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The Figure of Maheśvara/Rudra in the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Tantric Tradition

Most academic scholars of Buddhist Tantra should by now be reasonably familiar with Alexis SANDERSON's work on the dependence of the Buddhist Yoginītantras on Śaiva scriptural sources – all the more so now that increasing quantities of this material is beginning to filter down from the somewhat hermetic confines of the academic research seminar, and into the bibliographical bases of such popular and best-selling works as Gavin FLOOD's widely praised *Introduction to Hinduism,* and Miranda SHAW's more controversial *Passionate Enlightenment.*[1] SANDERSON's work I am referring to includes his published paper "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function",[2] as well as a number of unpublished (yet nevertheless quite well-known and widely-circulated) seminar papers and public lectures given over the years at various universities and institutes.[3] For specialists in Tantric Buddhism, the most significant

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1. Gavin FLOOD, 1996. *An Introduction to Hinduism.* Cambridge, C.U.P.; and Miranda Shaw, 1994. *Passionate Enlightenment.* Princeton, Princeton University Press.

2. 1995: "Vajrayāna: Origin and Function". In *Buddhism Into the Year 2000. International Conference Proceedings.* Bangkok and Los Angeles: Dhammakaya Foundation, pp. 89-102.

3. (i) "Evidence of the Textual Dependence of the Buddhist Yogānuttaratantras on the Tantric Śaiva Canon", seminar delivered at the University of Hamburg, May 1990. (ii) "The Dependence of the Herukatantras on the Śaiva Tantras of the Vidyāpītha", lecture series delivered at All Souls College, Oxford, May-June 1993. (iii) "Pious Plagiarism: Evidence of the Dependence of the Buddhist Yoginītantras on Śaiva Scriptural Sources", paper delivered at the Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, April 11, 1995. Items (i) and (ii) present excerpts from the Sanskrit texts of the Buddhist Yoginītantras in parallel with their Śaiva prototypes. Item (iii) introduces mythic narratives as well. Although not a Tibetanist himself, SANDERSON is able to draw significantly on Tibetan Buddhist materials from myself and Gyurme DORJE, juxtaposing these with fascinating Śaiva myths from the Sanskrit.

result of SANDERSON's work has been to seriously call into question the previously dominant view accepted by a majority of Buddhological scholars, who had suggested that any such observable parallels between the specifically *kāpālika* or 'cemetery' strands within the Buddhist Vajrayāna and a number of very similar Śaiva systems, were primarily the result of both traditions arising from a common Indic cultural substrate.[4] While Martin KALFF since the 1970's and David SNELLGROVE since the mid-1980"s had already begun to question the validity of this unsatisfactorily vague position on the grounds of common sense and more generalised observation,[5] it was only with the presentation of SANDERSON's minutely detailed and substantially documented philological analysis that we have finally been able to conclude with a reasonable degree of certainty that such similarities are much better explained as a result of direct Buddhist borrowings from the Śaiva sources.

In his papers, lectures and seminars, SANDERSON has analysed and discussed the phenomena of such Vajrayāna dependence on Śaivism from a number of different perspectives and has used a number of different types of primary sources. Firstly, he has presented detailed philological evidence showing the movement of substantial passages of text from specific Śaiva scriptural sources into specific Buddhist Herukatantras. Secondly, he has shown how many of the general categories of the Buddhist Vajrayāna appear to be calques on Śaiva prototypes. Thirdly, SANDERSON has cited passages of Śaiva mythology, which have provided an additional and valuable source of information for the relation of these two Tantric traditions. In particular, SANDERSON has shown how the Śaiva myths agree in most instances with the Buddhist ones already analysed by Tibetanists that the predominant direction of the borrowings were from Śaivism into Buddhism, even though the two

4. For an influential pioneering exposition of this view, see David SEYFORT RUEGG, "Sur les rapports entre le Bouddhisme et le 'substrat religieux' indien et tibétain", *Journal Asiatique* 252 (1964): 7-95; see also SEYFORT RUEGG's much later Review of David SNELLGROVE, *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors* in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* 1989 (1) p. 173.

5. SNELLGROVE, David L. 1987: *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors*. London: Serindia. Pp. 152ff, 462-463; and 1988: "Categories of Buddhist Tantras". In: G. Gnoli and L Lanciotti, eds. *Orientalia Iosephi Tucci Memoriae Dicata*. Serie Orientale Roma LVI. 3. Rome, IsMEO. P.1361.

traditions might offer quite different interpretations of the religious significance of this fact.

In my recent book, *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection: the Phur-pa bcu-gnyis*, I took up some themes from this third group of sources, the mythology.[6] Focusing mainly on the Buddhist sources, I discussed the well-known Buddhist myths of the 'Taming of Maheśvara/Rudra'. This myth has been dealt with at length in a number of published secondary sources, and I expect the outlines of it are familiar to most specialists in the field.[7] In my book, I primarily understood the

6. Robert MAYER, 1996: *A Scripture of the Ancient Tantra Collection. The Phur-pa bcu-gnyis*. Oxford and Gartmore: Kiscadale Publications.

7. In a nutshell, a basic core narrative more or less shared by the many variant versions of these myths could be described as follows: typically, it might begin by relating how the all-powerful malignance of Śiva and his entourage, specifically in their more radically transgressive or *kāpālika* tantric forms, seduced many beings into a demonic and evil religious practice, and also came to pose a serious threat to the survival of the Buddhist religion and even to the material welfare of the whole world. The severity of this predicament eventually induced the assembled Buddhas of the three times and ten directions to conclude that in the exceptional case of such intractable and acutely dangerous enemies as these Śaiva deities, there remained no realistic alternative other than to tame them and convert them to Buddhism by brute force. However, this could only be achieved if the Buddhas themselves manifested in terryfying forms that exactly matched and resembled the ferocious Śaiva deities (viz., the Tantric Buddhist Heruka and entourage); accordingly, such Buddhist *kāpālika* deities or Herukas were emanated by the combined forces of all the Tathāgatas, and were sent to engage the Śaiva deities in combat. Having succeeded in killing the Śaiva deities, the Buddhist Herukas are then typically described as resuscitating them and enslaving them as servants of Buddhism, giving them new Buddhist names, while likewise co-opting the entire panoply of Śaiva transgressive Tantric practice as a vehicle for disseminating Buddhist truths. It was under such circumstances, say the Buddhist texts, that the esoteric, specifically *kāpālika* traditions of Vajrayāna first appeared within history, and become accessible to the human beings of our world. Such myths appear in a great many extant Tantric texts in Sanskrit, Chinese, and Tibetan. The main secondary sources I have consulted are as follows: (i) R.A. STEIN, *Annuaires du Collège de France*, Années 71-80, and more recently "La soumission de Rudra et autres contes tantriques", *Journal Asiatique* 283.1 (1995): 121-160. (ii) Martin Michael KALFF 1979: *Selected Chapters from the Abhidhānottara-tantra. The union of female and male deities*. Unpublished PhD dissertation, Columbia University. (iii) Nobumi IYANAGA 1985: "Récits de la soumission de Maheśvara par Trailokyavijaya, d'après les sources chinoises et japonaises", in Michel Strickmann, ed. *Tantric and Taoist Studies in Honour of R.A. Stein*, vol. 3, Mélanges Chinois et Bouddhiques vol. XXII. Institut Belge des Hautes Études Chinoises, Bruxelles. (iv) David

'Taming of Maheśvara/Rudra' narrative as the charter myth (more or less in a Malinowskian sense) of the Vajrayāna in its specifically *kāpā-lika* forms, in other words as the myth by which the Buddhists explained and justified to themselves and to the world their co-option of so much of the religion of their Śaiva rivals. I also discussed this myth as representing Śiva as a 'demon devotee' of the Buddha, in other words of repeating the widespread pattern found in Indian religions in which deities transform hostile demons into their loyal devotees (often giving them the specific function of guardian or protector) through the medium of first slaying them, and then bringing them back to life.[8] I also showed how this myth can be seen as giving a Buddhist commentary (in the Geertzian sense) upon Śaiva-Buddhist relations, and how it can be seen to document the process described by LÉVI-STRAUSS as 'bricolage', in which persisting cultural materials are re-worked to create new cultural reconstructions.[9] I also looked at the myth in terms of the category of 'shamanic mediation' more recently developed by the anthropologist Geoffrey SAMUEL, in this specific case referring to the use of altered states of consciousness by Tantric Buddhist ritual specialists to achieve a reconciliation or accommodation between their own tradition and conflicting extraneous cultural forces.[10] Finally, I located the notion of the taming of Maheśvara/Rudra within its broader emic frameworks, as a specific instance of the important Mahāyāna and Tantric Buddhist category of *'dul ba* or 'taming',[11] which in general terms refers to a

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SNELLGROVE, 1987: *Indo-Tibetan Buddhism: Indian Buddhists and their Tibetan Successors*. London: Serindia. pp.136-141. (v) Alexander W. MACDONALD 1990: "Hindu-isation, Buddha-isation then Lama-isation or: What happened at La-phyi?", in *Indo-Tibetan Studies. Buddhica Britannica Series II*. Ed. T. Skorupski. Tring. (vi) Ronald DAVIDSON 1991: "Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skya-pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka", JIABS 14.2. etc.

8. cf. Alf HILTEBEITEL 1989 (ed): *Criminal Gods and Demon Devotees. Essays on the Guardians of Popular Hinduism*. Albany, SUNY Press. HILTEBEITEL's introduction to the volume gives a clear outline.

9. Claude LÉVI-STRAUSS 1976: *The Savage Mind*. London: Wiedenfield and Nicholson. See, for example, pp. 16 ff.

10. Geoffrey SAMUEL 1990: *Mind, Body and Culture*. Cambridge: C.U.P.; and 1993: *Civilized Shamans. Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press.

11. Perhaps this concept has its roots in early Buddhism? cf. the 'Ten Epithets of the Tathāgata', as cited, for example, in TAKASAKI Jikido, trans. Rolf GIEBEL 1987:

conveyor-belt process in which all non-Buddhist beings throughout the universe are eventually to be converted to the Dharma and set irreversibly on the path to enlightenment; more specifically, Tantric Buddhism claims to possess unique skilful methods, by which even those hard cases particularly resistant to taming (such as Maheśvara/Rudra), can also be converted.

In this paper, however, I want to focus on a somewhat different aspect of this material. I want to address the question of what *weight*, or what *significance*, the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra and the Śaiva categories associated with him have been accorded by the various traditions of Tibetan Buddhism themselves. From the Tibetans' own point of view, is Maheśvara/Rudra merely a marginal figure who appears occasionally in a few obscure myths that might be of more interest to foreign philologists than to the tradition itself? Or is the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra of great and central importance to the tradition as well? One part of the answer to this question is, of course, that Maheśvara/Rudra has been accorded a more prominent role in some areas of the diverse Tibetan Tantric traditions than in others. In particular, I wish to single out two areas where he is particularly significant. The first one is in the Yoginī-tantra traditions of Cakrasaṃvara.[12] The second one is in the Mahāyoga traditions of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa. The hypothesis I am putting forward here is that in the case of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, the Śaiva deity and the borrowed Śaiva categories are, according to most traditional voices, acknowledged and allowed to play only a somewhat limited albeit distinctive role: their true historical and structural importance to the Cakrasaṃvara system is consistently understated and downplayed, even if usually admitted in somewhat oblique and nebulous terms within certain narrow and carefully delimited contexts. By contrast, in the Mahāyoga traditions of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa, the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra is accorded a much more substantial part with very little restriction, and here he is much more freely permitted to fulfil a broad and surprisingly pivotal symbolic role of crucial importance. Once again, however, what modern

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An Introduction to Buddhism, Tokyo: Tōhō Gakkai, p. 50: epithet 8 is *puruṣa-damya-sārathi*, "one who controls men to be tamed".

12. The orthography 'Cakrasaṃvara' is deliberate: I am following SANDERSON's extensive but as yet unpublished research on the orthographical problems of *śaṃvara/saṃvara*, based on Śaiva and Buddhist sources in both Sanskrit and Tibetan. According to SANDERSON's findings, while 'Cakrasaṃvara' is probably more correct, most other instances should be spelt '-śaṃvara'.

scholars might see as the actual historical nature of the relation of Śaivism to Tantric Buddhism is by and large tacitly ignored in favour of highly complex metaphysical re-interpretations of that history.

I. *Maheśvara in the Yoginītantras*

The renowned *yi dam* Cakrasaṃvara and his consort Vajravārāhī are among the most important deities of the Yoginītantras, which are more usually designated by Tibetan doxography as the 'Mother-Tantra' (*ma rgyud*) section of the Anuttarayogatantras. This is one of the areas of the tradition very closely studied by SANDERSON, and since many readers are probably already familiar with his work or can consult it directly, I shall deal with this topic only very briefly.

Within Tibetan Buddhism, the Cakrasaṃvara Tantras are pre-eminently the speciality of the various bKa'-brgyud-pa schools, for whom these cycles are closely connected with their famous traditions of yoga and Mahāmudrā meditation. However, Cakrasaṃvara is also of great importance to the gSar-ma-pa traditions in general, including the dGe-lugs-pa, the Sa-skya-pa, and so on. In the Cakrasaṃvara tradition, the Śaiva deities take the form of Bhairava and his consort Kālarātri. As SANDERSON has so clearly described, these non-Buddhist deities played a specific role in the general Cakrasaṃvara iconography and commentarial literature in Sanskrit, primarily as the seats of the Buddhist Herukas.[13] The Tibetan tradition preserves this feature, but in addition, as one might expect, Bhairava and Kālarātri have also come to be represented in a number of additional indigenous Tibetan cultural developments of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition. For example, there are important and elaborate pilgrimage and sacred site traditions connected with this cycle, in which a number of holy mountains, but most notably Kailas, La-phyi and Tsa-ri, are seen as concrete manifestations of the Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala* of deities. These mountains must surely rank among the most famous of all the natural holy sites within the rich and so far largely uncatalogued inventory of the Tibetan religious landscape. As concrete manifestations of the Cakrasaṃvara *maṇḍala* and being further identified with some of the ancient Indian *pīṭhas* described in the Yoginītantras, in terms of the iconography and the taming narratives of this tradition they should necessarily also include representations of

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13. *Origins & Functions*, op.cit.; and "Pious Plagiarism", op.cit., pp.3-5.

Bhairava and Kālarātri. I believe these are in fact in evidence, although as yet I know only a very few details of their appearance.[14]

My readings within the Cakrasaṃvara literature are by no means exhaustive; on balance, however, my impression is that consciousness of its substantially Śaiva origins and of the predominantly Śaiva forms of the deities in its pantheon are not and never have been of absolutely overwhelming importance to the Cakrasaṃvara tradition as represented in Tibet, nor to any other area of the gSar-ma-pa traditions as currently practised, for that matter. Representations of the Śaiva forms might exist in iconography and mythology or possibly also in natural forms at sacred sites such as Tsa-ri, but these do not seem to have been allowed to penetrate to the inner core of the tradition, or to spread too deeply into its *sādhana* and commentarial systems. Rather, the taming myths persist as something attached to the tradition as an origin myth while remaining slightly extraneous to the ritual practice itself and the associated higher metaphysics, while the iconography of the Śaiva deities as the Herukas' seats is seen as little more than a symbolic detail, open to a variety of standard Buddhist interpretations of the subjugation of evil. Even if there might be a widespread awareness and acknowledgement of the formal external similarities of the Cakrasaṃvara traditions to Śaivism, as explained by the taming narrative and commonly assented to by lamas of this tradition, this is never allowed to become a doctrinally pivotal point: it remains a mere detail, a mere contingency. The very names of Bhairava and Kālarātri appear within only a few contexts in the litera-ture, notably when the origin myth is being recounted, or when the

14. Traditional texts, such as an oral text known as the *gNas chen tsāri tra'i gsol 'debs,* apparently claim that there are naturally-occurring stone *liṅgas* and *yonis* found at the hamlet of rDo-mtshan (lit. 'Sexed Stones') beside Tsa-ri. According to this tradition, these 'sexed stones' are apparently conceptualised according to the famous Indic cosmic dismemberment narratives connected with the Śaiva/ Śākta conceptions of the *pīṭha* system; in other words, as far as I understand it, following the taming myths, they are seen as the stone symbols of Maheśvara and his goddesses installed at Tsari (= the *pīṭha* Caritrā) and at each of the other 24 *pīṭhas*, before their downfall to Heruka. Apparently these *svayambhu* stone phalluses and vulvas are not obvious or easy to perceive, except by advanced yogins. While important for Tantric meditators, they are more often seen by lay persons as bestowing special powers of procreation and fertility. These stones and other features of the sacred topography of Tsa-ri are described in Toni HUBER 1993: *What is a Mountain? An Ethnohistory of Representation and Ritual at Pure Crystal Mountain in Tibet.* PhD Dissertation, University of Canterbury, Christchurch (New Zealand), pp. 82ff.

deities' seats are being described; otherwise, they seem to have no role to play, and there is no need to name them. One has the impression that were all its internal references to Śaivism to become forgotten altogether, the Cakrasaṃvara traditions of Tibetan Buddhism could still continue more or less unchanged.

However, as I have said above, my knowledge of the Cakrasaṃvara traditions is by no means entirely exhaustive, and so my perception of its representations of Śiva might yet prove to be mistaken. But if, as I expect, my current perceptions do indeed transpire to be accurate, this could be considered a little surprising, because there surely can be no area of the Buddhist tradition more intimately bound up with Śaivism than the Cakrasaṃvara Tantras. As we know from SANDERSON's work, large sections of their major scriptures, such as the *Laghuśaṃvara* and the *Abhidhānottara*, are borrowed virtually word for word from Śaiva prototypes such as the *Picumata* and the *Tantrasadbhāva*.[15] In addition,

15. For those readers unfamiliar with SANDERSON's work, although I cannot review all the issues here, perhaps it might be useful to present one brief quotation from my recent book in which I review some of SANDERSON's findings (taken from MAYER 1996 op.cit., pp.59-60):

"A contemporary Indologist, Alexis SANDERSON, has already identified (through textual criticism) a good quarter of all the verses in the long and important *Laghuśaṃvara* as having been adapted or borrowed virtually unchanged word-by-word from earlier Śaiva texts such as the *Picumata / Brahmayāmala*, the *Siddhayogeśvarīmata*, and the *Yoginīsamcāra[prakaraṇa]* (which latter appears in the third *ṣaṭka*, or section of 6000 verses, of the composite *Jayadrathayāmala*). This is remarkable for several reasons. Firstly, the *Laghuśaṃvara* is often considered the single most important text of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle. Secondly, the quarter of the text so far demonstrably incorporated from Śaiva sources might not reveal the full extent of the dependency, since not all the corpus of relevant Śaiva texts survive; for example, the **Yoginījālaśaṃvara* and the **Sarvavirasamāyoga* are two lost Śaiva texts that were influential in the eighth century, a period when a matrix of Buddhist Yoginītantras were produced whose very names may have been calques on the Śaiva texts (*Ḍākinījālaśaṃvara* and *Sarvabuddhasamāyoga*). Thirdly, a good part of the *Laghuśaṃvara* consists of mantroddharas and the like that are written very much in the manner of a Śaiva text, but which obviously could not be lifted in directly from Śaiva sources, given the important function of mantras as a text's unique signatures. Since the important Cakrasaṃvara *vyākhyātantra* (explanatory tantra), the *Abhidhānottara*, seems to draw on similar materials to the [proto-] *Laghuśaṃvara*, a quantity of the same Śaiva materials is found there as well, probably in an earlier form than the *Laghuśaṃvara* as we have it now (SANDERSON op. cit. 1990; 1993; 1995). Among other shared materials are the all-important samayāḥ (tantric vows of conduct). (Thanks to Alexis SANDERSON for these references)."

the Cakrasaṃvara iconography has probably remained closer to its Śaiva prototypes than any other Buddhist iconography. On top of that, the colourful and popular Cakrasaṃvara rendition of the taming myth, even if doctrinally comparatively restricted in scope, is nevertheless extremely widely attested in Tibet, and numerous versions of it are preserved and frequently repeated at both learned and popular levels; at first glance, one might possibly have expected this fact alone to have had more impact in terms of an historical awareness of the relation of the two traditions. Yet the acknowledgement of anything Śaiva does not seem to have been allowed to pervade very widely or deeply through the tradition. As far as I am aware, the Cakrasaṃvara tradition in Tibet contrives to deny the surface meaning of its own origin myth, and presents itself as having an exclusively Buddhist nature, often even claiming to have been originally taught by the historical Buddha during his lifetime in a transcendent form at the Dhānyakaṭaka Stupa near Amarāvatī in Andhra country, simultaneous to his preaching of the Mahāyāna Sūtras in a more anthropomorphic form at the Vulture's Peak in Bihar (NEWMAN 1985: 53)[16]. Thus, within Tibet at least, the Cakrasaṃvara cycle is generally conceptualised as a product of a uniquely Buddhist environment with scant acknowledgement of any debts to or historical contacts with Śaivism, or any realistic acknowledgement of the Śaiva iconography of its *mandalas*. It seems to me, then, that Buddhism has here decided to turn a blind eye to significant aspects of its own nature and origins: there seems to be a degree of deliberate avoidance or even denial of the full extent of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle's debts to Śaivism. Even the apparently obvious message of the taming narrative becomes ignored, isolated and negated by the denying attitudes of the broader tradition as a whole.

This traditional policy of denial has inevitably had its effect on modern Buddhology too. As recently as 1991, one of the finest of contemporary Buddhologists working in Vajrayāna, Ronald DAVIDSON, wrote of the list of 24 *pīthas* as mentioned in the Cakrasaṃvara-cycle's Śiva-taming narratives, that "it cannot be immediately assumed that [this] was a popular Hindu system subsumed into the Buddhist fold..." DAVIDSON continues, "The Buddhist mythic contention that these [24] places were initially Śaiva cannot be accepted as fact. Instead, the list is

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16. John NEWMAN 1985: "A Brief History of the Kālacakra". In *The Wheel of Time*, ed. Geshe Lhundub Sopa, Roger Jackson & John Newman, Madison: Deer Park Books, pp. 51-84.

developed out of such geographical lists of places noted in esoteric Buddhist literature as early as the *Mahāmāyūrī-vidyā-rajñī-dhāraṇī*".[17] In other words, DAVIDSON admits that the taming narratives of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition openly assert that the Buddhists took the system of *pīṭhas* from the Śaivas; yet he argues that as critical modern scholars, we should not believe this unlikely story. To my mind, this comparatively recent quotation from a first class scholar such as DAVIDSON only goes to show what a major long-term impact SANDERSON's extensive, painstakingly detailed and solidly founded philological work is likely to have on the Vajrayāna branch of Buddhology: thanks to SANDERSON, we can now move on from educated speculation, to a *terra firma* of sorts; for as SANDERSON has conclusively shown, the Buddhists did indeed adopt the system of *pīṭhas* directly from the Śaiva canon, exactly as the Buddhist taming narrative maintains![18]

I do not feel this is the moment to embark on a discussion of how things might have been in Indian Buddhism; however, as far as I can see, there seem to be three factors that can help account for this traditional understatement of the surface message of the taming myths and other Śaiva elements within the Cakrasaṃvara systems of Tibet:

[i] Firstly, as far as I know, the taming myths occurs only in commentarial texts of the Yoginītantras, and not in the actual canonical Yoginī scriptures themselves. Hence they are by definition somewhat marginal to the tradition as a whole, and from a traditional point of view there is no compulsion for their message to make an appearance at deeper or broader levels of *sādhana* and metaphysics. According to Ronald DAVIDSON, it is not even quite clear to what extent the Cakrasaṃvara-cycle Śiva taming myths as we currently have them derive from Indic sources, and to what extent they originate in Tibet. While R.A. STEIN has cited the following sources which he believes to be Indic, as far as I know he has not yet got round to publishing any findings from them: [1] A commentary by Indrabhūti, Peking bsTan-'gyur 2129; [2] Two commentaries by Vajra, Peking bsTan-'gyur 2128 and 2140. [3] A commentary by Nāropa, Peking bsTan-'gyur 4628 [4] a text he identifies only as

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17. Ronald M. DAVIDSON: "Reflections on the Maheśvara Subjugation Myth: Indic Materials, Sa-skya-pa Apologetics, and the Birth of Heruka", JIABS 14.2 (1991): 224.

18. See in particular *Origin and Function*, op.cit.; and *Pious Plagiarism*, p. 15, with Sanskrit texts pp. 3-4.

P. No.2624 [sic]. Following STEIN's lead, Ronald DAVIDSON reports that the two commentaries by Indrabhūti and Śūravajra do indeed make the subjugation of Maheśvara "part of the lore surrounding the advent of the Cakrasaṃvara Tantras."[19] Having read these two texts, however, DAVIDSON's conclusion is that they are too brief to account for the fully comprehensive earliest known Tibetan version of the Cakrasaṃvara taming myth written by the early Sa-skya-pa patriarch Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan, who lived from 1167-1216. One feature of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's analysis mentioned by DAVIDSON was that the Buddhists' arch-fiend figure of Maheśvara/Rudra himself becomes re-interpreted as an aspect of the Buddha of primordial enlightenment, an interpretation highly typical of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa exegesis of the taming narratives. DAVIDSON concludes, "so far as I am able to determine, fully developed forms [of the Cakrasaṃvara taming myth] occur only in indigenous Tibetan language materials, and the text of a Tibetan author of the twelfth-thirteenth century appears to be the earliest version". (DAVIDSON 1991 op.cit., p.204).

[ii] A second reason for the understatement of the debts to Śaivism is that Tibetan Buddhism did not have to co-exist with Śaivism in the same way that Indian or Nepalese Buddhism has had to do. Hence Tibetan approaches to Hinduism in any of its aspects has always tended to reduce Hindu categories into convenient sets of mainly abstract symbols for purely domestic intellectual or scholastic consumption. With the actual presence of Hinduism so distant, there was no need to take it seriously as a living historical reality. The reduction by learned clerics of its few references to Śaivism into purely abstract sets of symbols, is precisely what seems to have happened in the case of the Cakrasaṃvara cycle in Tibet.

[iii] Thirdly, the general tendency of the gSar-ma-pa traditions is to see the Tantras as the utterances of the historical Buddha, even if uttered by him in the transcendent form of Vajradhara. In other words, the gSar-ma-pa tend to support a closed canon, rejecting the idea of ongoing revelation and the continuous addition of new scripture to the existing

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19. DAVIDSON gives exact citations: *śricakrasaṃvaratantrarājasaṃbarasamuc-caya-vṛtti*, To. 1413, rgyud 'grel, vol. *tsa*, fol. 4ab; *Mūlatantrahṛdaya-saṃgrahābhidhānottaratantra-mūlamūlavṛtti*, To 1414, rgyud 'grel, vol. *tsa*, fol. 121a7.

canonical collections through the 'shamanic' (in SAMUEL's special technical sense) processes of colonising or 'taming' extraneous religious systems such as Śaivism. Thus the historical implications of the taming myth, that so clearly identify the origins of the Yoginītantras as an historical Buddhist response to Śaivism involving a stategy of co-option, are possibly something of an embarrassment: they suggest an uncomfortable truth, one that best remains understated.

II. *The Taming myth in the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Tantric scriptures.*

The other area of Tibetan Buddhism I wish to discuss in which the Maheśvara/Rudra myths are important lies within the Mahāyoga traditions of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa. Here, however, the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra takes on a very full and central role indeed, within the very heart of *sādhana*, within a great many aspects of ritual, and at the very deepest levels of commentarial exegesis. Here, little or no effort is made to ignore or contain the taming myths (with all their implicit implications of dependence), nor to deny Buddhist Tantrism's debts to the figures of Maheśvara/Rudra, even if these debts become heavily reinterpreted in Buddhism's favour. On the contrary, the very dependence of Vajrayāna Buddhism on this hostile and alien figure is itself elevated to a valuable spiritual truth, and the Śaiva deity himself is accorded a pervasive and pivotal role in rÑiṅ-ma-pa metaphysics, soteriology, and ritual. In the rest of this paper, I want to mainly look at this complex figure of Rudra in the rÑiṅ-ma-pa tantric tradition.

Unlike the Cakrasaṃvara traditions, the taming of Maheśvara/Rudra narrative plays a significant part in a great many of the most important canonical Tantric scriptures of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa tradition. It is true, of course, that much of the main rÑiṅ-ma-pa tantric canon, the *rÑiṅ-ma'i rgyud-'bum* (henceforth NGB), consists of materials composed or compiled in Tibet, rather than direct translations from Sanskrit as in the case of most of the Tantric texts of the gSar-ma-pa canon, the Kanjur. However, in integrating the taming myths into their scriptures, the rÑiṅ-ma-pa were certainly remaining true to a much older Sanskrit Vajrayāna tradition. Arguably the oldest and most important of all versions of the Maheśvara/Rudra taming myths is that found in the *Sarvatathāgata-tattvasaṃgraha* (henceforth STTS), the basic text of the older Yogatantra tradition, which became the source of the very wide dispersal of the taming myth in Far Eastern Tantric Buddhism. Likewise, taming myths occur in scriptures of the Mahāyoga traditions found in the

Tibetan Kanjur as well as in the NGB, and which are generally thought to have had an Indic origin, such as the *Candraguhyatilaka-mahātantra-rāja,*[20] and the text known to the Tibetans as the **Guhyagarbha-tattva-viniścaya,* which SANDERSON has possibly identified from Sanskrit sources as originally bearing the name of *Guhyakośa.*

In the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Tantras, the scriptural references to the taming myths are not merely fleeting or marginal. On the contrary, they assume the greatest possible significance, occupying large sections within the most important of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Tantras. The taming myth occupies an entire chapter of the **Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya,* for example, and this text is widely considered the most important single scripture within the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Mahāyoga tradition as a whole. In the *Mdo dgoṅs-pa 'dus-pa,* a text of uncertain origin said to have been translated from the 'Bru-sha language, which is the root text for the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Anuyoga tradition but also very influential for Mahāyoga, the highly extended taming narrative occupies no less than eleven chapters, (chs. 20-31) and, in the words of Matthew KAPSTEIN, this taming narrative "has become the organising metaphor of the text as a whole".[21] No one has yet attempted a comprehensive survey of the frequency of scriptural occur-

20. This occurrence of the taming myth is reported by DAVIDSON op.cit. p. 203, based on the version of the *Candraguhyatilaka-mahātantrarāja* as found in sDe-dge rgyud-'bum, vol. *ja,* fols. 281a-287a. It might be of interest to note that I recently made a brief and cursory ad hoc comparison of the opening chapter of the versions of the *Candraguhyatilaka-mahātantrarāja* as contained in the sTog Kanjur (vol. 97 CHA, 226a3-297b5) and in the mTshams-brag NGB (vol 18 folios 357 ff); I found that substantial portions at the beginning of the text seemed to be dramatically at variance between the different editions, while other portions were more or less the same. Note also that quite different translators from different historical periods are mentioned in the colophons of the different versions.

21. See his "Samantabhadra and Rudra: Innate Enlightenment and Radical Evil in Tibetan Rnying-ma-pa Buddhism", in F. Reynolds and D. Tracy, eds., *Discourse and Practice,* SUNY 1992, p. 66. R.A. STEIN has recently written a characteristically valuable and interesting paper in which he proposes that this extended version from the *Mdo dgoṅs-pa 'dus-pa* differs from Sanskrit texts such as the STTS and the **Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya* in that it talks more of Rudra than of Maheśvara; STEIN further suggests that it might be the source for the detailed taming narratives found in a number of other Mahāyoga scriptures, including some he has closely studied that were placed in the rNying-rgyud section of the Kanjur, such as the *Me-lce 'bar-ba* (P466), the *bDud-rtsi chen-po* (P464, and an untitled text that accompanies them (P465) (STEIN 1995, op.cit). The *Mdo dgoṅs-pa 'dus-pa* version of the taming narrative has also probably been very influential on important gTer-ma texts such as the *Padma bka'i thaṅ.*

rences of the taming narratives within the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Tantric canons, but I have encountered them in casual readings of several other rÑiṅ-ma-pa tantras, such as the *dPal rdo-rje phur-pa'i bśad-rgyud dri-med 'od*, [Thimpu NGB Sa, 28]; in the *Phur-pa mya-ṅan-las-'das-pa'i rgyud chen-po* [Thimpu NGB Sa, 28]; and in also in a doxographically more important text that I have looked at more carefully, the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis*, one of the main root texts for the Vajrakīlaya tradition [Thimpu NGB Dza, 19]. STEIN has also reported extended taming myths in a number of other rÑiṅ-ma-pa Tantras, such as the *Me-lce 'bar-ba* (P466), the *bDud-rtsi chen-po* (P464), and an untitled text that accompanies them (P465) (STEIN 1995, op.cit.). From the above evidence, it is not unreasonable to assume that taming narratives will eventually be found in a significant proportion of rÑiṅ-ma-pa tantric scriptures. For example, they are quite likely to turn up in several more of the nineteen *Guhyagarbhatantras preserved in the NGB, and not merely in the single if most important specimen from among this voluminous literature studied by Gyurme DORJE, namely the *Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya* mentioned above.[22] On doctrinal grounds, we can also predict a good likelihood of finding taming narratives in several more of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa tantras connected with major Heruka figures such as Vajrakīlaya, Hayagrīva, and so on.

The taming myth in Kloṅ-chen-pa's Phyogs-bcu mun-sel

If the taming of Maheśvara/Rudra narratives loom so large within the rÑiṅ-ma-pa scriptures, the question arises as to why? What important messages do they convey? To approach this complex question, I want to begin by citing a few key passages from a definitive traditional commentary on the *Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya* called the *Phyogs-bcu mun-sel*, 'Dispersing the darkness of the ten directions', written by that most influential of all rÑiṅ-ma-pa commentators, the fourteenth century sage Kloṅ-chen-pa. This extensive commentary has been translated in full by Gyurme DORJE (DORJE 1987, op.cit.). Here, I can only summarise a few salient points from its treatment of the taming narrative.

Kloṅ-chen-pa provides a comprehensive exegesis of the taming myth that aims only to bring out its soteriological implications: actual histori-

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22. DORJE, Gyurme 1987: *The Guhyagarbhatantra and its Fourteenth Century Tibetan Commentary Phyogs-bcu mun-sel.* Unpublished PhD thesis, London: SOAS.

cal fact, in the shape of the relations of Buddhism with Śaivism in India, are of no interest to him. Now, it is a famous feature of this particular commentary that Klon-chen-pa here seeks to interpret even the root text for all Mahāyoga, the *Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya* or *rGyud gsan-ba sñin-po*, to some degree at least from the doctrinally higher and philosophically even less dualistic point of view of Atiyoga or rDzogs-chen. Hence it is that within this profound soteriological exegesis of the taming myth, Klon-chen-pa adopts above all the uncompromisingly and quite radically non-dual perspectives characteristic of Atiyoga, focusing more on themes of primal purity than on more typical Mahāyoga themes of transformation. It is this bias towards Atiyoga which probably underpins his strong emphasis on the proposal that even the evil demon Maheśvara, who here as elsewhere throughout the Mahāyoga literature is consistently identified as the chief and worst of all the Māras, is ultimately an expression of primordial wisdom.

Firstly, Klon-chen-pa affirms that the Buddhist tantric wrathful deities exist primordially, and are particularly connected with the head *cakra*, just as the Buddhist peaceful deities exist primordially and are particularly connected with the heart *cakra*. He explains that this is entirely in accord with Buddhist doctrines on the *trikāya* and on the subtle body. It is therefore only to illustrate the principles of the Vajra-yāna teachings to trainee sentient beings, that the Rudra-taming episode is enacted at all; in other words, Klon-chen-pa is saying that although the wrathful Buddhist *kāpālika* deities exist primordially, they skilfully manifest themselves to beings via the occasion of the taming of Rudra. Thus Rudra himself is not really what he seems: he is in reality an expression of primordial wisdom, appearing as a demon to be subdued in order to provide an occasion by which the principles of the secret mantrayāna can be made clear to beings. In that he constitutes the unique condition for the revelation of the supreme Vajrayāna itself, he is thus superior even to a Buddha's emanation in the usual sutric parlance.

If all this begs some questions about Rudra's behaviour in harming and killing so many sentient beings through illness, calamity, and false teachings, as so graphically described in the main body of the narrative, Klon-chen-pa compares the situation with that described in the *Anguli-mālā-sūtra*. He writes:

> This is reminiscent of a common sūtra which reveals that when the dwarf Angulimāliya had formed a garland of the fingers of 999 men he had slain, he was tamed by the Buddha and ultimately shown to have no defect. However it

> was in fact an emanation of the Tathāgatas who slew phantom human beings of his own emanation so that the garland was strung... (translation from DORJE op.cit., p. 1088)

Thus Rudra is a phantasmagorical expression of Buddhist skilful means, who uniquely can demonstrate a negative example to sentient beings, without actually harming anyone. On the other hand, anyone foolish enough to attempt to emulate Rudra's outward behaviour would undoubtedly cause great harm, and this fact becomes a very important point in rÑiṅ-ma-pa writings on ethics, doctrine and the Tantric *samaya* vows, as I shall describe later on.

In typical Buddhist fashion, Rudra becomes an archetype and is multiplied. There can be any number of Rudras in different worlds. We can all become Rudras if we misunderstand the tantras, taking them literally with no insight into Buddhist metaphysical truths. Thus Rudra becomes transformed from an historical Śaiva deity, into a generalised symbol of evil with a very broad application. He has become elevated from history into myth, from a specific Hindu god to a universal symbol of evil equivalent to Māra.

Kloṅ-chen-pa summarises this first part of his exegesis:

> Rudra attained Buddhahood as Samantabhadra in primordial original time, and then, in order to subdue the Māra who appeared within his self-manifesting *cakra*s, he became manifest in and of himself ...." (DORJE op.cit., p.1092)

> In brief, just as the lion throne appears to symbolise the presence of the four kinds of fearlessness, Rudra appears to be subdued in order to symbolise victory over all demons and outside aggressors, and the complete mastery which overwhelms proud spirits. At the time when enlightenment is attained, Māra must appear to be subdued. Thus when the subjugation of Rudra, as the first and foremost of the host of proud demons or Māras, is revealed, one attains mastery over the appearances of the self-manifesting *cakra*s.

It is crucial for an understanding of Kloṅ-chen-pa to realise that Rudra is the chief of all Māras. He remains the closest thing to a Buddhist Satan, an inversion of all Buddhist values. It is only through the radical non-dualism of Kloṅ-chen-pa's Atiyoga type of exegesis that even the chief of the Māras is realised to be an expression of primordial wisdom like Samantabhadra; for what is enlightenment other than the conquest of Māra, and how could Māra be conquered if he did not manifest? Therefore there can be no enlightenment without Māra, and so Māra must be an expression of primordial wisdom. As the foremost of the Māras, Rudra is also indispensable for enlightenment.

It is worth noting that in this non-dual interpretation of Rudra as primordially enlightened, Kloṅ-chen-pa is not diverging from the early Sa-skya-pa exegesis of the Cakrasaṃvara taming myth. As DAVIDSON has pointed out, the Sa-skya-pa patriarch Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan took a very similar view in his work *dPal he ru ka'i byuṅ tshul*, a title which translates as "How Heruka was born".[23] Here Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan distinguished two levels of the Cakrasaṃvara tradition of the taming myth, the provisional meaning (*neyārtha*) and the definitive meaning (*nītārtha*). While the provisional meaning took the taming narrative at face value as a story of Buddhism conquering the wicked deities of the Śaiva pantheon, according to the definitive meaning, the tamer and the tamed become non-differentiated. The Śaiva deities, including Bhairava and Kālarātri, are all seen as emanations of Maheśvara, who is in turn seen as an emanation of the Buddha Vajradhara. Likewise, all the Buddhist deities who effect the conversion are emanations of Śri Heruka, who is himself an emanation of Vajradhara. Thus, from the point of view of the definitive meaning, all the characters in the taming myth are emanations of Mahāvajradhara (DAVIDSON 1991 op.cit., p. 208). However, as DAVIDSON points out, Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan cited no written sources for this interpretation of his: he simply states, it is "culled from the speech of my guru".[24] As a major early commentator of his own hereditary family lineage of the rÑiṅ-ma *Phur-pa* tradition as well as of the newer tantras such as Hevajra and Cakrasaṃvara, it is theoretically not impossible that Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan in fact borrowed this idea from the Vajrakīlaya literature or other rÑiṅ-ma-pa sources. Until we have read more of the surviving Indic Cakrasaṃvara commentarial texts such as those from the Tenjur mentioned above, we cannot easily assess how much of the Cakrasaṃvara taming myth is indigenous to Tibet. However, my own hunch is that it probably does have a substantially Indic basis; otherwise, it would be unlikely to have established so secure a place for itself within the writings of such seminal gSar-ma-pa authorities as Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan and Bu-ston, endowed as they were with such highly-developed critical faculties.

23. *Sa-skya bka'-'bum* (henceforth SKB), III.298.4.2-300.2.6 (bSod-nams rgya-mtsho, ed., *The Complete Works of the Great Masters of the Sa Skya Sect of the Tibetan Buddhism* (Tokyo: Toyo Bunko 1968).

24. *Dpal he ru ka'i byuṅ tshul rnam par bźag pa bla ma'i gsuṅ las cuṅ zad btus te.* SKB III.300.2.6; cited in DAVIDSON op.cit., p. 231, n. 8

Chapter Seven of the Phur-pa bcu-gñis.

I now want to consider more specific applications of the figure of Mahe-
śvara/Rudra within the Vajrakīlaya tradition, beginning by looking at
the taming narrative of Chapter 7 of the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis-kyi rgyud*, an
important root-text from the NGB, counted by that tradition as one of
the Eighteen [Root] Tantras of Mahāyoga *(tantra sde bco-brgyad)*.[25] I
want to show how the single episode of the taming of Maheśvara/Rudra
can be seen as the central, pivotal moment for the unfolding of this
whole scripture: for it is out of this single great and complex act of the
taming of Maheśvara/Rudra that the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis* seeks to derive
all the most important teachings of the Vajrakīlaya tradition, including
the key doctrinal positions, the major iconographic features, the basic
visualisation sequences used in Vajrakīlaya *sādhanas*, the major Vajra-
kīlaya ritual specialities, and the key Vajrakīlaya textual passages, which
latter function both as scripture and as the most important liturgical
passages. Surprising though it might seem to those unfamiliar with the
rÑiṅ-ma-pa Mahāyoga traditions, according to the anonymous authors of
the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis*, all such absolutely fundamental components of
this most pre-eminent among rÑiṅ-ma-pa *yi dam* soteriological systems
should thus be seen as being directly derived from or directly linked to
the taming narrative, and hence to the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra. In
this way the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra seems to be invested with a
scriptural prominence and a quite crucial doctrinal and even spiritual
importance that I have not yet encountered in my readings of the Cakra-
saṃvara tradition (although I would not be entirely surprised if some-
thing similar were eventually to turn up in some early precursors of the
developed Cakrasaṃvara tradition).

25. The full title is *Phur pa bcu gñis kyi rgyud ces bya ba theg pa chen po'i mdo*.
    There are in fact several texts in the NGB with quite similar titles to this, but the
    particular one I am referring to is perhaps traditionally considered the most im-
    portant, since it has been selected as one of the special Eighteen Tantras. My
    analysis below is based on my consultation of this text as contained in the
    following editions of the NGB: the sDe-dge xylograph NGB, vol. PA, ff.176r-
    251v; a manuscript NGB held in the National Archives, Kathmandu, vol MA,
    ff.37r-129v; the reprint edition of the mTshams-brag manuscript NGB preserved
    in the National Library, Thimpu, vol. DZA, 393r-507r (pages 785-1013); the
    Thimpu reprint of the gTing-skyes dgon-pa-byang monastery manuscript NGB,
    vpl. DZA, 1r-100r (pages 1-199); and the Waddell Manuscript NGB, mainly
    held in the India Office Library, London, vol DZA, 1r-91r.

Perhaps I should begin with a brief summary of the chapter. It is entitled 'Chapter Seven, How the arrogant [gods] were tamed', *gdug pa can btul ba'i le'u ste bdun pa'o //*, and is found within pages 82-92 of the Thimpu reprint NGB, within pages 871-884 of the mTshams-brag Manuscript NGB, and within folios 206r to 210v of the sDe-dge xylograph NGB. This substantial prose chapter is dedicated entirely to a lengthy description of the taming of Maheśvara/Rudra and his entourage, containing no other material. To my mind, the narrative clearly appears here, as in many other rÑiṅ-ma-pa Tantras, as a charter-myth for Buddhist kāpālikaism. More specifically, it also gives the context for the first appearance of the main Vajrakīlaya *maṇḍala* itself, which up to this point had not yet made its appearance in the text. The narrative begins with the Buddhas noticing that the Śaiva deities were causing terrible harm to the world by their savage attacks against the Buddhist religion. The Buddhas also perceived that the Śaiva deities could never be influenced by peaceful means; hence Vajrakīlaya manifested a special wrathful form with one thousand heads, a thousand arms, and ten billion feet, dwelling in a cemetery palace. From this form in turn was emanated the six-armed, four-legged, three-headed basic form of Vajrakumāra so familiar from rÑiṅ-ma-pa *sādhana* texts, here called the 'Excellent Son', embracing his consort Ekajaṭā. Easily victorious, Vajrakumāra subdued and trampled the arrogant Śaiva gods underfoot. To mark his victory, he was then invested by Vajrakīlaya with the emblems of the Śaiva gods, such as the *khaṭvāṅga* and the other *kāpālika* regalia. To proceed with the conquest of the remainder of the Śaiva pantheon, the Buddhist deities next emanated some further forms, known as the 'Kīlayas of the Five Families', i.e. Buddhakīlaya, Vajrakīlaya, Ratnakīlaya, Padmakīlaya, and Karmakīlaya; each of these had upper bodies similar to Vajrakumāra's, while their lower bodies were shaped like triangular *kīlas*. Upon this, the subsidiary Śaiva deity Vighnarāja (or Ganeśa) with all his retinue of *vighna* deities (Tib. *bgegs;* as with the Sanskrit, literally, = 'obstacles') was summoned; to the accompaniment of some potent 'vajra verses', the assembled Śaiva *vighna* deities were killed, and their remainders roasted or burned and eaten.

Most significantly, in my opinion, it is only at this point within the scripture, after these great acts of conquest had been carried out, that the interlocutor figure becomes transformed for the first time from the general, less esoteric tantric form of Vajradharma, to the specifically *kāpālika*, more esoteric Tantric form of Karmaheruka, which latter form

he retains for the duration of the remainder of the scripture. Thus trans-
formed into Karmaheruka, the interlocutor now asks Lord Vajrakīlaya
how the yogins of future ages should emulate this great deed of subdu-
ing the Śaiva deities? Vajrakīlaya replies with twenty-three lines of the
most famous root verses of the Vajrakīlaya tradition, verses that are
found repeated verbatim in virtually every Vajrakīlaya *gter ma, sādh-
ana*, liturgy, commentary, and so on, verses which have also attracted
far more important commentarial attention than any other section of the
Vajrakīlaya literature. They are known by heart in some version or an-
other by most serious Tibetan practitioners of this cycle, and they also
occur in the *rTsa-ba'i dum-bu* or *Vajrakīlayamūlatantrakhaṇda*,[26] the
only fragment of Vajrakīlaya literature to have gained entry into the
Kanjur, in this case through the efforts of Grags-pa rgyal-mtshan's
famous successor, Sa-skya Paṇḍita. These root verses not only give the
key teachings on the practice of 'liberative killing' (*sgrol ba, mokṣa*) for
which the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Mahāyoga in general, and the Vajrakīlaya cycle in
particular are so famous, but, according to the commentarial tradition,
they also give the most crucial of all instructions on the main Mahāyoga
contemplative soteriology itself.[27] After this important episode, the

26. Peking Kanjur 78, 3; sTog Palace Kanjur Catalogue no. 405; sDe-dge Kanjur,
    Toh. no. 439; Ulan Bator Kanjur Handlist, no. 469.
27. Innumerable variants of these verses occur within the multifarious *Phur pa* tradi-
    tions taken as a whole (see MAYER op.cit. pages 212-215). Here, I show only the
    version given in Chapter 7 of the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis* itself, mainly following the
    sDe-dge xylograph NGB, vol PA, folio 209r, but including some of the main
    variant readings taken from other editions: / *rdo rje khros pas źe sdaṅ gcod //
    mtshon chen sṅon po 'bar ba yis // nam mkha'i dkyil nas thigs par* [thig pa] *śar
    // srog gi go ru śar ba daṅ // sñiṅ gi go ru bsgom par bya // sñiṅ rjes bsgral ba'i
    dam tshig ni // gsad ciṅ mnan pa ma yin te // phuṅ po rdo rjer gtams byas nas //
    rnam par śes pa rdo rjer bsgom // rdo rje gźon nu'i rigs 'dzin rnams // srid pa
    rdo rje grub mdzod cig // srid pa rdo rje phur pa'i lha /* [however, the previous
    four yig-rkang are omitted in sDe-dge; I take them here from mTshams-brag ms.
    vol DZA, p 880] / *ye śes khro bo 'grub* [or grub] *par mdzod // saṅs rgyas kun
    gyi ye śes sku // ṅaṅ ñid rdo rje chos dbyiṅs las // 'bar ba'i khro bo mi bzad pa //
    sku yi dbyig tu* [sDe-dge reads dbyings su] *bdag bskyed ciṅ // thabs kyi spyod
    pas 'gro don du // byams daṅ sñiṅ rjes gaṅ 'dul ba // saṅs rgyas 'phrin las
    rdzogs bya'i phyir // dbaṅ daṅ byin rlabs 'dir stsol cig // de rjes phyi naṅ gsaṅ
    gsum dbaṅ // byin rlabs bdag la stsal nas ni // de ñid du ni mi snad* [or snang]
    *'gyur // de nas sras mchog yab yum gyis // gñis med byaṅ chub sems las ni //
    'byuṅ ba'i gsaṅ sṅags 'di yin no* / The soteriological meaning of these key verses
    is analysed at considerable length by 'Jam-mgon koṅ-sprul blo-'gros mtha'-yas
    in a famous commentary on the *rTsa-ba'i dum-bu: see his dPal rdo rje phur pa*

taming narrative continues with the emanation of the well-known Mahā-yoga versions of the 'Ten Wrathful Deities' (daśakrodha), along with their female consorts and their zoomorphic attendants. By now, the Śaiva deities have been reduced to a pulp, upon which the special Buddhist waste-disposal deity Ucchuṣmakrodha is emanated. The latter consumes the mess, through which process the Śaiva pantheon become revived once more; now they take the service-names of 'Grub-pa Laṅkā' (sic), promising to protect future Buddhist yogins, and offering them-selves as the seats of the Buddhist deities. Next, Vajrakīlaya copulates with each one of the consorts of the Śaiva deities, and from these unions, the series of goddesses Gaurī etc., Siṅhama etc., and Aṅkuśa etc., are born. After being used in this way, the Śaiva female deities themselves are bound under oath as servants, and consigned to the out-side of the maṇḍala (as the protective Twenty-eight Iśvarīs). With this, the emanation of the Vajrakīlaya maṇḍala of deities is complete.

Let us now look at how this narrative is interpreted and exploited by the tradition. To my mind, the taming narrative clearly signals sacrificial motifs, as I believe is also the case in Chapter 15 of the *Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya. The main implement used by the Buddhist deities in their work is the kīla, which, as I have shown elsewhere, shares distinct iconographic and ritual features with the yūpa, or sacrificial stake (MAYER 1991).[28] The Śaiva deities are slain, consumed by the Buddhist deities, digested by them, and then excreted, a symbolic representation of the transformation of impurity still widely current in India and which in itself has sacrificial overtones, here with the digestive fire of the deities analogous to the transformative fire of the sacrifice.[29] Through

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rtsa ba'i rgyud kyi dum bu'i 'grel pa sñiṅ po bsdus pa dpal chen dgyes pa'i źal luṅ źes bya ba (henceforth DG), 85 ff.

28. Robert MAYER 1991: "Observations on the Tibetan Phur-pa and the Indian Kīla", in *The Buddhist Forum* vol. II, London: SOAS. A considerable quantity of data further reinforcing my original association of the *phur pa* with the *yūpa* has come to light since this article was published. The reader might like to note that in this article, a computer-generated hyper-correction resulted in the two quite distinct Tibetan words *phur pa* and *phur bu* becoming conflated as a meaningless single word, *phur ba.

29. See Jonathan PARRY, 1985. "Death and Digestion: the Symbolism of Food and Eating in North Indian Mortuary Rites". In *Man* vol. 20.4, pp. 612-630. PARRY writes: "Digestion is thought to distil the good and nourishing part of food from the bad waste products; and it is employed in a wide range of cultural contexts. It is argued that by ingesting and digesting the deceased, his impure sins are elimi-

this process, the impure 'Proud Gods' are transmuted into pure aspects of the Vajrakīlaya *maṇḍala*: in other words, we can see the entire process as a rite of passage, through which Rudrahood sheds its delusive aspects and achieves maturity into Herukahood.[30] In this sense, the taming of Rudra is a symbol of the entire Buddhist path. But let us look more minutely at what the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis* gives us out of this great sacrifice of Maheśvara/Rudra.

To start with, the taming narrative becomes the opportunity to introduce the specifically Vajrakīlaya *maṇḍala* for the first time. Before this point in the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis*, only general Vajrayāna categories had been discussed, and only the non-specific peaceful *maṇḍala*s had been described in any great detail. Now, the main subject matter or the central *maṇḍala* of the text is finally introduced (a moment marked by the change in the name of the interlocutor from Vajradharma to Karmaheruka, as I have already mentioned above). The manner of this introduction of the main subject matter is also noteworthy: the detailed description of the Vajrakīlaya or Vajrakumāra *maṇḍala* precisely and exactly matches the step by step stages of visualisation followed in the *sādhana* traditions. Now, we must remember that Vajrakīlaya is a Mahāyoga cycle, and in the rÑiṅ-ma-pa tradition, Mahāyoga is understood to put a special emphasis on the visualisation processes of the development stage, *skyed rim* or *utpattikrama*, which constitutes its main contemplative technique. Hence in giving the actual visualisations that are the main basis of the main practice through which yogins approach their main spiritual objective of identification with the deity Vajrakumāra, the text is indeed at this point finally offering up its central tenet. The actual narrative runs as follows: in order to tame Maheśvara and his retinues, the teacher of this Tantra, the Lord, the Master of Supreme Secrets [Vajrakīlaya], does the following acts (I paraphrase and summarise the text):

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nated, while his pure essence is distilled and translated by the 'digestive fire' of the stomach to the other world – as the corpse is transmittted by the fire of cremation, and offerings to the gods by the sacrificial fire" (summary, p. 612).

30. For analyses of sacrifice as rites of passage, see Charles MALAMOUD's learned discussion of Vedic ritual, *Cuire le monde*, Paris 1989: 248 ff; for a broader theoretical view, see also Edmund LEACH, *Culture and Communication: the logic by which symbols are connected.* Cambridge University Press 1976; especially pp. 77-93.

Firstly, to build up the deity's palace, he emanates the syllables *e*, *yaṃ, raṃ, ma, suṃ, keṃ* and *bhrūṃ*, along with the utterance of the associated mantras, *e ākāśa hūṃ, karma rakṣa haṃ, raṃ vajra jvala raṃ, mahārakta jvāla maṇḍala, suṃ samaya hūṃ, keṃ nirṛti maṇḍala,* and *bhrūṃ bhāṇḍa (sic) jñānacakra jvāla maṇḍala.* From these are built up the *maṇḍala*s of the five elements and the cosmic mountain that form the foundation of the deity's palace: the triangular pyramidal blue *maṇḍala* of the space element, identified with Samantabhadrī, the green *maṇḍala* of the air element shaped (in this case) like a crossed vajra and identified with Samayatārā, the triangular red *maṇḍala* of the fire element identified with Pāṇḍaravāsinī, the circular white or red *maṇḍala* of the water element identified with Māmakī, and the square yellow *maṇḍala* of the earth element identified with Buddhalocanā; upon these bases arises the Mount Meru of skeletons, with the immeasurable blazing skull palace of the deity on the very top.[31] Those familiar with Vajrakīlaya *sādhana* texts will easily recognise that this sequence is virtually identical to the ones commonly found in the *sādhana* traditions of the Sa-skya-pa and rÑiṅ-ma-pa alike; it can be found in numerous texts of all types, for example the long Sa-skya-pa Phur-chen, the short and popular Sa-skya-pa *Ñes-don thig-le* (henceforth NT),[32] or the extensive rÑiṅ-ma-pa *gNam-lcags sPu-gri* (henceforth NP),[33] etc. etc.

Next in the taming narrative of the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis* we get the emanation of Vajrakumāra's important main consort of union, Dīptacakra,[34] through the utterance of the mantra *oṃ vajra kīlikīlaya mahākrodhi hūṃ.*

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31. gTiṅ-skyes dgon-pa-byaṅ ms. reprint, vol. DZA, pages 83-85; sDe-dge xylograph, vol. PA, folios 206v-207r; mTshams-brag ms. reprint, vol DZA, pages 872-875.

32. My edition of the Phur Chen is from Rajpur, in 79 folios. NT can be found at sGrub-thabs kun-btus, vol. PA, pp. 165-169.

33. *dPal rDo-rje Phur-bu bDud-'joms gNam-lcags sPu-gri,* from *The Collected Works of H.H. bDud-'joms Rin-po-che,* vols. 10 and 11. n.d., n.p.(for the fullest description of this sequence, see its bsñen yig folios 92ff).

34. Koṅ-sprul explains her name as follows: "Dīpta means blazing, and cakra means wheel". He goes on to explain the wheel specifically as a wheel of destruction that kills enemies (DG, folio 101, lines 1-2). The rendering of her name given by Martin BOORD as 'Tṛptacakra', interpreted by BOORD to indicate a 'wheel of bliss', is not attested in any of the commentaries I have so far seen. Unfortunately, BOORD does not cite any sources for his unusual rendering of the consort's name. See Martin J. BOORD 1993: *The Cult of the Deity Vajrakīla.* Tring: Institute of Buddhist Studies.

She too has not appeared in the text up to this point. She is closely followed by the first manifestation of the central deity Vajrakumāra himself, the very well known form practised in *sādhana* and surely the most popular *yi dam* or *iṣṭadevatā* among the entire rÑiṅ-ma-pa tradition. In many respects, this is absolutely the central event of the whole scripture. I quote from my draft translation:

> Then the fearsome lord Vajrakīlaya uttered '*hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ vajrakīlaya sarva-vighnan baṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ!*', upon which he emanated wrathful deities from out of his body, speech and mind. These emanated deities [killed and] 'liberated' the arrogant gods [Maheśvara etc.] in all the ten directions; and then, regathering, they merged together in front of the Lord, and transformed themselves into the Excellent Son, Vajrakumāra. He had three faces, the right one white, the left one red, and the middle one dark blue, which were very wrathful; and he stood with his four legs held in the posture with [two] drawn in and [two] extended. Filling the surrounding space with his vajra wings, his dark reddish brown hair bristled straight upwards. His head was ornamented with the blood-drinkers of the five [families], and a complete human skin was worn draped around the upper part of his body. A fresh elephant skin was worn at his flanks, and he was ornamented with garlands of dry and fresh heads. His four joints were ornamented with snakes of the four varṇas, and he wore a lower wrap of tiger skin. Residing within a dark maroon mountain of cremation fire, he rested in the embrace of his consort Ekajaṭā. Thus [the many wrathful deities] were transformed into the single [form of Vajrakumāra], who, having trampled underfoot the vicious arrogant gods [Maheśvara etc.] , stood there like a servant attending his lord.[35]

The description given here is exactly that of the version of the deity as visualised in *sādhana*, in this case embracing the 'liberating' aspect of his consort, Ekajaṭā, rather than her 'uniting' aspect Dīptacakra. So here we learn from the taming narrative that the great *yi dam* Vajrakumāra, the focus of more rÑiṅ-ma-pa *sādhana* practice than any other single

35. From sDe-dge xylograph NGB, vol PA, folio 207v: / de nas 'jigs byed kyi bdag po badzra kī la yas // hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ badzra kī la ya / sarba bigh nān baṃ hūṃ hūṃ hūṃ phaṭ / źes brjod pas / sku gsuṅ thugs las phyuṅ ba'i khro bo de dag gis / phyogs bcu'i dregs pa can de dag bsgral nas / slar 'dus te / bcom ldan 'das kyi spyan sña na sras mchog rdo rje gźon nur gyur te / źal gsum pa / g-yas dkar po / g-yon dmar ba // dbus mthiṅ nag // źal śin tu yaṅ rñams pa / źabs bźi brkyaṅ bskum du bźugs pa / rdo rje'i gśog pas gtams pa / skra kham nag gyen du brdzes pa / khrag 'thuṅ lṅas dbu la brgyan ciṅ g-yaṅ gźi ya kor du mnabs pa / glaṅ chen gyi ko rlon go zur mnabs pa / thod pa skam rlon gyi phreṅ bas brgyan pa / sbrul rigs bźis mdo bźir brgyan pa / stag lpags kyi śam thabs can / dur khrod kyi me ri smug nag gi naṅ na bźugs śiṅ / yum ral gcig ma daṅ 'khril pa'i tshul du bźugs pa gcig tu gyur te / bran jo bo la bka' nod pa'i tshul du bźugs śiṅ gdug pa can gyi dregs pa rnams źabs 'og tu brdzis te gnas par gyur to /

deity, was manifested especially and specifically to effect the killing of the hostile Śaiva deity, Maheśvara/Rudra! The point I will try to draw out later on is that when in their daily *sādhanas* yogins practising Vajra-kumāra build up the visualisation of the elements, the palace, and the deity in stages in exactly the same way as described here, they are quite consciously emulating the great archetypal act of taming which the Buddha, in his tantric aspect as the Great Lord, the Master of Supreme Secrets, first did in a bygone age: these later yogins too are doing it for the express purpose of killing Rudrahood, even if not the original legendary Rudra himself, for he has already been slain. First, let us return to the sequence of the taming narrative. The next passage reads as follows:

> Then, in order to endow [Vajrakumāra] with the great [vajra] pride of the wrath-ful [*dharmatā*], and to bestow empowerment [*abhiṣeka*] [upon him], the Great Blood Drinker [Vajrakīlaya] uttered the following [mantra]: '*Hūṃ vajrakīlaya hūṃ jñānavajra*'; upon which he placed a nine-pointed vajra of wisdom [*jñāna*] into [Vajrakumāra's] first right hand, a five-pointed vajra of the five wisdoms into [Vajrakumāra's] middle right hand, and a Mt. Meru [*kīla*], for piercing the defilements [*kleśa*], into the lower right hand. Then, placing the skull-cup of great compassion's lust in the first left hand, empowerment was bestowed. Since [Vajrakumāra] had subjugated [all] the vicious [gods i.e. Maheśvara etc.] in [all] the ten directions, he [also] appropriated their emblem, the *khaṭvāṅga*, to be brandished as a sign of heroism in the middle left hand.[36]

Thus this passage describes how the hand-emblems of the deity are generated, once again in a sequence very like that of the *sādhanas*, and once again at least partly in terms of the conquest of Maheśvara/Rudra.

The narrative continues:

> "Then, in order to [kill and] 'liberate' the [non-Buddhist] protector [deities] of the directions [of space], the King of the Blood Drinkers Vajrakīlaya once more entered into the equanimity of a samādhi of vajra wrath; and from out of the body, speech and mind of Vajrakīlaya himself, [the following mantras] issued forth:

36. From sDe-dge xylograph NGB, vol PA, folio 207v: / de nas khrag 'thuṅ chen pos khros pa'i ṅa rgyal chen por byin te dbaṅ bskur ba'i phyir / hūṃ badzra kīla ya hūṃ dzñā na badzra śes brjod de / ye śes kyi rdo rje rtse dgu pa ni g-yas kyi daṅ por byin / ye śes lha'i rdo rje rtse lha pa ni phyag g-yas kyi bar mar byin / ñon moṅs pa gzir ba'i ri rab ni g-yas kyi tha mar byin / thugs rje chags pa'i bhān da ni g-yon gyi daṅ por byin te baṅ bskur ro // phyogs bcu'i gdug pa can btul nas de'i lag cha kha ṭwāṃ ga phrog nas g-yon gyi bar ma na dpa' rtags su bsnams so /

Oṃ buddhakilikīlaya sarvavighnan baṃ hūṃ phaṭ
Oṃ vajrakilikīlaya sarvavighnan baṃ hūṃ phaṭ
Oṃ ratnakilikīlaya sarvavighnan baṃ hūṃ phaṭ
Oṃ padmakilikīlaya sarvavighnan baṃ hūṃ phaṭ
Oṃ karmakilikīlaya sarvavighnan baṃ hūṃ phaṭ

Upon this utterance, ten activity *kīlaya*s became emanated – those of the activity *kīlaya* of the blood drinker's wrath, the activity *kīlaya* of vajra wrath, the activity *kīlaya* of *ratna* wrath, the activity *kīlaya* of *padma* wrath, the activity *kīlaya* of *karma* wrath, and the [five] activity *kīlaya*s [further] emanated from those of the five families.[37] [All of] these also had three faces and six arms for their upper body, but their lower body appeared as the three sided blade of an iron *kīla*. The reddish brown hair upon their heads bristled up on end in a triangular [shaped] lock, and their heads were perfected with the five [buddha] families. With seed syllables at their hearts, they obediently took up their positions before the Supreme Son Vajrakumāra, upon thrones of [the syllable] *e.*"[38]

The Vajrakīlaya *sādhana*s often talk of three aspects to the *maṇḍala* to be visualised: the *dharmakāya maṇḍala*, the *sambhogakāya maṇḍala*, and the *nirmāṇakāya maṇḍala*. These are typically built up in visualisation in sequence, one after the other. With the figures already described above, up to and including the figures of Buddhakīlaya, Vajrakīlaya, Ratnakīlaya, Padmakīlaya and Karmakīlaya, the *dharmakāya maṇḍala* is complete.[39]

37. The text here is rather obscure, in that it is unclear what the further five are. I have been unable to resolve this problem by consulting NP, NT, DG etc.; most likely, they are the consorts of the *kīla*s of the five families.

38. From sDe-dge xylograph NGB, vol PA, folio 207v:-208r / *de nas yaṅ khrag 'thuṅ gi rgyal po badzra kī la yas phyogs skyoṅ ba bsgral ba'i ched du / rdo rje khro bo'i tiṅ ṅe 'dzin la sñoms par źugs nas / rdo rje phur pa ñid kyi sku daṅ gsuṅ daṅ thugs las thon to // oṃ buddha kīli kī la ya sarba bighnān baṃ hūṃ phaṭ // oṃ badzra kī li kī la ya sarba bighnān baṃ hūṃ phaṭ / oṃ ratna kī li kī la ya sarba bighnān baṃ hūṃ phaṭ / oṃ padma kī li kī la ya sarba bighnān baṃ hūṃ phaṭ / oṃ karma kī li kī la ya sarba bighnān baṃ hūṃ phaṭ / źes brjod pas // khrag 'thuṅ khro bo las kyi phur pa daṅ / rdo rje khro bo las kyi phur pa daṅ / rin chen khro bo las kyi phur pa daṅ / padma khro bo las kyi phur pa daṅ / las kyi khro bo las kyi phur pa daṅ / rigs lṅa las gyur pa'i las kyi phur pa bcu 'thon par gyur to // de yaṅ sku stod źal gsum phyag drug pa / sku smad lcags kyi phur bu zur gsum du snaṅ ba / dbu skra kham pa ral pa zur gsum pa gyen du snaṅ ba / dbu la rigs lṅa rdzogs pa / thugs kha na sa bon daṅ ldan pa / e'i gdan la sras mchog rdo rje gźon nu'i spyan sṅa na bka' nod pa'i tshul du bźugs so /*

39. To give a highly typical example of this last aspect of the *dharmakāya maṇḍala*: In NP, the *kīlaya*s of the five families immediately surround Vajrakīlaya, Dīptacakra and Ekajaṭā in the Root Maṇḍala. They are seen as direct expressions of Vakrakīlaya in terms of the five *jñāna*s. According to NP *las byaṅ*: they all resemble the root deity in having three heads, two wings, six arms, and in having

As one might expect, the taming narrative continues to proceed in following in the steps of the *sādhana* tradition, by presenting the *sambhogakāya maṇḍala* next; this mainly comprises the group of Heruka deities known as the Ten Wrathful Ones (*khro-bo-bcu, daśakrodha*), along with their consorts and attendant deities. Then come the various figures of the *nirmāṇakāya maṇḍala*, who have a more protective function. There is neither space here nor, I feel, any need to give further descriptions of the highly complex *sambhogakāya* and *nirmāṇakāya maṇḍalas*, but I should reiterate that this absolutely fundamental threefold construction of the main central *skyed rim* or visualisation practice is not described anywhere else within the twenty-four chapters of the *Phur-pa bcu-gñis* other than here, in the context of the taming narrative, just as the twenty-three lines from the famous root verses do not occur elsewhere.

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their two lower arms rolling a *kīla*, but the lower part of their bodies are formed into *phur bu*s, rather like the Supreme Sons. To the right is blue Buddha-kīlaya, supreme body, right face white, left face red, upper right hands hold meteoric iron vajra and wheel, left ones hold *khaṭvāṅga* and fire; lower hands roll a meteoric iron *phur bu*; the lower body is a conch *phur bu*. To the east is white Vajra-kīlaya, supreme mind, right face blue, left face red, upper right hands hold nine and five spoked vajras, left ones hold iron hook and skull-cup of blood; lower hands roll a silver *phur pa*; the lower body is a silver *phur bu*. To the south is yellow Ratna-kīlaya, supreme qualities, right face white, the left red, upper right hands hold blazing jewel and war axe, left ones hold noose and skull-cup of blood; lower hands roll golden *phur pa*; the lower body is a golden *phur bu*. To the west is red Padma-kīlaya, supreme speech, right face white, left blue, upper right hands hold lotus and blazing sword, left ones hold skull-cup of blood and iron chains; lower hands roll a jewelled copper *phur pa*; lower body is a copper *phur bu*. To the north is green Karma-kīlaya, supreme activities, right face white, the left red, upper right hands hold crossed vajra and blazing skull staff, left ones hold mass of flames and bell; lower hands roll a jewelled turquoise *phur pa*; lower body is an iron *phur bu* (NP *las byaṅ*: 97-98).

sGrol ba

I want to turn now from the standard or typical Mahāyoga visualisation practices of Vajrakumāra, to a particular yogic practice known as *sgrol ba*, or *mokṣa*, which is the most famous speciality or hallmark of the Vajrakīlaya tradition.[40] *Sgrol ba* is basically a practice of ritual killing. It takes many forms and is practised on many different occasions, but is most popularly done as a central component of the *gaṇacakra* or *tshogs* offerings connected with the extended forms of the standard *sādhana* practice. In this rite, an effigy is typically made, described as a *liṅga*, to be ritually stabbed by the yogin with a *kīla* or *phur pa*. The idea is that spiritual negativities are visualised as concentrated within the *liṅga*, and these are then forcibly transformed into wisdom through 'slaying' the *liṅga* with the *kīla*. In the Vajrakīlaya tradition, the *liṅga* is commonly identified as 'Rudra', and the act of stabbing the *liṅga* with the *kīla* can be seen as an emulation of the original act of Vajrakumāra in slaying Maheśvara/Rudra. So here once again, a central aspect of the Vajra-kīlaya tradition is linked with the taming narrative, and unsurprisingly Maheśvara-Rudra can frequently become the central focus of the entire rite. There are numerous examples of this in the *sādhana*s. I quote here from Cathy CANTWELL's translation of NP:

> A *liṅga* or effigy of Rudra is made and placed before the practitioner; the visuali-
> sation instructions are thus:[41]
> "From the heart of oneself visualised as Vajrakumāra, multitudes of wrathful
> emanations are sent forth...all negative forces, lacking any independent power,
> become summoned and dissolve into the *liṅga* [of Rudra]..."

While visualising as above, one recites:

> ... Multitudes of Rudras of breakers of *samaya*, hostile forces and obstacles, are
> summoned.
> The time for their 'killing and liberation' [*sgrol*] has come!'

Then, rolling the *kīla*, one strikes at the heart of the *liṅga*, which by now embodies all the Rudras, and recites:

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40. The most comprehensive treatment of this subject so far is by Catherine M. CANTWELL, forthcoming: "To Meditate on Consciousness as the Vajra Nature. Ritual 'Killing and Liberation' in the rNying-ma-pa tradition", in H. Krasser et al. eds., *Tibetan Studies* vol I, Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1997, pp. 107-118.
41. Page 130, line 6, to page 131, line 3.

These Rudras of the path of confused appearances
Are 'killed and liberated' in the expanse of the unborn essence.
They are purified in the great spontaneous three kāyas....
They are united in the circle of Great Bliss....

The instructions continue: after being stabbed at the heart with the *kīla*, the Rudra *linga* is to be stabbed in all its other *cakras* too. Then further weapons are employed. The *linga* is bombarded with magical black mustard seeds and other power substances; it is sliced with a small ritual sword; then each of the resulting slices is hammered with a small ritual hammer; and finally mashed with a pestle. Each of these actions is accompanied by the appropriate liturgy and visualisation. At the end, the mashed remains of Rudra are offered up to Vajrakumāra and his retinue to be eaten.

As well as this standard practice of *sgrol ba* as a means of transforming one's own negativity, there is another, much rarer form that envisages the actual killing by magic of a living human being. Needless to say, given the Buddhist context of these rites, the tradition holds that such literal killing should only be done in the most extreme circumstances, when the heinous demerits being earned by a potential victim are so vast that it becomes an act of mercy to kill them, to save them from a certain rebirth in hell. In addition, tradition holds that the performer of such rites must be highly accomplished, possessed of sufficient compassion and *siddhi* to unfailingly transfer the victim's consciousness to a higher realm – otherwise the performer will themselves incur the evil *karma* of murder. In the rÑin-ma-pa tradition, potential victims of this rite are typically described as Buddhist yogins who have misunderstood the real meaning of Tantric practice. Instead of taming Rudra, they have become Rudra. Instead of a Buddhicised Mahāyāna-congruent *kāpālika* practice, they have regressed into following an uregenerated version as originally taught by Rudra. The *Phur-pa bcu-gñis* Ch. 12 describes them as follows:

"Now for the characteristics of those who have fallen away from the purpose [of Vajrayāna practice].
In performing their duties, they do various things wrong:
They handle the sacred substances and ritual utensils in public;
They practice the rites of *tana* and *ghana* [i.e. sexual union and killing], in a [purely literal] physical [way];
They turn their backs on the view and on contemplation;
They are always ready to indulge in coarse behaviour;
They express anger, rage and pride for no reason;
They understand truthful oral instructions wrongly;

When offering guidance to others, their [teaching of] Dharma is false;
They are erudite in [any] lore that misleads;
Casting aside precepts and scriptural authority, yet they embark on grandiose undertakings;
They practice assorted perversions;
Since such persons are genuine Rudras,
Even in [killing and] liberating them with the *abhicāra* [rites],
one remains unstained by sin."[42]

Maheśvara / Rudra in Mahāyoga Doctrine

I want to finish this section of my paper by briefly summarising how the figure of Maheśvara / Rudra fits into the Mahāyoga doctrinal system as a whole. In very general terms, the basic view of the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Mahā-yoga system is a non-dual one, not dissimilar to that of the Yoginī-tantras. It holds that all phenomena, whether conventionally designated good or bad, pure or impure, should all ultimately be realised as being from the point of view of absolute truth the inseparability of appearance and emptiness (*snaṅ stoṅ dbyer med*). To approach this from the point of view of relative truth, one meditates on all phenomena alike, whether pure or impure, whether good or bad, as the primally pure *maṇḍala* of the Tantric deities. The conventional dualistic designations we impose on phenomena as good or bad, pure or impure, are thus seen as having no ultimate validity and are considered illusory, predicated upon false notions of inherent existence (*raṅ bźin*) and ontological duality (*gñis 'dzin*). A ritual corollary of this Mahāyoga doctrine is that those factors of existence or mind designated as impurities or sins to be abandoned in the conventional Mahāyāna systems, are here to be retained as potential sources of wisdom, as the raw materials of spiritual practice; thus rather than merely abandon such negativities as the five moral defilements or *kleśa* of conventional Buddhism, in Mahāyoga one seeks to overcome them through the alternative method of retaining them and exposing their true nature as aspects of the great purity of the *maṇḍala* of deities, and, from the ultimate point of view, as appearance and emptiness

42. From sDe-dge xylograph NGB, vol PA, folio 219r: / *don las ñams pa'i mtshan ñid ni // bya ru mi ruṅ sna tshogs byed // rdzas daṅ lag cha mṅon du 'dzin // tan gan sbyor sgrol dṅos por spyod // lta ba tiṅ 'dzin rgyab tu bor // spyod pa brlaṅ po daṅ du len // khro gtum ña rgyal raṅ gar gtoṅ // don gyi man ñag log par go // pha rol 'dren la log pa'i chos // phyin ci log gi don la mkhas // bka' gźuṅ bor nas rtsom pa che // log par spyod pa mtha' dag spyad // 'di ni ru dra dṅos yin te // mṅon spyod bsgral yaṅ sdig mi gos /*

inseparable. To take a specific example: in the case of the defilement of aggression which is the main focus of the Vajrakīlaya tradition, this would imply not abandoning it, but meditating on it; meditating on aggression should show it to have as its ultimate true nature, or to be from the point of view of emptiness, the mirror-like wisdom (*jñāna*) of the Buddha Akṣobhya. The method of meditating on aggression would be to visualise it as an aspect of the primal purity of the *maṇḍala* of the Tantric deity. Thus the basic method used to achieve the transformation of negativity in Mahāyoga is to visualise all negative factors as aspects of the wrathful Heruka deity *maṇḍala*, and as components of the special tantric offerings made to the Heruka. A central principle behind this practice is discussed by 'Jam-mgon Koṅ-sprul in his commentary on the Vajrakīlaya root verses I have mentioned above. He explains that the wrath of Herukas such as Vajrakumāra is directed against the city of ego projections built upon the duality of subject and object and discriminating discursive thoughts; such a wrath is quite unlike the hatred of personal egotism aimed at a specific enemy; it is more like the radiant sun fiercely dispelling the gloom of discursive conceptualisation all round (DG p.81). Similarly, the Heruka's wrathful compassion cuts through hatred, because it can not co-exist in the mental continuum with hatred any more than heat can co-exist with cold in a single substrate, since compassion and hatred are mutually exclusive (DG p.82).[43] The implication seems to be that simply by putting whatever negativities there might be in direct proximity with the spiritual presence of Vajrakumāra, all such negativities will spontaneously become destroyed and their energy will become transformed into wisdom. Thus one visualises the Heruka's cemetery palace as replete with negativity, graphically represented by gruesome symbols drawn from *kāpālika* iconography, because from the relative point of view, the compassionate Heruka is understood

43. DG p.81: *gaṅ la khros na / mtshan ma'i rnam par rtog pa gzuṅ 'dzin bdag rtog gi groṅ khyer la khros / tshul ji ltar khros na / źe sdaṅ raṅ rgyud pas mig śis ñan dgra la khros pa lta bu ma yin par ñi ma 'char ba'i gzi brjid kyis mun pa'i smag rum mdun na mi gnas pa ltar /* DG p.82: *don ni / źe sdaṅ gcod ces pa kun snaṅ sñiṅ rjes źe sdaṅ gcod pa ste / dper na tsha reg gaṅ na yod pa na graṅ reg med / graṅ reg gaṅ na yod pa na tsha reg med pa de bźin du / gaṅ zag gcig gi rgyud la źe sdaṅ skyes tshe sñiṅ rje med / sñiṅ rje skyes tshe źe sdaṅ med pa lhan cig mi gnas 'gal ba yin ciṅ /* Cathy Cantwell informs me that this passage is probably not Koṅ-sprul's original composition: almost identical passages occur in the NP *bsñen yig*, for example, suggesting an older common source (NP *bsñen yig* pp.87-88).

to delight in his bodhisattva's acts of effortlessly and spontaneously transmuting negativities into wisdom, and thus he constantly immerses himself in negativity. At the same time, from the point of view of absolute truth, the Heruka *maṇḍala* can be understood as the real nature of such negativities, once their empty or ultimate nature is understood as the inseparability of appearence and emptiness.

An additional significant point in Mahāyoga doctrine is that its commentators also sometimes take a position found also in the Yoginītantras, which argues that since beings of the present dark age are so heavily defiled, they quite naturally have far more negativity than virtue. It follows that pragmatically speaking, the potential good results of a spiritual approach which aims at the transformation of negativities, in general tends to outweigh the potential good results of a path that aims at the cultivation of positive values, by sheer force of weight. From such a logic, it follows that environments and persons with a great deal of negativity are the ideal and intended sphere of operations for deities such as Vajrakumāra; for if the heruka practice is being practiced successfully, the more negativities there are, the more wisdom energy will be produced.

Now, as we have seen above, the commentarial tradition explains that from the point of view of conventional analysis, Rudra is the Vajrayāna equivalent of Māra, the main Buddhist symbol of evil. From the absolute point of view, it also describes him as primordially pure, as an aspect of the Buddha Samantabhadra since beginningless time, merely appearing as evil and impure for the express purpose of allowing enlightenment to become manifest through the process of overcoming his apparent negativity. It would therefore make sense if in Mahāyoga ritual, the negativities visualised in *sādhana* with the intention that their pure inner wisdom aspect should be revealed, are identified with Maheśvara/Rudra; and this is in fact exactly what happens. Rudra stands for the primordial ground to be purified, or, to use the analogy of alchemy, the base metal of defilement to be transmuted into the gold of Buddhist enlightenment. Just as one can not alchemically make gold without first having some base metal to transmute, so one can not manifest enlightenment without a Rudra of egohood to liberate. In particular, in the Mahāyoga cycles, the specifically *kāpālika* categories associated with Rudra in the taming narratives are expressly identified with the negativities to be transformed.

In *sādhana* texts, one therefore comes across frequent references to Maheśvara/Rudra, in nearly all cases broadly identifying him with the negative basis of purification. In the NP *las byaṅ*, currently a very popular *sādhana* to Vajrakumāra, the cemetery palace is visualised as built up of the dismembered fragments of Rudra's corpse, with the roof canopy, for example, being described as made of Rudra's flayed skin (NP *las byaṅ*, Page 93, line 5). On the one hand, the palace as made of Rudra's dismembered corpse signifies the expanse of the negativities which need to be transmuted, within which the Heruka figure has his ideal field of activities; yet at the same time, the Rudra cemetery palace is also seen as an expression of pure primordial wisdom, a demonstration that confusions have primordially been of the nature of wisdom, in accordance with the primordially pure ultimate nature of Rudra as described in Kloṅ-chen-pa's commentary on the *Guhyagarbha-tattvaviniścaya*, Ch. 15. Similarly, referring to the practices of a *rDo rje gro lod* and a *Bla sgrub* ritual manual of the bDud 'joms tradition, CANTWELL notes that the wrathful series of the so-called outer offerings (or in some cases the inner offerings), which include items such as the flowers of the senses, the incense of melting human fat, butter lamps of burning stomach fat, perfume of blood or urine, food of human flesh or excrement, and music of skull-drums and thigh-bone trumpet, are often explained as the parts of the body of Rudra.[44] By offering these to the Buddhist Heruka, the idea is that the negativities they represent should become spontaneously revealed as wisdom, a wisdom which is already inherent within them when they are understood from the ultimate level of emptiness.

So the specific function of the wrathful Buddhist Herukas in Mahāyoga is an aggressive one: rather than attempting to directly increase good qualities which are already inherent anyway, Herukas exist in order to counteract the negativities that mask the primordial perfection. Their function is primarily to destroy what needs to be destroyed, above all to demolish dualistic thinking and intellectual clinging to the idea of inherent existence, even more than to encourage or increase any good qualities. Their wrathful, exorcistic names, epithets and representations underline their primarily destructive orientation: Vajrakīlaya is described as cutting through hatred much more frequently than he is described as

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44. Catherine M. CANTWELL 1989: *An Ethnographic Account of the Religious Practice in a Tibetan Buddhist Monastery in Northern India.* Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Kent at Canterbury. See pages 135, 180.

building up love, while Hayagrīva is described as subduing arrogance far more frequently than he is described as cultivating humility. Now, as we have already seen above, (embarrassing though this might be for the ecumenically-minded contemporary Buddhist seeking a rapprochement with, say, Kashmiri Śaivism), the Mahāyoga commentarial tradition has chosen as its main symbol of negativity the *kāpālika* figure of Maheśvara/Rudra, which in this context largely displaces the more traditional Buddhist symbol of evil, Māra. It is not surprising then that one is often reminded within the literature that a major purpose of the Buddhist Heruka is to attack and destroy Maheśvara/Rudra! If Maheśvara/Rudra is the embodiment of all that needs to be destroyed, then, by an unavoidable logic, it follows that the whole spiritual purpose of Mahāyoga can be and often is symbolically expressed as the destruction of Maheśvara/Rudra. Thus, as the NP liturgy puts it, the whole point of Vajrakumāra is that his "wrathful roar of *hūṃ*! [shall] destroy the brains of Rudra" (NP *las byaṅ*, p. 119, line 6); the whole point of his entourage is that they should "annihilate the Rudras of the teaching" (NP *las byaṅ* p. 121, line 2); as the prayer of fulfilment (*bskaṅ ba*) describes them, the Vajrakīlaya deities are blessed and praised precisely because they "[have] the mighty power to subdue the Rudras of perverse views" (NP *las byaṅ*, p. 160, line 1). Thus through achieving union with such Heruka deities as Vajrakīlaya, the Mahāyoga *sādhaka* might aspire to emulate the great *gter ston* and saint 'Ja'-tshon sñiṅ-po, who famously earned that highest (if not ecumenically resonant!) spiritual accolade of the rÑiṅ-ma-pas, *bdag 'dzin ru dra 'joms pa*, 'The Vanquisher of Rudra-egohood.'

In Conclusion

In conclusion, we can see that Tibetan Buddhism seems to allow the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra to play only a comparatively small role in the Cakrasaṃvara traditions, although a considerably larger one in the rÑiṅ-ma-pa Mahāyoga systems, where he functions as one of the most important symbolic categories of that tradition. In both cases, however, the Śaiva deity and the traditions connected with him are predominantly constructed in abstract metaphysical terms. The actual concrete historical significance of the Śaiva tantric traditions for Vajrayāna Buddhism is only rarely or almost never the focus of Buddhist scholastic attention. The surface historical reading of the taming narrative, that so obviously to Westerners seems to admit that the *kāpālika* elements of the Buddhist

Vajrayāna are derivative of Śaivism, is not widely followed by Tibetans. Instead, in the hands of the tradition, this underlying historical narrative is comprehensively and systematically reconstructed into a purely metaphysical set of symbols onto which psychological factors can be correlated in accordance with Buddhist doctrine.

Unfortunately, the question as to why the Tibetan Vajrayāna tradition seems uninterested in its historical debts to Śaivism is one I have not yet had much opportunity to think about. Nevertheless, it might be useful at this juncture to float a few largely speculative ideas on the subject, and I have already mentioned some of these earlier. On the one hand, it does seem to me at the moment that there is surely some degree of simple denial involved, some effort to gloss over what could be construed as an embarrassing historical fact for Buddhism: it can surely not be considered a very comfortable situation for Buddhists to constantly to have to reflect on the substantially derivative nature of some of their most sacred traditions. On the other hand, it is no straightforward task to ascertain to what degree such denial is the case, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the strictly historical understandings of events of any kind, whether shameful or glorious, have never been of much interest or relevance to Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna Buddhism, especially in India. The Buddhist scholastic tradition has consistently mythologised every aspect of its history, the shameful and the glorious to an equal degree. We can see this from the highly mythologised traditional accounts of the Buddha's life, the hagiographies of Buddhist saints and kings, predictions about the decline of the śasana, and the stories about the origins of Buddhist scriptures and Buddhist sacred sites such as stupas. The Indian Buddhist scholastic tradition, like its many Hindu counterparts, seems to have quite consistently sought to distil what it saw as religiously valuable mythic narratives out of any historical events within its experience, and not merely the embarrassing events. It is not impossible that the mythologised approaches of the figure of Maheśvara/Rudra evidenced in Tibetan literature might derive from a typical Indian Buddhist mythological response to history, just as much as from a specific cover-up attempt.

I am also not clear to what degree the different elements of the Buddhist tradition in India would have found the facts of its debts to Śaivism embarrasssing. Surely the blatant borrowings of substantial unedited passages from the scriptures of the Śaiva canon into the Buddhist Yoginītantras must have been a considerable embarrassment to many

among the more respectable clerical elements of Indian Buddhism at the time; yet this raw co-option of Śaiva material was presumably at the same time seen as a great coup by the 'shamanic' (in SAMUEL's technical usage) or yogic Buddhist individuals who initiated it. Perhaps these yogins understood their coup in terms of a continuation of the process of the taming of Maheśvara described in already well established Yoga-tantra scriptures such as the STTS; this is a point that also needs to be carefully considered. Above all, however, as LAMOTTE remarked many years ago, we must remember the pervasive theme in pre-Tantric Buddhist literature of the conversion of Māra and his daughters to the Dharma. The Tantric narratives of the taming of Maheśvara/Rudra make clear allusion to these much older stories – for example, conversion of Māra's daughters by multiple simultaneous sexual intercourse (cf. Mahāyoga) already existed in Mahāyāna scriptures such as the *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra*, a text which devotes considerable attention to the taming of Māra and his daughters. With the identification of Māra as Maheśvara-Rudra, an ancient Buddhist literary template (cf. *Śūraṃgamasamādhisūtra, Mahāsaṃnipāta, Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*, etc.) found a new concretely historical focus. Now there was a real, tangible Māra out there to be converted, not just a symbolic or mythical one.

So even from a clerical point of view, the general principle of Buddhism's co-option of Śaiva *kāpālika* tantrism might not have been altogether unacceptable. A basic tendency of Buddhism from its very inception is that it seems to have normally preferred to recode and to respond to or react to existing non-Buddhist categories, rather than to create new ones of its own *ex nihilo*. Most of my readers are probably aware of the work of Richard GOMBRICH and K.R. NORMAN, who have shown most of the key doctrines of early Buddhism to be constructed from recycled Brahmanical categories. This includes even such quintessential Buddhist ideas and technical terms such as *karma, nirvāṇa*, and the Middle Way, all originally articulated through the medium of redefining existing non-Buddhist ideas. One can see another aspect of this tendency neatly represented in texts like the *Brahmajāla Sutta*, the first text of the *Dīgha Nikāya* of the Pali Canon, which presents the Buddhist point of view through the medium of a critique of sixty-two specifically non-Buddhist theories. K.R. NORMAN writes as follows:

> There have been those who thought that Buddhism was simply an offshoot of Hinduism, while there are others who maintain that there is no trace of Hinduism in Buddhism. The truth, as always, lies somewhere between these two extremes.

> What is certainly true is that Buddhism owes much, especially in terminology, to Brahmanical Hinduism and much of the Buddha's preaching would have been unintelligible to those who had no knowledge of Brahmanical teaching. Although some of the technical terms of Buddhism are exclusive to that religion, much Buddhist terminology is, in form, identical with that of brahmanism. At the same time it must be recognized that, although the Buddha took over some of the terminology of Brahmanical Hinduism, he gave it a new Buddhist sense.[45]

Although NORMAN was here discussing early Buddhism, it seems to me his words are substantially true of later Buddhism as well. On several significant occasions through its long history, Indian Buddhism seems to have recreated itself anew primarily through the medium of reinterpreting or reacting to the existing categories of its opponents, in preference to inventing new categories of its own. This process of subverting its rivals seems to have eventually become interpreted as a central Buddhist virtue and elevated to the level of a conscious dialectic. Perhaps the most famous example is the way in which the Mahāyāna Buddhism of the early Perfection of Wisdom literature primarily defined itself through its critique of the Abhidharma, upon the categories of which it is by that very token substantially dependent for its articulation. Similarly, as Paul WILLIAMS suggested to me some years ago, it might be that Buddhist logic invented itself in an effort to defeat the Nyāya logicians in their own terms. Buddhist logic is therefore philosophically diametrically opposed to Nyāya – idealist or phenomenalist as opposed to Nyāya's naive realism – while nevertheless expressing itself almost entirely through the medium of originally Nyāya types of discourse. The most basic Mahāyāna philosophical notions often seem to encapsulate this sort of propensity – the *apohavāda* claims that nothing can be defined except in terms of what it is not, the Madhyamaka dialectic puts forward no argument of its own but merely negates those of its opponents.

In addition, the three major philosophical strands represented in Vajra-yāna Buddhism, the emptiness doctrines of the Madhyamaka, the mind-only doctrines of the Yogācāra, and the Buddha-nature doctrines of the Tathāgatagarbha sūtras, all share an important basic axiom. They all hold that emptiness or the ultimate nature is already inherent within all the profane phenomena of *saṃsāra*, and can never be found or constructed outside of them. Thus the major purpose of Buddhism was seen to be to expose the ultimately true nature already inherent in existing

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45. K.R. NORMAN: "Theravāda Buddhism and Brahmanical Hinduism: Brahmanical Terms in a Buddhist Guise", *Buddhist Forum* II, p.193.

defiled phenomena, not to try to create new structures of truth outside of
them. Truth or Dharma was seen as self-existent and all pervading; the
only purpose of Buddhism was to point it out to beings. To this kind of
thinking, if an originally non-Buddhist *deva* were compelled by the skil-
ful methods of Heruka to heed the teachings of the Buddha and begin to
realise his inherent Buddha-nature, he could become just as much a
legitimate object of Buddhist devotion as any being of purely Buddhist
lineage who had achieved realisation within a conventional sangha
career. It seems to me that with such an ideological framework, many
elements within Indian Buddhism might have been reasonably un-
ashamed and unperturbed by the fact that their religion had taken sub-
stantial borrowings from non-Buddhist sources.

The situation developing within contemporary Tibetan Buddhism is
harder to assess. The barrier of the Himalayas has meant that for around
1,000 years Tibetan Buddhism had no significant social contact with
Śaivism, and as a result, Śaivism remained of a mainly abstract and
symbolic value within Tibetan thinking. It is only in very recent years
that Tibetan Buddhist refugees have had to seriously confront their
boundaries with Śaivism in any concrete sense, and they have had to
begin to do so with little or no traditional template or precedent to work
from. Over recent decades, the Tibetan refugee experience of modern
Hinduism has generally been very harmonious, but it has also been poli-
tically fraught on some occasions. Several Tibetans have claimed that in
Nepal, Hindu bureaucrats have sometimes compelled Tibetan refugee
lamas to sign documents avowing their religion to be a minor subsection
of Hinduism.[46] In India, Hindu fundamentalism can be seen as a threat-
ening force by some Tibetans. In Bhutan, the Buddhist populations feel
their traditional way of life to be gravely threatened by what they see as
an engulfing tide of Hindu Nepalese settlers and colonists. As one might
expect, in such circumstances a wide variety of responses to the question
of historical relationships with Śaivism seem to be forthcoming. I have
discussed the problems of Śaiva/Buddhist scriptural intertextuality with
a number of Tibetan refugee lamas living in India and Nepal, including
some major figures in the contemporary Tibetan Cakrasaṃvara tradi-
tions, as well as specialists in Mahāyoga. My impression is that there are

46. David GELLNER likewise reports that the official Nepalese Government view has
    been that Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism are all branches of Hinduism. See his
    *Monk, Householder and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of
    Ritual*, Cambridge University Press 1992, page 92.

no fixed ideological positions dictated by sectarian or doctrinal affilia-
tion; rather, responses seem to vary according to the individual. My
initial impression is that the lamas most closely connected to the yogic
side of Tibetan Buddhism, what Geoffrey SAMUEL calls its 'shamanic
current', seem to be quite happy to admit a concrete historical relation-
ship with Śaivism, while the more clerical lamas seem more reluctant to
admit to any Buddhist dependence on Śaivism. Thus Khenpo A, a
widely respected scholar of the Karma Bka'-brgyud-pa and rÑiṅ-ma-pa
traditions especially favoured by some among the more yogic side of the
tradition, told me he had made a special study of the relation of the
Vajrayāna to Śaivism whilst studying in Benares. He was an enthusiastic
supporter of the idea that Vajrayāna was derivative of Śaivism, in the
specific sense that Śaivism had been tamed ('dul ba) by Buddhism. He
told me that the next thing would be that Buddhism was going to tame
technology and science, which were going to become a principal
medium through which the Dharma would express itself in future cen-
turies. B Rinpoche, a major incarnate lama with considerable back-
ground in traditional mountain retreats dedicated to both the bKa'-
brgyud-pa and rÑiṅ-ma-pa systems, firmly took the view that Śaivism
and the Vajrayāna were often virtually identical in all ritual respects, but
that Buddhism uniquely applied these rituals to the understanding of
emptiness. He described to me Śaiva tantric rituals he knew of, which he
said were almost identical with those of Buddhism. However, he advised
me to dissemble when discussing this fact with Buddhists of a more
clerical or traditionalist mind set, because he said such talk would only
upset them and achieve no benefit. C Rinpoche is the lama in charge of
one of the leading yogic training centres within contemporary Tibetan
Buddhism. His centre is particularly associated with the Cakrasaṃvara
cycle and its associated yogas, which are practised there in the form of
long solitary retreats of many years duration. C Rinpoche clearly felt
very positively about certain aspects of Hinduism, and spoke warmly of
the virtues that can be found within the Hindu traditions. Our conversa-
tion on the subject of Śaiva-Buddhist intertextuality came to a slightly
uncomfortable close when I made remarks that could be interpreted to
carry a slightly anti-Hindu nuance. D Rinpoche, who was mainly con-
cerned with the social aspects of Buddhism and had no experience of
retreat, had entirely different attitudes. At one stage I even became anx-
ious that he might come to blows with the Hindu paṇḍits we met at the
Nepal-German Manuscript Preservation Project offices in Kathmandu,

when our conversation turned to Śaiva/Buddhist parallels, and the pandits all asserted that the Buddhists had copied their rituals from the Hindus. We had to leave quite briskly. D's close friend, a senior monk and a recent escapee from Tibet, had only weeks before been arrested, beaten and, he alleged, forced to sign a humiliating document by the Nepalese police, asserting that Buddhism was a minor offshoot of Hinduism. It will be interesting to see how Tibetan Buddhism comes to terms over the coming years with the growing evidence of its historic debts to Śaivism.