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## MAX NIHOM

### Vajravīṇayā and Vajraśauṇḁa: A 'Ghost' Goddess and her Syncretic Spouse

In Marie-Thérèse DE MALLMAN's *Introduction à l'Iconographie du Tāntrisme Bouddhique* (1975), on page 431 one finds the entry *Vajravīṇayā*:

De *vinaya*, séparer, rejeter. Déesse figurant parmi les divinités hindoues du Maṇḁala Durgatipariśodhana (NSP 22). Épouse de Vajraśauṇḁa (i.e. Balarāma), elle est pareille à lui; cependant, elle peut tenir de la gauche le *khaṭvāṅga* au lieu du soc.

The requisite passage in Abhayākaragupta's *Niṣpannāyogāvalī* (p.89) indeed reads:

*kuṅjare vajraśauṇḁaḥ sitaḥ savye vajraṃ vāmena lāṅgalam / vajravīṇayā  
vajraśauṇḁavat / vāmena khaṭvāṅgaṃ bibhartīti viśeṣaḥ /*  
Vajraśauṇḁa, white, on an elephant, has in his right hand a *vajra* [and] in his left hand a plough. Vajravīṇayā is like Vajraśauṇḁa. With her left hand she holds a *khaṭvāṅga*. Such is [her] particularity.

Similarly, in SKORUPSKI's edition of the *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-tantra*, recension B, at 252.6-10 we find:

*vajraśauṇḁo gaṇapatir gajavāhana dakṣiṇakareṇa vajraṃ dhārayed vāmena  
lāṅgalam dhārayed avasthitaḥ / sitavarṇaḥ /  
vajravīṇayā Vajraśauṇḁavad ayan tu viśeṣo yad uta vāmakareṇa  
khaṭvāṅgadhāriṇīti /*

Here, the Tibetan translation reads:

*rdo rje tshogs bdag glaṅ sna glaṅ po che ḥon pa can / phyag g.yas pas rdo rje  
'dzin ciṅ / g.yon pas gśol 'dzin ciṅ gnas pas / mdog dkar po'o /  
rdo rje 'dul ma rdo rje glaṅ sna lta bu'o / 'di ni khyad par te gaṅ ḥe na / phyag  
g.yon gyis khaṭvāṅga 'dzin pa'o /*

Save that *glaṅ po che ḥon pa can* implies \**mahāgajavāhana*, the Tibetan seems in accordance with the Sanskrit as printed. For *gajavāhana* manuscript B reads *gajāvāhako* and for *dhārayed* manuscript G reads *dharāḥ*. These discrepancies are minor. Of more interest is that for *vajravīṇayā*, well represented by Tibetan *rdo rje 'dul ma*, no less than four manuscripts (of seven), namely A, B, C and G, read *vajravīlayā*.

Obviously, given the support of the *Niṣpannāyogāvalī* and the Tibetan of *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-B*, such would not seem to be a problem. However, although in the *Niṣpannāyogāvalī* the set of gods of which Vajraśauṇḍa and Vajravīṇayā are a part are found in the outer circle of the maṇḍala, and although SKORUPSKI, who indeed noted the almost total identity of the divinities of the former with the set found in SDP-B, also suggests that these gods are found “beginning in the northeast” of the Sarvadurgatipariśodhanamaṇḍala (1983: 87-91), in fact this set of gods is practically identical to the set described in the Vajrasamaya section of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* for the Trailokyavijayamaṇḍala (*Tattvasaṃgraha* 172-173), where they are each the *vajranāma* or consecration name of an associated Hindu divinity. *Tattvasaṃgraha* 172.13 (Tib. 242a2/3) and 173.13 (Tib. 242b2/3):

*madhumattāya Vajraśauṇḍaḥ*  
*sbrañ rtsis myos pa ni rdo rje'i glaṅ po'i sna'o*  
*māraṇyai vajravīlayā*  
*bsod ma ni rdo rje 'ju ma'o*

We therefore have a ‘problem’. Four of the seven manuscripts of *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-B* confirm the reading of the *Tattvasaṃgraha*, that the spouse of Vajraśauṇḍa is not Vajravīṇayā, but Vajravīlayā. Moreover, *vīlayā* makes more sense, since the Hindu goddess is Māraṇī, She Who Causes Death. Since, paleographically, an erroneous reading *vinayā* for *vīlayā* is no problem at all, we may propose that the ‘true’ reading is *vīlayā*, and that Tibetan SDP-B had as basis a faulty Sanskrit reading.

It may consequently be formally proposed that Vajravīṇayā, whatever her subsequent textual or art-historical development may be, is a divinity whose origin is an orthographic error.

This simple reasoning is nicely supported by Ānandagarbha’s *Trailokyavijayamaṇḍalopāyikā*’s parallel to the SDP-B passage cited above. Indeed, the entire SDP-B section dealing with these divinities also found as reported by the *Niṣpannāyogāvalī* in the exterior of the Sarvadurgatipariśodhanamaṇḍala is to be retrieved in the former text.<sup>2</sup> 45a8/b1:

1. Compare *Trailokyavijayamahākāparājā* 64b6: *chan gis myos pa ni rdo rjes zin pa'o. rdo rjes* is clearly an error and may be corrected to *rdo rje s[na]*.
2. Text-historical consequences may not be insignificant, since the *Trailokyavijayamaṇḍalopāyikā* also furnishes the set of mantras associated with the divinities of the Trilokacakraṇḍala of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* in close propinquity to this passage which it shares with *Sarvadurgatipariśodhana-B*.

*rdo rje glaṅ po'i sna ni tshogs kyi bdag po ste / mdog dkar po / lag pa g.yas na  
rdo rje thogs pa / g.yon gśol thogs te gnas pa glaṅ po che la ŷon pa'o //  
rdo rje 'ju ma ni glaṅ sna dan 'dra ba las khyad par ni 'di yod de / 'di ltar lag  
pa g.yon na khatvāṅga thogs pa'o //*

Being found here and in the Tibetan of *Tattvasaṃgraha* 173.13 above, the translation *rdo rje 'ju ma*, with *'ju ba* meaning “to melt, digest”<sup>3</sup> and with *'ju ba* attested as representing *vilīna*,<sup>4</sup> now irrefutably may be taken to be a reflex for *vajravilayā*.

Ancillary evidence for this conclusion is supplied by the parallel passage of the *Vajrasekharatantra* (Peking 46a1): *gsod byed rdo rje 'jigs ma ste //*. Here, *'jigs ma* should not be taken as representing *bhīmā*, *bhairavī* or the like, but as from a non-standard perfect of *'jig pa*, ‘to destroy, dissolve’.<sup>5</sup> Further, we may adduce the mantra associated with *Vajravilayā* in the sarvavajrakulakarmamaṇḍala of the Trilokacakra in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* (303.6-8):

*atha vajravilayā svakarmasamayām abhāṣat /  
oṃ vajravi[laye<sup>6</sup> chinda sina bhinda va]jriṇi mādayonmadaya piva piva hūṃ  
phaṭ //*

The portion between brackets has been supplied by YAMADA on the basis of the Chinese and Tibetan. That it is correct to do so is proven by *Trailokyavijayamaṇḍalopāyikā* 44b5:

*oṃ vajravilaye chinda asina bhinda vajreṇa maraya udmadaya piva priva hūṃ  
phaṭ //*

I am unable to understand the readings *sina* and *asina* as Sanskrit (Chinese reconstructs to *chindā sinā*<sup>7</sup>), although perhaps *sina* is a Middle Indic imperative corresponding to the Sanskrit root *snā*, ‘bathe’. TS *vajriṇi*, taken as a feminine vocative, may be better than *vajreṇa*, since the set of mantras of which this is one is partial to vocatives. While it is obvious that the mantra should read *unmadaya*, because Tibetan TS reads *māraya u[n]madaya* and because the *Tattvasaṃgraha* has identified *Māraṇī* as *Vajravilayā*, it is not unlikely that one should read *māraya* instead of *mādaya* or *maraya*, because the *Trailokyavijaya-*

3. JÄSCHKE 177.

4. LOKESH CHANDRA 1976: 810.

5. Cf. JÄSCHKE 175. The usual perfect is *bṛīg*.

6. Tibetan TS (253d6) adds *me*.

7. YAMADA 1981: 303 note 7.

*maṅḍalopāyikā*, in its list of consecration names associated with the Hindu divinities of the Trailokyavijayamaṅḍala states (64c5): *gsod ma ni rdo rje gsod ma 'o* / “Māraṇī is Vajramāraṇī”.

In the light of the data presented so far, it is more difficult to account for *unmadaya*. True, given the imperatives *piva piva*<sup>8</sup>, “drink! drink!”, this statement seems insignificant.<sup>9</sup> Yet acknowledgement of the importance of intoxication for Vajravilayā presumes that her symbolism is to be regarded as structurally admixed with that of her spouse, Vajraśauṇḍa, and this is a notion which, although certainly not unlikely, remains to be proved, since it would have consequences for our understanding of all sixteen pairs of divinities of the Trailokyavijaya, Trilokacakra and Sarvadurgatipariśodhanamaṅḍalas.

To this end, we may first cite *Tattvasaṃgraha* 284.8-9, which presents the mantra of Vajraśauṇḍa in the sarvakulavajramaṅḍala of the Trilokacakra:

*atha Vajraśauṇḍaḥ*<sup>10</sup> *svasamayamudrām abhāṣat / oṃ vajramade*<sup>11</sup> *hūṃ* //<sup>12</sup>

Then Vajraśauṇḍa declared his own Pledge-Mudrā: *oṃ* O (female) Vajra-Intoxication! *hūṃ*.

As male, Vajramada is found in the *samayahṛdaya* of Vajraśauṇḍa in the Trilokacakra *mahāmaṅḍala* description at *Tattvasaṃgraha* 271.11: *oṃ vajramada huṃ*<sup>13</sup>. This name is also supported by *Vajraśekhara Tantra* 45e4: *myos chen rdo rje myos pa ste*, “Mahāmada is Vajramada”.<sup>14</sup>

Curiously, the Tibetan (252c3) for *Tattvasaṃgraha* 271.11 reads: *oṃ vajradhama hūṃ*. This *dhama* is definitely not an error: TS 294.6 has *oṃ mada mada huṃ phaṭ*, for which the Tibetan (253a4/5) is *oṃ dhama dhama hūṃ phaṭ*. The word *dhama* is interesting: the root √*dham* may

8. *priva* of the *Trailokyavijayamaṅḍalopāyikā* is an error.

9. See also Vajravilayā's *svahṛdaya* at *Trailokyavijayamahākālparājā* 77b8: *oṃ khargamarini hūṃ*. For *marini*, I suggest *māriṇi*, ‘she destroying’. *kharga* is more difficult. Given *kharjikā*, “a relish that provokes drinking” (MONIER-WILLIAMS 1899: 337), might one conjecture *kharja?* *kharjamāriṇi* would then be a vocative: O She destroying the itch to drink!

10. “Chinese inserts *gaṇapatiḥ*” (YAMADA 1981: 284 note 4).

11. The Chinese suggests *vajraśauṇḍe* (YAMADA 1981: 284 note 5).

12. TS Tibetan 252c3/4: *de nas rdo rje snas raṅ gi dam tshig phyag rgya smras pa / oṃ vajramede hūṃ*.

13. Chinese *hūṃ*.

14. See also *Tattvasaṃgraha* 279.9: *madanī madanī tīvraṃ*.

mean 'to blow a conch shell or any wind instrument, blow into, exhale, kindle a fire by blowing' (MW 509). As noun, it also means 'blowing, melting', but is also said of Kṛṣṇa (*ibid.*).

*Vajraśauṇḍa* is most easily taken as meaning 'Vajra-Intoxication' (*śauṇḍa*: 'fond of intoxicating liquor, drunk, intoxicated'). Although in accordance with *mada*, this hardly fits with the Tibetan translation *glañ sna*, *glañ po'i sna* or the like. These suggest that *śauṇḍa* be taken as from *śuṇḍa*, 'elephant-trunk', and imply a translation of 'Vajra-Elephant-Trunk'. From here, the trumpeting of an elephant could be seen to be implied by the imperatives *dhama* and *dhama dhama* in the mantras above, the more since *dhamadhamā* (ind.) means 'blowing repeatedly or the sort of sound made by blowing with a bellows or trumpet' (MW 509).

Such an association for *Vajraśauṇḍa* with elephants is further supported by Ānandagarbha's *Trailokyavijayamaṇḍalopāyikā*. There (39b7/8), parallel to the passages of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and *Trailokyavijayamahākalparājā* identifying Hindu divinities with Buddhist ones, we find for *Māraṇī*/ *Vajravilayā*:

*gsod ma ni gts'o mo rdo rje 'dzum ma'o //*  
*Māraṇī* is the mistress *Vajrāṅguli*.

This is at first obscure: 'Vajra-Finger' seems totally irrelevant. Nevertheless, *āṅguli* also means "finger-like tip of an elephant's trunk" (MW 8). This word has been previously attested only lexicographically and in Nīlakaṇṭha's *Mātāṅgalīla* iii.1.<sup>15</sup> Hence, analogous to the locution *unmadaya* in *Vajravilayā*'s mantra above, we may use the presence of a particular association of the god (*Vajraśauṇḍa*) to motivate the existence of aspects of his consort.

Now in fact understanding how, if not why, *Vajraśauṇḍa* was understood to include references to both elephants and to intoxication is not very difficult. His 'Hindu' name, *Madhumatta*, could be understood as 'he (a furious elephant) drunk with liquor' or 'he (an elephant) intoxicated by the Spring (i.e. in rut)'. As such, that such an elephant would 'trumpet' or 'blow' (cf. *dhama*) with his trunk (*śauṇḍa*, *glañ sna*) is quite acceptable.

In any case, the connection of *Vajraśauṇḍa* with elephants is also furnished by *Trailokyavijayamahākalparāja* 77a2:

15. Cf. EDGERTON 1931: 58, 114.

*om mahābālāka mahāganade piva piva ruhrira sarvaduṣṭānā phaṭ*

Most of these orthographic monstrosities are easy enough to correct. *ruhrira* may be corrected to *rudhiram* and *sarvaduṣṭānā* to *sarvaduṣṭānām*, while *mahāganade* should clearly be *mahāgaṇapate*.<sup>16</sup> This leaves *mahābālāka*. Reading *mahābālāka*, the immediate meaning is ‘a great young one’. This is in context seemingly senseless, save that one recalls that Vajragarbha, the more ‘orthodox’ name for Vajraśauṇḍa, is the prime *vajrabodhisattva* associated with consecration. As such *mahābālāka* could be seen to refer to the tantric candidate. However, perhaps more to the point is another meaning furnished by the dictionary for *bālaka*: ‘a young elephant five years old’.<sup>17</sup> This meaning of a young bull elephant fits very well with the other aspects signified by *mada*, *matta*, and *dhama*, namely, the characteristic of impetuosity.

*om* O great young bull elephant! Great Lord of Hosts! Drink! Drink the blood of all the evil ones! *phaṭ*

Yet this is not the end of the matter. Above we noted that another use of *dhama* is as a name of Kṛṣṇa. This again seems irrelevant: till, that is, one adduces the parallel to the passages equating the Hindu and Buddhist names from the *Trailokyavijayamaṇḍalopāyikā* (38b3):

*stobs bzān ni tshogs kyi bdag po rdo rje glaṅ po'i sna'o //*

MALLMAN deems Vajraśauṇḍa to be called Balabhadra, who is the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa (1975: 114). Indeed, Balabhadra, who is also known as Balarāma, is found outside of the fourth circle of the Dharmadhātuvāg-īśvaramaṇḍala (*Niṣpannāyogāvalī* no. 21) and is held in the skull in the fifth left hand of Viśvadhāka in the northern circle of the Pañcaḍāka-maṇḍala (*Niṣpannāyogāvalī* no. 24). Since *stobs bzān* is recorded as representing *balabhadra*,<sup>18</sup> it follows that *stobs bzān* should also be so reconstructed. However, *stobs bzān* may also represent *lāṅgalin* (*ibid.*), which is another name for Baladeva (MW 900) who is indeed the elder brother of Kṛṣṇa and whose distinctive iconographic attribute is the plough (*lāṅgala*, *hala*. MALLMAN 1963: 270).

16. See also *Tattvasaṃgraha* 263.2-5: *atha vajraśauṇḍo gaṇapatir bhagavate vajrapāṇaye idaṃ hṛdayan niryātayati sma / om vajraśauṇḍa mahāgaṇapati rakṣa sarvaduṣṭebhyo vajradharājñāṃ pālāya huṃ phaṭ //*

17. Cf. MW 729. However, in the *Mātāṅgalīla* (v.2), *bāla* refers to “an elephant in the first year” (EDGERTON 1931: 121).

18. LOKESH CHANDRA 1976: 986; 1992-94: 805.

Now above we noted that MONIER-WILLIAMS records that *dhama* is said of Kṛṣṇa, but unfortunately no text locus is supplied. Nor is one found in the Petersburg Wörterbuch. Assuming that *dhama* and/or *dhama dhama* in the mantras cited above may be taken both as a name and as imperatives, the resultant discrepancy between the identification of Vajraśauṇḍa as Balabhadra/Lāṅgalin and as Kṛṣṇa is at first puzzling. On the other hand, evidence from Indian art exists of a syncretism between Vāsudeva Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma (MALLMAN 1968: 48 and note 49). Moreover, as MALLMAN has noted on several occasions, the elephant, here the mount of Vajraśauṇḍa, is in fact connected with Kṛṣṇa and not with Balabhadra (*ibid.*; 1964: 177; 1975: 114-115).

Therefore, we may conclude that the figure of Vajraśauṇḍa is probably another example of such a syncretism. It is worth noting that the name Baladeva occurs only once in the *Tattvasaṃgraha* and that in the epithet *baladevarakṣiṇi* in the mantra of Vajrāśana (TS 303.9-14),<sup>19</sup> the consort of Vajramāla whom MALLMAN (1964: 177) associates with Vāsudeva (i.e. Kṛṣṇa). Moreover, since Vajraśauṇḍa (Madhumatta) is the first and Vajramāla (Madhukara) the second of the four *vajrabodhisattva* in the South of the Trailokyavijayamaṇḍala, their positions may reflect the elder/younger brother relationship of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa.<sup>20</sup> That the names Madhumatta and Madhukara are also similar is not likely to be chance. If not, then that the “maker of *madhu*” is Kṛṣṇa and the consumer is Baladeva (Balarāma, Balabhadra) is also an interesting observation of the *Tattvasaṃgraha* on the relationship between these two brothers.<sup>21</sup>

The foregoing provides the student both with interesting conclusions on the nature of the *yogatantras* and with troubling questions as the proper

19. TS 303.10-14: *atha vajrāśanā svakarmasamayām abhāṣat / oṃ vajrāśane bha [kṣaya sarvaduṣṭān vajradaśani śaktidhāri]ṇi mānuṣa mānsāhāre nararucirā śubhapriye majjavaśānulepanavilīptagātre ānaya sarvadhanadhānyahiranya-suva[māḍini saṃkrāmaya baladevarakṣi]ṇi hūṃ phaḥ ||*

20. Note that Vajraśauṇḍa is white in colour and that Balarāma is also said “of a white hair of Viṣṇu” (SÖRENSEN 1904: 107).

21. It also brings up the question of whether *madhukara* is a kind of pun on Kṛṣṇa’s famous epithet *madhusūdana*. Concern with the elder/younger brother relationship is found elsewhere, in particular vis à vis Skanda and Gaṇeśa (cf. SANFORD 1991: 297).



methodology towards their study. Let us take on the aspect of doubt first.

We may be accused of an all too flippant use or misuse of philological methods. Thus, for example, we have postulated that the word *dhama* within a mantra may be seen both as an imperative verb *and* as a noun in the vocative. That is, not only have we insisted on the multi-interpretability of words, but have also suggested that such a polyvalence extends to grammatical categories. This is, to my knowledge, not usual.

Nevertheless, one may hypothesize that in the *yogatantras* the multi-interpretability of names and mantras are precisely the salient feature. That is, these *śleśa* – if one may call them so – are what distinguishes tantric from non-tantric ritualizations. Indeed, I should like to go further. I suggest that the subsequent semantic ‘overload’ was intended by the writers of these texts. Perhaps, the idea is that by weighing the disciple down with ultimately unwieldy and unbearable masses of culturally determined meaning, the notion might arise that the meaning of words and acts is in truth disjoined from imposed externalities and resides solely in the mind of the disciple himself.

If this ratiocination has merit, it then follows that the academic student of these texts must search for the ambiguities in them, even while distinguishing between text developments external to the ‘system’ (e.g. *vinayā* as orthographic error for *vilayā*) and intended ambiguities as such. Clearly, this is in practise difficult, and may explain why so little progress has been achieved in our understanding of the particulars of these fascinating and recalcitrant texts.

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