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CONTENTS

I. ARTICLES

1. The Buddhist Path to Liberation: An Analysis of the Listing of Stages, by *Rod Bucknell* 7
2. Temporary Ordination in Sri Lanka, by *Richard Gombrich* 41
3. The Symbolism of the Early Stūpa, by *Peter Harvey* 67
4. Reason as the Prime Principle in Tsong kha pa's Delineation of Deity Yoga as the Demarcation Between Sūtra and Tantra, by *Jeffrey Hopkins* 95
5. Buddhism and Belief in Ātma, by *Y. Krishan* 117
6. Giuseppe Tucci (1894–1984), by *Luciano Petech* 137
7. Kokan Shiren and Musō Soseki: "Chineseness" vs. "Japaneseness" in Thirteenth and Fourteenth Century Japan, by *David Pollack* 143
8. The *Rasāvahinī* and the *Sahassavatthu*: A Comparison, by *Telwatte Rahula* 169
9. A Study of the Theories of *Yāvad-bhāvikatā* and *Yathāvad-bhāvikatā* in the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, by *Ah-yueh Yeh* 185

II. BOOK REVIEWS

1. *Alone With Others: An Existential Approach to Buddhism*, by Stephen Batchelor; *The Way of Siddhartha: A Life of the Buddha*, by David J. and Indrani Kalupahana (reviewed by Roger Jackson) 208
2. *The Buddha*, by Michael Carrithers (reviewed by Paul Griffiths) 216

3. *Buddhist and Western Psychology*, edited by Nathan Katz
(reviewed by Paul Griffiths) 219
4. *A Lamp for the Path and Commentary*, by Atiśa, trans-
lated and annotated by Richard Sherburne
(reviewed by José Cabezón) 224
5. *Religious Festivals in South India and Sri Lanka*, edited
and prefaced by Guy R. Welbon and Glenn E.
Yocum (reviewed by Peter Claus) 226

III. NOTES AND NEWS

1. 7th Conference of the International Association of
Buddhist Studies 230
 2. L.M. Joshi: A Brief Communication 232
 3. I.A.B.S., Inc. Treasurer's Report 233
- OBITUARY
- John Brough (1917–1984) 236
- Contributors 239

Reason as the Prime Principle in Tsong kha pa's Delineation of Deity Yoga as the Demarcation Between Sūtra and Tantra

by Jeffrey Hopkins

In the first of fourteen sections in his *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra* (*sNgags rim chen mo*),¹ Tsong kha pa (1357–1419), founder of the dGe lugs pa, Virtuous or Joyous² Way, sect of Tibetan Buddhism, presents his view on the difference between sūtra and tantra in Buddhism. The section is a long, involved argument in which, although Indian sources are cited, the central appeal is to reasoning. Typical of much of his writing, the argument is so involved and the principles behind the steps in the presentation so taken for granted that an introduction which presents the same material in a more straightforward manner is needed. I have attempted to provide this in *Tantra in Tibet*, which is centered around translation of Tsong kha pa's first section, through translating and editing an oral commentary by His Holiness the Dalai Lama XIV.³

The extreme rules of redundancy that often make Tibetan writing laconic to the point of obfuscation do not apply to oral commentary, and thus the Dalai Lama's explanation provides a more free-flowing introduction to this complex argument. It is the type of introduction that a well-versed Tibetan scholar will give to a student before launching into a topic; it smoothes the way, and thus is invaluable for a beginner. The simplified version, however, is not meant to replace the twists and turns of Tsong kha pa's argument; rather, one is encouraged to become acquainted with the system to the point where the implicit principles are explicit to the mind of the reader of Tsong kha pa's text. This seems to be the Dalai Lama's point when, during

public lectures, he has encouraged dGe lugs pas not to forsake Tsong kha pa's writings for later simplified presentations.

In much the same spirit, it is germane to simplify Tsong kha pa's and the Dalai Lama's arguments even further for the sake of getting a firm grip on the broad structure of the myriad points being made. I read the argument as follows (page numbers in parentheses refer to *Tantra in Tibet*):

Because people are of different capacities, dispositions, and interests, Sākyamuni Buddha taught many different paths. He set forth sūtra and tantra; within sūtra, he taught four different schools of tenets—Great Exposition School (Vaibhāṣika), Sūtra School (Sautrāntrika), Mind Only School (Cittamātra), and Middle Way School (Mādhyamika)—and within tantra, he set out four different sets of tantra—Action (*Kriyā*), Performance (*Caryā*), Yoga, and Highest Yoga (*Anuttarayoga*, literally “Unsurpassed Yoga”).

Within the four schools of the sūtra system, he described three varieties of paths—for Hearers (Śrāvaka), Solitary Realizers (Pratyekabuddha), and Bodhisattvas. Each of the four schools has internal sub-divisions, and the four divisions of tantra also contain many different types of processes and procedures of meditation. The result is that there are many different levels of commitment—ranging from the assumption of tantric vows down to the assumption of only the refuge vow—many different paths and many different styles. (pp. 20–21)

In determining the difference between sūtra and tantra, first it is necessary to settle the difference between the vehicles in sūtra—the Hearers' Vehicle (*Śrāvakayāna*), Solitary Realizers' Vehicle (*Pratyekabuddhayāna*), and Bodhisattvas' Vehicle (*Bodhisattvayāna*) or Great Vehicle (Mahāyāna)—and then consider the further division of the latter into its sūtra and tantra forms. “Vehicle” (*yāna*) has two meanings:

1 Since *yā* means to go, and *na* indicates the *means* of going, a vehicle is comprised of those practices which carry one to a higher state—those practices which, when actualized in the mental continuum, cause manifestation of a higher type of mind.

2 Somewhat unusually, “vehicle” can also refer to the destination—that place or state at which one is aiming. This is because just as a vehicle can bear or carry a certain load, so

the state of Buddhahood—the goal of the Bodhisattva Vehicle—can bear or carry the welfare of all sentient beings, whereas the state of a Hīnayāna Foe Destroyer (*Arhan*)⁴ can bear much less. (p. 43)⁵

Since “vehicle” has these two meanings, the difference between the two Buddhist Vehicles—Hearer and Solitary Realizer (being Hīnayāna) and Bodhisattva (or Mahāyāna)—must occur either within the sense of vehicle as the means by which one progresses or within the sense of vehicle as the destination or state to which one is progressing, or both.

In the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika interpretation of Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna (as delineated by Tsong kha pa), there is a tremendous difference between the two in the sense of vehicle as that to which one is progressing. In Hīnayāna, practice culminates as a Foe Destroyer, one who has overcome the foe of ignorance but is not omniscient and thus is not a Buddha. Unlike a Buddha, a Foe Destroyer does not have the ability spontaneously to manifest in various forms in order to help all beings. Since the states of being a Buddha and a Foe Destroyer are very different, there is a significant difference between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in the sense of vehicle as that to which one is progressing—the goal—Buddhahood and Arhanship.

With this difference in goal, there must also be a difference in the two vehicles in the sense of the practices by which one progresses to these goals. The difference between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in terms of the means of progress can occur in only two places—method and wisdom, these two comprising the entire path in that method mainly produces the Form Body (*Rūpakāya*) of a Buddha and wisdom mainly produces the Truth Body (*Dharmakāya*) (p. 57). In the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika interpretation, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna do not differ with respect to wisdom, in that both require realization of the subtle emptiness of inherent existence of *all* phenomena such as body, mind, head, eye, wall, consciousness, etc. (pp. 38–41, 98–9). Although Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna do differ in terms of *how* wisdom is cultivated—how many reasonings one uses for getting at the subtle emptiness, Bodhisattvas using myriad reasonings and Hīnayānists only a few⁶—in terms of the object of the wisdom consciousness, the subtle emptiness of inherent existence, there is no difference between the emptiness a Hīnayānist realizes and the emptiness a Mahāyānist realizes. In this sense, there is no difference in wisdom.

Since wisdom in Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna do not differ in terms of the type of emptiness being cognized, the difference between the two vehicles must lie in method (p. 55). "Method" here specifically means motivation and the deeds that it impels. No matter how much compassion a Hīnayānist may have, his or her primary motivation is to release him or her self from cyclic existence (*saṃāra*). However, in Mahāyāna the primary motivation is the *altruistic* aspiration to highest enlightenment (*bodhicitta*), induced by great love and compassion, in which one takes on the burden of the welfare of all beings. Thus, there is a significant difference between Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna in terms of method, even though not in wisdom. (pp. 98–9)

Hence, Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna differ in both senses of vehicle, as the means by which one progresses as well as that to which one progresses.

In the Mahāyāna itself, there are two vehicles—the Perfection Vehicle (*Pāramitāyāna*) and the Mantra or Tantra Vehicle (*Mantrayāna, Tantrayāna*).⁷ The Perfection Vehicle is sūtra Mahāyāna, and the Mantra Vehicle is mantra or tantra Mahāyāna.

Do sūtra Mahāyāna and tantra Mahāyāna differ in the sense of vehicle as that to which one is progressing? The goal of sūtra Mahāyāna is Buddhahood, and Tantrayāna cannot have another goal separate from Buddhahood, as there is no attainment higher than the Buddhahood explained in sūtra as attainment of the Truth and Form Bodies. Sūtra describes a Buddha as a being who has removed all obstructions and attained all auspicious attributes, a being who has no movement of coarse winds (*prāṇa*, inner energies);⁸ thus, such Buddhahood has to include the attainments of even Highest Yoga Mantra (*Anuttarayogamānta*), the primary aim of which is to stop the movement of all coarse winds and manifest the most subtle consciousness—the mind of clear light—simultaneously appearing in totally pure form.⁹ Hence, the Vajradhārahood often mentioned as the goal of tantra and the Buddhahood described in sūtra are the same. (pp. 55, 139–42)

There being no difference between the Perfection Vehicle and Mantra Vehicle in terms of the goal—the destination—they must differ in the sense of vehicle as the *means* by which one progresses. They must differ either in terms of method, or wisdom, or both. If the difference lay in wisdom, there would be many problems, because the Perfection Vehicle contains Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika teachings on emptiness, and there would have to be some other

more subtle emptiness than that which Nāgārjuna establishes with many different arguments in the twenty-seven chapters of his *Treatise on the Middle Way (Madhyamakāśāstra)*,¹⁰ whereas there is none. Thus, there is no difference between sūtra and tantra in the view, which here refers to the objective view, that is, the object that is viewed (Tib. *yul gyi lta ba*)—emptiness or ultimate truth—not the realizing consciousness, since sūtra Mahāyāna and Highest Yoga Tantra do differ with respect to the subtlety of the consciousness realizing emptiness. Specifically, in Highest Yoga Tantra, more subtle, enhanced consciousnesses are generated to realize the same emptiness of inherent existence. Still, because the object realized is the same whether the consciousness is more subtle or not, the “objective view” is the same. (pp. 55–7, 110)

In this way, between the sūtra and tantra Mahāyānas there cannot be any difference in the factor of wisdom in terms of the object that is understood by a wisdom consciousness. Hence, the difference again has to lie in method.

In both the sūtra and tantra Mahāyānas, the basis of method is the altruistic intention to become enlightened for the sake of all sentient beings (*bodhicitta*); because of this, the motivational basis of the deeds of the path is the same. The other main factor of method has to do with the deeds induced by that method, which in sūtra Mahāyāna are the practices induced by this altruistic aspiration—the perfections of giving, ethics, and patience. However, since these are also practiced in tantra, the difference cannot be found there, either. Furthermore, tantra has an even greater emphasis than sūtra on the deeds of the perfections, in that a tantric practitioner is committed to engage in them at least six times during each day. (pp. 57–8)

Moreover, the distinction could not be made on the basis of speed of progress on the path, because within the four tantra sets—Action, Performance, Yoga, and Highest Yoga Tantra—there are great differences in speed, and in sūtra Mahāyāna there are five different modes of progress, slow to fast. In addition, the difference must not lie in some small or insignificant feature, but in an important one. (pp. 58, 100–1)

The profound difference occurs in the fact that in tantra there is meditation in which one meditates on one's body as similar in aspect to a Buddha's Form Body, whereas in sūtra Mahāyāna there is no such meditation. This is deity yoga (Tib. *lha'i rnal 'byor*), which all four tantra sets have, but sūtra systems do not. Deity yoga means to imag-

ine oneself as having the Form Body of a Buddha now; one meditates on oneself in the aspect of a Buddha's Form Body. (pp. 61–5, 115–16)

In the Perfection Vehicle, there is meditation similar in aspect to a Buddha's *Truth* Body—a Buddha's wisdom consciousness. A Bodhisattva enters into meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness with nothing appearing to the mind except the final nature of phenomena, the emptiness of inherent existence; the wisdom consciousness is fused with that emptiness. Even though, unlike his tantric counterpart, a sūtra Bodhisattva does not specifically imagine that the state of meditative equipoise is a Buddha's Truth Body,¹¹ meditation similar in aspect to a Buddha's Truth Body does occur in the sūtra system in the sense that the state of meditative equipoise on emptiness mimics a Buddha's exalted wisdom consciousness in its aspect of perceiving the ultimate. However, the sūtra Perfection Vehicle does not involve meditation similar in aspect to a Buddha's *Form* Body. There is meditation on Buddhas and so forth as objects of offering, etc., but there is no meditation on oneself in the physical body of a Buddha. (pp. 60, 62, 115)

Such meditative cultivation of a divine body is included within the factor of method because it is mainly aimed at achieving a Buddha's Form Body. In the sūtra system, the sole means for achieving a Buddha's Form Body is, on the basis of the altruistic intention to become enlightened, to engage in the first three perfections—giving, ethics, and patience—in limitless ways over a limitless period of time. Though the Mantra Vehicle also involves practice of the perfections of giving, ethics, and patience, it is not in limitless ways over limitless periods of time. Despite emphasis on the perfections, practice in limitless ways over limitless time is unnecessary, because one is engaging in the additional technique of meditation on oneself in a body similar in aspect to a Buddha's Form Body.¹² In other words, in the tantric systems one meditates on oneself as similar in aspect to a Buddha in terms of both body and mind in order to become a Buddha. This practice is significantly different, and thus those systems which involve it constitute a separate vehicle, tantra Mahāyāna.

In deity yoga, one first meditates on emptiness and then uses that consciousness realizing emptiness—or at least an imitation of it—as the basis of emanation of a Buddha. The wisdom consciousness itself appears as the physical form of a Buddha. This one consciousness thus has two parts—a factor of wisdom and a factor of method, or fac-

tors of (1) ascertainment of emptiness and (2) appearance as an ideal being—and hence, through the practice of deity yoga, one *simultaneously* accumulates the collections of merit and wisdom, making their amassing much faster. (pp. 62–3)

The systems that have this practice are called the Vajra Vehicle, because the appearance of a deity is the display of a consciousness which is a *fusion* of wisdom understanding emptiness and compassion seeking the welfare of others—an inseparable union symbolized by a *vajra*, a diamond, the foremost of stones, as it is “unbreakable” (pp. 22–3, 51, 107–8). Since the two elements of the fusion—compassionate method and penetrating wisdom—are the very core of the Perfection Vehicle, one can understand that sūtra and tantra, despite being different, are integrated systems. One can understand that compassion is not superseded by, but essential to, tantra, and that the wisdom of the Perfection Vehicle is not forsaken for a deeper understanding of reality in the Tantra Vehicle.

To summarize: the difference between the vehicles must lie in the sense of vehicle as that by which one progresses or that to which one progresses. Hīnayāna differs from Mahāyāna in both. The destination of the lower one is the state of a Hearer or Solitary Realizer Foe Destroyer and of the higher one, Buddhahood. Concerning “vehicle” in the sense of means by which one progresses, although there is no difference in the wisdom realizing the subtlest nature of phenomena, there is a difference in method—Hīnayāna not having and Mahāyāna having the altruistic mind of enlightenment (that is, the altruistic intention to become enlightened) and its attendant deeds.

Sūtra and tantra Mahāyāna do not differ in terms of the goal, the state being sought, since both seek the highest enlightenment of a Buddha, but there is a difference in the means of progress, again not in wisdom but in method. Within method they differ not in the basis or motivation of the deeds, the altruistic intention to become enlightened, nor in having the perfections as deeds, but in the additional technique of deity yoga. A deity is a supramundane being who himself or herself is a manifestation of compassion and wisdom. Thus, in the special practice of deity yoga one joins one’s own body, speech, mind, and activities with the exalted body, speech, mind, and activities of a supramundane being, manifesting on the path a similitude of the state of the effect.

The appeal throughout this presentation is to reason; never-

theless Tsong kha pa also cites supportive Indian sources. For instance, in establishing that according to the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika system even those who are Hīnayānists by path—that is to say, Hearers and Solitary Realizers (as opposed to Hīnayānists by tenet, the Vaibhāṣikas and Sautrāntikas)¹³—must realize the most subtle emptiness, he presents an abridged version of his own extensive argument on this in his commentary to Candrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle Way"* (*Mādhyamakāvātāra*), citing Candrakīrti's *Supplement* (p. 94), Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland (Ratnāvalī)* (p. 94), Nāgārjuna's *Treatise on the Middle Way (Madhyamakāśāstra)* (pp. 95 and 96), *Praise of the Non-Conceptual* ([?] *Nirvikalpastava*) (p. 95), two Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras (pp. 95–96), and a Hīnayāna sūtra (p. 96). (That the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika view on the emptiness of inherent existence (*svabhāva-siddhi*) is needed in order to become a Foe Destroyer is extremely controversial, as it means that no follower of Vaibhāṣika, Sautrāntika, Cittamātra, or even Svātantrika can complete the Hīnayāna path and become a Foe Destroyer by means of any of those paths alone.)¹⁴

Considering counter-arguments, Tsong kha pa makes reference (pp. 96–97) to presentations in both Hīnayāna and Mahāyāna texts that propound the opposite, i.e., that to get out of cyclic existence (*samsāra*, 'khor ba) it is sufficient to have the fully developed wisdom that understands that the person is not substantially existent, a coarser type of selflessness (pp. 179–81). Again, the conflict is settled by reasoning through differentiating what is definitive (*nūtārtha*, *nges don*) and what is interpretable (*neyārtha*, *drang don*). This not being a main subject of the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*, the author leaves the matter with a brief admonition to learn how to make such hermeneutical distinctions—implicitly indicating the benefit of studying his *Essence of the Good Explanations (Legs bshad snying po)*, where the dominant argument is that scriptural reference is not sufficient, since a supporting scripture would require another, which, in turn, would require another, ad infinitum, and thus reasoning is necessary. The working principles revolve around showing that the conception of inherent existence is the root of cyclic existence and that some trainees are temporarily incapable of receiving teaching on such a subtle topic. The interpreta-

tion of the opposing scriptures is made (1) on the basis of the ontological fact, determined by reasoning, that the emptiness of inherent existence is the final mode of subsistence of phenomena and (2) in the context of the existential situation of the epistemological needs of the trainees to whom the doctrines were taught.

Tsong kha pa resolves other seeming contradictions by taking into account the frame of reference of a remark. For instance, Kulika Puṇḍarīka's (Rigs ldan Pad ma dkar po) commentary on the *Kālacakra Tantra*, called the *Stainless Light* (*Vimālaprabhā*), explains the term "vajra" in "Vajra Vehicle" (*Vajrayāna*) in the context of the *Kālacakra Tantra*, a Highest Yoga Tantra, in such a way that the meaning applies only to that class of tantra and not to all four classes. Tsong kha pa comments (pp. 107–8):

The meaning of "Vajra Vehicle" is given through taking "Vajra" as an indivisibility of the effect—the Mantra mode—and the cause—the Perfection mode. Here, "cause and effect" refer to totally supreme emptiness and supreme immutable bliss. The *Brief Explication of Initiations* (*Śekhoddēśa*) [included in the *Kālacakra* cycle] says:

That bearing the form of emptiness is the cause,
That bearing immutable compassion is the effect.
Emptiness and compassion indivisible
Are called the mind of enlightenment.

The indivisibility of these two is a Cause Vehicle in the sense of being the means by which one progresses, and it is an Effect Vehicle in the sense of being that to which one is progressing. Such a Vajra Vehicle has reference to Highest Yoga Tantra and cannot occur in the lower tantras. For the supreme immutable bliss can only arise when one has attained the branch of meditative stabilization [in the system of the *Kālacakra*] and thus the branches of mindfulness and those below must be the means of achieving it. The three lower tantras do not have all the factors that are included in these causal branches.

Therefore, this interpretation of "Vajra Vehicle" bears little relation to its general meaning, and the same applies to that of the meaning of the Vehicles of Cause and Effect. [Or, more literally: Therefore, (this interpretation)

is too narrow here in the context of identifying the general meaning of the Vajra Vehicle, and positing the meaning of the Vehicles of Cause and Effect through that mode (of interpretation) is also too narrow in a general presentation.] Here the meaning of “Vajra Vehicle” should be taken in accordance with what is said in Ratnākaraśānti’s *Handful of Flowers, Explanation of the Guhyasamāja Tantra* (*Kusumāñjaliguhyasamājanibandha*): “With regard to its being called the Vajra Vehicle, those which included all the Mahāyāna are the six perfections. Those that include them are method and wisdom; that which include them as one taste is the mind of enlightenment. That is the Vajrasattva meditative stabilization; just this is a vajra. Because it is both a vajra and a vehicle, it is the Vajra Vehicle, the Mantra Vehicle.” Thus, the Vajrasattva yoga that indivisibly unites method and wisdom is the Vajra Vehicle. It occurs at the time of both the path and the fruit.

Tsong kha pa explains that since the three lower tantras do not have the paths necessary for the generation of a fusion of totally supreme emptiness (here referring to a form empty or devoid of material particles) and supreme immutable bliss (“immutable” here referring to non-emission), this interpretation, in the *Kālacakra* mode, of “Vajra Vehicle” is too narrow (*khyab chung ba*). He adds that interpreting “Vehicles of Cause and Effect” in this way is also too narrow for a general presentation. Rather, the general meaning of “Vajra Vehicle” must apply to all four classes of tantra, not just Highest Yoga. As explained above, he indicates that this is an indivisible union of method and wisdom.

In his *The Buddhist Tantras*, Prof. Alex Wayman condenses Tsong kha pa’s presentation to the point where he mistakenly makes it seem that for Tsong kha pa the passages from the *Stainless Light* and the *Brief Explication of Initiations* present a properly formulated demarcation between the Perfection and Mantra Vehicles in general. Wayman says:¹⁵

According to passages cited by Tsoñ-kha-pa in the introductory section of his work on the stages of Tantra called *Sñags rim chen mo*, the Mahāyāna (Great Vehicle) has two divisions—the *praññā pāramitā* method (that part of Mahāyāna which is not tantric) and the mantra method (the strictly tantric part of the Mahāyāna). In his quotation (fo-

lio 12b–4) from the (Kālacakra work) *Vimalaprabhā*, these two wings of the Mahāyāna are termed “cause” and “effect”. But also the Diamond Vehicle (Vajrayāna)—so called because the diamond is unsplitable and unbreakable—can be considered the Vehicle that incorporates both the *prajñāpāramitā* side (the “cause”) and the *mantra* side (the “effect”). Therefore, the vehicle of the Bodhisattvas (who are the Mahāyāna saints) has two degrees, first the perfection of insight (*prajñāpāramitā*) and then the practice of mantras, initiation in the *maṇḍala*, etc. . . . Tsoṅ kha pa introduces further terminology (folio 12b–6) with a passage from the *Śekhoddēśa*:

Holding the form of the void is the cause;
 The fruit is the adherence to incessant compassion.
 The indissoluble union of voidness (*śūnyatā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*) is called “mind of enlightenment” (*bodhicitta*).

At 17a–1, he quotes the Tantra called the *Vajrapañjarā* . . .

Wayman seems to be taking the position of Kulika Puṇḍarīka’s *Stainless Light* (*Vimālaprabhā*) and the *Brief Explication of Initiations* (*Śekhoddēśa*), which Tsoṅ kha pa rejects as being too narrow, as being Tsoṅ kha pa’s own accepted version of the meaning of “Vajra Vehicle” in general.¹⁶ By citing those two texts and then the *Vajrapañjara Tantra* as if they are in accord, one misses the movement of Tsoṅ kha pa’s critical analysis of the flaws of accepting the first two as applying to a general treatment of the Perfection and Mantra Vehicles and then explication of an appropriate opinion. Tsoṅ kha pa is making the point that the type of union of method and wisdom described in those texts applies only to Highest Yoga Tantra and that a meaning of “*Vajrayāna*” applicable to all four tantras must be found elsewhere.

Prof. Herbert Guenther cites the same passage in a chapter on “Pāramitāyāna and Mantrayāna” in his *Tibetan Buddhism Without Mystification*.¹⁷

. . . Vajrayāna is the indivisibility of cause or Pāramitā method and effect or Mantra method.—According to the *dBang mdor bstan*:

Awareness of no-thing-ness is the cause;
 To feel unchanging bliss is the effect.
 The indivisibility of no-thing-ness
 And bliss is known as the enlightenment of mind.

Here the indivisibility of awareness which directly intuitively no-thing-ness and the unchanging, supreme bliss is conceived as consisting of the two phenomena of goal-approach and goal attainment. Such an interpretation of Vajrayāna, however, applies to the Anuttarayogatantras, not to the three lower tantras, because, if this unchanging, supreme bliss has to be effected by meditative practices preceding and including inspection, since it settles after the bliss-no-thing-ness concentration has been realized, these causal factors are not present in their entirety in the lower tantras. Therefore, while this is correct for the general idea of Vajrayāna, it is not so for the distinction in a causal situation course or in one anticipating the goal.

The last sentence (*des na 'dir rdo rje theg pa spyi'i don ngos 'dzin pa'i skabs su khyab chungs pa yin la tshul des rgyu 'bras kyi theg pa'i don 'jog pa yang spyi'i rnam bzhag la ma khyab pa yin no*)¹⁸ literally reads, "Therefore, [this interpretation] is too narrow here on the occasion of identifying the general meaning of the Vajra Vehicle, and positing the meaning of the Vehicles of Cause and Effect through that mode [of interpretation] is also too narrow in a general presentation." Guenther, however, has Tsong kha pa saying that this interpretation is "correct for the general idea of Vajrayāna," thereby contradicting his own explanation in the previous sentence that the interpretation of Vajra Vehicle according to the *Stainless Light* applies only to Highest Yoga Tantra and is not wide enough to apply to all four tantras.

Both Wayman and Guenther have missed the argument of this section of the *Great Exposition of Secret Mantra*, though the former worse than the latter. As this section is mainly comprised of critical analysis that appeals to reason, it would have to be said that they have misconstrued the main point being made in Tsong kha pa's elaborate argument on the difference between the Perfection and Mantra Vehicles. That these scholars, who are indeed luminaries in the field of Tibetan Buddhism, miss such a fundamental point is itself sufficient justification for a style of translation and exposition that spends more time on the ground of the tradition itself.

With respect to scriptural authority for the distinction between the sūtra and tantra Mahāyānas, Tsong kha pa quotes a passage from the *Vajrapañjara Tantra* (p. 117), rejects the commentaries of Kṛṣṇapāda and Indrabodhi (p. 120), and critically uses the commentary of Devakulamahāmati (pp. 120–1), accepting some parts and rejecting others. Having established that deity yoga is the dividing line between the two Mahāyānas, he reinforces this with citations from or references to works on Highest Yoga Tantra by Jñānapāda (pp. 122–8), Ratnākaraśānti (pp. 129, 134), Abhayākāra (pp. 129–30), Durjayacandra (p. 130), Śrīdhara (p. 130), Samayavajra (p. 131), Jinadatta (p. 131), and Vinayadatta (p. 131–2). The general drift is illustrated by a passage (p. 129) from Ratnākaraśānti's *Commentary on (Dīpaṅkarabhadra's) "Four Hundred and Fifty"* (*bZhi rgya lnga cu pa*) as Tsong kha pa cites the title, or *Commentary on (Dīpaṅkarabhadra's) "Rite of the Guhyasamāja Maṇḍala"* (*Guhyasamājamāṇḍalavidhiṭkā*), as it is listed in the *Tibetan Tripitaka*¹⁹:

If one cultivates only [a path] having the nature of a deity, one cannot become fully enlightened through that because the fulfillment of [yogic] activities is not complete. Or, if one meditates on the suchness of a deity and not on that deity, one will attain Buddhahood in many countless aeons but not quickly. Through meditating on both, one will attain the highest perfect complete enlightenment very quickly because to do so is very appropriate and has special empowering blessings.

In short, the path to speedy attainment of enlightenment must involve both deity yoga and emptiness yoga; one without the other is not sufficient.

Prof. Wayman criticizes my translation of that passage and offers his corrections:²⁰ (emphases his)

If one cultivates only *with adoption of the ego of a deity*, one cannot become fully enlightened merely through that, because the *completion of the ritual part is not fulfilled*. Or, *if there are no deities in the sense of cultivating the reality of deities*, one might attain Buddhahood in many countless aeons but not quickly. Hence, the cultivation of both [reality of deities and ritual part], because it *is highly gratifying*, and because it has special empowering blessings, quickly *achieves* the highest perfect complete enlightenment.

Let us cite the Tibetan:²¹

yang na lha'i bdag nyid can 'ba' zhig tsam bsgoms na de lta²² na ni de tsam gyis 'tshang rgya ba nyid du mi 'gyur tel las rdzogs pa ma tshang ba'i phyir rol/ yang na lha rnams kyi de kho na nyid bsgom gyi lha rnams ma yin na nil de lta na yang bskal pa grangs med pa mang por sangs rgyas nyid thob par 'gyur gyi myur du ni ma yin nol/ de bas na gnyis ka sgom pa ni shin tu yid du 'ong ba yin pa'i phyir dang/ byin gyis brlabs kyi khyad par gyis mchog tu myur bar bla na med pa yang dag par rdzogs pa'i byang chub thob par 'gyur ro

His changes miss the point. First, *bdag nyid* here is synonymous with *ngo bo* and *rang bzhin*, and thus means “nature” or “entity”; that which has such a divine nature could be a maṇḍala, a divine body itself, or a path that involves cultivation of such. There is no need to construe *bdag nyid* as “ego,” though indeed the pride of being that deity (*lha'i nga rgyal*) must be cultivated. Wayman is forced not only to add in the word “adoption” but also to supply an instrumental ending (“with”). Rather, *lha'i bdag nyid 'ba' zhig tsam* is the direct object of *bsgoms*: “cultivates [or literally, cultivated] only [a path] having the nature of a deity.”

Second, Wayman's preference for “because completion of the ritual part is not fulfilled” becomes self-contradictory when later in brackets he identifies the two factors that are necessary for speedy attainment of Buddhahood as “cultivation of both [reality of deities and ritual part],” whereby “ritual part” comes to stand for deity yoga, since the “reality of deities” clearly refers to their emptiness and the two topics of the passage are deity yoga and emptiness yoga. This is self-contradictory because in the first sentence the reason clause is speaking of the incompleteness of the *yoga due to the absence of emptiness yoga*, the specific activity or “ritual part” that is lacking clearly being identified as emptiness yoga, not cultivation of a divine body, as Wayman would have it. The basic point of the passage and the reason for Tsong kha pa's citing it have been lost in Wayman's translation. The context clearly indicates that the incompleteness of yogic activities in the first sentence refers specifically to the absence of emptiness yoga, the yogic activities themselves standing for the entire corpus of the path and not just one part.

Third, his translation of *thob par 'gyur* in its two occurrences first as “might attain” and then as “achieves” is unfounded. The 'gyur ending with a present verb makes that verb future, and my original translation in both cases as “will attain” reflects this meaning.²³

Fourth, *shin tu yid du 'ong ba* (literally, “very much coming to the mind”) means not “highly gratifying” as Wayman prefers but, literally, “very attractive,” in the sense that since a Buddha has both a Truth Body (Dharmakāya) and a Form Body (*Rūpa-kāya*) it is *very appropriate* or attractive that on the path one cultivate both emptiness yoga and deity yoga, the former having as its main result the Truth Body and the latter, the Form Body.

Fifth, in *yang na lha rnams kyi de kho na nyid bsgom gyi lha rnams ma yin* the particle *gyi* in *bsgom gyi* is not a genitive ending but a non-case particle meaning “and” or “but.” As Tibet’s foremost grammarian, Si-tu Paṅ-chen, says:²⁴

There is also a usage of those [genitive endings,] *gi* and so forth, for a non-case meaning, for they are also used as word-ornaments indicating that the latter word is contradictory or discordant, as in, “This is true, and/but the other is obscured,” “Our refuge is the Teacher Buddha and/but is not Rudra and so forth,” “It indeed is correct this way but . . .” (*gi la sogs pa de rnams rnam dbye'i don ma yin pa gzhan la'ang 'jug pa yod del 'di ni bden gyi gzhan ni gti mug go/ bdag cag gi skyabs ni ston pa sangs rgyas yin gyi drag po sogs ma yin no// 'di liar 'thad mod kyi 'on kyang/ zhes pa lta bu phyi tshig 'gal ba'am mi mthun par ston pa'i tshig gi rgyan la'ang 'jug pa'i phyir ro*).

Wayman mistakes the non-case particle *gyi* for a genitive case particle, seeking to reform the clause to “if there are no deities in the sense of cultivating the reality of deities.” He thereby suggests that if one meditates on the reality or suchness (*tattva*, *de kho na nyid*) of a deity one cannot simultaneously perceive a divine body. This is not true to the system, since the very assertion of the difference between the sūtra and tantra Mahāyānas is made on the basis of the simultaneous union in one consciousness of the factors of method and wisdom, specifically the appearance of the divine form and ascertainment of its emptiness.

Wayman cites this passage and gives his “corrections” as a sole sample of what he considers my error-laden translation of prose citations in Tsong kha pa’s work:

... while Hopkins does reasonably well with Tsoñ-kha-pa’s own prose, he has continual difficulty with the citations in prose or verse, and despite the labor of tracing out these passages in the canon—taking up most of the notes—he still exhibits a result which is more typical of language beginners, of giving an obscure and non-cogent rendition as though it represents the original, while in truth the translator does not understand the original.

His attempt at correction doubles back on him, displaying his own failure to catch even the general thread of the argument of the text.

Having cited such passages in Highest Yoga Tantras and commentaries to show the distinctive presence of deity yoga, Tsong kha pa makes brief citations for Yoga, Performance, and Action Tantras by referring to Śākyamitra (p. 132), Ānandagarbha (p. 133), and Buddhaguhya (p. 133), skirting for the time being the considerable controversy on whether Action and Performance Tantras have deity yoga, since he tackles that problem at the beginning of the section on Action Tantra.²⁵ Despite Tsong kha pa’s many citations of tantras and Indian commentaries, it is clear that they are used only as supportive evidence for his argument. Tradition is only supportive, not the ultimate authority. The arbiter is reason, specifically in the sense of determining coherence and consistency within a path structure. Tsong kha pa refutes Ratnarakṣita and Tripiṭakamāla (pp. 143–50), for instance, not because they differ from the aforementioned sources, but because their presentations fail in terms of consistency with the path structure. By doing so, he moves the basis of the argument from scriptural citation to reasoned analysis of a meditative structure.

To determine the context of Tsong kha pa’s analysis and investigate whether it is correct, it will be necessary first to examine the presentations on the difference between sūtra and tantra given by (1) his predecessor and chief source, the Sa skya scholar Bu ston Rin chen grub (1290–1364), (2) his near con-

temporary, the rNying-ma scholar kLong chen rab 'byams (1308–63), who exemplifies the type of presentation Tsong kha pa is refuting, (3) the later bKa' brgyud pa scholar Pad ma dkar po (1527–92) who sided with a different tradition while acknowledging Tsong kha pa's well-reasoned argument, (4) Tsong kha pa's critic Bo dong Phyogs las rnam rgyal (1376–1451), who opposes Tsong kha pa's argument with reason, and (5) later dGe lugs scholars who wrote condensations or elaborations of Tsong kha pa's presentation as the implications of his work came to the fore.²⁶ With such data, we will be well grounded for pursuing our own analyses. In the meantime, we can say, upon determining Tsong kha pa's argument, that his procedure is that of a thorough scholar, analyzing sources and counter-opinions with careful scrutiny and determining the place of the pillars of his analysis in the general structure of a system. His intention is clearly not just to present a catalogue of views as Bu ston mainly did, but to adjudicate conflicting systems of interpretation, thereby, at least by style, establishing a new one.

The intellectual intricacy of his presentation is no match for the immediately evocative style of the great rNying-ma scholar kLong chen rab 'byams, for instance. However, when the principles of his position have been so internalized that the reader can supply the unspoken interstices, the experience of re-reading the text can evoke palpable glimpses into the experience of deity yoga. The argument itself becomes an exercise moving the mind toward developing the ability to combine the profound realization of emptiness and manifestation as an ideal being, such that one begins to sense the possibility of consciousness itself appearing as form—the union of method and wisdom that, for Tsong kha pa, is at the very heart of tantra. dGe lugs is often criticized, both in Tibet and in the West, for being overly verbal, overly abstract, but I would suggest that this is due to the critics not having put sufficient time into first getting the positions of the dGe lugs scholars straight and then allowing the metaphysical imagination to be stimulated. The danger of over-abstractation in some areas of dGe lugs thought is great, but the intricately woven arguments, when probed over time, lead to an internalization of knowledge and palpable experience of principles, which are then the basis for

verbalization. In the beginning, the words seem to use the person, but later, a changed person is using the words.

As scholars, we need both patience to go through this process as well as wariness against being trapped by our own willingness to become absorbed in these complex systems. The dilemma posed by such openness and the need for discrimination is certainly not solved by refusing to spend the time needed to probe the material or by an affectation of distance that prevents involvement. Tsong kha pa seems to have conquered this dilemma within his own culture with his startlingly refreshing reasoned analysis of traditional accounts, which functions as a hermeneutic, bringing all the more focus to a pivotal practice in tantra—deity yoga—itself founded on the reasoned analysis performed in emptiness yoga.²⁷ The lesson may be that the type of mind needed to follow his argument is also needed in this central practice. Seen in this light, there is a harmony between the form of Tsong kha pa's elaborately reasoned argument on the difference between sūtra and tantra and the content, the identification of deity yoga—the first step of which is reasoned meditation on emptiness—as the central tantric feature. The style itself makes the point that reason is not cast aside in tantra.

NOTES

1. The longer title of Tsong kha pa's text is *Stages of the Path to a Conqueror and Pervasive Master, a Great Vajradhara: Revealing All Secret Topics* (rGyal ba khyab bdag rdo rje 'chang chen po'i lam gyi rim pa gsang ba kun gyi gnad rnam par phye ba). In the Peking edition it is P6210, Vol. 161 (Toh. 5281), but I have mainly used the Dharamsala (Shes rig par khang) edition of 1969, despite flaws, because of its legibility, checking questionable passages against the Ngawang Gelek edition (New Delhi, 1978), which is a retouched version of the 1897 Lhasa old Źol blocks.

2. Several Tibetan scholars have reported that *dge*, "virtuous," was originally *dga'*, "joyous."

3. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977), pp. 13–79.

4. The translation of *Arhan* as "Foe Destroyer" accords with the Tibetan translation as *dgra bcom pa*; for discussion of the etymology and justification of the translation see my *Meditation on Emptiness* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983), n. 553.

5. The page reference here is to the Dalai Lama's commentary. Tsong kha pa also speaks of these two meanings of "vehicle," but the line was unin-

entionally deleted from *Tantra in Tibet* at the beginning of the last paragraph on p. 106. It should read: "About 'vehicle', there is an effect vehicle which is that to which one is proceeding and a cause vehicle which is that by which one proceeds. Due to proceeding [it is called] a vehicle. With respect to . . ."

6. Tsong kha pa discusses this point in some detail in his commentary (*dGongs pa rab gsal*) on Chandrakīrti's *Supplement to (Nāgārjuna's) "Treatise on the Middle Way"* (*Madhyamakāvatāra*), the first five chapters of which are translated in *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Rider and Co., 1980), pp. 174–5. (For justification of my translation of *Madhyamakāvatāra* as *Supplement to the "Treatise on the Middle Way"*, see my *Meditation of Emptiness*, pp. 462–9 and 866–9.) Tsong kha pa says (p. 175, diacritics added):

To establish that even a single phenomenon does not truly exist, Mahāyānists use limitless different reasonings as set forth in the *Treatise on the Middle Way*. Hence their minds become greatly broadened with respect to suchness. Hinayānists use only brief reasoning to establish suchness by valid cognition, and since they do not establish emptiness the way Mahāyānists do, do not have a mind broadened with respect to suchness. . . . This difference arises because Hearers and Solitary Realizers strive to abandon only the afflictions [the obstructions to liberation], and cognizing a mere abbreviation of the meaning of suchness is sufficient for that. Mahāyānists are intent on abandoning the obstructions to omniscience, and for that it is necessary to have a very broadened mind of wisdom opened to suchness.

7. The term "Tantrayāna" has great favor in the West, but it does not appear to have been popular in Tibet. There the favored term is Guhyamantrayāna (*gsang sngags kyi theg pa*).

8. This is one among many points that 'Jam dbyangs bzhad pa makes in defending the position that the Buddhahoods of sūtra and tantra are the same. See his *Great Exposition of "Tenets"* (*Grub mtha' chen mo*), (Mussoorie: Da Lama, 1962), ca 44b. 6–47a. 8.

9. See Lati Rinbochay's and Hopkins' *Death, Intermediate State and Rebirth in Tibetan Buddhism* (London: Rider and Co., 1979), pp. 69–73.

10. Also known as the *Madhyamakārikā*.

11. The source here is Kensur Losang Wangdu, abbot of the Tantric College of Lower Lhasa during the time of its re-location in South India; he is currently residing at Jang-dzay (Byang rtse) College at Gan-den (dGa' ldan) in Mundgod, Karnataka, having been appointed head of the dGe lugs order.

12. See the Mongolian scholar Ngag dbang dpal ldan's statement of this in Tsong ka pa's *Yoga of Tibet* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), pp. 211–12.

13. For a discussion of this, see the first appendix in *Tantra in Tibet*, pp. 173–7.

14. Tsong kha pa's argument can be found in *Compassion in Tibetan Buddhism*, pp. 150–81.

15. *The Buddhist Tantras* (New York: Samuel Weiser, 1973), p. 4. In this chapter, Wayman is engaged in the admirable task of refuting those who view tantra as a corruption. Tsong kha pa's finely worked argument is itself an indication that Wayman is right in this.

Wayman's equation of *pāramitāyāna* with *prajñāparamitāyāna* is questionable, since in the Perfection Vehicle the emphasis is on practice of all six perfections, not just the perfection of wisdom, for a "limitless" period of time in "limitless" ways. This is clear in the Mongolian scholar Ngag dbang dpal ldan's (b. 1797) *Illumination of the Texts of Tantra, Presentation of the Grounds and Paths of the Four Great Secret Tantra Sets* (*gSang chen rgyud sde bzhi'i sa lam gyi rnam bzhag rgyud gzhung gsal byed*, 6b. 7–7b.3) cited in 'Tsong ka pa's *Yoga of Tibet* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), p. 210, "... In the Perfection Vehicle this wisdom consciousness is caused to possess the capacity to abandon the obstructions to omniscience through training for a limitless time in limitless varieties of giving and so forth. . . ." From Ngag dbang dpal ldan's explanation, it would seem that the Perfection Vehicle is so named because of calling for practice of the six perfections for a "limitless" period of time in "limitless" ways due to lacking the practice of deity yoga.

16. Wayman's problem with this passage may revolve around the term *khyab chung ba* ("to narrow"); his mis-interpretation of this term in his translation of the special insight section of 'Tsong kha pa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* (*Lam rim chen mo*) in his *Calming the Mind and Discerning the Real* (New York: Columbia, 1978) is documented at length in Geshe Sopa's excellent review, *JIABS*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1980, pp. 68–100.

17. *Tibetan Buddhism Without Mystification* (Leiden: Brill, 1966), p. 54. Guenther treats the same topic from the rNying ma viewpoint in his *Buddhist Philosophy in Theory and Practice* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1972), pp. 155–170.

Of the six passages which are quoted by 'Tsong kha pa in Guenther's citation, Guenther gives the Sanskrit titles for only two, leaving the other four in Tibetan transliteration and thus giving the misleading impression that they are texts written in Tibetan. I prefer to translate titles into English (with the Sanskrit at each first citation) in order to give some idea of the contents of the texts, the titles often being named by way of their contents. I have also chosen a style of translation different from Guenther, trying to keep with the literal vocabulary of the tradition as much as possible, building up the meaning of words through establishing context. By doing this, multi-worded translation equivalents from a cognate western system are not needed. However, I deeply appreciate the effort that he has made in this regard; my only quarrel is with his insistence that everyone follow his style.

18. (Dharamsala, 1969), 10a.4.

19. (Tokyo-Kyoto: Suzuki Research Foundation, 1955), Vol. 65, Table of Contents.

20. *Kailash* (Kathmandu), V. 7 No. 3–4 (1979), p. 321.

21. 17a.3–5 of the Dharamsala 1969 edition.

22. Read *de lta na* for *de lha na* in accordance with the Ngawang Gelek edition of the *Collected Works* (Delhi, 1978), ga 42.6.

23. For the usage of 'gyur with the future, see the exposition by the grammarian Si tu in his *Explanation of "The Thirty" and "Usage of Gender," Special Treatise on the Thorough Application of the Language of the Snowy Country, Beautiful Pearl Necklace of the Wise* (*Yul gangs can pa'i brda yang dag par shyor ba'i bstan bcos kyi bye brag sum cu pa dang rtags kyi 'jug pa'i gzhung gi rnam par bshad pa*

mkhas pa'i mgul rgyan mu tig phreng mdzes), 58.5 (Dharamsala, n.d.): "Sounds [used for] future actions [are, for instance,] 'grub par 'gyur/ 'chad par 'gyur . . ." (*bya 'gyur ma 'ongs pa'i sgra nil 'grub par 'gyur/ 'chad par 'gyur . . .*) Note that 'chad is the present form of the verb to explain, the future being *bshad*.

24. 27.lff (see the previous note for the text.)

25. *The Yoga of Tibet* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1981), pp. 47–62.

26. I did this work in preparation for *Tantra in Tibet* and intend to present it in a separate, more historically oriented work.

27. Examples of the reasonings required in emptiness yoga are presented in my *Meditation on Emptiness* (London: Wisdom Publications, 1983), especially in Parts One and Two (pp. 47–196), as well as the last chapter of Part Five (pp. 549–60).

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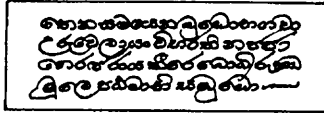
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