlike texts, are efficient tools that can more readily transmit at least esoteric teaching *in toto*. Truly they are pictures worth a thousand words.

In this context, it may be interesting to compare, phenomenologically, Buddhist stories about the transportation of texts with stories about the movement of maṇḍalas. Texts seem eminently more likely to be subject to loss or diminution in the course of transmission. Especially in the movement from India to China (which, it might be pointed out, also necessitated translation—a further erosion not necessarily afflicting maṇḍalas), texts sometimes seem to have been incapable of remaining intact, whole. The myth recounted by Charles Orzech is a case in point: the original *Sarvathāgatataṭvasaṃgraha* found in the Iron Stūpa was not transmitted to China, but instead a summary was sent, an “outline” that itself was “broad and long like a bed.” But even this went overboard during a typhoon, and

5. For many examples of this oral genre, see Victor H. Mair, *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1988); on the identification of Chinese *pien-wen* as “maṇḍala-texts,” however, see *idem*, *Tang Transformation Texts* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989) 59-60.

6. This according to his “Memorial Presenting a List of Newly Imported Sutras and Other Items” (*Shōrai mokuoku*), trans. Yoshito S. Hakeda, *Kūkai: Major Works* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972) 140-50.

7. See *ibid.*, 145-46.

what ended up in China was a summary of a summary.⁸ In the process, as Orzech points out, there occurred an “esoterization” of the text, the total teaching of which could now only be attained through initiation. In light of Kūkai’s comments, it might be possible to think of this as a “maṇḍalization” of the text, a stripping of it down to its esoteric essence.⁹ Because this essence, according to Kūkai, did not need elaboration and exegesis so much as viewing, i. e., realization, it may, in fact, have been more easily movable from one culture to another than exoteric traditions. This fact can help shed further light on Geri Malandra’s claim that maṇḍalas were an important part of making tantric Buddhism into an “international movement.”

(2) Secondly, maṇḍalas make moves by systematizing formerly disjunct elements of the culture or the religion. They give unity to multiplicity, and this in several different arenas. First of all, they *synthesize* in a new organized format structures that were nascent or not yet formed within the tradition. A clear example of this may be seen in David Gardiner’s portrayal of the role played by Kūkai and his newly imported maṇḍalas in the process of creating a new “systematized” esoterism in Heian times out of an older “fragmentary” Nara esoterism. This was occasionally referred to at the symposium as “putting old wine into new bottles,” but it might more appropriately be conceived of as “bottling what had been loose in barrels.”

A slightly more complex instance of this process may be found in Charles Orzech’s analysis of the systematization, under Śubhākarasimha, Vajrabodhi and Pu-k’ung, of “piecemeal” *mantra* and *dhāraṇī* texts that had been flooding into China. Here, in his view, the new maṇḍalaic structure provided by the *Sarvatathāgatattvasamgraha* was not single and static but modular and adaptable to the different demands of ritual situations—a notion that some discussants at the symposium dubbed as maṇḍalas providing the basis for “ritual as jazz.”¹⁰ Something similar, per-

8. There are many such Buddhist legends. For another famous example, Hsüan-tsang’s loss of scriptures in a boat while crossing the Indus river on his way back home, see Li Rongxi, trans., *A Biography of the Tripiṭaka Master of the Great Cīen Monastery of the Great Tang Dynasty*, BDK English Tripiṭaka 77 (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995) 156 (= T. 50: 249b, no. 2053).

9. It is interesting to recall here that one of the etymologies proposed for the word “maṇḍala” is “seizing the essence.” See Ferdinand D. Lessing and Alex Wayman, *Introduction to the Buddhist Tantrika Systems* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1978) 270, n.1.

10. This point was first raised at the symposium by Robert Campany.

haps, may be found in the iconographic context at Ellora, in the different "unfoldings" of the "shrine programs" described by Geri Malandra. And yet another sort of synthesizing movement may be seen in Jacob Kinnard's analysis of the various ways in which the eight scenes of the *aṣṭamahā-prātihārya* "maṇḍala," formalized during the Pāla period, create a new totality that "epitomizes" the whole of Buddhism.

But maṇḍalas do not just synthesize previously disjunct elements within Buddhism, they also serve to *syncretize* Buddhist and "non-Buddhist" religious traditions, as well as Buddhist and state ideologies. Clearly, Buddhist esoterism, in its different cultural venues, interacted with a variety of other religious traditions: Brahmanism, Taoism, and Shintō, as well as "indigenous spirit cults." There was, of course, nothing new about this in the Buddhist world. It was, rather, the continuation of a trend, but it did affect the development of maṇḍalas. Thus we find, for example, that elaborate compositions such as the Vajradhātu and the Mahākaruṇadhātu maṇḍalas have incorporated into their halls gods, goddesses, and godlings that in a different context might be thought of as Hindu. More specifically, at Ellora (where Hindu and Buddhist patterns replicated and reinforced each other), Geri Malandra notes the presence of Bhūdevī, the Earth goddess who testifies to Śākyamuni's merits when he is challenged by Māra. This is taken to be a reference to Bodhgaya and to the Buddha's conquest of Māra there, and as such, it may be compared to the *bhumisparśamudrā* images featured in Jacob Kinnard's discussion of the Pāla period. But the conquest of Māra and the witness of the Earth goddess may also be seen as symbolic of the syncretism between Buddhism and indigenous divinities that everywhere accompanied the establishment of Buddhism in new locales.¹¹ This theme is perhaps less pursued in the papers dealing with maṇḍalas in East Asia, but it did not go unnoticed by the discussants at the symposium, several of whom emphasized the fact that the systematizations taking place in T'ang China and Heian Japan need to be considered not only in the pre-existent Buddhist context, but in light of Buddhist-Taoist parallels on the one hand, and various cults of Shintō kami on the other.¹² The question was posed, for example, of the relationship between maṇḍalas and the nine-squared Ming T'ang (Hall of Light), supposedly used by early

11. Bhūdevī (Nang Thoranī) was to become especially important in Southeast Asia.

12. These points were particularly raised by Robert Campany and by Gary Ebersole.

Chinese rulers.¹³ Elsewhere, Charles Orzech has suggested that Chinese maṇḍalas should be seen in light of the "Taoist" Ho-t'u and Lo-shu cosmograms as well as the Chinese philosophical categories of *li* and *chih*.¹⁴

A second type of syncretic movement going on in maṇḍalas is that between Tantric Buddhism and state ideologies. Thus, as has often been recognized, the rituals and structures of maṇḍalas—in India, T'ang China, and Heian Japan—were in part stimulated by and helped reinforce political concerns. As Charles Orzech points out, two goals dominated Esoteric Buddhism in T'ang times: the rapid attainment of enlightenment and the protection of the state. Similarly, at Ellora, Geri Malandra suggests that the depiction of royal figures might reflect "an early record of royal participation in a maṇḍala . . . ritual."

At the same time, however, she goes further to propose that Ellora as a whole, and the esoteric Buddhism it nurtured, be viewed in the geopolitical context of a nascent "world system" that saw Indian Ocean civilisations as part of an "entire structure" defined in part by Islam. This is an important point. On the one hand, it may help correct the generally dominant perception of pan-Asian Buddhism as a *continental* culture with a view of it being also a *maritime* tradition. On the other hand, it may alter the way in which we see maṇḍalas themselves. From this perspective, maṇḍalas are not only *cosmograms*; they also paradoxically embody both a totality that is the whole and a totality that is "less than the whole." Because of their political connections, they are graphs of palaces, capital cities, kingdoms, empires, from a ruler's perspective. They are thus privileged places, and are often marked off by gateways, boundaries, guardians. Socially, they might be called "aristograms." In terms of state ideology, these very demarcations set them off and mean that they have to be seen not just as "the whole cosmos" but as units operating within a greater world system. In this regard, it may be worth remembering that when the *Lotus Sūtra* lists various types of kings, it uses the word "maṇḍalin" not to denote a cosmic king, but to identify a more minor ruler, one who governs only a single region. The maṇḍalin, who controls a "maṇḍala," is thereby distinguished from a cakravartin who rules all four continents (i. e., everything) and a bala-

13. For an interpretation of the Ming T'ang, see the still useful Marcel Granet, *The Religion of the Chinese People*, trans. Maurice Freedman (New York: Harper and Row, 1975) 67.

14. See Charles D. Orzech, "Chen-yen," *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade, vol. 3 (New York: MacMillan Publishing Co., 1987) 236.

cakravartin who rules over only one.¹⁵ A maṇḍala may constitute a world, but it can also be a world within the world.

(3) A third set of moves made by maṇḍalas lies in the fact that they make present the absent Buddha. By this I do not mean only that, as the *Mahāvairocana sūtra* puts it, a maṇḍala is “what gives birth to all Buddhas,” i. e., that it provides a matrix for enlightenment, for the development and maturing of bodhicitta.¹⁶ Maṇḍalas do not only make meditators into Buddhas, they also are able “magically” to transpose the Buddha through time and space to the present here and now. I am using the word “magic” here in the sense employed by Paul Mus in his *Barabudur*. Mus’s focus was on the stūpa rather than the maṇḍala, but he saw both as “mesocosms,” a term he created to mean a “place of passage,”¹⁷ “a magical structural milieu”¹⁸ that can “overcome the absence of objects or persons . . . wherever they might be or no longer be.”¹⁹ The primary “absent” person, of course, was the Buddha in Nirvāṇa, a concept “so ungraspable that one can only propose for it a formula bristling with contradictory negations.”²⁰ According to Mus, it was in order to cut through this “excessively subtle logic” that Buddhists turned to magical and cultic practices focused on mesocosms “so as to assure themselves of satisfactions and certainties of an affective order, without which there is no religion.”²¹

The “maṇḍala as mesocosm,” however, would appear to “make the Buddha present” in several particular ways. First of all, it can overcome the barrier of *distance* by transposing to itself the site (and hence the event) of the Buddha’s enlightenment at Bodhgaya. This is most explicitly stated by Geri Malandra who convincingly connects Ellora with Bodhgaya even

15. Hendrik Kern and Bunyu Nanjio, ed., *Saddharmapundarīka sūtra* (St. Petersburg, 1912) 6, 20, 363. Kern (*The Lotus of the True Law* [Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1884] 7, 20, 343) translates “maṇḍalin” as “governor of a region.” Eugène Burnouf (*Le Lotus de la bonne loi* [Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1852], p. 4, n.1) has “roi d’un pays.”

16. See on this, Snodgrass, 120, 122. The original citation may be found in *T.* 848, 18: 5.

17. Paul Mus, *Barabudur*, vol. 1 (Hanoi: Imprimerie d’Extrême-Orient, 1935) 100.

18. *Ibid.*, 94.

19. *Ibid.*, 74.

20. Paul Mus, “La mythologie primitive et la pensée de l’Inde,” *Bulletin de la Société Française de Philosophie* 37 (1937): 91.

21. *Ibid.*

calling it the "Bodhgaya of the South." But more generally, of course, every maṇḍala could be seen as the Vajrāsana.

The transposition of Bodhgaya and other "central" Buddhist sites where the Buddha had lived and taught to localities on the periphery was not an uncommon phenomenon in the Buddhist world. Thus, according to certain local traditions, the various sacred places of Magadha could be found reduplicated in Gandhāra,²² in Yünnan,²³ and in Southeast Asia.²⁴ Even as far away as Japan, the tradition developed that it was no longer necessary to travel to India because the sites most intimately associated with the Buddha (and thus the Buddha himself) could be found right there in Japan, at the Sennyū-ji temple in Kyoto, for example,²⁵ or at the Kasuga shrine in Nara.²⁶ These views recall the words of the Maharashtrian saint quoted by Geri Malandra to the effect that there is no need to go anywhere, because every place worth visiting—in this context, those places where the Buddha can be found—has been made present right at home. Maṇḍalas thus can make pilgrimages unnecessary because they move the center to the periphery, thereby transforming it into a place of the Buddha.

It may be, however, that that "center" is not always located on this earth. Thus the Buddha's dwelling place could be thought of not as Bodhgaya but as a Pure Land or as one of the heavens. Here too, however, the maṇḍala can serve to make present that distant site. Alex Wayman, for instance, describes a text in which "the maṇḍala can be understood to represent the palace of the Akaniṣṭha heaven, where . . . Gautama was initiated as a Complete Buddha."²⁷ By entering into the maṇḍala, bodhisattvas could thus find themselves in the Akaniṣṭha heaven and receive instruction from the Buddha himself (in his saṃbhogakāya).²⁸

22. See Edouard Chavannes, "Voyage de Song Yun dans l'Udyana et le Gandhara," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 3 (1903): 381-87

23. See Paul Pelliot, "Deux itinéraires de Chine en Inde à la fin du VIIe siècle," *Bulletin de l'Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient* 4 (1904): 161-62

24. See Michael Aung-Thwin, "Jambudipa: Classical Burma's Camelot," *Contributions to Asian Studies* 16 (1981): 38-61.

25. See John S. Strong and Sarah M. Strong, "A Tooth Relic of the Buddha in Japan: An Essay on the Sennyū-ji Tradition and a Translation of Zeami's Nō Play 'Shari,'" *Japanese Religions* 20 (1995): 15

26. See Robert E. Morrell, "Passage to India Denied," *Monumenta Nipponica* 37 (1982): 192-93.

27. Alex Wayman, "Symbolism of the Maṇḍala Palace," *The Buddhist Tantras* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973) 91.

28. *Ibid.*

Secondly, the "maṇḍala as mesocosm" can overcome the barrier of time, and here the directions it takes can be several. On the one hand, the orientation may be to the *past*, and the maṇḍala may act as the milieu for a transposition to the life and time of the Buddha Śākyamuni. Such a move lies at the heart of the icono-conservatism described by Jacob Kinnard, with its freezing in time the sequence of eight scenes from the biography of the founder. This is akin to a "move to Bodhgaya" but the metaphor is temporal rather than spatial. On the other hand, the orientation may be to the *future*, and the maṇḍala may enact a projection to the presence of the Buddha Maitreya who is yet to come. Such a move does not figure in the papers published here but was much emphasized in Julie Gifford's presentation to the symposium on "The Place of Maitreya in the Borobodur Maṇḍala." The same theme, perhaps, may be found at present day Kōyasan where Kūkai and many others lie waiting for Maitreya in the midst of the maṇḍala-like cemetery at the Okuno-in, or more explicitly at Kasagidera, not far from Nara, where the original presence of the future Maitreya was preserved in what is now called the "Kasagi mandara."²⁹ At the same time, of course, the maṇḍala as mesocosm can eschew both the past and the future and seek the Buddha in the "eternal," finding him in figures such as Akṣobhya and / or Vairocana.

(4) Finally, we come to what might be called "movements within the maṇḍala." I want to address this by speaking in terms of several different "oscillations," which are not unconnected to the movements we have discussed so far, but present them in a different light. These oscillations are the result of a maṇḍala's inherent multivalence: as one pole of significance within the maṇḍala is emphasized, there is a tendency for it be counterbalanced and replaced by the opposite pole.

The first oscillation concerns the question of the identity of divinities within the maṇḍala. Here I would like to return to the ambiguity pointed out in Jacob Kinnard's paper between Śākyamuni and Akṣobhya, both of whom are represented as figures in bhūmisparśamudrā.³⁰ Kinnard cites Nancy Hock's view that this is an "intentional ambiguity," a "dual nature" reflective of a transitional stage epitomized by Śākyamuni in a tantric

29. See Karen L. Brock, "Awaiting Maitreya at Kasagi," *Maitreya, the Future Buddha*, ed. Alan Sponberg and Helen Hardacre (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988) 214-47.

30. The same ambiguity between Śākyamuni and Akṣobhya can be found in Southeast Asia, as was pointed out by Richard Cooler at the symposium.

form.³¹ There is thus some oscillation here between Tantra and non-Tantra within the maṇḍala. This could also be viewed as an oscillation between different bodies of the Buddha or different levels of understanding: in a certain sense, Śākyamuni is Akṣobhya; in another he is not. In a slightly different context, it is similarly possible to state that all the divinities in the two great Shingon maṇḍalas—the Taizōkai and the Kongōkai—are finally none other than Vairocana (Dainichi Nyorai) who occupies the center of both of them. Here too, there may be constant opportunities for oscillation. For example, in the first level *abhiṣeka* rite mentioned by David Gardiner, the *kechien kanjō* meant to “establish a bond” between the initiate and a particular deity of the maṇḍala, the blindfolded candidate must toss a flower onto the surface of the maṇḍala; the particular divinity on whom the flower lands thereby takes on a special importance and is established in a tutelary relationship (embodied in an esoteric name) with the initiate.³² In the midst of the ritual, however, at least in the Tendai tradition, as soon as the flower is thrown, the name “Dainichi Nyorai” (Vairocana) is shouted out by the attendant priests, regardless of what particular divinity or bodhisattva the flower falls on. This is because all deities in the maṇḍala are Vairocana.³³

A second oscillation may be found in the structure of the Kongōbuji at Kōyasan as described by David Gardiner: was the plan for one stūpa or two stūpas? Was the intention to map out on the landscape of the mountain two maṇḍalas in distinction or overlapping as one?³⁴ The ambiguity, of course, may be due to such mundane matters as the lack of funds or materials for buildings, but it nicely captures an oscillation that is perhaps also summed up in the Japanese expression “*ryōbu funi*,” meaning the two paired maṇḍalas are “not two”—i. e., not different from each other. This

31. See Nancy Hock, “Buddhist Ideology and the Sculpture of Ratnagiri,” diss., University of California, Berkeley, 1987.

32. For brief descriptions of the ceremony, see Tajima, 271; Snodgrass, 732.

33. I owe this detail of “oral tradition” to the late Michel Strickmann, with whom I visited the hall set up for the *abhiṣeka* in Yokawa, on Mount Hiei, in 1977. It may also be due to the fact that these initiations can be seen as repetitions of Kūkai’s *abhiṣeka*. When Kūkai was initiated, his flower landed on the image of Dainichi Nyorai both times—in the Taizōkai and the Kongōkai maṇḍalas. See Snodgrass, 732.

34. A similar oscillation may be found in the mountains of the Kii peninsula where, for Japanese *yamabushi*, Mount Kimpu (near Yoshino) represents the Kongōkai, the Kumano peaks represent the Taizōkai, and Mount Ōmine represents the superimposition of both maṇḍalas. See Carmen Blacker, *The Catalpa Bow* (London: Unwin, 1986) 211-12.

paradoxical assertion, of course, reflects an oscillation of major importance to the whole Tantric tradition: the twin emphasis on Wisdom and Compassion. Thus the Taizōkai maṇḍala is traditionally taken to show the unfolding womb of the Buddha's compassion and the Kongōkai maṇḍala the penetrating power of his wisdom. But even within the Kongōkai, there can be a double motion: a centrifugal one spinning out compassion from the center and a centripetal one seeking wisdom by spiralling inward.³⁵ Elsewhere, as in the case of the monument of Borobudur, this double motion may be thought of as ascending (to enlightenment) and descending (to this world of suffering).³⁶ In each instance, there is a realization within the motion of the maṇḍala of the duality-yet-unity of Nirvāṇa and saṃsāra, that forms such a crucial part of Mahāyāna Buddhism and of Tantra in particular. One might recall here David Snellgrove's distinction between the "vertical core" of the maṇḍala in which stages of realization and reality are distinguished, and the "horizontal maṇḍala" which is "an idealized representation of the identity of nirvāṇa and saṃsāra."³⁷

Finally, these papers bring to light a third kind of movement within the maṇḍala that might be described as an oscillation between the inside and the outside. Simply put, in this context, what one finds when one penetrates into the center of the structure *is* the structure. Some of this may be found in Geri Malandra's paper in which "the maṇḍala is at Ellora," and "Ellora is in the maṇḍala," but the full dimensions of this oscillation are perhaps best seen in David Gardiner's discussion of the relationship of stūpa and maṇḍala. At Kōyasan, what one finds inside the maṇḍala is the stūpa and what one finds inside the stūpa is the maṇḍala. In so far as the stūpa may represent the Buddha's absence and the maṇḍala his "active presence in our world," this also represents an oscillation between absence and presence. But other elements—texts and bodies—may enter into this game of tantric leapfrogging. The Great Stūpa at Kōyasan is sometimes identified with the Iron Stūpa in India which, as was pointed out, was the source of texts that were the source of maṇḍalas, but which here in Shingon is also "this very body in which one realizes Buddhahood" (*sokushin jōbutsu*), which

35. See Daigan and Alicia Matsunaga, *Foundation of Japanese Buddhism*, vol. 1 (Los Angeles: Buddhist Books International, 1974) 189.

36. This was one of the insights from Julie Gifford's paper not published here.

37. D. L. Snellgrove, *The Hevajratāntra*, vol. 1 (London: Oxford University Press, 1959) 29.

Buddha body is a stūpa, which is a maṇḍala. Truly the word “maṇḍala” means a “circle” in more than the usual sense of the term.³⁸

One could probably keep going round and round on the meaning of maṇḍalas which themselves are not static entities, and which are in constant interaction with the contexts that inform them. But enough has been said, I think, to show that there is much to be learned from the approaches taken in these four papers. Though dealing with very different situations in very different parts of Asia,³⁹ they nonetheless make it possible to think of 8th-9th centuries in pan-Buddhist terms.

38. The model for all this may well be an Indian one rooted in Brahmanical traditions of sacrifice, in which the sacrifice itself creates the gods, creates the priests, creates the texts, creates the structure that creates the sacrifice . . . The necessity of thinking about maṇḍalas in the context of śrauta rites was emphasized by John Holt at the symposium.

39. It should be noted that no paper was presented to the symposium on maṇḍalas on the move in Tibet or in Mainland Southeast Asia or in Nepal, a fact that was noted and regretted.